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Priest's Accuser Anguished over Inquiry Result:

Timothy Sawicki Says Diocese Didn't Tell Him the Rev. Jupin Was Back at Work

By Michele Morgan Bolton
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When a man who accused his pastor of sexual abuse learned that the priest was returned to ministry over the weekend, he was devastated.

It was the third time Timothy Sawicki has seen a priest he said abused him in the 1970s be cleared of any wrongdoing by the Albany Roman Catholic Diocese.

"I really believe I am being put in the torpedo tube and they are pushing the button," the 45-year-old Schenectady man said Monday. "They don't listen. They don't want to hear what you have to say. They don't want to help victims."

On Sunday, diocesan officials announced that Bishop Howard Hubbard had returned the Rev. Alan Jupin to ministry at Our Lady of Fatima Church in Niskayuna. Sawicki had claimed the priest got him drunk and raped him in 1976, when he was a teenager.

The cleric who was on voluntary leave since May 2003 resumed his duties as pastor at a Saturday afternoon Mass.

At the same time, the diocese said that the Rev. James C. McNerney, 56, pastor of St. Peter's and St. Paul's churches in Troy, was placed on administrative leave after a diocesan sexual misconduct review board ruled that claims he sexually abused a minor in the 1980s could be true. He was named pastor in 2000.

Sawicki said he was particularly dismayed he wasn't told about Jupin's reinstatement.

"I have not heard a single word from the diocese," he said. "Nothing. Zero."

Diocesan spokesman Ken Goldfarb said Sawicki's lawyer, John Aretakis, has forbidden the diocese from contacting his clients directly.

Sawicki's hands trembled as he sat with reporters at an iron picnic table outside the Schenectady County Office Building Monday and described the pain he said priests inflicted and their bosses ignored.

"I was naive," he said. "I was a kid. ... The bishop is excusing people who have done horrible things."

In January, state Supreme Court Judge Barry D. Kramer dismissed a \$600,000 lawsuit brought by Sawicki against Jupin, claiming the priest had stalked him in early 2003 and threatened to commit suicide if the man filed a complaint with the diocese.

Sawicki had also accused the Rev. Donald Ophals, pastor of St. Francis de Sales Church in Troy, of abuse, as well as the Rev. Louis Douglas, now of Delaware.

Both have been returned to ministry.

Aretakis said Sunday's pronouncement was only the church's internal investigation on itself: "It really doesn't mean a hell of a lot, except they're calling Tim a liar."

Jupin's housekeeper at the Rosa Road rectory refused access to the priest.

"He has no comment at this time," she said.

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