

Community latest

Priest in Fall River Diocese states Vatican has restored priestly faculties, ordered Bishop to pay legal expenses, after being placed on “Credibly Accused” list



Ken Paiva • November 5, 2025

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FALL RIVER — The Diocese of Fall River had announced in October of 2024 that they updated its **list of “Credibly Accused” clergy** posted on the Diocesan website.

In the update, the Diocese added the name of Father Thomas Kocik to the listing of “Credibly Accused” clergy.

Following a review of all older files, the Diocese began an investigation into allegations made against Father Kocik involving actions alleged to have occurred in the 1990s. At the outset of the investigation, Bishop Edgar da Cunha placed Father Kocik on administrative leave and restricted his priestly faculties. The restrictions included prohibition from exercising public ministry including the celebration of public Mass or of other sacraments. He was also not allowed to provide spiritual direction or present himself as a priest in good standing.

According to the Diocese, Bishop da Cunha reviewed all of the facts of the case and considered the recommendations of the Ministerial Review Board, (an independent and consultative body made up primarily of lay members to advise the bishop on alleged misconduct by clergy). Ultimately, the Bishop determined that the allegations were credible and met the definition of sexual abuse of a child, as defined in the Diocese's *Policy for the Protection of the Faithful*. He informed Father Kocik that he would not be returning to public ministry, and that the restrictions would continue.

Father Kocik denies any culpability in the incident.

The "Credibly Accused" list states that the 59-year-old Kocik has served at Our Lady of Mount Carmel-Seekonk, St. Francis Xavier-Hyannis, St. Anne's Hospital-Fall River, St. Anne-Fall River, St. Joseph-Taunton, Morton Hospital-Taunton, Charlton Memorial Hospital-Fall River, St. Michael-Fall River, Santo Christo-Fall River, and Cape Cod Hospital.

On Sunday, Father Kocik notified Fall River Reporter that the "Vatican has upheld the presumption of innocence to which I am entitled, restored my priestly faculties, and ordered Bishop Da Cunha to compensate my canonical legal expenses. The Diocese added my name to the list *six months* after the Vatican decided *not* to subject me to a canonical trial, and only *weeks* after the Vatican condemned the practice of publishing names of clergy who are "credibly accused" but *not* found guilty."

We asked Father Kocik to send us the Vatican report, he stated that "for reasons of confidentiality, I cannot send the entire document." He did send us two screenshots from the Vatican decree.



DICASTERIUM
PRO CLERICIS

From the Vatican, 3 March 2025

Prot. N. 2024 4337

Mr. Michael J. MAZZA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Dear Mr. Mazza,

The Dicastery for the Clergy writes further regarding your petition for hierarchical recourse on behalf of the Reverend **Thomas M. KOCIK** against the decree of 17 June 2024 of the Most Reverend Edgar M. DA CUNHA, S.D.V., Bishop of Fall River imposing ministerial restrictions.

Please find enclosed the Decree whereby the recourse has been decided. Thanking you for your correspondence, and with assurances of prayers and best wishes, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

✠ Andrés Gabriel Ferrada Moreira
Titular Archbishop of Tiburnia
Secretary

In addition, this Dicastery, in consideration of the harm done to the good name of the cleric, hereby ORDERS the following:

(1) The following statement to be published, and in the future to accompany any publication of the cleric's name on a list of the so-called credibly accused, so long as no definitive judgment finding guilt regarding delicts against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue with minors has been rendered according to a canonical penal process:

"According to natural law and reaffirmed by canon law (can. 1321 § 1), the Reverend Thomas M. Kocik is considered innocent until the contrary is proved through a penal process. The Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, the only competent body to judge the accusations, declared on 12 April 2024 that the alleged delict is prescribed, and therefore the possibility of criminal action is extinct."

(2) The expenses incurred in his present canonical defense are to be paid by the Ordinary.

Recourse against this Decree may be made before the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura within the peremptory time limit established by the Apostolic Letter *Motu Proprio, Antiqua Ordinatione* 34 §1.

Given at the
Dicastery for the Clergy
3 March 2025


Lazzaro Card. You Heung sik
Prefect


✠ Andrés G. Ferrada Moreira
Titular Archbishop of Tibernia
Secretary

Fall River Reporter contacted the Diocese on Monday morning for comment, and we have not yet received a response.

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