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Syracuse Bishop Expresses Sorrow for Priest's Abuse Admission

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The head of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Syracuse expressed his sorrow on Friday for the hurt churchgoers felt because of a retired priest's admission to sexual misconduct 25 years ago.

"I'm well aware the people of Utica are hurting," Bishop James Moynihan told a crowd at Holy Trinity Church at the start of a Mass held to peacefully protest against abortion.

Last week, Msgr. H. Charles Sewall admitted in a statement issued through the diocese to sexual misconduct with a teen-ager in the late 1970s, when he was principal of Notre Dame High School.

"It's very difficult that someone so revered in the community, loved for his leadership and dedication and service to the community could admit to an instance of sexual misconduct," Moynihan said of Sewall, who now lives in Florida.

Moynihan said the diocese had not decided what action it would take against Sewall, who was once vicar of the diocese's eastern region, or whether he would even return to this area, the Observer-Dispatch of Utica reported.

Approximately 150 people marched in song from the church to Planned Parenthood. Employees from the agency, including executive director Margaret Roberts, stood on the front steps watching as the group prayed.

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