

**NEWS RELEASE**  
Catholic Diocese of Peoria  
February 23, 2006  
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## **"CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF PEORIA REQUESTS PRIEST TO NO LONGER FUNCTION IN PUBLIC MINISTRY"**

### **For Immediate Release**

**PEORIA-** Bishop Daniel R. Jenky, C.S.C. of the Catholic Diocese of Peoria has asked Father William Virtue, Administrator at St. Theresa in Earlville, to step-down from public ministry. Recent allegations of sexual misconduct with a minor were made against Virtue dating back to nearly twenty-five years ago. During the time of the abuse mentioned in the allegation, Virtue was a priest in the Diocese of Joliet. He has been asked not to function as a Catholic priest in any public capacity, to no longer wear clerical garb or the Roman collar, and to refrain from using the title Reverend or Father. Virtue has denied the allegations and has claimed that he is innocent, but has agreed to cooperate with the Bishop.

The Diocese of Peoria was not aware of any allegations at the time of his incardination into the Diocese of Peoria, April 18, 1988.

Virtue's assignments serving in the Diocese of Peoria include: Sacred Heart, Campus and St. Mary, Loretto (1986-1988), Sabbatical for studies (1988), St. Mary, Odell, Sacred Heart, Campus (1989), Sacre Coeur, Creve Coeur (1990-1991), St. Joseph's Home, Lacon (1991), Sacred Heart, Granville and St. Theresa, Cedar Point (1992), Sacred Heart, Campus and St. Mary, Loretto (1993-1996), St. Theresa, Earlville (1996-1999), Mount St. Mary's Seminary (1999-2001), Sacred Heart, Farmer City, St. John, Bellflower (2001-2003) Leave of Absence 2003 and Administrator St. Theresa, Earlville (2005).

Under the direction of Bishop Jenky the Catholic Diocese of Peoria remains committed to maintaining a safe environment for all children. The implementation of the Protecting God's Children program related to Virtus programs has made an important impact on the safety of the children in the Catholic faith communities throughout the 26 counties of the diocese.

Bishop Jenky said, "I continue to pray daily for all victims of sexual abuse. I send my heartfelt apologies to all those affected and pray that our Lord will heal the wounds resulting from this abuse. I also ask for the prayers of the faithful for all the individuals involved in this case and especially for the overwhelming majority of our priests and lay ministers whose zeal and holiness do so much to build up the body of Christ in Central Illinois."

At this time, out of respect for the privacy of the individuals involved in the cases, the Catholic Diocese of Peoria will not be providing any further information.

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