



Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown

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MEDIA ADVISORY

Retired Priest Restricted from Public Ministry

(HOLLIDAYSBURG, PA) – The Most Rev. Mark L. Bartchak, Bishop of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown, has taken the following action regarding the status of Reverend Stephen J. Gergel, a retired priest of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown. Although retired, he is restricted from carrying out any public ministry.

This action is in response to alleged misconduct with a young adult that is reported to have taken place while he was Pastor of Saint Francis of Assisi Parish in Johnstown. Father Gergel was Pastor from November 1969 until July 1989. He then served as a Chaplain in the United States Navy until his retirement in November 2005. Since his retirement, Father Gergel has resided in Georgia. He was ordained a priest in 1962.

According to diocesan practice, the complaint has been referred to Pennsylvania ChildLine and the Office of the District Attorney. Anyone with information regarding possible sexual abuse of minors should contact law enforcement.

A letter from Bishop Bartchak will be read at all Masses at Saint Francis of Assisi Parish this weekend. The Bishop is assuring that faith community of his prayers, and he is asking them to pray for victims of abuse and their families.