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Priest Admits Abuse of 3

By Marc Parry
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Three Capital Region residents had their abuse claims vindicated in a Massachusetts courtroom Tuesday when a New York priest admitted sexually assaulting them decades ago during repeated trips from Troy to the Bay State.

The Rev. Frank Genevieve, 52, a former associate pastor at Troy's St. Anthony of Padua Church and teacher at La Salle Institute, entered a surprise plea of guilty to five counts of statutory rape.

Suffolk Superior Court Judge Charles Spurlock sentenced the Franciscan priest to 8 to 10 years in prison, but the sentence was suspended, meaning he won't be incarcerated if he stays clear of new crimes.

Genevieve must register as a sex offender, undergo treatment, avoid minors, wear a GPS monitoring bracelet and submit a DNA sample to the state.

The crimes occurred in Genevieve's car and in a Boston rectory during overnight trips from Troy to Boston between 1977 and 1989, according to the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office. The victims were young boys.

Mark Lyman was 14 when he spent the night with Genevieve in a North End rectory, according to the district attorney's office and Lyman. Genevieve shared a bed with Lyman and sexually assaulted him as he tried to sleep.

Thirty years later, Lyman is an activist for priest abuse victims. A Stillwater resident who works for the state, Lyman called Tuesday's plea "a tremendous weight off our shoulders."

"We're no longer 'alleged victims,' " he said.

The case was able to proceed because under Massachusetts law, the statute of limitations was suspended when Genevieve left the state, said Erika Gully-Santiago, a spokeswoman for the Suffolk district attorney. It would have expired had he been a Massachusetts resident who never left and whose crimes only now came to light.

Another victim, David Landfear, 40, of Cohoes, faced Genevieve Tuesday for the first time in more than 20 years. Landfear had been living in a group home for boys in Schenectady when, at the age of 13, Genevieve drove him to Boston and sexually assaulted him in the back room of a church.

"I really wanted to see him do time for what he did," Landfear said in a phone interview on the way home from Massachusetts. "He ruined my life."

St. Anthony's in Troy is staffed and run by priests from Genevieve's Franciscan order, according to the Rev. Kenneth Doyle, chancellor of public information for the Albany Roman Catholic Diocese. Because of that, Genevieve was never an employee under the supervision or control of the diocese, Doyle

said.

But the church is owned by the Albany Diocese, said the head of Genevieve's Franciscan province, the Rev. Robert Campagna. Campagna said Genevieve was serving in the diocese of Fall River, Massachusetts when he was removed from ministry in 2002.

Barbara Dorris of the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests criticized Albany church officials for distancing themselves from the disgraced priest.

Genevieve's attorney, Robert Sheketoff, could not be reached.

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