

LOCAL NEWS

Deacon Damiani removed from ministry after allegations of fund-misuse at Gichitwaa Kateri

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A deacon serving at St. Agnes in St. Paul has been removed from ministry in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis after a review by the archdiocese's Ministerial Review Board and Tim O'Malley, director of Ministerial Standards and Safe Environment.

Archbishop Bernard Hebda told parishioners about the status of Deacon Joseph Damiani in the June 16 parish bulletin. The Church of Gichitwaa Kateri in Minneapolis, where Deacon Damiani had served in the past, also noted the decision in its June 16 bulletin.

The decision came after the archdiocese in 2016 received information suggesting a possible misuse of funds at Gichitwaa Kateri, where Deacon Damiani was serving, the archbishop said. The archdiocese reported the information to law enforcement, which concluded in May that no charges would be filed.

The review board and O'Malley subsequently reviewed the matter and "recommended that Deacon Damiani nonetheless not be permitted to engage in ministry at this time," the archbishop wrote. "I agreed with their recommendation."

Ordained in 2009, Deacon Damiani has served at St. Agnes since 2016. Prior to that assignment, he was on staff at Gichitwaa Kateri and served as a deacon at Annunciation, also in Minneapolis.

In June 2014, he was temporarily removed from ministry due to an allegation of sexual abuse from 40 years prior. After a thorough investigation and extensive review, the MRB recommended in October that year that Deacon Damiani be reinstated to ministry. Then-Archbishop John Nienstedt accepted that recommendation.