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STATEMENT REGARDING REV. JOSEPH GALLATIN

From Archbishop John C. Nienstedt, Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

At the recommendation of the Clergy Review Board and the Episcopal Vicar for Ministerial Standards, Very Rev. Reginald Whitt, O.P., I am placing restrictions on the ministry of Rev. Joseph Gallatin. Rev. Gallatin has been on a leave of absence as pastor of the Church of Saint Peter in Mendota since December 2013.

Beginning late last year, we have been reviewing the files of all clergy in the history of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. During that review, Rev. Gallatin's file was referred again to the Clergy Review Board because of a single incident involving a boundary violation between him and a 17 year old male in 1998. It occurred on a mission trip when Rev. Gallatin rubbed the sleeping teenager's chest and abdomen, under the shirt, because the teen was snoring. The teen told chaperones, and the matter was examined by the Clergy Review Board in 1998. At that time, the Board reviewed the matter and concluded Rev. Gallatin required evaluation, therapy and monitoring. He has actively participated in all requirements since that incident 16 years ago and, to my knowledge, we have received no other allegations of inappropriate behavior with a minor against Rev. Gallatin.

As part of the ongoing review of clergy files, the Clergy Review Board was asked to revisit the 1998 allegation. Law enforcement was informed, and charges have not been filed. The Clergy Review Board thoroughly examined the incident over the course of several months, and determined after consulting with multiple experts that the act did not violate the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.

However, the Clergy Review Board did find the 1998 action and recent evaluations of Rev. Gallatin concerning enough to recommend to me that I place significant restrictions on his ministry. The Clergy Review Board took many factors into account, including Rev. Gallatin's 16 years of good conduct and his current psychological assessments, as well as promoting a culture of abundant caution needed to restore trust.

The Clergy Review Board recommends Rev. Gallatin continue in the monitoring program, and that he be allowed to continue to serve in some limited ministry that does not involve minors. I have accepted the Board's recommendation, and communicated it to Rev. Gallatin. Rev. Gallatin then offered me his resignation as pastor of the Church of St. Peter, which I accepted. Based on the Board's recommendation, I will assign Rev. Gallatin to a new assignment, where he will not have any role in a parish setting or any other setting in which he will have vocational responsibilities that involve minors.

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The Clergy Review Board is made up of clergy and lay people with expertise in sexual abuse, health care, mental health, law and 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.

Bishop Andrew Cozzens celebrated every Mass this weekend at the Church of Saint Peter in Mendota, and informed the parishioners of this decision.

Please keep all involved in your prayers.

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