



9.8.18

Father Charles “Chuck” Schmitt removed from ministry

The Diocese of Erie has announced that Father Charles R. Schmitt, 86, retired, has been prohibited from all public ministry, as well as from any contact with minors, effective immediately.

The Most Rev. Lawrence T. Persico, bishop of Erie, said the news was disheartening.

“This is a very difficult time for the Catholic Church,” he said, “but we must face the truth. In collaboration with law enforcement, victims are finding their voice and helping us to ensure we are living out the principles we proclaim.”

An allegation of sexual abuse of a minor dating back to the 1960s was received through the hotline established by the Diocese of Erie. The matter has been turned over to the Erie County District Attorney, and Bishop Persico has initiated an independent investigation through the K&L Gates law firm.

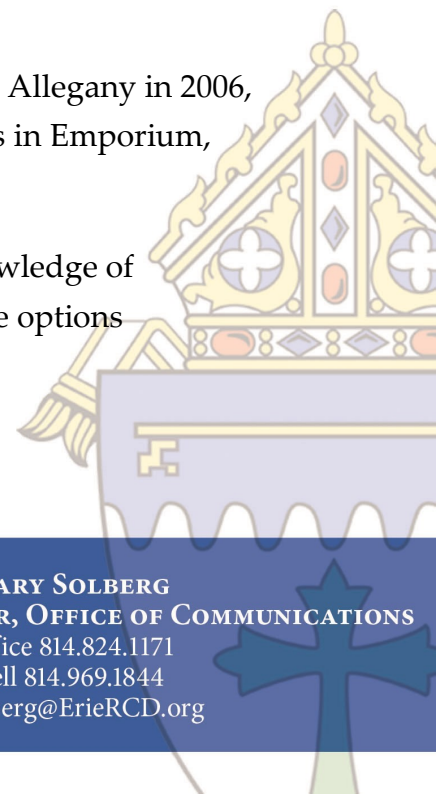
Father Schmitt retired as pastor of St. Gabriel Parish in Port Allegany in 2006, and afterward served as temporary administrator for brief periods in Emporium, Tidioute and Emlenton.

The Diocese of Erie encourages anyone who may have knowledge of or who has been affected by similar improprieties to use any of the options for reporting listed at the end of this release.

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ANNE-MARIE WELSH
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS
Office 814.824.1167
Cell 814.746.6889
amwelsh@ErieRCD.org

MARY SOLBERG
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS
Office 814.824.1171
Cell 814.969.1844
msolberg@ErieRCD.org



Pastoral care and compassion for victims, as well as the protection of children and vulnerable adults, is a top priority of the Diocese of Erie. The diocese encourages anyone who has experienced sexual abuse or misconduct by a member of the clergy or any employee or volunteer of the church, to contact law enforcement. To report abuse to the independent investigators retained by the Diocese of Erie, email ErieRCD@KLGates.com. Victims or concerned individuals also are welcome to contact the diocese directly to report abuse at 814.451.1543. In addition, anyone can directly report suspected abuse of minors by anyone to PA ChildLine by calling 800.932.0313. The line is open 24/7, and callers may choose to remain anonymous. Victims also are welcome to contact the diocese directly to report abuse at 814.451.1543. Counseling assistance is available for victims and/or their families through the diocesan victim assistance coordinator, Dr. Robert Nelsen, who can be reached at 814.451.1521.

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