

Archdiocese Receives Allegations of Abuse

In the past week, the Archdiocese of Baltimore learned of two allegations of sexual abuse of a minor against Monsignor Richard E. Smith, 67, pastor at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Ellicott City. The alleged abuse occurred in mid-late 1960s while Richard Smith was a priest at Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help parish in Woodlawn (known as St. Gabriel since 1997).

One woman alleges she had a series of sexual encounters over a course of months in 1967 when she was approximately 15-16 years old. Another woman has indicated that she and then-Father Smith had one inappropriate sexual interaction sometime in 1966 or 1967 when she was about 15 years old.

Richard Smith was informed of the allegations. He admitted to some of the allegations and couldn't recall other details of his interactions with them.

These incidents were immediately reported to the appropriate civil authorities. Richard Smith has been removed from ministry and his faculties to function as a priest have been removed. The Archdiocese's investigation continues. In accordance with Archdiocesan policy, counseling assistance has been and will be offered to those affected.

Representatives of the Archdiocese met with parishioners and staff at Our Lady of Perpetual Help on Sunday afternoon to inform them of the allegations and to answer questions. The Archdiocese is providing pastoral care to both the parish and the school.

Richard Smith was ordained a priest in 1966. In addition to serving at Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help (Woodlawn), 1966-1967, he also served at St. Bernard (Baltimore), 1967; St. Mary (Cumberland), 1968-1973; St. Mark (Fallston), 1973-1978; St. Jane Frances de Chantal (Riviera Beach), 1978-1983; St. Clare (Essex), 1983-1987; Our Lady of Sorrows (Owensville), 1987-1996; St. Elizabeth Ann Seton (Crofton), 1996; Our Lady of Perpetual Help (Ellicott City), 1996-2007.

The Archdiocese of Baltimore is committed to protecting children and helping to heal victims of abuse. We urge anyone who has any knowledge of any child sexual abuse to come forward, and to report it immediately to civil authorities. If clergy or other church personnel are suspected of committing the abuse, we ask that you also call the Archdiocesan Office of Child and Youth Protection Hotline at 1-866-417-7469.