

August 12, 2007 - Alleged perv priest removed from duties  
By WILLIAM BENDER, Philadelphia Daily News, Philadelphia, PA

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia announced yesterday that it has banned the Rev. Robert L. Brennan from performing priestly duties after a preliminary investigation substantiated an allegation of child sex abuse dating back to the late 1960s.

"It's a new day, and we're trying to do the right thing," said Donna Farrell, the archdiocese's spokeswoman.

Brennan, 69, was removed from his post at Camilla Hall nursing home in Immaculata, Chester County, shortly after he was singled out in a September 2005 Philadelphia grand-jury report that alleged widespread sexual abuse among archdiocesan priests. The report accused Brennan of engaging in "inappropriate or suspicious behavior" with more than 20 boys from four parishes since 1988.

Yesterday, the archdiocese said Cardinal Justin Rigali intends to inform the Vatican of the latest allegation, which surfaced in spring 2006, and will seek authorization to begin a formal process that could result in Brennan's being permanently ousted from the Catholic priesthood.

Brennan, who has denied the latest allegation, will remain a priest in the meantime, but he has been banned from celebrating Mass, wearing clerical clothes or even publicly identifying himself as a priest.

The archdiocese, which has strongly disputed the grand-jury report and labeled it anti-Catholic, initially took no action against Brennan. But within days, it reversed course and removed him and the Rev. John H. Mulholland from their nursing-home assignments.

The report found "countless acts of sexual depravity" among Philadelphia-area priests and included testimony that Brennan would force boys to sit on his lap, then kiss them and touch them inappropriately.

Brennan was "treated" four times after those incidents, according to the report, which said Rigali's predecessor, Cardinal Anthony Bevilacqua, and his managers had failed to restrict Brennan's access to children.

Brennan was ordained in 1964 and has served in Philadelphia, and its surrounding suburbs.

Individuals who have been sexual abused by clergy are asked to contact the archdiocese's Victim Assistance Program at 1-888- 800-8780. \*

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