

Fr. Carlton J. Westfield (Northern Chautauqua Catholic School)

Background: In May 2012, a secretary at Northern Chautauqua Catholic School reported that Fr. Carlton J. Westfield was discussing inappropriate topics with the sixth and seventh grade boys in religious education class. She also reported that Fr. Westfield had taken pictures of small groups of the boys and girls and that she overheard a discussion about Fr. Westfield giving private lessons for conversion to Catholicism to a seventh grade boy.

Bishop Grosz immediately met with Fr. Westfield, and Fr. Westfield admitted discussing topics such as pornography and masturbation with the boys. He said that he had such discussions with only the boys because of the nature of the topics. He also admitted taking pictures of the children in small groups and said that he planned to keep them as a remembrance of the children. Because of the complaints, he said that he would not teach at the school any longer, would refrain from taking photos of the children, and would delete the photographs that he had already taken.

The matter was reported to the Diocesan Review Board, and the Review Board recommended further investigation. We therefore called the school secretary who initially complained, and she advised that Father Westfield had not been at the school since the issue was raised. She said that her concerns about what might be on Father's computer were based on nothing other than the subject matter he discussed with the boys and the fact that he was taking photos of the boys and girls in the cafeteria.

Action Items: Although the secretary's concerns appear to lack any concrete basis, we have arranged for a forensic review of Father Westfield's computer by the Diocese computer services office. We also have reached out to the family of the young man who Father Westfield planned to teach, but they have not returned our calls.