

Youth Gets \$35,000 Award In Case Against Priest

INDIO, Riverside Co. (AP) — A Superior Court judge has ordered a Catholic monsignor to pay \$35,000 in damages to a former high school student who accused the priest of making forcible homosexual advances.

The charges against the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Maximiliano Gomez-Macouzet, former pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Health Catholic Church, were made by Antonio T. Croteau, who was 17 and a student at Coachella Valley High School at the time of the alleged incident in 1962.

The priest called the charges "completely false" and said he was an object of racial discrimination.

Croteau accused Msgr. Gomez-Macouzet of inviting him to his parish apartment for "instruction and advice," giving the youth alcoholic drinks and making advances to him.

At a 1966 hearing before Superior Court Judge Merrill Brown,

Msgr. Gomes - Macouzet said, "From the very beginning, I have been told and have received letters telling me they (the parishoners) did not like the idea of having a 'wetback' for their pastor."

Also named in Croteau's suit were Bishop Francis J. Rurey of the Roman Catholic diocese of San Diego and the diocese itself. The bishop was accused of failing to investigate the charges after they were brought to his attention.

Merrill awarded \$10,000 in compensatory damages to Croteau and \$25,000 in punitive damages. The youth had sought \$200,000.

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