

Chicago Catholic priest reinstated after past sex abuse allegations

by [Emily McFarlan Miller](#) in the [June 30, 2021](#) issue



(RNS photo by Emily McFarlan Miller)

Five months after allegations of past sexual abuse first were made against him, the Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago has concluded there is “insufficient reason to suspect” Michael Pfleger is guilty of the allegations.

The result of the investigation by an independent review board was announced May 24 in a letter from Cardinal Blase Cupich to the church Pfleger has led for years, the Faith Community of St. Sabina.

“I’m so relieved and glad this nightmare is over,” Pfleger said later that day at a press conference. “If anything, I’m more emboldened, and I’m stronger, and I’m ready to fight more than ever in my life.”

Pfleger, 72, returned to his position as senior pastor of St. Sabina on June 5.

The well-known priest temporarily stepped down from ministry in January amid allegations of sexual abuse of a minor more than 40 years ago. Three men have since accused him of sexually abusing them decades ago—allegations Pfleger and his attorneys have denied.

The investigation was met with backlash from parishioners at St. Sabina, who reportedly flooded the archdiocese's phone lines in support of Pfleger, staged rallies, threatened to withhold \$100,000 in monthly dues, and sent 1,300 letters.

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services also concluded there wasn't sufficient evidence to show Pfleger was a threat. —Religion News Service