

Former member of Sacred Heart files suit against Catholic diocese

Posted: Friday, April 20, 2012 8:51 pm

A former member of the Sacred Heart Parish in Nacogdoches filed suit on April 12 against the Roman Catholic Diocese of Beaumont and Bishop Curtis J. Guillory, in his official capacity as bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Beaumont, his predecessors and successors, according to a press release from the law office of attorney Tahira Merritt in Dallas.

The lawsuit claims that the former member was sexually abused by Father Ronald W. Bollich between approximately 1976-1977 in the rectory of Sacred Heart, then part of the Beaumont Diocese. Father Bollich died on August 7, 1996 at the age of 59. The lawsuit was filed in the 60th Judicial District Court of Jefferson County.

Merritt, who represents the plaintiff in this new case, said in the release that the defendants have been served with the petition. In the petition, “the plaintiff has claimed that defendants used deception to conceal Father Bollich’s alleged crimes, as well as those of other predatory Beaumont priests or former priests, such as Ernest Dale Calhoun, Frank Paduch, August Pucar, Roger Thibodeaux, among others currently unknown to the plaintiff, and to conceal its own failure to properly assign, supervise, investigate, report and remove Father Bollich for his injurious criminal sexual misconduct,” according to the press release.

When the alleged abuse began, the release states the plaintiff was a minor and Bollich was working as a priest at Sacred Heart Parish, and he had worked in several other parishes within the Beaumont Diocese before it become part of the newly-formed Tyler Diocese in 1986. It is believed he was still an active priest at the time of his death in 1996, according to the release.

Merritt said in the release, “the plaintiff has come forward to reach out to others who may have been sexually abused by Father Bollich and to protect other potential victims from harm. He is asking anyone who has pertinent information to come forward and also report their abuse to law enforcement.”

Merritt can be reached at

214-503-7300 begin_of_the_skype_highlighting 214-503-7300 end_of_the_skype_highlighting.