

For Immediate Release  
1/12/2009

For further information contact:  
Sue Bernard, Communications Director  
Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland  
773-6471

### Details Released on Sexual Abuse Case of Accused Priest

The Diocese of Portland is releasing details of the case against Thomas Lee, former pastor of St. Philip in Lyman. This information is being provided in this instance to give the community perspective on the case and to support complainants who say they have been criticized by their community for making a report of sexual abuse.

Investigations are done confidentially out of respect for all concerned. The diocese has stated in the past that there were “more than two” or “multiple” reports of abuse that took place in the early 1980’s. Specifically, the Diocese of Portland received nine direct and two second-hand reports relating to events involving a total of fourteen individuals, all from the Boothbay Harbor area, where Lee served from 1971-1985. The reports involved issues of inappropriate touching or privacy violations. There were no reports from Lyman, where Lee ministered from 1985-2003.

Bishop Malone is supporting an appeal to the Vatican of the decision by a church court (tribunal) which found the accusations against Lee were not proven. Lee, age 81, was removed from ministry more than 5 years ago when an investigation opened regarding the complaints.

Bishop Malone is calling on the community to be understanding to all involved, most especially those who have made reports. He continues to encourage anyone who has been sexually abused by a Church representative to make a report to civil and Church authorities.