

MEDIA ADVISORY

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF JEFFERSON CITY

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Jefferson City.... Most Rev. John R. Gaydos of the Catholic Diocese of Jefferson City has placed a local priest on temporary administrative leave pending an investigation into an allegation of inappropriate electronic communication with a minor. Fr. Thomas Seifner, pastor of Immaculate Conception Church in Loose Creek and St. Louis Church in Bonnots Mill was removed from his position on Friday and Bishop Gaydos has convened the Diocesan Review Board to conduct an inquiry into the allegation.

Bishop Gaydos and diocesan vicar general, Monsignor Gregory Higley, attended weekend masses at Immaculate Conception Church and St. Louis Church to inform parishioners of the action. Bishop Gaydos delivered the following statement from the pulpit:

The Diocese of Jefferson City has received a report of inappropriate electronic communication between Fr. Tom Seifner and a minor. The report is of communication that took place five years ago. The individual is no longer a minor.

Diocesan policy regarding the investigation of such a report will be followed and the diocesan review board will meet promptly to conduct an investigation and advise me as to its findings.

As your bishop, I am placing Fr. Seifner on temporary administrative leave pending the review board's completion of its investigation. This action is neither an indication of his guilt nor his innocence.

Such actions are difficult for everyone involved. I share in the pain and anguish that we all feel as Catholics when such reports appear. I ask that you keep everyone involved in the report and the investigation in your prayers.

The protection of children is a primary concern for the Diocese of Jefferson City. As your bishop, I am committed to insure that the church is a safe and healthy place for all children. If anyone knows of information regarding any inappropriate or abusive behavior by any priest or representative of the diocese, please contact Mr. Ron Vessell, the review administrator for the diocese. He can be reached by calling the chancery.

A similar statement was read at masses at St. Joseph Church in Pilot Grove, St. John the Baptist Church in Clear Creek, and St. Joseph Church in Clifton City where Fr. Seifner served prior to his appointment to the Loose Creek and Bonnots Mill churches last July.

Due to the pending investigation, no further details of the allegation are available at this time.

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