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NCNow News

Man suing Diocese of Ogdensburg over alleged sex abuse by priest

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OGDENSBURG -- A man is suing the Diocese of Ogdensburg over alleged sexual abuse by a priest who held church positions in Ogdensburg, Raymondville, Brasher Falls, Newton Falls and Star Lake.

The announcement of the suit comes from attorney Patrick Noaker of Noaker Law Firm LLC.

Noaker says the defendant, referred to in court documents as “Anonymous GF,” is suing related to sexual abuse by Msgr. John M Waterhouse that occurred when the man was an altar boy and parishioner from 1973 through 1978 at St. Joseph’s Church in West

He was ordained and was made an assistant pastor at St. Mary’s Church in Potsdam in 1945. In 1947, he was made assistant pastor at St. Alphonsus Church in Tupper Lake. In 1950, Waterhouse was an assistant pastor at St. Mary’s Cathedral in Ogdensburg and was secretary of the Diocese Tribunal. In 1951, he was made assistant chancellor for the Ogdensburg diocese, and chancellor of the diocese in 1957. Waterhouse was then pastor at St. Raymond Church in Raymondville in 1959. In 1968, he was pastor at St. Patrick’s Church in Brasher Falls. In 1978, he was pastor of St. Anthony of Padua Church in Newton Falls and St. Hubert’s Church in Star Lake. Waterhouse died on Dec. 28, 1995. The dates come from a timeline included in Noaker’s news release.

The case is filed under the New York Child Victims Act (CVA), which allows survivors of childhood sexual abuse to file lawsuits for sexual abuse no matter when the abuse occurred. Idaho Attorney Leander James, who also represents the man, reported that “This case is being filed under the New York Child Victims Act, which opened the courtroom doors to victims of sexual abuse. This law is especially important because it allows survivors of sexual abuse cases where the victims are children who can’t understand the impact of the abuse until well into adulthood.”

St. Joseph is a small country church with a rectory immediately beside the church containing the living quarters for the priests. At the time the plaintiff attended, approximately 100 parishioners attended mass on Sunday. The Plaintiff was one of between four to six altar boys who served at St. Joseph’s, Noaker’s announcement said.

Msgr. Waterhouse is not on the list of credibly accused priests on the Diocese of Ogdensburg website. According to the Official Catholic Directory for 1973, Msgr. Waterhouse was assigned to St. Joseph’s parish as well as one of the Diocese of Ogdensburg Consultors and a synodal examiner. Msgr. Waterhouse had a long career in the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

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