

Priest sentenced to one year in child pornography case

From AP and local sources
EVANSVILLE — A Jasper priest and former St. Meinrad Seminary moral theology teacher was sentenced to one year and a day in federal prison after he pleaded guilty to charges of possessing child pornography.

The Rev. Mark Ciganovich, 56, of Jasper, admitted in U.S. District Court on Thursday that he ordered the sexually explicit material last spring from a business operator by undercover postal inspectors conducting a nationwide investigation into a child pornography ring.

Ciganovich has lived in Jasper for about 20 years. He was living in the Arlington Apartments, but

since the January sting, he has moved to another Jasper residence that is unknown.

In January, postal inspectors seized more than 300 pornographic videotapes from Ciganovich's private home. At least 15 of those contained graphic material of children as young as 12 engaging in sex, according to court testimony.

According to Mike Flower of the Jasper police, which assisted U.S. Postal Service agents, a postal inspection agent posing as a mailman delivered a child pornography video Ciganovich ordered to his apartment. He signed for the package.

Later a team of agents re-

turned, identified themselves and asked for and received consent to search Ciganovich's residence.

Ciganovich was caught in the same investigation that resulted in the indictment of the Rev. Jean Vogler, also a Jasper native and a former pastor of Holy Rosary Catholic Church in Evansville, as well as scores of other patrons of a pornographic videotape distributor.

Vogler was sentenced earlier this fall — also to a year and a day in prison — after pleading guilty to a federal charge of receiving child pornography by mail.

In court Thursday, Ciganovich pleaded with U.S. District Court Judge Gene Brooks not to send him

to prison, saying he had a medical condition that needed continuing treatment. Ciganovich asked to be placed under house arrest or in a community corrections facility and be allowed to receive counseling.

But a skeptical Brooks rejected the request, saying Ciganovich deserved a stint in prison and that his medical condition, a heart ailment, could be treated by prison doctors.

Ciganovich also told Brooks that he had once sought counseling for his "obsession with pornography" but was told by a psychologist that he was "normal."

Ciganovich resigned from the

seminary on Aug. 15. His order, the Carmelites, placed him under supervision in what was described as a "Carmelite house" and was removed from public ministry pending sentencing.

There was no word from the order's headquarters in Darien, Ill., as to whether Ciganovich will be removed from the priesthood.

Postal investigators launched the investigation two years ago after shutting down a California company called Overseas Male, which investigators said was the largest distributor of child pornography in the nation.