Baltimore Archdiocese removes priest over allegations of child sexual abuse from 1970s

The following news release was issued by the Archdiocese of Baltimore May 21 concerning the pastor of Our Lady of Pompei in Highlandtown:

The Archdiocese of Baltimore has learned of an allegation of child sexual abuse against Father Luigi Esposito, 77, pastor at Our Lady of Pompei Church in Baltimore. The alleged abuse occurred in the 1970s while Father Esposito was serving as Associate Pastor at Our Lady of Pompei. The alleged victim claims the abuse began at the age of 14 and occurred multiple times while the minor was at Our Lady of Pompei.

The Archdiocese has been cooperating and sharing information with the civil authorities and on May 17, after receiving permission from civil authorities to make contact with Father Esposito, representatives of the Archdiocese met with him to discuss the allegations. He denied all the allegations against him. The Archdiocese spoke a number of times with the alleged victim and the allegations were consistent. Pursuant to Archdiocesan policy, the Archdiocese suspended Father Esposito from ministry and removed his faculties to function as a priest, pending the outcome of its investigation.

Yesterday, representatives of the Archdiocese met with parishioners and staff at Our Lady of Pompei to inform them of the allegations and to answer questions. The Archdiocese is working with the parish and staff to provide pastoral care to the Our Lady of Pompei community.

In accordance with Archdiocesan policy, the Archdiocese has offered counseling assistance to those affected.

In 1964, Luigi Esposito was ordained a priest of the Congregation of the Mission of St. Vincent de Paul, a religious order also known as the Vincentians, in Naples,

Italy. He was incardinated, the process whereby a diocesan or religious order priest becomes a priest of another diocese, into the Archdiocese of Baltimore in 2000.

Father Esposito served as Associate Pastor of Our Lady of Pompei from 1964-1984, then as Pastor from 1987-present. He was a Teacher, Coach, and Athletic Director of Our Lady of Pompei High School from 1964-1987.

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 is 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.

*To read this release in Spanish, click **here**.*