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## **Alleged Sexual Abuse Victim Suing Diocese: Leonard Claims Legal Action Is Only Way to Get Affirmation of 'Terrible Things That Happened'**

By Robert Cristo  
Troy Record  
July 15, 2004

ALBANY (NY): Claiming he never received any support from the church in regard to his allegations of being molested as a child by Boston priests and sexually victimized by an Albany cleric as an adult, a Capital District man says the only place left to look for justice is in the courtroom.

David Leonard, 61, of Frankfort, Herkimer County, said Wednesday that he is filing a lawsuit in Massachusetts against both the Albany Diocese and the Boston Archdiocese over allegations that include being sexually abused by priests as a child at a camp in the Berkshires and having an inappropriate exorcism performed on him in Albany.

Leonard made the 40-page civil suit public in the jury's lounge of the Albany County Courthouse with his wife, Nancy, and attorney John Aretakis by his side.

"People have to understand that the church still doesn't get it. ... They tell everyone that they're going to help, but I haven't seen it," said Leonard while sitting in an Albany park before the press conference.

"We have four children I'm very proud of and I want them to hear from the church about all the evil they sat back and just let happen.

He's also upset with Albany Bishop Howard Hubbard for making public what Leonard thought was a confidential statement he gave last year to the diocese concerning the alleged inappropriate sexual activities of four priests, one of whom has since been removed from ministry (Robert Shinos).

The confidential letter was used in attorney Mary Jo White's independent investigation that recently found the bishop innocent of all charges of sexual misconduct. Leonard says the diocese never asked his permission to use the statement.

He believes White used the information to cast a negative light on allegations that he saw Hubbard in a gay bar in the late 1970s, despite other aspects of his "confidential" diocese statement being found true.

"I went to them with the names of bad priests and then the diocese betrays me," said Leonard, who has a history of mental illness.

Diocese Spokesman Rev. Kenneth Doyle said no confidentiality rules were broken in this case.

"Mr. Leonard's 2003 statement did not indicate he had been a victim of any priest, but he was reporting what he thought to be true of some priests. That was investigated and shared in discussion with the White investigation," said Doyle, who added that, "surely, anyone who comes to the diocese as a victim reporting a complaint is protected by confidentiality."

According to White representative Mary Beth Hogan, the statement was relevant because it showed that a year before Leonard made accusations against Hubbard, he trusted the bishop enough to ask him to investigate other priests.

Meanwhile, Leonard claims that Albany Diocese spokesperson Ken Goldfarb asked him to leave Hubbard's press conference a few weeks ago when the bishop commented on the White investigation.

"I wasn't being disruptive. ... I just wanted to hear Hubbard's statement, but Goldfarb escorted me out," said Leonard. "Considering how bad victims have been treated in the past ... I wasn't surprised.

... Goldfarb said this wasn't the time for this, but I was just sitting there causing no problems."

Phone calls to Goldfarb for comment were not returned.

Leonard's long history of alleged abuse began at the age of 12 in Hindsdale, Mass., where he claims he was abused at a camp called Camp Wyoma by a priest (Ronald Dorsey) from the Stigmatine Order, which falls under the Boston Archdiocese.

Shortly after that, Leonard attended a minor seminary named Elm Bank Prep in Wellesey Hills, Mass., to become a priest, where he claims to have been sexually abused by Brother John Fowler between 1953 and 1956.

Leonard said he told a superior at the seminary about the abuse, but that priest told him to "swear to never reveal" any of the details to anyone.

His story was the subject of a 2002 Boston Globe article, which reported that "one Stigmatine priest who tried to stop the abuse was twice transferred after alerting superiors to what was going on."

Leonard came to the Capital District as a result of his uncle David Gallagher, a Stigmatine brother, referring him to Rev. John Bertolucci of the Albany Diocese for assistance.

After revealing his history of abuse to Bertolucci in 1978-79, Leonard claims the priest said he was possessed by a demon and required an exorcism.

According to Leonard, Hubbard approved of the exorcism, and it was performed by Rev. Richard McAlear, one of the few authorized persons in the country to perform exorcisms.

The diocese denies that ever happened, but Leonard claims he ended up in the hospital for six months as a result, and even attempted suicide by trying to set himself on fire.

Diocese officials have said in the past that McAlear may have performed other rituals within the diocese at the time.

Bertolucci, a defrocked priest, admitted to interacting with McAlear regularly during the 1970s, but said in media interviews last year that he did not recall Leonard.

In the early 1990s, Leonard claims, Rev. Anthony Curran from St. Peter's and Paul's Church in Frankfurt sexually abused him as an adult and put child pornography on the television in his bedroom at the rectory.

Curran is currently a priest in good standing at a Schenectady parish, but Bertolucci was removed from active ministry in 2002 for inappropriately touching boys as young as 12 back in the 1970s.

Leonard's attorney says the reason he filed the lawsuit in Boston is simply because the statute of limitations laws there are less strictly adhered to than in New York state, which gives his client a better chance of the case going to trial. #