



The Diocese of Knoxville

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PRESS RELEASE AND MEDIA ADVISORY
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Bishop Stika responds to Casey verdict

KNOXVILLE—Bishop Richard F. Stika of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Knoxville has issued the following statement in regard to the conviction of William Casey on charges of one count of first-degree sexual misconduct and two counts of aggravated rape. On July 14 the guilty verdict was handed down in Sullivan County Criminal Court in Blountville.

“From the first day that Warren Tucker brought this horrible crime to our attention, the Diocese of Knoxville has supported his efforts to seek justice,” Bishop Stika wrote. “We are brokenhearted at the pain and tragedy Mr. Tucker has experienced over the past years, and we sincerely hope that today’s verdict will bring some healing to him.”

On April 14, 2010, Mr. Tucker came to the diocese to tell diocesan officials that during the 1970s he had been sexually abused by Mr. Casey, who at that time was a priest of the Diocese of Nashville serving in East Tennessee.

Bishop Stika immediately began an investigation into the allegations and notified the district attorney offices and law enforcement officials in Greene and Sullivan Counties, in keeping with diocesan policy on sexual misconduct.

Bishop Stika met with Mr. Casey that afternoon, and he admitted there was credibility to these accusations. At that time the bishop issued a “suspension decree” to Mr. Casey. This permanently suspended him from priestly ministry, permanently removed his priestly faculties, and decreed that he could not present himself as a priest—for example, could not use the clerical title “Father,” wear clerical garb, or act in any priestly capacity.

The following morning the diocese held a press conference to publicly apologize to Mr. Tucker and to invite any other possible victims to come forward. Bishop Stika then sent a letter to all parishes that week to be read at all weekend Masses to explain to the faithful about the tragedy that had occurred to Mr. Tucker and to ask for their prayers and assistance in reaching out to anyone who may have been hurt.

In the weeks following, the diocese held four healing sessions in the areas of the diocese where Mr. Casey had served in order to reach out to any other potential victims and help all those who were hurting to begin the healing process.

The diocese has cooperated fully with civil authorities since Mr. Casey’s actions came to light and will continue to do so.

More information on the Diocese of Knoxville’s policies and procedures to safeguard children and vulnerable adults may be found online at <http://dioknox.org> (click “Child protection”).