



CONTACT

Rita Beatty
Communications Manager
T: 651-290-1611
beatty@archspm.org

October 26, 2014

STATEMENT REGARDING REINSTATEMENT OF DEACON JOSEPH DAMIANI

From Archbishop John Nienstedt, Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

At the request of the Clergy Review Board back in June, I temporarily removed Deacon Joseph Damiani from ministry while an investigation was reopened regarding a previous allegation of a sexual abuse of a minor. Deacon Damiani has consistently denied the accusation, which alleges abuse to have occurred more than 40 years ago, decades before he was ordained. The accusation was brought to local law enforcement, and no criminal charges were filed.

The Clergy Review Board engaged in an extensive, diligent and professional review of the allegations. The Board reviewed the multiple transcribed interviews of all available witnesses, Deacon Damiani's 300-page deposition in the civil case, police reports, court filings, correspondence, psychological evaluations, and all other available materials. Due to the passage of time, the distinct differences in the recollections of witnesses and the lack of extrinsic evidence, the Board was unable to determine conclusively the validity of the underlying allegations.

Based on the thorough review described above, along with the fact that these allegations are over 40 years old and there has been no accusations of any misconduct while he has served as a deacon, the Board found no reason to believe that Deacon Damiani poses a risk to the health or safety of others. The Board concluded that Deacon Damiani is fit for public ministry and recommended that he be reinstated. I am in complete accord with the Board's Recommendations. Deacon Damiani's leave of absence is now ended and his faculties are reinstated. He is a Deacon in good standing.

Deacon Damiani has served as the deacon at Annunciation Catholic Church in Minneapolis, and on staff at Gichitwaa Kateri Catholic Church in Minneapolis in the Office of Indian Affairs since 2009. The staffs of both Annunciation Catholic Church and Gichitwaa Kateri Catholic Church have been notified.

The Clergy Review Board is made up of lay people and clergy with expertise in sexual abuse, health care, mental health, law, education, and includes parents and victims of abuse. They serve as a confidential, advisory, consultative body that advises the archbishop and the Episcopal Vicar for Ministerial Standards in their assessment of allegations of sexual abuse of minors by priests and deacons.

###