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## Former Queens Pastor on Leave from Ministry

Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn  
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<http://www.memorypharm.com/Pastoronleave.html>

Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio of the Diocese of Brooklyn has announced that an investigation by the Diocesan Review Board has found sufficient evidence of sexual abuse of minors by a former Queens pastor.

In a letter to parishioners of Sacred Heart parish in Bayside, the Bishop stated that John Abrams, now retired, is "on leave from the public exercise of sacred ministry."

According to the report of the Diocesan Review Board, the sexual abuse took place more than 25 years ago when he was the pastor there.

Bishop DiMarzio said he is not permitted to present himself as a priest, wear clerical attire, celebrate Mass or administer the sacraments.

While he left the parish in 1982, the allegations were presented to the Diocese after the implementation of the U.S. Bishops' "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People," the letter said.

Msgr. Sean G. Ogle, the Episcopal Vicar for the Queens North Vicariate, read the letter at weekend Masses Nov. 3-4.

The Bishop extolled the qualities of the advisory eight-member review board that studied the allegations, calling them "people of outstanding integrity and good judgment" experienced in law, medicine, law enforcement, social services and family life.

The Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith will receive the results of the investigation "for direction on how to proceed next," he said.

In the letter, Bishop DiMarzio asked the parishioners to pray for all victims of abuse by clergy, saying they have experienced shame, anger and betrayal.

"As Bishop, and on behalf of the Diocese of Brooklyn and the entire Church, I sincerely apologize to the victims for the emotional sufferings endured by sexual abuse by a member of the clergy," he said. "The courage of those who have come forward at this time should be especially respected and admired."

Bishop DiMarzio said anyone aware of sexual abuse of minors by clergy should advise the Diocese by calling a toll-free number: (888) 634-4499. He said callers will be treated "with courtesy and respect."

Members of the Diocesan Intervention Team were on hand at the Masses to answer questions or listen to concerns expressed by parishioners.