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Canonical Proceedings Conclude

Final Resolution of Four Priest Cases in the Archdiocese of Detroit

In a letter sent Friday, April 20, to the priests of the Detroit archdiocese, Msgr. Ricardo Bass, Cardinal Maida's delegate for clergy matters, announces the four remaining cases involving priests placed on administrative leave have come to closure. The final resolution, according to Msgr. Bass, is the result of separate canonical trials authorized by and reported to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

"In accord with the provisions of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* and the *Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons*," Msgr. Bass writes, "the following priests have been permanently removed¹ from ecclesiastical ministry, are prohibited from wearing clerical clothes and publicly presenting themselves as priests: Dennis Laesch (*Lesh*), Ronald Williams and James Wysocki (*Why-sock-key*). Dennis Duggan (*Dug-gan*) has been dismissed from the clerical state² in accord with the provisions of the above mentioned documents."

Msgr. Bass notes that "these decisions complete those cases of which we have been made aware and which have been addressed according to the *Essential Norms* and the *Code of Canon Law*." He adds that the Archdiocese of Detroit in general—and Cardinal Maida in particular—continue to "work for and pray for the day when those who have been touched in any way by these tragic events will be healed of the scars which they carry within themselves." Msgr. Bass concludes by asking his brother priests to keep all those affected by these events in their prayers.

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¹ These men, while still priests, are permanently suspended, restricted in their public ministry, and should not be identified as "Father."

² When dismissed from the clerical state, a laicized (*lay-ah-sized*) priest is removed and barred from priestly ministry, and dispensed from the promise of celibacy and other priestly obligations. He should not be identified as "Father." While sometimes used to describe this process, *defrocked* is a word and description of what happened to monks and priests in the 16th Century who wore long habits and were dismissed. Laicized is the term used by the contemporary Church.

For additional information on archdiocesan policy and procedures regarding clerical sexual abuse, go to AODonline.org and click on [*Promise to Protect. Pledge to Heal*](#), or call Ned McGrath at 313-237-5943 (work) | 313-886-4114 (home).