

# Priest, deacon indicted in molestations

From staff reports

**LAWRENCE** — The Diocese of Trenton has suspended a Medford priest following an indictment alleging that he molested a 13-year-old girl, according to the diocese.

The Rev. Florencio Tumang, 69, of St. Mary of Lakes Catholic Church in Medford, who is believed to have fled the area about two weeks ago, was indicted Thursday on charges of aggravated criminal sexual contact and endangering the welfare of a child. The charges stem from an alleged incident on April 4, in which he is accused of fondling the 13-year-old girl's breasts and kissing her.

The girl told her mother, who confronted church authorities, and they in turn

contacted the police, according to Burlington County First Assistant Prosecutor Michael Riley.

The Rev. Walter Nolan, the Diocese of Trenton's director of priest personnel, said yesterday Tumang was suspended because he left his position without authority.

Nolan said the diocese, which found out about Tumang's disappearance about two weeks ago, does not know where the priest is.

"We are cooperating with the authorities fully, as best we can," Nolan said.

He said Tumang, who was ordained in 1948, was brought into the diocese from the Philippines and was officially made

part of the diocese in about 1984. Nolan said he believes Tumang is an American citizen.

He was an associate pastor at St. Mary of the Lakes, where he has served since 1984. Nolan said Tumang's served the diocese in southern Burlington County churches exclusively.

In a separate indictment also handed up Thursday, a Baptist church deacon was charged with molesting eight girls during church-sponsored activities, according to the prosecutor's office.

Sgt. Daniel Eaves, 35, of McGuire Air Force Base, was indicted on charges of sexual assault, criminal sexual contact

and endangering the welfare of a child, said Riley.

Eaves, a deacon at Victory Baptist Church in Mansfield, is accused of molesting girls ages 3 to 15, Riley said. The assaults occurred at the church between June and January, the prosecutor said.

Riley said authorities began investigating after two girls reported the incidents to their parents.

Eaves has been stationed at McGuire in Wrightstown since October 1988, a base spokeswoman said.

Eaves is being held in the county jail on \$25,000 cash bail. If convicted, he faces up to 60 years in prison.