

Archdiocese of Detroit

For Release February 24, 2004

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Fr. Brian Bjorklund Reinstated to Active Ministry

Fr. Brian Bjorklund (pronounced *bee-YORK-lund*), 64, a U.S. Navy chaplain, has been reinstated as an active priest. Fr. Bjorklund had been on administrative leave and restricted from any public ministry by the Archdiocese of Detroit since June of 2003 because of a single allegation of sexual misconduct with a minor dating back to the early years of his ministry in the Detroit archdiocese.

The allegation of sexual misconduct involved a 17-year old male. At the time the alleged incident occurred, canon law considered a 17-year old male to be an adult. Since that time, canon law has changed. Now, anyone under the age of 18 is considered by canon law to be a minor as it relates to matters of sexual abuse.

When the information involving Fr. Bjorklund was brought to the archdiocese in the spring of 2003, it was shared with civil authorities, who chose, because of the passage of time, not to investigate the allegation further.

In a letter to the priests of the archdiocese, Bishop Walter Hurley, Cardinal Maida's delegate to the Archdiocesan Review Board, noted the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith found, "according to Canon law in place at the time (1975-77), the alleged action did not constitute the crime of sexual abuse of a minor under the age of 16. Therefore any penal procedure is not possible.

"Additionally, the Congregation found that there was no proof or indication that Fr. Bjorklund represented a risk to minors or that his continued ministry would constitute scandal or any harm to the community. With this in mind, we expect Fr. Bjorklund to resume his military chaplaincy with the required endorsement of Cardinal Maida," Bishop Hurley said in the letter.

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***Note: Biographical Information on Fr. Bjorklund, including his picture, can be found on the Archdiocese of Detroit website at www.aodonline.org.**

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