



THE DIOCESE OF KALAMAZOO

Office of the Bishop

February 22, 2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

With a heavy heart, I write to share with you the following information regarding one of our retired priests, Father Richard Fritz. Due to credible allegations of sexual abuse that been made against Father Fritz, I have informed him that he is restricted from all public ministry. These allegations date back to the late 1970s and early 1980s. To the best of our knowledge, we have received no additional complaints of sexual abuse against Father Fritz.

This decision to restrict Fr. Fritz's ministry was neither made lightly, nor was it made in isolation. We enlisted the assistance of the Diocesan Review Board, a consultative body, made up of laypersons with expertise in sexual abuse, as well as members of the clergy. With full awareness of the Michigan Attorney General's Office, the Diocese continues to move forward its ecclesiastical processes, according to the Code of Canon Law and other applicable norms for such cases.

With this in mind, we are required to forward this case to the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith (CDF) at the Vatican, which has competency for further review. As in civil law, there is a presumption of innocence during this canonical process. Credible allegations are not a determination of guilt or innocence; rather, the term denotes that there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the abuse may have occurred.. Until this process is concluded, Father Fritz is not permitted to engage in public ministry (e.g. celebrate Mass or the Sacraments, or to present himself as a priest in public).

Father Fritz has not held any official assignment within the Diocese since 2016, when he resigned as pastor of St. Mary's Assumption Parish, Bronson and retired from ministry. His previous assignments were at St. Philip Parish, Battle Creek; St. Charles Borromeo Parish, Coldwater; Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish, Bridgman; St. Basil Parish, South Haven; St. Barbara Parish, Colon; St. Augustine Cathedral Parish, Kalamazoo; and St. Jude Parish, Gobles.

To protect the privacy and rights of all those involved, I am unable to share additional details with you. At the same time, I encourage anyone with information related to clergy sexual misconduct to call the reporting number set up by the Michigan Attorney General's Office at 844-324-3374. In the Diocese of Kalamazoo, we maintain a zero-tolerance policy toward abuse.

Asking for your continued prayers, especially for all victim-survivors of abuse and trauma, and assuring you of my prayers for the continued healing of the Body of Christ, I remain

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Paul J. Bradley
Bishop of Kalamazoo