

## Office of Communications

Tel. 585-328-3210

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### Statement on the arrest of Rev. Dennis Sewar

On July 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Rochester Police Department charged Rev. Dennis Sewar with a Class B misdemeanor, Sexual abuse in the Third Degree; and a Class A misdemeanor, Endangering the Welfare of a Child. Rev. Sewar is on administrative leave. Under the terms of the leave, he cannot engage in any public ministry.

Rev. Sewar, a priest since 1983, is not assigned to any parish or ministry. He previously served at St. Helen Church, Church of the Assumption, St. James Church, St. Mary Church-Waterloo, Church of the Annunciation and, most recently, as pastor of St. John the Evangelist Church in Spencerport. He was on sabbatical from January to June 2005, and has been on an administrative leave since June 14.

After receiving information related to alleged inappropriate behavior on Rev. Sewar's part, the Diocese of Rochester immediately asked local authorities to investigate per the guidelines of the diocese and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishop's *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*.

"I am deeply disturbed by these allegations," said Bishop Matthew Clark. "I sincerely hope that they do not diminish in the eyes of our faithful the great progress we have made over the last three years in promoting our Safe Environment Program. We continue to keep the safety and protection of children and vulnerable adults among our highest priorities and remain committed to working with the proper authorities in the prompt investigation of any behavior that is contrary to our policies. We are confident that the Rochester Police Department and our legal system will provide justice for all concerned."

Due to the pending court action in this matter, diocesan officials will not comment beyond this statement. Please direct all inquiries concerning this statement to Michael Tedesco or Doug Mandelaro. To avoid unnecessary disruption in this difficult time, please also refrain from bringing recording or camera equipment into any of the churches Rev. Sewar served.

**All questions about the investigation should be directed to the Rochester Police Department.**

#### **Please print or broadcast:**

"If you have been a victim of abuse by anyone working in the Church, you can report to the civil authorities. To receive help and guidance from the Diocese, contact our victims' assistance coordinators: Barb Pedeville: (585) 328-3228, ext. 1215 or Rev. Bob Ring, (315) 730-0882."