

Misconduct charge hits ex-MB priest

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CHARLESTON — A Roman Catholic priest who formerly served in Myrtle Beach has been put on administrative leave after allegations of sexual misconduct with a minor were made against him.

Bishop David Thompson said Thursday he took the action against the Rev. Paul Seitz, currently of Taylors.

The person who made the allegations against Seitz requested confidentiality, said Mary Jeffcoat, a spokeswoman for the Diocese of Charleston.

Seitz, 67, has been pastor of the Prince of Peace parish since 1985. He was ordained in 1958 and has had assignments in Aiken, Anderson, Greenville, Hilton Head, Myrtle Beach and North Augusta, Jeffcoat said.

Seitz was at St. Andrew's Catholic Church in Myrtle Beach for about four years starting about 10 years ago, according to longtime parishioner Jimmy D'Angelo.

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MARY JEFFCOAT
spokeswoman for
Diocese of Charleston

The alleged misconduct occurred in Aiken County about 30 years ago, Jeffcoat said. The diocese said it first found out about the possible problem last week.

"It is a credible accusation," Jeffcoat said. "We did notify the [Aiken] solicitor's office."

She would not discuss details of the allegation.

Solicitor Barbara Morgan said her office was contacted about the accusation by church officials on Wednesday, but has not pursued charges because she was told the alleged victim did not want authorities involved.

Morgan said she was assured this was

the only time Seitz had been accused of such crimes, and "I feel comfortable that [the diocese] are going to continue looking into this."

Aiken County Sheriff's Lt. Tim Hoffman said he had not heard anything about the case.

"We have taken this action in the best interest of possible victims, the accused and the church," Thompson said.

Seitz voluntarily has admitted himself to a facility for a comprehensive psychological evaluation, the bishop said.

Jeffcoat said this was the first allegation against Seitz.

He must avoid any contact with children while on administrative leave, and he may not dress or function publicly as a priest, Jeffcoat said.

"The safety and protection of the innocent, vulnerable children is a primary concern for me and the diocese," Thompson said.

Staff writer Ken Bell contributed to this report.