



**St. Edward**  
on the Lake

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Community • Evangelism • Fellowship • Encouragement • Sacraments • Grace • Faith • Trust • Service

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St. Edward Parish is mentioned in a recent article about Archbishop John Clayton Nienstedt, which appeared in a free Detroit weekly publication distributed to area businesses. I would like to share some important context missing from the article and provide you my absolute assurance that its insinuations about our local community are unfounded.

I will begin with some background information. Archbishop Nienstedt was ordained a Detroit priest in 1974 and made an auxiliary bishop in 1996. In 1998, he purchased a vacation home in nearby Burtchville. In 2001 he was named bishop of New Ulm, Minnesota and archbishop of St. Paul-Minneapolis in 2007. Amid reports of mishandled clerical sexual abuse cases, he resigned 2015. In the years since, there have been additional misconduct allegations that remain unresolved.

When he decided to return to his home in Burtchville last year, the Archdiocesan Communications Department shared the following notification with all priests and parishes:

*"This summer, Archbishop Nienstedt announced his intention to move back to southeast Michigan to live in a house he owns. At that time, Archbishop Vigneron asked Archbishop Nienstedt – and he agreed – to abstain from public ministry in the Archdiocese of Detroit. That agreement remains in effect."*

At around the same time, the current archbishop of St. Paul-Minneapolis, Archbishop Bernard Hebda, confirmed that Archbishop Nienstedt would be prohibited from celebrating Mass in that archdiocese as well, until all the allegations against him were resolved.

The article in question details Archbishop Nienstedt's history and concludes with speculation that the unproven allegations against Archbishop Nienstedt, now 72, make him a potential threat in our local community. This is patently untrue.

Importantly, I learned this week that the house owned by Archbishop Nienstedt is three miles away from our parish campus. During the six years of my pastorate, Archbishop Nienstedt has never assisted us with any parish or school ministry. He has not been involved in distribution of the sacraments or had any other role at St. Edward. I have never seen him at the parish or surrounding area.

St. Edward Parish declined to be interviewed for this article and referred the writer to the Communications Department, which provided this concise response:

*"Archbishop Nienstedt is neither housed nor supported by the Archdiocese of Detroit, and he does not minister here. As such, we will have no further comment about him."*

As always, I remain committed to the health, safety and success of our beloved parish community. It is with this pledge in mind that I share this information. Please do not hesitate to contact me at the parish office, should you have any further questions or concerns.

In Christ,

Fr. Lee Acervo