

Priest sued for alleged sex abuse

By Bob Merrifield

A Kankakee priest accused in July of sexually molesting a 16-year-old boy is being sued by a couple who claim their son suffered similar abuse more than 20 years ago that eventually led to his suicide.

In a suit filed Wednesday in Will County Circuit Court, the family of a man identified only as John Doe claim Rev. Myles P. White sexually abused their son between 1967 and 1972 while the priest was assigned to St. Isaac Jogues Catholic Church in Hinsdale.

The victim took his own life in 1990 at the age of 36 because of anguish over the incident, says Joseph G. Klest, the family's lawyer.

Klest said he is seeking \$5 million in damages from White and the Diocese of Joliet, which governs the Hinsdale parish.

Sister Judith Davies, chancellor of the Joliet Diocese, declined any comment, saying she had not yet seen a copy of the suit.

Klest says the mother, father and sister of the alleged victim now live in California.

After being told in 1989 by their son about the alleged abuse, the father called White, who denied any improprieties and described the allegations as delusions, the suit says.

The family "half-accepted" White's claim, Klest said, because White was a powerful authority figure who had had ties to the family for more than 30 years.

"He had married their son and their daughter," Klest said. "And in 1989 there wasn't as much known about these cases as there is now."

After other charges against White surfaced last summer, the family reconsidered, Klest said.

White was charged in Indiana with two counts of child molestation on July 28 after a videotape allegedly showing him having sex with a teenage boy was turned over to Marshall County, Ind., sheriff's deputies. The tape had been purchased at a flea market by a friend of the 51-year-old priest, police said.