News



by Heidi Schlumpf

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Msgr. John Enzler (CNS/Chaz Muth)

When President Donald Trump announced Judge Brett Kavanaugh as his nominee for the U.S. Supreme Court in July, his former pastor, Msgr. John Enzler, was sitting in the audience. Since then, Enzler has praised Kavanaugh in media interviews and posed for photos with the nominee while he serves meals to the homeless.

Now the priest, who is president and CEO of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington, is standing by Kavanaugh, as the Catholic judge is accused of sexually assaulting a girl when he was a high school student.

"I know Brett Kavanaugh to be a man of honesty and integrity," Enzler told NCR. "My opinion of him is based upon a 40-year relationship in which he's never given me any reason to doubt his veracity and character. Hopefully the facts concerning the recent allegations will bear out my trust in him."

Enzler said he did not want to comment or "cast aspersions" on Kavanaugh's accuser, Christine Blasey Ford, who said that Kavanaugh sexually assaulted her in the 1980s when they were both teenagers. She said he and another boy pushed her into a room, played loud music so she couldn't call for help, tried to take off her clothes, and covered her mouth when she tried to call for help.

On the advice of an attorney, Ford took a polygraph test, administered by a former FBI agent, which determined she was being truthful.

Kavanaugh has said he "categorically and unequivocally" denies the allegation.

Enzler was pastor at Little Flower Parish in Bethesda, Maryland, where Kavanaugh was an altar boy. The now-monsignor also was chaplain at Mater Dei, where Kavanaugh went to elementary and middle school, and he witnessed Kavanaugh's marriage to Ashley Estes.

The priest has praised Kavanaugh as emblematic of the spirit of the elite Jesuit boarding high school where Kavanaugh was a student at the time of the alleged attack.

"At Georgetown Prep, you saw him catch the spirit of their theme, which is 'be a man for others,' " Enzler told Yahoo News in July. "Jesuit schools are about giving back. I

saw his willingness to try to give back and do things for other people. ... He really got the DNA of giving, sharing and faith."

He also said Kavanaugh and his friends were regular teenagers, but that he never fell into a bad crowd and lived out Jesuit values, even on weekends.

"You know, teenage parties can be a little wild, a little crazy, but I don't remember seeing much of that from the kids," Enzler said in July. "These were not kids going out and getting drunk or using drugs. They were already living the values when they had very little adult supervision. They just knew who they were."

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