

Couple blames son's suicide on alleged abuse by priest

BY ALEX RODRIGUEZ
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Recent charges that a Kankakee priest sexually abused a 16-year-old boy last year has sparked similar accusations from DuPage County parishioners, including one couple who blames their son's suicide on the priest's behavior.

The case of the Rev. Myles P. White received a slew of publicity in August when the 51-year-old Catholic priest was charged with sexually molesting a 16-year-old boy from Manteno, a small town in Kankakee County.

Now, the parents of a former Hins-

dale man say their son committed suicide in 1990 because he had been sexually abused as a boy by White between 1968 and 1972 while White was a priest at their church, St. Isaac Jogues Catholic Church in Hinsdale.

The allegations were made in a lawsuit the man's parents filed Tuesday against White in Will County Circuit Court.

And, Kankakee police say they are receiving calls from DuPage County residents who say their children may have been abused by White while he was a priest in their communities,

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said Kankakee police Detective Richard Sims.

Joseph G. Klest, a lawyer for the parents of the Hinsdale man, said White was once assigned to St. Petronille parish in Glen Ellyn, St. Raphael parish in Naperville and Sacred Heart parish in Lombard, though he did not know when.

However, longtime parishioners at St. Petronille and St. Raphael said Tuesday they do not remember White ever working at their parish.

According to the suit, the Hinsdale man was "between 13 to 17 years old" when the alleged abuse took place. At the time, the boy's family attended St. Isaac Jogues, where White was a priest.

It claims that, as an adult, the Hinsdale man suffered psychological trauma from the childhood abuse that eventually led to his suicide Dec. 10, 1990, at the age of 34.

The suit does not indicate where or when the alleged abuse happened, or the nature of the activity. Klest said the boy never mentioned White's alleged activity to anyone until 1989, when he told his parents, who now live in California.

However, his parents did not believe him at the time, Klest said. But

when they saw television news accounts of White's charges in Kankakee, they changed their minds about their son's claims.

"When the allegations were made, it was just so outlandish to the parents," Klest said. "They didn't believe it until White was arrested."

Efforts to reach White were unsuccessful. Officials at the Diocese of Joliet, which oversees the parishes where White worked, also could not be reached for comment.

While it isn't known where or when the former Hinsdale youth was allegedly abused, Klest said it may have happened while White and the boy went on vacation to Colorado and Arizona sometime between 1968 and 1972.

Klest said he has two other clients, whom he decline to identify, with children who have been sexually abused by White. Klest added that White has been assigned to eight parishes since his training at the St. Thomas Seminary in Denver and another seminary in Mundelein.

Also named as defendants were the Diocese of Joliet, Bishop Joseph L. Imesch, who heads the diocese, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Roman Catholic Church and the pope.