



DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Mary Haarman
616-475-1240
616-443-3860 (cell)

Regarding Father David LeBlanc

Grand Rapids, Mich, January 9, 2007 – Most Reverend Walter A. Hurley has announced that Father David LeBlanc, 71, has resigned as pastor of Holy Family Parish in Caledonia and has been permanently removed from ministry in accord with the provisions of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People and the Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons*. Father LeBlanc is prohibited from wearing clerical clothes and publicly presenting himself as a priest. He will be expected to live a life of prayer and penance.

The Charter provides that “for even a single instance of sexual abuse of a minor – whenever it occurred – which is admitted or established... The offending priest is to be permanently removed from the ministry (Article 5).” In addition, dioceses are to be open and transparent in communicating with the public. The diocese has also shared the information with the Muskegon County civil authorities.

“On my own behalf and on behalf of all the good and faithful members of the clergy, I express my most heartfelt apology to all the children and young people who were abused by priests or other representatives of the Church,” said Bishop Hurley. “We will be ever sorry for the harm you and your families suffered, for the trust that was betrayed, and humbly ask your forgiveness.”

As Bishop Walter Hurley assumed his role in the local diocese a little more than a year ago, he completed a final review of all files associated with meeting the requirements of the *Charter*. In doing so, the recent decision associated with Michael McKenna and this announcement will complete the review and ensure the integrity of the *Charter* remains in place.

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“During the past five years since the *Charter* we have learned much due to the generosity of so many who have committed themselves to the rebuilding of the Church. There are hopeful signs found in the preventative work being done,” said Bishop Hurley. “As painful as these matters are, the *Charter* continues to provide a solid roadmap to follow.”

The diocese continues to encourage anyone who has been sexually abused as a minor by a priest, deacon or church employee to contact the diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator at 616-243-0491.

Father David LeBlanc Biographical Information:

Ordained: 1961

1961	Blessed Sacrament, Grand Rapids
1964	St. Joseph Seminary, Grand Rapids
1968	St. Mary, Cheboygan (Note: Initially part of the Diocese of Grand Rapids)
1970	St. Jean Baptiste, Muskegon
1977	St. Francis Xavier, Grand Rapids
1980	St. James, Montague & St. John the Baptist, Claybanks
1984	Holy Spirit, Grand Rapids
1996	Holy Family, Caledonia

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