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Archdiocese Coverup Dates to '44, Suit Says

By Helen Peterson
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Eleven New York priests, including three monsignors, sexually assaulted as many as 15 children between 1944 and 1981, attorneys will charge today.

The lawsuit, which accuses the Archdiocese of New York of tolerating and concealing the sexual abuse of children by priests, is expected to be filed in Manhattan Supreme Court.

"We are arguing that there was a massive fraud conducted by the Catholic hierarchy over decades," said Michael Dowd, attorney for the 12 male and three female victims.

"A lot of these people have been hurt rather severely," he added.

One woman says she was raped repeatedly between 1973 and 1976 by the Rev. Luis Rios, then pastor of Our Lady of Esperanza Church in Manhattan.

When she became pregnant, the lawsuit charges, church leaders promised to help, but did not.

Rios' whereabouts were unknown, but New York Archdiocese spokesman Joseph Zwilling said some of the priests named in the suit are dead and all are out of the ministry.

"We have hoped that people would contact us. We have been providing pastoral help and counseling for people," Zwilling added, including some of those who are suing.

Many of the plaintiffs claim they were plied with liquor by priests who then fondled, raped or sodomized them.

Some said they were altar boys at the time of the abuse.

Another plaintiff claims she was abused every Sunday between 1944 and 1948, and on trips to Bear Mountain, from age 7 to 11, by Msgr. John Joseph Brady, a former pastor of St. Catherine's of Genoa parish in Manhattan.

The woman said her sister and other girls also were abused by Brady, who is now dead.

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