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Giuliani Firm Confirms It Hired L.I. Priest Barred from Ministry

By Daniel J. Wakin
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A prominent Long Island priest who was barred from the ministry last year after an allegation of sexual abuse has been quietly working for the consulting business of Rudolph W. Giuliani, a Giuliani spokeswoman confirmed yesterday.

The priest, Msgr. Alan J. Placa, is one of the former mayor's oldest friends. He has been coming into the Manhattan office of the firm, Giuliani Partners, about three days a week, said Sunny Mindel, the spokeswoman. "He's a very prominent guy and an incredibly learned man and able man," she said, noting that he is a lawyer, speaks French and has business experience running the hospital division of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, which covers Nassau and Suffolk Counties.

In April 2002, Bishop William F. Murphy of the Diocese of Rockville Centre removed Monsignor Placa from a diocesan panel investigating clerical sexual abuse, replacing him and the two other members in an effort to respond to the abuse crisis. Several families had accused Monsignor Placa of conflict of interest because, they said, he had used his role as a spiritual adviser to gain information from victims to strengthen the diocese's legal position. He also stepped down as vice chancellor of the diocese.

In an interview at the time, the monsignor denied such charges as "gossip, innuendo and lies."

Then, in June, Bishop Murphy placed him on administrative leave while the Nassau County district attorney and the diocesan panel investigated an allegation that he molested a teenage seminarian about 25 years ago. The investigation has not been completed.

Monsignor Placa, 58, did not respond to a phone message yesterday, but in the past he has denied any sexual misconduct. The former mayor has also spoken out strongly in defense of his friend, who joined Giuliani Partners in August.

In September, Monsignor Placa received special permission from Bishop Murphy to preside over the funeral of Mr. Giuliani's mother, Helen, because of his closeness to the Giuliani family.

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