



**FOR RELEASE:** Tuesday, August 24, 2010

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## **Bishop Earl Boyea notified of sexual abuse by priest who died in 1968**

*Lansing, Mich. – August 24, 2010* Bishop Earl Boyea, of the Catholic Diocese of Lansing, has learned of a serious situation involving a priest who died 42 years ago. On June 10, 2010, Bishop Boyea was informed of allegations of sexual abuse of minors by Reverend John Martin during his tenure as pastor of St. Isidore Parish, Laingsburg from 1941-1966, where he was also active in the community. Bishop Boyea believes the statements of the victims are true. He expresses his deep sorrow as he repudiates these gravely sinful actions, extends an apology to the victims on behalf of the Catholic Church, and offers prayerful support.

The diocese makes available to victims one-on-one psychological counseling, a spiritual retreat designed for people who have been sexually abused, and the opportunity to meet with the bishop and the diocesan review board, which handles claims such as these. The parishes and dioceses where Father Martin served were notified of the allegations. Although criminal statutes of limitations have run, the civil authorities were also notified.

Bishop Boyea directed that notices be placed in the bulletins of the two Diocese of Lansing parishes where Father Martin served: at St. Isidore Parish in Laingsburg (1941-1966) and St. Mary Parish in Morrice (1938-1941). Father Martin also served at St. Philip Parish in Battle Creek (1932-1938), which is now a part of the Diocese of Kalamazoo. In the Archdiocese of Detroit, he served at Sacred Heart Parish in Yale (1923-1932); and St. Vincent in Detroit (1918-1923), which is now closed. These (arch)dioceses have been notified of the allegations.

Additional men who were victimized as boys in Laingsburg have come forward as a result of the bulletin notices. These men have come forward independently of one another and their stories are consistent. Each has requested anonymity and the diocese is honoring that request.

Some may think it unfair to make public allegations about a priest who is unable to defend himself, and Father Martin died in 1968. In this case, the statements of the victims lead us to believe that there are more. By making this information public, and extending its apology and pastoral care, the Diocese of Lansing seeks to encourage other victims to come forward and promote their healing. Children who are abused have been hurt physically and emotionally, and have been spiritually violated.

The policy of the Diocese of Lansing regarding implementation of Article #7 of The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' *The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* (2002) is to be open and transparent in communicating with the public about the sexual abuse of minors by clergy. The diocese is to notify religious and secular media of the facts of the incident (within the confines of respect for the privacy and the reputation of individuals involved), keeping the media informed through updated news releases as warranted. Notice will also be placed on the diocesan website at <http://www.dioceseoflansing.org>.

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Anyone who was abused by Father Martin is encouraged to contact the office of the Bishop of the Diocese of Lansing through the victim assistance coordinator, Adrienne Rowland, LMSW, ACSW at 888.308.6252, [arowlandvac@dioceseoflansing.org](mailto:arowlandvac@dioceseoflansing.org).

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