
Diocese of Buffalo

Office of Communications



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BISHOP MICHAEL W. FISHER REINSTATES TWO PRIESTS

Independent Review Board Finds Allegations to Be Unsubstantiated

Buffalo, NY, June 23, 2022 – Following an independent investigation and review and recommendation by the Independent Review Board (IRB) of the Diocese of Buffalo concerning allegations which have been determined to be unsubstantiated, Bishop Michael W. Fisher has accepted the IRB’s recommendation and has posthumously reinstated Reverend Robert Beiter, and Reverend Thomas Wopperer, 84, both of whom were previously placed on Administrative Leave. Father Beiter passed away June 13, 2022, at the age of 83. Father Wopperer is retired but assists with priestly ministry.

The Diocese followed its rigorous policies and protocols in dealing with the allegations in question, including notifying the District Attorney’s office, which declined to act on the allegations. In addition, Diocesan attorneys reached out to the attorneys for the plaintiff to gain the cooperation of the plaintiff in the investigation. The plaintiff declined to cooperate with the IRB’s investigation. The Diocese also confronted both priests with the allegations, each of whom denied ever committing any acts of abuse. They further participated in the investigations and Fr. Wopperer appeared before the Independent Review Board.

The Diocese of Buffalo encourages any person who wishes to report an instance of sexual abuse or sexual harassment by a member of the clergy, diocesan employee, or volunteer to contact the Victims Assistance Coordinator at (716)-895-3010 or Jacqueline.joy@ccwny.org. For a more extensive overview of resources, go to: <https://www.buffalodiocese.org/abuse-response/>

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