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## **Priest's Removal Linked to Sex Abuse**

Albany Diocese Rebutts the Rev. James Rosch's Claim That His Dismissal Was for an Incident from before His Ordination

By Michele Morgan Bolton  
The Times Union (Albany, NY)  
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The Rev. James Rosch was permanently removed from ministry in 2002 because of credible allegations that he sexually abused a teenage boy in Schenectady two decades earlier, the Albany Catholic Diocese has disclosed.

Bishop Howard Hubbard's confirmation this week contradicts the claim by Rosch, the former pastor of St. Joseph's Church in Fort Edward, that he lost his church because he fondled a 17-year-old girl when he was 23 and not yet ordained.

"If that were the case, he would never have been removed," diocese spokesman Kenneth Goldfarb said.

Goldfarb said he couldn't discuss whether there was more than one allegation of abuse against Rosch because only substantiated claims can be discussed publicly.

Rosch is one of 19 priests to be removed from ministry since 1950 in a diocese that has been shaken by claims of clergy abuse and two incidents last month: allegations made in public that Hubbard had engaged in homosexual relationships and the mysterious death of the Rev. John Minkler at his Watervliet home.

On Sunday, the Rev. Robert S. Shinos, pastor of Sts. Anthony & Joseph parish in Herkimer, was permanently removed from ministry after the diocesan eight-member review board, which includes one sexual-abuse victim, determined that accusations involving sexual abuse in the 1960s were credible.

The diocese has paid more than \$3 million since 1950 to those who were sexually abused by priests as children. The diocesan insurance fund also paid for therapy, legal and other costs tied to clergy sexual abuse issues that totaled \$965,697, of which more than 80 percent went to counseling for victims and priests.

Payment to the family of Rosch's victim are included in the totals, but Goldfarb said a 1995 confidentiality agreement prevented him from specifying an amount.

Rosch, 57, who retained the support of some parishioners after he was removed, has remained in the community where he is now a part-owner and manager of Zante's Restaurant.

He was St. Joseph's second of three spiritual leaders publicly accused in 2002 of sexual abuse. The others were former Pastor Edward Leroux, who was also removed from ministry, and the Rev. John Mea, who died in 1984.

Ordained in 1972, Rosch served as associate pastor at St. Joseph's in Scotia, Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Gloversville, St. Paul the Apostle in Troy, St. Madeleine Sophie in Guilderland and Our Lady of the Annunciation in Queensbury.

He was a chaplain for the Boy Scouts program in the early 1980s.

Binghamton lawyer Ronald Benjamin represents 20 clients who claimed to have been sexually abused by priests, including one in the Capital Region.

"In all the cases, the fact pattern is so similar, it's disgraceful," he said. "As soon as a complaint is made, they are shifted off to another parish."

Rosch didn't return a call for comment.

His answering machine's message ends with the words, "God bless you."

St. Joseph's, a parish of about 700 members, is now led by the Rev. Joseph Dworak, who came on in August 2002.

Dworak said Wednesday that the road back for his disillusioned parishioners has been tough.

"There are some indications that the dust is settling," Dworak said. "People can only take so much. We've come a long way. And we're all trying to move on."

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