

Press Release 5-18-07

Teacher Fired for Improper Conduct with a Minor Approximately Six Years Ago While Serving as a Youth Minister

A 30-year old religion teacher at Sacred Heart Catholic School in Muenster has been fired after admitting to Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth officials to improper sexual conduct with a minor approximately six years ago while he was serving as a youth minister at St. Mark Catholic Church in Denton, Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth officials announced Friday.

Kelly B. Bayer was terminated by Vicar General Father Michael Olson Thursday after Bayer admitted engaging in improper acts with a minor in 2001. He was removed from the school immediately Thursday night. The Denton police are now conducting a criminal investigation.

Bayer had taught religious education classes at Sacred Heart School for the last two school years. No incidents of improper sexual conduct with minors have been reported while Bayer has taught at Sacred Heart School.

A possible incident involving Bayer and a minor was reported to diocesan officials recently by two female retreat participants with whom the victim shared the information. The report was made in accordance with the dioceses Safe Environment Program that requires persons with knowledge of possible sex abuse of a minor to report immediately that information. The diocese's Safe Environment Program requires a safe environment for children and young people. Likewise, Article 12 of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, requires that dioceses establish safe environment programs and gives the necessary elements of such a program.

Diocesan officials contacted Denton police immediately upon learning of a possible improper incident with a minor who was 14-years-old at the time and began a diocesan investigation. The victim in the 2001 incident has declined to meet with diocesan officials. Bayer admitted to the incident during the course of the diocesan investigation and was fired immediately.

Sacred Heart School staff, students and parents were informed Friday through meetings and letters of Bayer's dismissal. Sacred Heart School enrolls approximately 235 students in grades pre-kindergarten through 12. Counselors will be on hand at the school Monday.

St. Mark Parish also has been informed of the incident.

The Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth invites anyone who wishes to report sexual misconduct by Bayer or by anyone who serves the church to contact Victims Abuse Coordinator Judy Locke at (817) 560-2452, Ext. 201 or Father Olson at 817 560-2452, Ext. 107.