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## **Seventh Priest Named in Scandal**

Albany Diocese says the Rev. John Fitzpatrick had abused five children

By Andrew Tilghman  
Times Union  
July 30, 2002

At least five children were sexually abused by a priest who was forced out of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany in 1996 for sexual misconduct, a church official said Monday.

The Rev. John Fitzpatrick, who worked at parishes throughout the Capital Region, was not among the six priests publicly identified and removed from active ministry by church officials last month.

Fitzpatrick, who went to seminary with Bishop Howard Hubbard and was ordained in 1964, was not among those named because he no longer has any ties, nor receives a paycheck, from the diocese, said the Rev. Kenneth Doyle, chancellor of the diocese.

Hubbard first learned of Fitzpatrick's history of sexual abuse in 1993, when Fitzpatrick was assigned to St. Mary's Church in Crescent. Hubbard at that time received an anonymous letter accusing Fitzpatrick.

Hubbard confronted Fitzpatrick with the allegations and the priest confessed to incidents of sexual abuse involving three children, Doyle said.

Fitzpatrick was sent to a residential treatment program for pedophiles in New Mexico in 1993 and later returned to the diocese, where he was assigned to a desk job with the diocesan planning office and celebrated Mass with retired nuns, Doyle said.

But more victims came forward in 1996, and Fitzpatrick was asked to resign from the ministry when Hubbard learned he had victimized more children than initially believed, Doyle said.

The diocese entered into a confidential settlement agreement with at least one of Fitzpatrick's accusers, said Doyle, who would not elaborate. All of Fitzpatrick's alleged sexual abuse took place before the early 1980s, Doyle said.

Fitzpatrick and Hubbard were classmates and graduated together from Mater Christi Minor Seminary in Albany, Doyle said.

After Fitzpatrick confessed to abusing several children, Hubbard decided to reach out to the victims, adults at the time, to offer pastoral counseling.

A lawyer for a man who said Fitzpatrick abused him as a child in Castleton said he found Hubbard's call "very unsettling."

"Out of the blue, Bishop Howard Hubbard calls him up personally at work and said, 'I heard that you may have been molested by Father Jack Fitzpatrick. Do you want to talk to me about it?' He said, 'Absolutely not,' " said the lawyer, John Aretakis of Manhattan.

Fitzpatrick was assigned to several parishes, including Sacred Heart in Castleton and St. Columba's Church in Schenectady in the 1970s and St. Mary's in Crescent from 1980 to 1993, Doyle said. It was unclear where Fitzpatrick lives today.

The diocese continues to investigate new claims from recent months leveled against additional priests,

but no more priests have been removed, Doyle said. He declined to say how many victims have come forward or how many additional priests are under investigation.

In June, the 14-county Albany Diocese revealed that it paid out a total of \$2.3 million to 11 victims of sexual abuse in confidential settlement agreements during the past 25 years.

The six priests were removed from active ministry last month in accordance with the nationwide "zero-tolerance" policy that the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops adopted at a meeting in Dallas on June 14.

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