

April 1, 2008

**Update regarding Reverend John F. Hummell
The following statement was distributed at Masses this past weekend
at Sacred Heart Parish in Oxford, Chester County:**

In June 2006, Cardinal Justin Rigali removed Reverend John F. Hummell from Sacred Heart Parish, Oxford, and restricted the exercise of his priestly ministry after the Archdiocesan Review Board advised the Cardinal that an allegation that Father Hummell had sexually abused a minor in the early 1970s was considered substantiated. At the time the allegation was made, and despite Father Hummell's denial, a report was immediately submitted to the appropriate civil authorities in accordance with the policy of the Archdiocese.

Since June of 2006, Father Hummell has not been permitted to exercise his ministry publicly, administer any of the Sacraments, wear clerical garb or present himself publicly as a priest. In August 2006, Cardinal Rigali named Reverend Thomas J. Brennan as Parochial Administrator of Sacred Heart Parish.

When Father Hummell was removed from ministry, the Archdiocese stated that Cardinal Rigali intended to inform the Holy See and request authorization to begin a formal process under Canon Law. In preparation for the referral of Father Hummell's case to the Holy See, Cardinal Rigali sought canonical counsel. Such counsel was necessary because the behavior considered to be substantiated by the Review Board could best be described as "grooming behavior." After extensive canonical consultation, it was clear that Father Hummell's case had to be resolved administratively at the local level. Hence, the penalties attached to the sexual abuse of minors (e.g. laicization or a supervised life of prayer and penance) could not be imposed.

Nevertheless, Cardinal Rigali has determined that Father Hummell cannot be restored to the active ministry because of the nature of his behavior. His priestly ministry will remain restricted. He is not permitted to exercise his ministry publicly, administer any of the Sacraments, wear clerical garb or present himself publicly as a priest. In light of these circumstances, he has officially resigned as pastor of Sacred Heart Parish, Oxford in response to Cardinal Rigali's request and for the good of the people of the parish. He is retired and living in a private residence outside the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The Archdiocese has notified the local bishop and the civil authorities in the jurisdiction where he resides. The Archdiocese is working with an independent consultant with expertise in these matters to evaluate any additional steps which may be considered necessary.

Cardinal Rigali will be appointing a new pastor of Sacred Heart Parish, Oxford in May of this year. Father Thomas Brennan will remain as parochial administrator until a pastor is appointed.

We recognize that this announcement may occasion pain for someone who has experienced sexual abuse. Resources are included with this announcement for anyone who needs assistance or wishes to talk about this situation. *

Father Hummell was ordained in 1965. Since that time he has served in the following parishes/schools: Saint Cecilia, Coatesville; Saints Simon & Jude, West Chester; Corpus Christi, Philadelphia; Roman Catholic High School, Philadelphia; Bishop McDevitt High School, Wyncote; Saint Gabriel, Norwood; Saint Callistus, Philadelphia; Saint Dominic, Philadelphia and at Saint Joseph's University as an adjunct faculty member in the physics department. While in the education apostolate Father Hummell lived at the following parishes: Saint Aloysius, Philadelphia; Saint Joseph, Cheltenham; Epiphany of Our Lord, Philadelphia; Saint Joseph, Ambler; Seven Dolors, Wyndmoor

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Editor's Note*: Resources that were provided included contact information for the Archdiocesan Victim Assistance Office at 1-888-800-8780; Catholic Social Services at 610-344-7028 and the Crime Victims Center of Chester County at 610-692-7420.

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