

Former Queens Pastor on Leave from Ministry

Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio has announced that an investigation by the Diocesan Review Board has found sufficient evidence of sexual abuse of minors by a former Queens pastor.

In a letter to parishioners of Sacred Heart parish in Bayside, the bishop stated that John Abrams, now retired, is "on leave from the public exercise of sacred ministry."

Charge from 25 Years Ago

According to the report of the Diocesan Review Board, the sexual abuse took place more than 25 years ago when he was the pastor there.

Bishop DiMarzio said he is not permitted to present himself as a priest, wear clerical attire, celebrate Mass or administer the sacraments.

While he left the parish in 1982, the allegations were

presented to the diocese after the implementation of the U.S. Bishops' "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People," the letter said.

Msgr. Sean G. Ogle, the Episcopal Vicar for the Queens North Vicariate, read the letter at weekend Masses, Nov. 3-4.

The bishop extolled the qualities of the advisory eight-member review board that studied the allegations, calling them "people of outstanding integrity and good judgment" experienced in law, medicine, law enforcement, social services and family life.

Results Sent to Vatican

The Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith will receive the results of the investigation "for direction on how to proceed next," he said.

In the letter, Bishop DiMarzio asked the parishioners

to pray for all victims of abuse by clergy, saying they have experienced shame, anger and betrayal.

"As Bishop, and on behalf of the Diocese of Brooklyn and the entire Church, I sincerely apologize to the victims for the emotional sufferings endured by sexual abuse by a member of the clergy," he said.

"The courage of those who have come forward at this time should be especially respected and admired."

Diocesan Toll-Free Number

Bishop DiMarzio said anyone aware of sexual abuse of minors by clergy should advise the diocese by calling a toll-free number: (888) 634-4499. He said callers will be treated "with courtesy and respect."

Members of the Diocesan Intervention Team were on hand at the Masses to answer questions or listen to concerns expressed by parishioners.

Obituary

Sister Bernadette Desmond M.M., a native of Brooklyn, died Nov. 3 peacefully in Maryknoll Residential Care unit of cancer at Maryknoll, N.Y. She was 72 and had been a Maryknoll Sister for 53 years.

She was born in St. Rose of Lima parish in Brooklyn and she attended Catherine McAuley H.S., East Flatbush, Class of 1953.

She entered the Maryknoll Sisters on Sept. 2, 1954. She received the religious name of Sister Maria Pilar. She made her first profession of vows on March 7, 1957 and her final vows on the same date in Lima, Peru.

Sister Bernadette attended Maryknoll Teachers' College, 1956-60, and was assigned in 1960 to the Peru Region where she taught in primary grades for four years, high school for one year and served as principal for one year.

In 1967 she was assigned to Cobija, Bolivia, where she was also principal of the primary school. While there she also served as Superior of the Sisters.

She was reassigned to Peru in 1971 where she served in the Altiplano in Juli, 1971-75.

Delay for Pastoral Letter in Spanish

Due to technical difficulties, the Spanish translation of Bishop DiMarzio's pastoral letter, "Do Not Be Afraid," will not be printed in this week's paper. It will appear in full in next week's edition.

CRS Responds with \$1.5 Million To Mexico And Caribbean Flood

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) has announced an initial commitment of \$1.5 million toward emergency relief and recovery assistance for thousands of people affected by a series of storms that caused the worst flooding in Mexico's history and tore through the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Cuba.

A week of heavy rains flooded 80 percent of the Mexican Gulf Coast state of Tabasco, prompting Mexican President Felipe Calderon to declare it the "worst natural disaster in the history of the country."

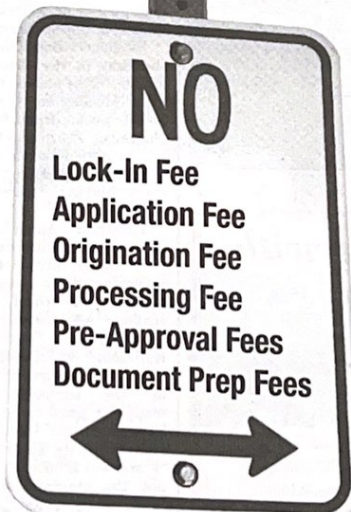
About half of the two million people in Tabasco have been affected. Thousands are being evacuated to neighboring states while some 300,000 people remain trapped in their homes by the flooding.

CRS, which is working closely with Caritas Mexicana and Caritas Tabasco, has pledged \$1 million to provide food, water, blankets and other basic emergency supplies to thousands of affected families.

CRS has committed an additional \$500,000 to support relief efforts already underway by CRS staff and partners in the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Cuba, where Tropical Storm Noel, the deadliest storm to hit the region since Jeanne in 2004, lashed the Caribbean last week.

Roughly 45,000 Haitians, Dominicans and Cubans were evacuated and the storm destroyed some 15,000 homes before moving on to the Bahamas.

Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio said that individuals can donate money to assist CRS in its emergency response by calling (877) HELPERS, online at www.crs.org or by sending a check to Catholic Relief Services, P.O. Box 17090, Baltimore, Md 21203-7090. Memo portion of check: LACRO Severe Weather Fund.



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