News



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April 10, 2018

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The Diocese of Saginaw, Michigan, canceled two events last week as it continues to deal with the fallout from sex abuse allegations against former priests, one of whom was arrested for the second time.

Local NPR affiliate Michigan Radio reported that Fr. Robert DeLand, the priest whose arrest in late February began the troubles in the diocese, was arrested again April 5 and charged with four new crimes, including two counts of felony sexual misconduct and one count of felony manufacture or distribution of a controlled substance.

DeLand had previously been arrested after two people came forward claiming to have been sexually assaulted by the priest. One of them, a 17 year old boy, cooperated with police in a sting operation that ultimately resulted in DeLand's arrest.

Three of the new charges are related to claims of the 17 year old, while the other comes from a new person, an 18 year old who claims he was assaulted by DeLand last May. His family claims to have reported the abuse to diocese, which never took subsequent action.

Following DeLand's first arrest, police said that they were investigating several other reports of sex abuse, including against local priests. So far, no other priests have

been arrested or charged, although the diocese suspended Fr. Ronald Dombrowski in mid-March after receiving allegations from an adult claiming to have been abused by Dombrowski as a child.

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On March 22, the diocese's offices, cathedral rectory, and the home of Saginaw Bishop Joseph Cistone were all raided by the police, claiming that the diocese had failed to cooperate with their investigation. The diocese said it would cooperate going forward.

On April 3, the diocese canceled the "Bishop's Ball," a fundraising event scheduled for April 27. "A celebration during this time would not be in keeping with the heartache felt in the local Church community," the diocese said in a statement announcing the cancellation.

The announcement also noted that MYFaith 2018, called "the flagship youth event in the Diocese of Saginaw," on the diocese's website, "in which youth encounter Jesus Christ through the Eucharist, dynamic speakers, spirit-filled prayer, stirring music and much more" originally scheduled for Aug. 11 at Saginaw Valley State University, has been postponed. No new date has been announced.

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