

## N.Y. bishop apologizes; 1 victim says affair began when she was teen

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The Journal News

**Bishop James F. McCarthy** is apologizing to his former parishioners for the affairs he had with women, which forced his resignation this week as an auxiliary bishop in the New York Archdiocese.

"I cannot begin to imagine the thoughts and emotions which are yours because of my sinfulness so many years ago," McCarthy wrote in the letter posted yesterday on the Web site of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Shrub Oak. "I am truly sorry and apologize to you. I wish it were possible for me to do this kneeling before each of you individually, especially the younger members of Seton."

McCarthy, 59, who also stepped down Tuesday as pastor of the church, admitted to relationships with several women after he was

exposed in a letter received by the archdiocese on Saturday. The letter writer was one of the women with whom he had been involved.

That woman told an advocate for victims of clergy sex abuse that she became sexually involved with McCarthy when she was a teen-ager, the advocate, Daniel Dugo, said yesterday.

Dugo, himself a victim of sex abuse by a priest, said he met the woman at a news conference both attended in May.

She told him then that she had had an affair with McCarthy that began when she was 16 years old, Dugo said. The relationship continued for about 20 years, Dugo said the woman told him.

"The woman was very distraught," he said. "She was blaming herself. At 16, he was a predator."

The woman, whom he did not name, is now in her early 40s. She

has declined to go public with her account.

Susan Jason, a victims advocate who had been speaking on the woman's behalf, said yesterday she never commented on the woman's age to The New York Post, which reported Wednesday that Jason said the woman was an adult when the affair with McCarthy began.

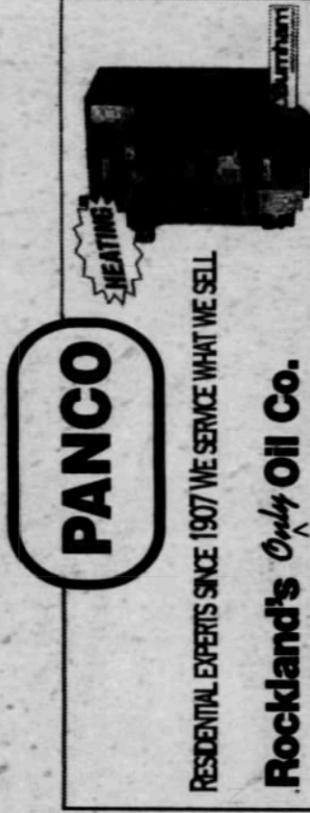
McCarthy, who was secretary to the late Cardinal John O'Connor, issued a formal statement on Tuesday in which he acknowledged the affairs and mentioned one in particular, with a woman who he said was about 21 years old when it started. He did not mention the ages of the other women with whom he had had relationships, saying simply that "I had improper sexual contact with other women."

McCarthy, 59, has been a priest for 34 years. He was to have attended the meeting of the Nation-

al Conference of Catholic Bishops taking place in Dallas. The woman who wrote to the archdiocese about McCarthy has said that she came forward now because she knew McCarthy was expected to

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