

**DIOCESE OF MONTEREY**

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www.dioceseofmonterey.orgFor Immediate Release
February 14, 2011Contact: Pastoral Office
831-373-4345**DIOCESE OF MONTEREY'S STATEMENT REGARDING FR. EDWARD FITZ-HENRY**

On Friday, January 7, 2011, the Diocese was notified of an allegation of sexual misconduct against Fr. Edward Fitz-Henry which occurred in Salinas approximately six years ago. Because this allegation involved sexual abuse of a minor, the Diocese immediately reported this allegation to the Salinas Police Department for investigation and we pledged our full cooperation with the police department's investigation.

Under our policies, the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People and the law of the Church, Bishop Garcia removed Fr. Fitz-Henry's faculties to function as a priest. The Diocese retained an independent investigator to help the Diocesan Independent Review Board determine whether the allegation was "credible."

The investigator presented his investigation to the Diocesan Independent Review Board on Wednesday evening. Through the investigation process, we learned additional information about an incident that occurred almost twenty years ago. The Independent Review Board has determined that there is evidence that the past incident involved sexual misconduct with a minor and that it appears credible. However, the allegations raised on January 7, 2011 could not be specifically verified. Fr. Fitz-Henry and the Salinas Police Department have been informed of this conclusion. Fr. Fitz-Henry remains suspended from ministry.

In the Diocese of Monterey, we take our promise to protect our children and young people from sexual abuse by a priest, deacon, religious or lay person seriously. We have established a Safe Environment Program that outlines appropriate ministerial boundaries with children and we have adopted a zero tolerance policy with regard to priests or deacons who have abused a child. This policy requires the Bishop to take swift action in the case of a priest or deacon who is accused of sexual abuse as he has done in this case. There is no priest or deacon in ministry in the Diocese of Monterey with a credible claim of sexual abuse involving a child.

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