

# BishopAccountability.org

---

## Group Wants Bishop Disciplined

Accused priests reside at site of Latin Mass

By Rita Ciolli  
Newsday  
February 26, 2003

An organization of Long Island Catholics yesterday asked a Vatican court to discipline Bishop William Murphy because he will allow the old Latin Mass rite to be celebrated only at a former seminary in Uniondale that is used as a residence for priests accused of sexually abusing children.

Vincent Cioci, president of the group, described Murphy's refusal to relocate the Latin Mass from St. Pius X as "callous, deliberate and malicious" and said the bishop must be held accountable "for placing our children in harm's way."

The Long Island Latin Mass Committee has about 1,000 members in the Diocese of Rockville Centre, Cioci said during a news conference in Mineola yesterday.

Cioci, father of six, said the Latin Mass is popular because it brings them a "deep spirituality." Richard Manougian, another committee member, said many younger Catholics who never knew the Latin Mass were now seeking it as well as other traditional devotions. Manougian, who prefers the old Mass as more "reverential," brought with him his family's 30-inch statue of Mary, with a sizable brown rosary knotted around her neck.

Cioci said many young families have stopped going to St. Pius because suspended priests who live upstairs from the chapel can attend the Mass if they want and children use the bathroom at the former high school seminary and also attend a social gathering afterward in the cafeteria.

"We don't know who they are, what they look like, how they dress," said Ginny Camarano of Huntington, a mother of five and a member of the group. She called Murphy's decision "lacking in common sense and mean-spirited."

Joanne Novarro, a diocesan spokeswoman, said retired priests as well as a "few who are waiting resolution of their cases" in church tribunals live there. On weekdays, Mercy Hospital provides health services there to uninsured patients in another part of the St. Pius building, she said.

Novarro said that "children who accompany their parents to the Latin Mass at St. Pius X are as safe as it is possible to be in our society as long as they remain in the Chapel with their parents for the Mass."

There are about five priests accused of abuse at St. Pius according to sources in the diocese. Suspended priest **Andrew Millar** lived at St. Pius after his arrest in May 2000 for sodomizing a teenage boy in a bathroom at the Town of Oyster Bay Beach until he was sentenced to a 3-year prison term in December 2000.

The Latin Mass, formally known as the Tridentine Mass, has its roots in the fourth century and was used for about 1,500 years before being replaced in 1968, one of the major changes of the Second Vatican Council. In the traditional Mass, the priest prayed in Latin with his back to the congregation. The current liturgy is in the native tongue of the congregation and includes much more participation by the laity, with the priest facing the congregation.

However, responding to pressure from traditional Catholics, Pope John Paul II said in 1988 that

individual bishops could allow some celebrations of the Latin Mass. A few years later, Long Island's Bishop John McGann gave permission for a monthly mass in Uniondale and then a few years later approved a second one in Cutchogue, according to the diocese. The Suffolk Mass has since been discontinued.

The group first met with the bishop in May and asked him to increase the frequency of the Masses and expressed their concerns about the suitability of the Uniondale facility.

Cioci, a commodities trader who lives in Water Mill, said that at that meeting Murphy went around the table and asked those present how many children they had and that one member responded, 11.

In September, the group was told that while the Latin Masses would increase to once a week, the services would continue at the Uniondale facility. Cioci dismissed Novarro's explanation that a Latin Mass centered in one parish would interfere with parish life and other events such as baptisms and weddings. He said the pastor at St. Matthew in Dix Hills had agreed to host the Mass.

The diocese said that Murphy would be re-evaluating the Latin Mass issue in June. However, Cioci said his group decided to go directly to the Vatican after the the release earlier this month of the Suffolk grand jury report about sexual abuse in the diocese and what they described as Murphy's "dismissive" response to it.

Cioci said that the Rev. Al Soave, one of the priests who used to celebrate the Latin Mass, was identified to him by someone in the diocese as an abusive priest who had been placed there after he was removed from ministry for allegedly molesting "a number of young children." Soave, whose identity is confirmed by other priests as one of those profiled in the grand jury report, died in 1999. "It's just negligence," said Cioci. They don't see this as a problem."

Novarro said she "totally rejects" that characterization.

GRAPHIC: 1) AP File Photo - Bishop William Murphy, 2) Newsday Photo / Dick Yarwood - Vincent Cioci seeks Vatican censure of Murphy.