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## McConnell to resume ministry in Catholic Church

Thomas McConnell, who had been suspended from his position as a Catholic Church deacon in Chattanooga, has been reinstated after a Hamilton County grand jury decided to dismiss the sexual battery accusations against him.

Saturday, April 21st 2012, 3:46 PM EDT by David Carroll

**Updated:** Wednesday, April 25th 2012, 8:59 PM EDT



Thomas McConnell

CHATTANOOGA (WRCB)- Thomas McConnell will resume his ministry as a Deacon at St. Jude Catholic Church in Chattanooga. On Wednesday, a Hamilton County grand jury dismissed sexual battery claims against McConnell. The charges originated in early March, when he was videotaped inside a Chattanooga restaurant by a couple who believed he was touching a five-year-old girl in an inappropriate manner. The girl was later revealed to be McConnell's granddaughter.

Saturday, Bishop Richard F. Stika released a statement announcing that McConnell, who had been suspended by the church when the allegations surfaced, has been restored to his position.

McConnell is also the director of the Hamilton County Schools' JROTC program, and was suspended without pay from that position as well. Sources inside the school district tell Eyewitness News that Superintendent Rick Smith is likely to reinstate McConnell to his post during the next week.

Here is the statement from Bishop Stika:

