

March 20, 2018

Dear Ms. Ormsby,

Bishop Bergie asked that I respond to your request.

The Diocese of St. Catharines does not have a specific policy about priests who father children. This would be an exceptional situation and would fall under our diocesan policy on responding to allegations of misconduct<sup>i</sup>. If the bishop learned that a priest had fathered a child, he would want to ensure that the priest take responsibility for his child. Of course, parental obligations would take precedence over responsibilities to the church. In most cases, if a priest wanted to pursue a relationship and have a family, he would voluntarily leave ministry, rather than leaving it to his bishop to make the decision to remove him from ministry.

The failure of any priest to abide by a vow of celibacy would be an ecclesiastical matter to be dealt with by the bishop within the church under ecclesiastical law. If there were any suggestion that the relationship was non-consensual, this would be addressed according to our diocesan policy on responding to allegations of misconduct<sup>ii</sup>.

We are not aware of any priests in ministry at present who have children. Due to the historic nature of the troubling case referenced in the Boston Globe, there is no additional credible information that we can provide relating to that specific case.

Any guidelines or procedures that the Vatican has introduced or will introduce to protect children will assist both the local and global church in taking the appropriate steps to care for the security and best interests of children.

Kind Regards,

Margaret Jong, JCL  
Vice-Chancellor

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<sup>i</sup> <http://www.saintcd.com/responding-to-allegations-of-misconduct-andor-the-abuse-of-children-or-vulnerable->