

Archdiocese Responds to Allegation of Abuse Against Cumberland Pastor

In June of this year, the Archdiocese of Baltimore learned of an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor against Monsignor Thomas Bevan, 73, pastor at St. Patrick Catholic Church in Cumberland. The acts allegedly occurred in the mid-1970s while he was serving as an associate pastor at St. John Catholic Church in Frederick.

The individual alleges he was abused on a number of separate occasions in the mid-1970s when he was a student at the parish school.

The allegation was immediately reported to civil authorities in Frederick County, who instructed the Archdiocese not to take any further action, including continuing its own investigation or making contact with Monsignor Bevan. On August 18, the Archdiocese received permission from civil authorities in Frederick County to resume its investigation and representatives of the Archdiocese met with Msgr. Bevan the following day. At the meeting on August 19, Msgr. Bevan denied the allegation. The Archdiocese removed him from ministry and revoked his faculties to function as a priest that same day, pending the Archdiocese's investigation.

In 2005, the Archdiocese had received an allegation of child sexual abuse against Msgr. Bevan dating back to 1974, which he denied. The Archdiocese reported the allegation at that time to the Frederick County State's Attorney and conducted an investigation into the claim. The Archdiocese determined that there was not sufficient evidence at the time to remove him. The Archdiocese's Independent Review Board, which reviews the Church's handling of child sexual abuse allegations, affirmed the Archdiocese's handling of the allegation and the civil authorities in Frederick County did not pursue the matter.

In accordance with Archdiocesan policy, counseling assistance has been offered to all those affected.

Representatives of the Archdiocese met with parishioners and staff at St. Patrick earlier today to inform them of the allegations and to answer questions. The Archdiocese is providing pastoral care to the parish.

Thomas Bevan was ordained a priest in 1963. In addition to serving at St. John in Frederick from 1974-1979, he also served at Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Middle River (Associate), 1963-1974; St. Mark, Fallston (Pastor), 1979-1991; St. Mary, Cumberland (Temporary Administrator), 1991-92; St. Patrick, Mount Savage (Temporary Administrator), 1992; St. Patrick, Cumberland (Pastor), 1997-2009.

Msgr. Bevan served as Executive Director of the Secretariat for Priestly Life & Ministry for the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (now the USCCB) from 1992-97. He also served in the Office of Clergy Education for the Archdiocese from 1976-91. During his time as an Associate at Mount Carmel, he taught Religion and Church History at the parish high school. While an Associate at St. John, he taught liturgy courses at Mount St. Mary's.

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. If you have any other information relevant to this matter, please contact the Archdiocese Office of Child and Youth Protection at 410-547-5599.