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Possible Dismissal in Church Sex Abuse Case

By Bill Carey
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For years, two sisters named Hansen and a woman identified only as Jane Doe have pressed their complaints that Father Thomas Keating had sexually abused them. But, after New York State's Court of Appeals upheld the statute of limitations in cases of clergy abuse, attorneys for Father Keating and the Syracuse Diocese have sought to have their case dismissed. A state supreme court justice, Edward Carni, is now considering doing just that.



Victims groups are crying foul.

"I mean even look at our pledge of allegiance. With liberty and justice for all. I never saw a footnote that said, unless you're sexually molested by a priest," said clergy abuse activist Charles Bailey, Jr.

The Syracuse Roman Catholic Diocese and diocese across the country have attempted to deal with the scandal year after year. And they've had some success.

"Our priority first was to those who have been abused, to continue to call them forward and really to give them an environment in which they feel comfortable to come forward to the Bishop and to tell their story, which is a very courageous step to take," said Danielle Cummings, diocese communications director.

The diocese has removed Father Keating and others accused of abuse, but there are claims that Syracuse Bishop James Moynihan hasn't gone far enough.

"I've had a real problem with bishops across the state and especially Bishop James Moynihan. He's still protecting and coddling predators. He still has priests in active ministry right now who have molested children in the past and that's a real danger," said John Aretakis, the plaintiffs' attorney.

"The bishop made a commitment to talk about this openly. To create programs and to follow the charter and he has done that. People have seen that he has removed priests. I know that there have been claims that there are active priests out there, right now, who have supposedly abused. People have said that publicly. There aren't. At least to our knowledge," said Cummings.

Attorneys for those claiming abuse say their fight against the church, nationwide, will go on.

Judge Edward Carni has set no date for his ruling on the motions to dismiss the civil case against Father Keating.

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