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## **2 Launch Group for Victims of Abuse by Clergy the Women Claim Their Sons Were Molested by a Priest**

By Janet Gramza  
Post-Standard (Syracuse, NY)  
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For nearly five years, two Oswego women said they kept quiet about their sons' claims that they had been sexually abused by a priest.

Today, one of the mothers has a sign in front of her house on East 8th Street that reads, "It's Time to Break the SILENCE. We Are in Mourning Until the Catholic Church Stops Protecting Priests Who Molest Children!"

The women, who are also taking legal action against the church, have joined forces to start a support group for people who have been abused by members of the clergy.

It's a branch of a national group called VOCAL - Victims of Clergy Abuse Linkup - and it's the first such group formed in upstate New York, if not in the entire state, the women said.

"Our motivating force for doing this is our sons, but also the community," said the mother who made the sign.

"We kept this building inside for so long, it was devastating; and the longer we remain silent, the longer it will be allowed to go on," she said. "We've been through the pits with (our son), and I don't want any more kids to have to go through it."

The Post-Standard is not identifying the women in order to protect their sons' privacy.

Both mothers have accused the Rev. Daniel W. Casey Jr., the former assistant pastor of St. Paul's Church and School of Oswego, of abusing their sons between 1987 and 1989.

The first mother said her two sons, then 11 and 12, were abused while on an outing with Casey to Laker Hall at the State University College at Oswego campus in December 1987.

About a year later, the second mother said she learned that her son, then 11, had also been abused while accompanying Casey to Laker Hall to go swimming on two occasions between August 1988 and January 1989.

The women said they found each other through faculty members at the school who had heard about both cases.

Both filed lawsuits in 1992 accusing Casey of touching and kissing the boys and showering with them in a locker room area off the Laker Hall pool.

The second mother claims Casey went further than that with her son, who she said has attempted suicide and been treated for alcohol and drug abuse as a result of being molested.

St. Paul's and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Syracuse are also named in the lawsuits, because the parents say Casey's employers should have been responsible for his actions.

The women say the diocese offered each of them a \$45,000 settlement in 1992, but they are pursuing multimillion-dollar suits for two reasons.

"First, there will be counseling fees for years to come," the first mother said. "But we also feel the church will only take action to stop passing around abusive priests from parish to parish when their pocketbooks are affected."

The women said that soon after they accused Casey, he left St. Paul's and went to a Maryland treatment center for dysfunctional priests.

He is currently studying and living in Rochester, but is not allowed to minister as a priest in that diocese, said a spokesman for the Diocese of Rochester.

The Rev. George Norton, of the Rochester diocese, said Casey is studying for a doctorate at Colgate Divinity School in Rochester and is living in the rectory at St. Monica's Church and School, but has no ministerial responsibilities at either institution.

"He has not been authorized to exercise his priestly ministry in any way," Norton said.

The Oswego women said mental health professionals, doctors and lawyers are part of their group, which hopes to help people throughout Central New York. To contact the local chapter of VOCAL, call 342-1713.

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