

# Press Release



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE — Monday, November 19, 2018**

The Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau has received an allegation of sexual misconduct with a minor involving Msgr. Mark C. Ernstmann, deceased (2013). The complaint alleges Msgr. Ernstmann had sexual interactions with a then-17-year-old person in the early 1970s. This was initially reported to the Diocese in early 2002, prior to the “Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People” being adopted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Requesting anonymity, the victim/survivor did not want to pursue further action at that time, other than having the allegation placed in the priest’s record.

On Sept. 17, 2018, the same person repeated the allegations to Bishop Edward M. Rice, to make certain that if another allegation was made concerning Msgr. Ernstmann, there would be some credence to another victim’s report. Although the alleged victim did not want to advance the allegations, and Msgr. Ernstmann is deceased and cannot participate in any supplementary investigation, the Diocese notified the Greene County Prosecuting Attorney on Oct. 17, 2018. Additionally, pastoral support has been made available to the reporting party.

Monsignor Ernstmann was born in Wichita, KS, and ordained a priest in 1951 for the Diocese of Kansas City. The Diocese of Springfield Cape Girardeau was formed in 1956 from territory that was prior to 1956, part of the Archdiocese of St. Louis and the Diocese of Kansas City.

Monsignor Ernstmann retired from active ministry in 2004. He died Aug. 7, 2013.

**Pastoral appointments for Msgr. Mark C. Ernstmann:**

- 1951—Assistant Pastor, St. Stephen Parish, Kansas City, MO
- 1953—Assistant Pastor, St. Peter the Apostle Parish, Joplin, MO
- 1957—Director, Sacred Heart House of Studies minor seminary, Springfield (until 1974)
- Dec., 1962—Diocesan Director of Seminaries & Vocations, Springfield (until 1974)
- May, 1964—Diocesan Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Springfield (until 1974)
- 1965—Administrator, St. Agnes Regional High School, Springfield
- 1967—Principal, St. Agnes Regional High School, Springfield (until 1970)
- 1968—Diocesan Director of Newman Clubs (Catholic Campus Ministry);  
Diocesan Director of Religious Education programming
- 1972—Administrator, Holy Trinity Parish, Marshfield, MO;  
Chaplain, Fordland Honor Camp
- 1973—Pastor, Holy Trinity Parish, Springfield
- 1977—Pastor, St. Lawrence Parish, Monett, MO
- 1983—Pastor, St. Henry Parish, Charleston, MO
- 1989—Pastor, Our Lady of the Ozarks, Forsyth, MO
- 2004—Retired, Springfield Mercy Villa; provided sacramental assistance to residents
- 2013—Deceased

**Assistance Provided to Victims/Survivors**

The Diocese will reach out to every person who has been the victim/survivor of sexual abuse or ministerial misconduct as a minor by anyone acting in the name of the Church, whether the incident was recent or occurred many years in the past. This outreach will include provision of counseling, spiritual assistance, support groups, and other social services agreed upon by the victim and the Diocese. The Victim Assistance Coordinator will aid in the immediate pastoral care of persons who claim to have been sexually abused as minors by clergy or other diocesan personnel.

Any suspected or known abuse of a minor must first be immediately reported to the Missouri Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline 800-392-3738 or 844-CAN-TELL; or for suspected or known abuse of vulnerable or eligible adults, the Missouri Adult Abuse and Neglect Hotline 800-392-0210, and may also be reported to law enforcement agencies. All Church personnel are required to report violations of The Code of Conduct for Clergy, Employees and Adult Volunteers Working with Minors to the diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator: Judy St. John, LPC, NCC at (573) 587-3139 or [vac1@dioscrg.org](mailto:vac1@dioscrg.org); or, the Director of Child and Youth Protection, William Holtmeyer, Jr., MS, NCC, LPC, CEAP at [billholtmeyer@dioscrg.org](mailto:billholtmeyer@dioscrg.org) or (417) 866-0841. Persons who wish to document an allegation may also do so through the diocesan confidential Web-based TIPS Online Reporting portal (see [dioscrg.org](http://dioscrg.org) and look for “TIPS” link).

At the heart of the Catholic Church’s concerns are 1) the victim(s); and 2) a prevailing sense of justice and accountability. The Safe Environment Procedures for the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau and relevant policies related to keeping our children and adults safe, which includes training requirements and background screenings, are available for review under the Child and Youth Protection ministry tab on the diocesan Website at [www.dioscrg.org](http://www.dioscrg.org).



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