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## Legal Fund Set up for Accused Montgomery County Priest

By Edward Munger Jr.  
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[http://www.dailygazette.com/news/2008/oct/09/1009\\_churchbadness/](http://www.dailygazette.com/news/2008/oct/09/1009_churchbadness/)

FONDA — Roman Catholic Church officials said Wednesday they were not aware of a legal defense fund established by a New York priest who is facing child sexual abuse charges in Montgomery County.

John W. Broderick, 47, of Nicholville, St. Lawrence County, faces three felony counts of second-degree sexual abuse and a misdemeanor count of first-degree unlawfully dealing with a child in an indictment handed up in Montgomery County Court last month.

Broderick is accused of befriending a town of Palatine family and sexually abusing three children ages 5 to 11 between October 2005 and May 2007. He is also accused of providing alcohol to one of the children.

Broderick's attorney said Wednesday his client decided to try to collect money to pay for his defense after taking a lie detector test and passing it.

"I believe him," said attorney John J. Broderick, who is not related to the priest. He said that he thinks only one in 10,000 people are capable of passing a lie detector test while telling lies.

In an e-mail the priest transmitted with the date of Oct. 7, he claims his innocence and says the Catholic Church, priesthood and Catholic faith are all at stake in the criminal proceedings against him.

In the letter, the priest asks people for two things: prayers for his vindication, the church and the faith, and donations in amounts of \$100 up to \$10,000 "or even more."

The letter asks people to send money in care of "The John Broderick Fund" to a West Virginia address — a post office box belonging to the St. Thomas Aquinas Parish of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, W.Va.

Brian Minor, a spokesman for the Wheeling-Charleston Diocese, confirmed Wednesday that the post office box indeed belongs to the church, but said the diocese is unaware of the collection.

Minor said any collection outside of the parish requires approval by the bishop there, and the John Broderick Fund is not on the list of those that were approved.

"The collection is not sanctioned by this diocese, and that priest has no affiliation with the diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, and we would not authorize such a collection at one of our parishes," Minor said.

Albany attorney John Aretakis, who represents the family whose children are alleged to have been abused by the priest, sent out a news release Wednesday decrying Broderick's references to the faith and church in his efforts to collect money.

Aretakis said his clients are upset because "they feel like it's sanctioned by the entire church."

Montgomery County District Attorney James "Jed" Conboy on Wednesday said he did not believe it is unusual for somebody to develop a legal defense fund. Broderick is out on bail and could not be reached for comment Wednesday.

Conboy said Broderick's trial is scheduled for Nov. 10.

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