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## Priest Takes Leave Amid Allegations of Sexual Misconduct

By Mary Fairchild  
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CAIRO - A Roman Catholic priest who is the pastor at Sacred Heart Parish in Cairo and Our Lady of Knock Mission in East Durham has taken a leave of absence amid allegations that he sexually abused a male child some 30 years ago, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany announced on Wednesday.

The Rev. Jeremiah Nunan denies the allegations against him and took the leave voluntarily, according to a prepared statement from the diocese. Nunan's parishioners were told about his leave during Masses on Saturday and Sunday, the diocese said.

Diocese spokesman Ken Goldfarb said the complaint of sexual misconduct against Nunan has been referred to the Independent Mediation Assistance Program for investigation. The IMAP was created in 2004 by the Albany diocese to look into allegations of abuse against young people by current or former priests or deacons in the diocese.

Once the investigation by the Independent Mediation Assistance Program is complete, the Diocesan Sexual Conduct Review Board, a predominantly lay panel, will determine whether reasonable grounds exist to believe the allegation against Nunan, the diocese said. The board then will make a recommendation to Bishop Howard J. Hubbard about what, if any, action should be taken against Nunan.

Goldfarb did not identify Nunan's accuser or say how old the child was at the time of the alleged abuse. He said the accusation dates back about 30 years, but he did not say exactly when or where the alleged abuse occurred.

A woman who answered the phone at Sacred Heart Parish on Wednesday said there was no one at the church who could comment about the allegations against Nunan, and the police department in the town of Cairo said it had no knowledge of the matter.

Goldfarb said the Albany diocese has a "zero tolerance" policy regarding sexual abuse of minors by clergy and that no priest or deacon believed to have abused a minor is allowed to remain in public ministry.

No one has been appointed to take over Nunan's responsibilities in the parish, Goldfarb said. Rather, "there are a number of priests who will fill in while the investigation goes forward," he said.

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany comprises 14 counties in and around the Capital District. More than 400,000 Catholics served by 175 parishes live in the diocese.

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