Charges of Sexual Misconduct

Pastor Placed on Leave

Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio has placed a Brooklyn pastor on administrative leave from active priestly ministry after allegations of sexual misconduct against him were found to be credible.

In a letter read to parishioners of St. Brendan’s Church in Midwood, Brooklyn, the bishop issued the notification. Bishop DiMarzio noted that allegations of misconduct were made by an individual who was not a member of the clergy of the diocese but former member of the diocese.

The bishop asked anyone who may have been impacted by the conduct of the priest to come forward and advise him. The bishop gave the following phone numbers for the diocese:

- (636) 634-4499
- (800) 634-4499

Referring to Father Purcell’s permission to say Mass privately, the bishop said: “His ministry with the Eucharist will sustain him in his life.”

Members of the Diocesan Investigation Committee were available to speak with parishioners or the general public. The committee includes Sister Patricia Leonard, C.S.J., the director of the Diocesan Office of Safeguarding; Lawrence Cobham, Timothy McElrath and Mike Wasklewicz.

Father Purcell has been acting as pastor of St. Brendan’s, bringing closer to God.

One thing that Father Jim made very clear when he began his assignment was that he did not want to intrude on a program that was so successful. He chose not to be a director of any program because he trusted the directors and teams in place. He felt that they were the true experts. He felt that everyone involved on the weekends brought equal importance to the experience. Directors were no more important than team members, who were no more important than angels, who were no more important than sinners. All were equal, essential and chosen by God to share together on C.A. and Cursillo weekends. His personal goal for each weekend was to be available to all members for spiritual and pastoral presence. Love what I love about Father Jim’s involvement in the Young Adult program was that he was extremely approachable. He made himself available for private time to anyone who chose him, with an ‘everyman’s style’. His talks were clear and concise and one could ask a question, reach for a helping hand, or for comfort.

Father Jim came into my life uninvited, unexpected, and changed me forever. He and I came together because God put us together. We couldn’t be more different yet there is a strong connection between us. We don’t always agree about things but we always had respect for each other. What I loved about him was his openness to share experiments about his life before his ordination and his life as a priest. I love that he always thanked me for my work and my support of him. I loved his sense of humor and how he talked things exactly the way they were. I loved his honesty about what’s going on in the world and the Church. I loved how much he believed in the power of prayer. I loved how sensitive he was to the needs of others, specifically those with grief, addiction and lack of faith. I loved how he recommended pop fiction to read for fun and spiritual books for growth. I loved how he reminded me of the truly important things in life and to not focus on the petty. I loved how important his family was. I loved how he saw me as real and not how I believed I was.

I hope to inspire people to think about their lives and the people in them that contribute to their growth. I hope my reflection inspires you to reflect on Father Jim and how he has affected your lives in his five years as director of St. Paul’s Center. If not Father Jim, I hope you can think about the priests who have come into your life and have inspired you to be better. If not priests, then the people God has put in your life.

I know that Father Jim would not want me to put him into a specific category of importance. In my life, he wasn’t – he was just my friend. Father Jim was a blessing to St. Paul’s Center over the last five years. I will pray in thanksgiving for him. I will pray for peace, and I will pray that the people he encountered over the last five years gained as much from him as I have.

God bless you, Father Jim – De Colores!