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[News](#)
[Columnists](#)
[Editorial](#)
[Obituaries](#)
[Photos/Video](#)
[Contact](#)
[Archives](#)

Two retired priests suspended from ministry

FALL RIVER, Mass. — The Diocese of Fall River has announced that two retired priests have been suspended from ministry due to separate allegations of sexual abuse of a minor, said to have occurred decades ago.

The suspended priests are **Father James F. Buckley** and **Father Edward J. Byington**. The separate, unrelated claims of abuse were referred to the appropriate law enforcement authorities and remain under investigation by the diocese. Both priests have denied the allegations. The suspension from ministry is required by diocesan policies. The diocese is committed to resolving both cases in a fair and expeditious manner.

Both priests are retired and are not assigned to a parish (*see service records at the end of this release*). However, both have assisted with the celebration of Masses in various parishes since their retirements. The diocese was informed that Father Byington has also taught German classes at St. Joseph's School in West Warwick, R.I. and has, in turn, notified the Diocese of Providence about his suspension.

"Nothing is more important than the welfare of all members of our diocesan community, especially anyone who has been harmed or impacted by abuse in any way," said Bishop Edgar M. da Cunha, S.D.V. "The Diocese of Fall River remains committed to resolving these matters in as fair and as transparent a process as possible and to ensuring the safety of all youth and vulnerable adults."

As part of ongoing efforts to improve its Office of Safe Environment, the diocese recently hired Carolyn Shipp, a licensed social worker, to focus on pastoral outreach to victims/survivors. "As a social worker, I am here to listen to anyone with concerns and to connect survivors to the resources they need," said Shipp.

Anyone with information that they wish to raise regarding the conduct of any past or present member of the diocese, is encouraged to contact Carolyn Shipp, the Diocese's Victim Assistance Coordinator, at 508-985-6508 or cshipp@dioc-fr.org.

Background: Parish Assignments



Father James F. Buckley

Ordained 1959

Assignments: St. Mary's Cathedral, Fall River; Sacred Heart Parish, Fall River; Immaculate Conception Parish, North Easton; St. Joan of Arc Parish, Orleans; St. Augustine Parish, Vineyard Haven; St. Margaret Parish, Buzzards Bay; Holy Redeemer Parish, Chatham; 2001 retirement.

Father Edward J. Byington

Ordained 1970

Assignments: St. John the Evangelist Parish, Attleboro; Sacred Heart Parish, Fall River; Sacred Heart Parish, Taunton; St. Patrick Parish, Fall River; St. Paul Parish, Taunton; St. George Parish, Westport; Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Seekonk; Sacred Heart Parish, Fall River; St. Francis of Xavier Parish, Hyannis; St. Thomas More Parish, Somerset; 2006 retirement.



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