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Priest Undergoing Evaluation after Abuse Allegations

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A priest accused of sexual abuse by two people has been asked to undergo a psychological evaluation, an official with the Roman Catholic Diocese of Syracuse said Thursday.

The Rev. Albert J. Proud, 64, pastor of Annunciation Church in Clark Mills, is on administrative leave and undergoing psychological treatment out of state, said diocese spokeswoman Danielle Cummings.

Last week, Ernest "Skip" Keller, a former altar boy in the diocese, told The Florida Times-Union of Jacksonville, Fla., that he was sexually abused by a priest in 1973, when he was 14.

Keller said he came forward in case the priest was still abusing others. Keller said he has not yet decided whether to take legal action but wanted a face-to-face meeting with the priest.

The diocese this week confirmed Proud is the subject of Keller's complaint. At the time of the alleged abuse, Proud was associate pastor of Christ the King Church in Liverpool, according to diocesan records.

Cummings also said Thursday that another sexual abuse complaint was lodged against Proud just before Easter. She did not identify who made the first charge and did not know when the alleged abuse occurred but thought it was within the same time frame as the Keller allegation.

It was after the first allegation arose that Proud was sent for testing and treatment, Cummings said.

Proud's future will depend on the outcome of a diocesan investigation and the recommendation of a soon-to-be-formed advisory board to Bishop James M. Moynihan, Cummings said.

Proud has been pastor at the church in Clark Mills, 40 miles east of Syracuse, since July 1998.

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