



# CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF YOUNGSTOWN

March 16, 2025

## **Statement from Bishop Bonnar Regarding Reverend Michael Swierz**

Last spring, an inquiry was opened regarding Reverend Michael A. Swierz. Pursuant to diocesan policy Father Swierz was placed on Administrative Leave and an investigation took place. In September the findings were presented to the Independent Review Board to provide an outside opinion to Bishop Bonnar on the matter.

After review, the Independent Review Board determined that the information presented warranted the actions taken by the diocese, and the Investigation was appropriate.

As per the directives given by the Holy See, Bishop Bonnar forwarded the case to the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith (“DDF”) for a full review. The DDF also received a position statement from Father Swierz. The DDF is a department of the Roman Curia and oversees religious discipline within the Catholic Church.

On January 22, 2025, the DDF issued its determination and affirmed the action taken by the Bishop and the Diocese of Youngstown. Father Swierz has retired from ministry and does not have faculties to serve in ministry.

Bishop Bonnar said, “The DDF’s decision is an affirmation of the difficult but necessary actions taken. These are never easy matters. Thankfully, we have a strong policy in place with procedures and protocols that ensure a thorough and just process of investigation. I am grateful for all those who participated in this inquiry, most especially the input of the outside Independent Review Board and the validation offered by the Holy See. This has been painful on many levels. I pray for healing for anyone hurt by any member of the Church.”

The Diocese will have no further comment on this matter.