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Troy Priest Indicted on Rape Charges Involving Young Boys

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PITTSFIELD, Mass. — A Troy priest has been indicted on charges related to the alleged rape of two minors in the late 1980s in western Massachusetts.

Rev. Gary Mercure, 60, was indicted by a Berkshire County grand jury on two counts of rape of a child with force and one count of indecent assault and battery of a child under 14. He is also charged with one count of rape with force for an incident involving a 13-year-old boy in 1989.

Mercure got to know the minors while working in New York parishes and took them to Massachusetts when the alleged rapes occurred, according to authorities.

Berkshire County District Attorney's Office spokesman Frederick A. Lantz said today the charges are the result of an investigation by Massachusetts state police. He was not sure when the investigation began, however.

"We are prohibited from saying anything about a criminal matter," said Lantz.

Albany Roman Catholic Diocese Bishop Howard J. Hubbard removed Mercure from ministry in August after it was determined Mercure sexually abused a minor in the mid-1980s at St. Teresa of Avila Church in Albany. Hubbard removed Mercure based on recommendations from the diocesan sexual misconduct review board.

Mercure is also facing civil charges in Warren County, where a hearing is scheduled for Friday. John Watkins sued Mercure and others for libel and claimed a sexual relationship he had with Mercure in the 1990s was not consensual, as officials of the Albany Diocese contend.

Watkins, who is represented by attorney John Aretakis, said in the suit that he was mentally ill and a victim of childhood sexual abuse when he sought help from Mercure, who sexually abused him.

The lawsuit also names Bishop Howard Hubbard and the diocese, saying Hubbard knew in 1994 that Mercure had abused Watkins but didn't suspend Mercure until January 2008, when someone came forward with childhood sexual abuse accusations against the priest dating from the 1980s, when Mercure was an associate pastor of Our Lady of Annunciation Parish in Queensbury.

Mercure had been a priest for 33 years and has served in several area parishes, including Our Lady of Assumption in Latham, St. Theresa of Avila in Albany, St. Mary's in Glens Falls and St. Mary's in Clinton Heights.