

For Immediate Release

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Vatican issues clergy-abuse decision

(Seattle) The Archdiocese of Seattle has received final determination from the Vatican on the status of a local priest accused of child sexual abuse. The Archdiocese of Seattle announced today that Dennis V. Champagne has been given the status of a priest on prayer and penance and permanently restricted from public ministry.

The Archdiocese said the decision follows the recommendations of the Archdiocesan Review Board and affirms the process and procedures conducted in accordance with Church law and the national norms established in 2002 by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

"I again express my deep regret for the harm done to all victims of clergy child sexual abuse and extend my personal apology to them and their families," Archbishop Brunett said. "My hope is that by following due process and pursuing these cases to a decisive conclusion we have assisted the victims in their process of healing."

Champagne's case was the last local allegation of clergy sexual abuse reviewed by the Archdiocesan Review Board that was waiting final disposition from the Vatican.

Champagne served as a parish priest from 1971 to 1979 before being named pastor of St. Michael Parish, Snohomish where he served until 1999. He also served at St. John Bosco Parish, Lakewood and Immaculate Conception Parish, Steilacoom until he was placed on administrative leave in June of 2002.

Archbishop Brunett said the Archdiocese of Seattle continues to extend counseling and support to all victims of clergy child sexual abuse. He urged anyone who has knowledge of sexual abuse by a member of the clergy, an employee or volunteer of the Archdiocese of Seattle to call the Archdiocesan Hotline at 1-800-446-7762.

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