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Two Pastors Accused of Sexual Abuse

By Eden Laikin
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Bishop William Murphy has stripped two more longtime pastors of their ability to work as priests because of accusations of sexual abuse involving teenagers that allegedly occurred in the 1960s.

Allegations against Msgr. Robert Saccacio of St. Martin of Tours Church in Amityville and the Rev. Kenneth Nee of Our Lady of Fatima in Manorhaven came to the Diocese of Rockville Centre after the diocese already had turned over names of accused priests to civil authorities, said Joanne Novarro, a diocesan spokeswoman. They involve a teenage boy in one case, a teenage girl in the other, said Novarro, who would not provide further details.

The diocese also said Friday it has asked State Supreme Court in Nassau County to consider whether the diocese can turn over to the district attorney information covered by confidentiality agreements concerning two cash settlements the diocese has made with sexual abuse victims. The information involves cases the district attorney already was aware of, Novarro said, noting the diocese took the legal action in response to a subpoena by the DA's office "so that we can say we fully disclosed everything about the cases."

Kevin McDonough, an attorney representing the diocese, said it asked for the involvement of the court because "protection for innocent third parties who had an expectation of confidentiality has also been a concern. That's why the diocese made a motion to have these third parties contacted so that they could have an opportunity to consent to the release of information or to continue in the protection of their privacy."

There also are two cases of cash settlements involving a confidentiality agreement in Suffolk County, Novarro added, but the diocese hasn't been specifically asked for that information yet.

"The Nassau County district attorney specifically requested information protected by confidentiality agreements," McDonough explained. "If such request is made by the Suffolk County district attorney, the diocese will follow this same course of action."

"The grand jury of Suffolk County has issued broad-based subpoenas and we expect full compliance," said Bob Clifford, spokesman for Suffolk District Attorney Thomas Spota. "We can not talk about the specific contents of the subpoenas, other than to say they are comprehensive."

Saccacio, 66, had served as pastor of St. Martin of Tours Church since 1987. Nee, 74, was at Our Lady of Fatima since 1980, according to a diocesan directory. Neither man could be reached for comment.

Novarro confirmed that the two priests were placed on administrative leave and cannot celebrate Mass or exercise other priestly functions.