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Chicago Cardinal silences priest who mocked Clinton

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The Chicago priest who mocked Hillary Clinton by saying she cried on the campaign trail because "there's a black man stealing my show" has been told by Cardinal Francis George not to speak about politics.

Fr. Michael Pfleger of St. Sabina's Catholic Church on the city's South Side apologized after a May 25 appearance at Sen. Barack Obama's former church in which he said Clinton thought she was "entitled" to become president because she's white.

"I apologize for anyone who was offended and who thought it to be mockery," Pfleger, who is white, said in a statement June 1. "That was not my intent, nor my heart."

Regardless, George, who has tangled with Pfleger's controversial statements in the past, called Pfleger's words "both partisan and ... a personal attack" and ordered him to keep quiet.

"To avoid months of turmoil in the church, Fr. Pfleger has promised me that he will not enter into campaigning, will not publicly mention any candidate by name and will abide by the discipline common to all Catholic priests," George said May 30.

The controversy over Pfleger's remarks at Trinity United Church of Christ prompted Obama to end his 20-year church membership. He said the media attention on his membership was a distraction for both his campaign and other parishioners.

Obama had worked with Pfleger on community development and called his remarks about Clinton "divisive, backward-looking rhetoric."

Last year, George chastised Pfleger for vowing to "snuff out" the owner of a local gun store. According to the Chicago Tribune, he has also wrestled with Pfleger over his long-time tenure at St. Sabina's and rules that traditionally rotate clergy ever 12 years.

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