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## Man Accused of Molesting Boys Draws a Church Group's Fire

By Bruce Lambert  
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A former official in the Catholic diocese on Long Island who was barred from priestly duties after being accused of molesting boys is prominently listed on the pastoral staff of a Great Neck, N.Y., parish.

A protest is planned for Sunday Masses at the church, St. Aloysius, by Voice of the Faithful, a group formed in response to the scandals. The group plans to distribute leaflets calling attention to the situation.

The focus of the group's protest is Msgr. Alan J. Placa, the former vice chancellor of the Diocese of Rockville Centre. Bishop William F. Murphy barred him from priestly duties after accusations that he molested boys more than two decades ago. A Suffolk County grand jury described Monsignor Placa, though not by name, as an abuser. Further, the jury said Monsignor Placa, a lawyer, was a key strategist in the diocese who protected abusive priests and fended off victims' complaints.

Monsignor Placa, who did not return a phone call seeking comment, has denied the allegations.

The latest dispute arose because St. Aloysius, where Monsignor Placa lives, lists him on the cover of its weekly bulletin and on its Web site under "Our Pastoral Staff." His listing bears the title "Rev. Msgr." and "in residence." His name appears under the parish pastor's, Msgr. Brendan P. Riordan, and ahead of seven staff members, including the music director and the youth minister. The list gives phone numbers for staff members, including his.

While the diocese says Monsignor Placa is not supposed to represent himself as a priest, critics say that the bulletin and Web site listings do just that. "I don't see how it can be interpreted any other way," said Dan Bartley, a co-chairman of Voice of the Faithful. "What else is a parishioner supposed to think?"

On Aug. 4, Voice of the Faithful wrote to Bishop Murphy objecting to Monsignor Placa's being on the pastoral staff list and asking: "Could this have occurred without your approval? How can you justify such actions?" The letter also called Monsignor Placa "the lead architect of the policies that protected pedophiles in this diocese." The bishop has not responded, Mr. Bartley said.

The bishop's spokesman, Sean P. Dolan, defended St. Aloysius yesterday, saying: "He's been listed that way the past seven years uncontested. He's still a monsignor; he's still a priest there. It hasn't been a problem in the past. The issue is him not presenting himself as a priest, and he's not doing that."

After leaving his diocesan post, Monsignor Placa has worked for Giuliani Partners, the Manhattan consultants headed by Rudolph W. Giuliani, the former New York City mayor. The firm's spokeswoman said that Monsignor Placa would not comment. He was never prosecuted, and the complaints were not adjudicated within the church. His defenders say he helped root out abusers.

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