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Bishop Turns over Priests' Records

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The Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester has begun forwarding information to Monroe County District Attorney Howard Relin regarding three priests who resigned Thursday amid decades-old allegations that they sexually abused minors.

The information was unlikely to result in any prosecutions but would help the diocese maintain credibility in handling complaints, Relin said.

"That's a very important step," said Relin. "It shows people here that (Bishop Matthew Clark) is very concerned about the issue."

Relin's office received three phone calls Friday from people alleging that they had been abused by priests. None of the callers had informed the diocese about the alleged abuse before calling the District Attorney's Office, Relin said.

In all, Relin's office has discussed alleged sexual abuse cases with seven people since January, when the scandal began spreading nationwide throughout the Roman Catholic Church.

The callers' cases now fall outside the statute of limitations and can't be prosecuted, Relin added.

Nonetheless, the calls from adults who were allegedly molested decades ago "shows you the lasting effect of child abuse," he said.

Clark had resisted forwarding information to legal authorities because he said he was concerned such a policy would scare victims from coming forward.

But he backed away from that resistance on Thursday, saying that some victims had encouraged him to report allegations of sexual abuse.

The lingering pain of victims pushed Clark to ask for the resignations of three church pastors - the Rev. Foster Rogers of St. Pius X in Chili, the Rev. David Simon of St. Paul in Webster and the Rev. Thomas Burr of St. Mary Our Mother in Horseheads, Chemung County.

Clark also placed further restrictions on a retired priest - the Rev. Robert O'Neill - and on two priests who served in administrative roles at diocesan headquarters - the Rev. William Lum and the Rev. Thomas Corbett.

The six priests cannot participate in any ministry, wear clerical clothing or reside in parish or diocesan housing.

In those cases, said Clark, "The law can do nothing. We're doing something."

The three priests removed from their parish assignments on Thursday will be replaced at Masses today and Sunday.

The Rev. Daniel J. Condon, diocesan chancellor, will preside at Masses at St. Pius X.

The Rev. Raymond H. Booth, a retired priest and former pastor of St. Paul Church, will celebrate Masses at his former parish.

And the Rev. Michael F. Conboy, director of priest personnel for the diocese, will celebrate Masses at St. Mary Our Mother Church.

For help

Anyone who has further concerns or who would like to report any incident of sexual misconduct may call Barbara Pedeville at the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester at (585) 328-3228, ext. 215, or the Rev. Robert Ring at (315) 536-7459. The toll-free number for the diocesan Pastoral Center is (800) 388-7177.

Visits by bishop

Bishop Matthew H. Clark is scheduled to visit the following parishes this month to offer assistance. Priests from these parishes have resigned because of sexual misconduct.

? St. Pius X Church, 3000 Chili Ave., Chili: 5 p.m. Mass, May 11; 8, 9:30 and 11 a.m. Masses, May 12.

? St. Paul's Church, 783 Hard Road, Webster: 5 p.m. Mass, May 18; 8 and 10 a.m. and noon Masses, May 19.

? St. Mary Our Mother, 816 W. Broad St., Horseheads, Chemung County: May 25-26.

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