

## No information released on G'town priest

A series of events has surfaced since the March 6 announcement of sexual misconduct allegations against Breese native, Rev. Jerome Ratermann.

The most recent, the unexplained disappearance of Rev. James Calhoun, pastor of St. Boniface Catholic Church in Germantown.

Concerned parishioners who have followed Rev. Calhoun for many years are troubled why he chose this time to leave his parish without any word of his whereabouts.

Sister Michelle Emmerich, vice chancellor of the Belleville Diocesan office, told the Breese Journal Tuesday, that the Chancery has had contact with Rev. Calhoun and he is okay.

Sister Emmerich would not comment further on his whereabouts or why he left so suddenly without leaving word to someone.

Rev. Calhoun's weekend services were conducted by Rev. Gerhardt Lemkuhl, a priest from St. Louis who fills in for other parishes when priests are ill or on vacation.

According to previously published reports, Rev. Lemkuhl did not know anything about Rev. Calhoun's whereabouts when he was sent to Germantown.

Sister Emmerich would not respond to any questions that may have suggested a link between the misconduct allegations and Rev. Calhoun's disappearance.

Previous reports indicate Rev. Calhoun apparently left Germantown sometime on Thursday, March 11, because he did not show up for the weekly saying of the Stations of the Cross on Friday evening.

Although this article is not intended to suggest Rev. Calhoun is involved in the allegations of sexual misconduct against Rev. Ratermann, according to a letter appearing in Wednesday's Belleville News-Democrat, Bishop James Keleher has called a meeting of the 130 priests throughout the diocese to update them on the current situation.

The private meeting will be held

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Friday, April 2.

In his letter to the priests, Bishop Keleher wrote, "Earlier this month, I had the opportunity to discuss recent events related to sex abuse with a number of groups; this included the counselors the Presbyteral Council, the Belleville deanery as well as with many of you.

"But it is my feeling that we should meet together as a presbyteral body in the near future.

"It will be a time for us to be together to be updated on what is being done by the diocese on the matter of allegations relative to sexual abuse, it will be a time to be able to speak about these matters as brothers, it will be a time to pray together and mostly a time for healing and bonding among ourselves."

Bishop Keleher's letter followed the forced resignation of Rev. Ratermann from Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church because of sexual misconduct allegations.

Since then, other victims and advocates for abuse victims have claimed additional abuse cases involving priests other than Rev. Ratermann.

Rev. Ratermann was relieved of his duties at the beginning of March for allegations at the Blessed Sacrament Church, because he had been accused of sexual harassment while he was principal at Mater Dei High School in Breese from 1964-69.

Rev. Calhoun was last seen at the Clinton County businessman's prayer breakfast Wednesday morning.

Some rumors circulating around the county indicate that Rev. Calhoun is having difficulty dealing with the death of a tour guide from a recent trip to Cancun, Mexico he chaperoned.