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Priest in 80s Charged with Touching 12-Year-Old

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(March 21, 2007) — The Rev. John J. Steger is slated to appear in Gates Town Court today, facing four misdemeanor charges involving a 12-year-old girl.

Steger, who is in his 80s, was a priest at St. Jude the Apostle Church in Gates. He was arrested in May and was accused of inappropriately touching the girl in late April and early May. Police reportedly learned of the allegations after the girl reported two incidents to her parents.

The parents apparently contacted the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester; the diocese contacted the police.

Gates Police last year charged Steger with two counts of second-degree sexual abuse and two counts of endangering the welfare of a child; both crimes are misdemeanors and both involved the 12-year-old girl.

Steger had served the diocese since 1951; at St. Jude the Apostle Church since 1968 and previously at St. Theodore Church in Gates.

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