

# Archdiocese of Detroit

April 21, 2004

## Update on Fr. Brian Bjorklund...

The Archdiocese of Detroit has been informed that the military archdiocese will not be accepting Fr. Brian Bjorklund (pronounced *bee-YORK-lund*), 64, back for reassignment as a chaplain. He will return to the Archdiocese of Detroit. The archdiocese is discerning various options.

In February of 2004, Fr. Bjorklund was reinstated as an active priest in good standing. He 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. Ordained a parish priest for the Detroit archdiocese in 1966, Fr. Bjorklund served as a U.S. Navy Chaplain since 1988. Subsequent to a recent finding by the Vatican and his reinstatement, he had expressed an interest in returning to the military.

The allegation of sexual misconduct in this case involved a 17-year old. At the time the alleged incident occurred, canon and civil law considered a 17-year old to be an adult. Since that time, the 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 February 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," Bp. Hurley said, "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."

### Contacts

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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](http://www.aodonline.org).**