



Catholic Diocese of Columbus

Chancery Office
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DATE: January 25, 2022

Parish outreach notice regarding Columbus Diocese placing Fr. Dean Mathewson on administrative leave

The Diocese of Columbus has placed diocesan priest Father Dean A. Mathewson, 77, on administrative leave, effective January 24, 2022.

This action and announcement are made in accordance with the Catholic Church's *Charter and Norms for the Protection of Children and Young People* and the Diocese's published *Policies for Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Minors and Response to Allegations Thereof*.

An accusation of sexual abuse of a minor, allegedly occurring during Father Mathewson's tenure at St. Francis de Sales Parish, Newark, Ohio, in the early 1990s was reported to the Diocese on January 19, 2022. This allegation had already been received by criminal authorities in Newark. On January 24, 2022, Diocesan officials notified Father Mathewson of the allegation and informed him of the details of the allegation. He was formally placed on leave, and he was advised about the steps the Church would follow as a result of the allegation. As was explained to Father Mathewson, his placement on administrative leave was not an indication that the Diocese had determined that the allegation is credible. Rather, the preliminary investigation into the allegation has just begun.

A meeting of the Diocesan Board of Review for the Protection of Children will be convened in the near future to assess the results of the preliminary investigation and advise Diocesan administration as to whether or not it appears to be credible. If an allegation is determined to be credible, the Diocese of Columbus will execute the necessary judicial and administrative processes. A determination of credibility is never to be considered proof of guilt.

Plans are underway to set up outreach in the Diocese, and once that effort is set up, more information will be provided to parishioners in the Diocese.

Priests on administrative leave are prohibited from the public exercise of their priestly ministry. They cannot publicly celebrate sacraments, wear clerical attire, be housed at any parish or on diocesan property, or identify themselves as a member of the clergy.

Fr. Mathewson has been serving as the Diocesan Coordinator for Priest Hospital Chaplains since 2006, with part-time duties as Catholic Chaplain at Riverside Methodist Hospital, Columbus, and residence and part-time sacramental duties at St. Thomas the Apostle Parish, Columbus, since 2006. He also has served as Associate Pastor, St. Brendan, Hilliard (2003-2006); Pastor, St. Francis de Sales, Newark (1995-2003); Administrator, St. Francis de Sales, Newark, (1994-1995); Associate Pastor, St. Francis de Sales, Newark (1991-1994); Pastor, St. Joseph, LaRue, with part-time teaching duties at Marion Catholic High School (1981-1991); Associate Pastor, St. Mary, Chillicothe, with part-time teaching duties at Bishop Flaget High School (1977-1981); and Assistant Parish Priest, St. Matthias, Columbus, with part-time teaching duties at St. Francis de Sales High School (1973-1977).

The Diocese of Columbus encourages anyone who may have claims of abuse by clergy or others associated with the Church to notify law enforcement immediately as well as the Diocesan Victim's Assistance Coordinator (866-448-0217 or helpisavailable@columbuscatholic.org); and Detective Steven Vanoy, Newark Police Department (740-670-7928).