



ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI

Communication & Mission Promotion

MEDIA RELEASE

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Update from the Pastoral Center of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati regarding Fr. Ed Burns' administrative leave:

Last week, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Pastoral Center shared that Fr. Ed Burns, pastor of St. Carlo Acutis Family of Parishes, had been placed on administrative leave after a computer previously used by him at St. Michael Parish was reported to have accessed inappropriate websites. A parish employee turned over the computer to leadership at the Pastoral Center, along with a document listing various websites that may have been accessed on the device.

As shared last week, placement on administrative leave is not a presumption of guilt. It is a procedural step intended to protect all parties and allow for an objective investigation.

In accordance with archdiocesan policy the matter was referred to law enforcement. At the direction of the Hamilton County Prosecutor's Office, the computer was provided to the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office for forensic investigation.

This investigation is now complete. The Hamilton County Sheriff's Office informed us that it conducted a full forensic review of the computer and found no evidence of any criminal, pornographic, or inappropriate material of any kind.

While questions regarding the technical aspects of the investigation should be directed to the forensic experts at the Hamilton County Sheriff's office, we understand that the initial list of concerning websites that was provided to the Pastoral Center was not in fact a list of websites that had actually been accessed by anyone using the computer. Instead, the websites were obtained from an anti-malware program installed on the computer. The individual who generated the document mistakenly concluded that those websites were included in the computer's DNS cache or temporary local storage records.

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Regarding the role of the Pastoral Center in this matter: this list of websites was generated by the son of a parish employee and presented to the Pastoral Center by the parish employee. The list was not generated at the request of archdiocesan leadership. After reviewing the document that included the list of websites thought to have been possibly accessed on the computer, both the computer and list were promptly handed over to law enforcement. Archdiocesan leadership did not even turn on the computer while in possession of it.

This investigation by the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office exonerates Father Burns of any wrongdoing. Given that the reason for Fr. Burns' administrative leave has been demonstrated to be unfounded, effective immediately, Fr. Burns is no longer on administrative leave and will resume his duties as pastor of the St. Carlo Acutis Family of Parishes.

Archbishop Robert Casey expresses his gratitude for Father Burns' patience and cooperation during this process, and for his ongoing service to God, the Church, and his parishioners.

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati remains committed to transparency in all matters. That commitment must always be balanced with respect for the individuals involved, the integrity of investigative processes, and the public's trust in the safeguards that are in place. This balance can be difficult to maintain when public pressure demands immediate answers, but the archdiocese remains steadfast in its responsibility to pursue truth with diligence and integrity. Trust is built not only through openness but also through consistent adherence to due process and established protocols, both of which were followed in this case.

The archdiocese thanks the Hamilton County Prosecutor's Office and the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office for their professional investigation, and the Catholic faithful for their prayers and patience during this time.

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Cincinnati is the 45th largest Catholic diocese in the country, with nearly 440,000 Catholics, and has the fifth largest Catholic school system in terms of enrollment with more than 40,000 students. The 19-county territory includes 199 canonical parishes organized into 57 Families of Parishes, and 108 Catholic primary and secondary schools.