

Altoona Mirror

Chest Springs priest put on leave after misconduct allegation

Alleged incident dates back several years

The administrator of St. Augustine Parish in Dysart and St. Monica Parish in Chest Springs was placed on leave from public ministry by the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown after an accusation of sexual misconduct involving a minor.

Bishop Mark L. Bartchak announced Friday that he placed the Rev. David R. Rizzo, 47, on leave for an alleged incident, which dates back several years. Rizzo was appointed to the Dysart-Chest Springs post in 2018.

The incident has been reported to civil authorities, the diocese stated in a release.

While on leave, Rizzo, who was ordained in as a priest in 1999, is not permitted publicly to function as a priest.

In September 2016, the diocese placed a David R. Rizzo, then 44, on leave after receiving a complaint against him “*alleging behavior inconsistent with church ministry,*” according to a statement from the diocese at the time.

In 2016, the diocese’s statement did not explain the nature of the complaint but said it does not involve minors.

At the time, this David R. Rizzo, who was ordained in 1999, was serving at Our Lady of Lourdes in Altoona. He had been appointed there in 2009.

Efforts by the Mirror to seek clarification if these two cases involved the same priest were unsuccessful. An email sent to diocese spokesman Tony DeGol was returned with an automatic message that he is out of the office until Oct. 9.

Mirror archives show that in the 2016 case, Rizzo had asked for and was granted a leave of absence, effective immediately.
