

34 of 49 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2003 The Cincinnati Enquirer  
All Rights Reserved  
The Cincinnati Enquirer

September 19, 2003 Friday Kentucky Edition

**SECTION:** NEWS; Pg. 1A

**LENGTH:** 905 words

**HEADLINE:** Frankfort priest may be put on leave

**BYLINE:** Jim Hannah Cindy Schroeder, STAFF

**BODY:**

By Jim Hannah and Cindy Schroeder

The Cincinnati Enquirer

BURLINGTON - The priest at Frankfort's only Catholic parish may be placed on leave of absence today after allegations surfaced in court papers that he sexually assaulted and stalked a girl more than 20 years ago.

Sacramental Minister Stephen Gallenstein has worked at six churches in central and eastern Kentucky since 1982. An unidentified woman said he sexually and psychologically abused her for four years starting when she was 13. He then stalked her for 10 years, she claimed.

"This is the first hint of a credible allegation the Diocese of Lexington has received against this priest," Lexington Diocese spokesman Tom Shaughnessy said Thursday. "He (Gallenstein) will in all likelihood be placed on a leave of absence while we further investigate this allegation."

Gallenstein did not return phone calls to his home and church office Thursday night.

The information about Gallenstein became public Wednesday when a legal brief outlining examples of alleged abuse by priests and cover-ups by church officials in the Covington Diocese since 1953 was filed in Boone Circuit Court. The brief was compiled after a Boone County judge ordered the Covington archives released to lawyers representing victims of the alleged abuse in Northern Kentucky.

Attorneys had sought complaints of sexual abuse by priests and the diocesan response as part of a potential class-action lawsuit.

The Lexington Diocese's long-standing policy on sexual abuse claims calls for a priest to immediately be placed on leave. Shaughnessy said an action had not taken place Thursday evening because Bishop Ronald W. Gainer was in Rome for an orientation for new bishops and could not be reached. He was appointed in February after three men accused Lexington's former bishop of sexual abuse when they were boys.

Shaughnessy said Gallenstein would have likely never been given an assignment at a parish had the Lexington Diocese known of the allegations. He said the Covington Diocese has not shared its files concerning sexual abuse with the Lexington Diocese despite the fact that parishes now under Lexington authority were controlled by Covington until 1988.

"The Diocese has consistently over the years sent abusive priests to other dioceses where they have the opportunity to abuse children," Cincinnati Attorney Stan Chesley wrote in a 37-page brief filed Wednesday.



The Cincinnati Enquirer September 19, 2003 Friday Kentucky Edition

The names of the children and priests have been removed from the public version of the brief to protect the identity of the alleged victims. It was accompanied by 25 sealed exhibits concerning at least 18 priests. The Lexington Diocese confirmed Thursday night that one of the priests was Gallenstein.

The Covington Diocese would not immediately address the allegations in the court papers.

"The Diocese has received the legal brief today," Covington Diocesan spokesman Tim Fitzgerald said Thursday. "We will be filing a response in due time."

In one example to illustrate the pattern of alleged abuse and cover-up, Chesley wrote that instead of removing a priest accused of sexually abusing a 13-year-old girl, the priest was made principal of the school. This priest, said Shaughnessy, is Gallenstein.

The Covington Diocese has done nothing to prevent the priest from being transferred for the past 21 years to other churches where he is believed to have had contact with children, said Chesley. The dates and locations of the transfers as identified in the court papers are:

St. Elizabeth Church in Ravenna in 1982.

St. Francis Church in Pikeville in 1986.

St. Julian Church in Middlesboro in 1987.

Church of Jesus Our Savior in Morehead in 1997.

St. Francis Church in Pikeville in 1998.

St. Luke Church in Salyersville in 2001.

St. Francis Church in Pikeville and St. Luke Church in Salyersville in 2002.

Good Shepard Parish in Frankfort, where he remains active.

In an unprecedented public apology last month to the 89,000 Roman Catholics in the 14-county diocese, Covington Bishop Roger J. Foy admitted to 158 credible claims of abuse. Chesley said that number is greatly underestimated - and believes it's between 500 and 1,000.

"What was going on in Northern Kentucky is no different than Boston and St. Louis," Chesley said. "And we have women who were abused; it was not just children and boys."

Last week, the Boston Archdiocese agreed to pay \$85 million to settle 552 sex abuse claims. Some have predicted the Boston settlement will serve as a model for the nation's 194 other dioceses, many of which are facing lawsuits.

The brief claims a priest was recently reinstated at an unnamed parochial school where he abused a child in the mid-'70s. The unidentified priest was sent away for treatment in 1976 after a student said he was sexually assaulted at the age of 11. That boy, now grown, said he was forced to "date" the priest and attend parties with other priests accompanied by other young men. The boy said the priest was highly placed at the school and threatened him with bad grades and punishment.

In yet another case cited in the brief, a priest accused of sexual misconduct was assigned to investigate another priest accused of sexual misconduct.

Chesley will have a chance to present his argument to make his suit a class action in a hearing set for Oct. 1 before Boone Circuit Judge Jay Bamberger.

E-mail [jhannah@enquirer.com](mailto:jhannah@enquirer.com) and [cschroeder@enquirer.com](mailto:cschroeder@enquirer.com)

LOAD-DATE: September 20, 2003