

Judge rules priest must be given name of accuser

NEW ULM (AP) — A Comfrey priest said Monday he is happy with a judge's ruling that he is entitled to know who reported him to authorities for alleged child sexual abuse, but said he is angry the accusation was made.

No charges were filed against the Rev. Michael Guetter, a priest at St. Michael's Catholic Church,

and Brown County District Judge Noah Rosenbloom ordered on June 20 that Guetter be told who made the allegation.

Brown County Family Services, which opposed Guetter's request, was given 30 days in which to appeal Rosenbloom's decision.

"I have an appointment with the family services Wednesday to

tell me who did it, by court order," Guetter, 71, said in a telephone interview. "I have no idea who did it."

However, Brown County Family Services Director Tom Henderson said Monday that the name would not be released at Wednesday's meeting. He added that a decision on whether to appeal

would be made by mid-July.

Guetter's attorney, J. Brian O'Leary, made the motion for disclosure of the name, citing a statute that allows his client access to the identity upon receiving a court order.

In an affidavit filed with the court, Guetter, a priest for 45 years, said accusations that he

sexually molested young girls under his care were "absolutely false and groundless."

Guetter said the girls who were named as victims of the alleged abuse had denied the allegations, too.

Rosenbloom, in a memorandum to his order, wrote that the statute states "the name of the re-

porter shall be confidential but accessible to the individual subject of the record upon court order once the investigation is completed."

Rosenbloom added that Guetter "ought not be exposed to the obloquy implicit in the rumors circulating about him without legitimate means of self-protection."