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VICAR REMOVED FROM MINISTRY

## PRESS RELEASES



# BISHOP BRENNAN ACCEPTS RECOMMENDATION OF DIOCESAN REVIEW BOARD;

# PAROCHIAL VICAR REMOVED FROM MINISTRY

The Most Reverend Robert J. Brennan, Bishop of Brooklyn, announced today 70-year-old Father Michael McHugh, currently a Parochial Vicar at Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Astoria, has been removed from ministry. The decision was made based on the recommendation of the independent **Diocesan Review Board** (DRB).

The DRB had been investigating claims against Father McHugh received in a report on March 27, 2025, alleging sexual abuse of a minor dating back to the 1980's. The Diocesan Review Board found sufficient information to substantiate allegations of sexual misconduct with a minor and recommended Fr. McHugh's removal from ministry.

The removal from ministry means that he is not permitted to celebrate Mass publicly, cannot exercise any public ministerial duties, and cannot live in a parochial residence. His name will also be added to the List of Credibly Accused Priests on the Diocese of Brooklyn website.

The removal from ministry is not a legal determination of guilt. It is recognition of the possibility that wrongdoing may have taken place, and therefore, out of concern for the safety of the faithful, it was determined necessary to remove the priest from ministry.

Father McHugh was ordained on May 17, 1980. He then served at the following parishes: Our Lady of Refuge, Holy Cross (Flatbush), St. Agatha, Our Lady of the Presentation, Blessed Sacrament (Jackson Heights), Most Precious Blood (Long Island City), The Shrine Church of St. Jude, St. Sebastian, Our Lady of Mount Carmel (Williamsburg), Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Williamsburg), Corpus Christi, and St. Brendan.

The Diocese of Brooklyn takes all allegations of sexual misconduct with minors seriously and has instituted significant programs to prevent sexual abuse and protect children. In 2002, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops passed the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, which includes a Zero Tolerance policy that states any clergy member who is determined to be credibly accused of sexual misconduct with a minor is permanently removed from ministry. The Diocese also conducts initial and ongoing background checks of all employees and volunteers and provides age-appropriate sexual abuse awareness training for children and adults.

The Diocese of Brooklyn places great emphasis on providing pastoral care to victims. The Office of Victim Assistance Ministry provides supportive initial counseling, therapy

referrals, and pastoral resources for the victims of sexual abuse. The Diocese hosts a yearly Mass of Hope and Healing where the faithful come together and pray for victims of clergy sexual abuse.

Anyone who has been the victim of clergy sexual abuse is encouraged to report it to law enforcement or to the Toll-Free Reporting Line established by the Diocese at 1-888-634-4499. All calls are forwarded to law enforcement officials.

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