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## Diocese Says It Didn't Know Priest Sought Counseling

By Gary Craig  
Democrat & Chronicle [Rochester NY]  
March 14, 2005

The Catholic Diocese of Rochester did not know that the Rev. Michael Volino, accused this week of possession of child pornography, was undergoing counseling to treat a possible fixation with sexual images of youngsters, according to a diocesan spokesman.

"We had no knowledge that Father Volino was, as the FBI complaint alleges, having conversations with a private counselor about a 'desire to view sexually explicit pictures,'" said diocesan spokesman Doug Mandelaro.

Volino, 41, has been a priest at St. John the Evangelist Church of Greece, 2400 W. Ridge Road, since 2002.

Federal authorities Thursday charged Volino with receiving and possessing child pornography. In an affidavit, FBI special agent Michael Preisser said Volino admitted that "he had sexual issues for which he was seeking professional help."

Volino had been undergoing counseling for three years and said he "had told his counselor about his desire to view sexually explicit pictures of boys younger than 18 years old," the FBI affidavit alleges.

Were the diocese aware of the counseling, it would likely have to answer whether it had taken steps to ensure that Volino was not permitted to be around youths.

The diocese, in fact, was key to Volino's arrest. A technology specialist discovered the child pornography on Volino's computer and contacted authorities, the FBI said.

"We acted as swiftly as we could in notifying authorities once cause for concern was discovered," Mandelaro said. The diocese has never received an allegation of sexual abuse or misconduct about Volino, Mandelaro said.

According to the FBI affidavit: "Volino indicated that at one time he would never have believed that he would be drawn into an addiction of this nature, but that he would never take his fixation to the level of touching underage boys."

Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard Resnick said he did not know whether the diocese had been informed of Volino's counseling.

Volino's attorney, John Parrinello, could not be reached for comment Friday. A federal magistrate judge today ordered the Rev. Michael Volino to stay at an Elmira monastery as he awaits trial on child pornography charges.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Jonathan Feldman said reports from 2002 showed that therapists at a Maryland-based counseling center had decided that Volino should not be around children, based on evaluations of Volino.

Volino, 41, last week was accused of receiving and possessing child pornography after a diocese technician repairing Volino's computer reportedly found pornographic images of children stored there.

Volino's lawyer, John Parrinello, today argued that Volino should be allowed to stay under house arrest in the Rochester area. Feldman indicated he believed the monastery was a safer setting.

Feldman and federal authorities noted that there have been no allegations that Volino abused or improperly touched any child.

Further article on same subject; same source.

### **Judge Orders Priest in Porn Case to Monastery**

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Staff  
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