

Priest gets probation in pornography case

A Roman Catholic priest, vice chancellor of the Diocese of Crookston, Minn., pleaded guilty Friday to possession of child pornography and was placed on two years' probation.

The Rev. Richard Boyd, 33, associate pastor and a language and religion instructor at Sacred Heart High School in East Grand Forks, was charged with possession of pictorial sexual representation of a minor after police searched his living quarters in the East Grand Forks rectory.

There was no evidence that Boyd ever had sexual contact with children "or anyone else, for that matter," said Wayne Swanson, Polk County attorney. He added that Boyd "had no prior arrests and as far as we could see there were just no victims."

District Judge Russell Anderson imposed a two-year sentence on Boyd for the gross misdemeanor, then stayed the sentence in favor of probation on the conditions that Boyd undergo treatment in an unnamed church-sponsored program and that he not "undertake any duties related to the care and teaching children during the period," according to Swanson.

"He was a man with a personal problem," Swanson said. "I did what I felt needed to be done. But I do feel for him. As I understand it, he was and is highly thought of. I have heard nothing but good about him in times past and frankly, have found no reason to change that opinion."

He said the material found in Boyd's quarters were magazines produced in a number of foreign countries, including Denmark and The Netherlands. He said as far as he knew the material was not purchased locally but came to Boyd through the mail.

"We are aware some charges are being made ... but the only comment we have at this time is we certainly regret the difficulty this matter creates for all of the people involved," said the Rev. Mike Patnode, chancellor of the Crookston Diocese.

The Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA), along with East Grand Forks police, had been investigating Boyd for about a month, said Floyd Roman, assistant superintendent of the BCA.

Material from the Associated Press was used in this article.