

Priest accused of abuse while at parish in Mass.

Sexual misconduct allegations widen

By Stephen Kurkjian
GLOBE STAFF

A priest who was ordered by the Worcester Diocese in 1971 to seek medical treatment for pedophilia had sexually abused several boys repeatedly at a parish in East Douglas, according to one of the alleged victims.

The alleged victim, who asked that his identity not be disclosed, said that the Rev. David A. Holley forced him and two boyhood friends to engage in repeated acts of oral sex while Holley served as assistant pastor of St. Denis Church.

The accounts of sexual abuse provided to The Globe by the alleged

victim, now a 40-year-old Boston communications specialist, are the first public allegations that Holley molested youths while assigned to parishes in central Massachusetts between 1960 and 1972.

Holley was accused in a civil suit filed Wednesday in New Mexico of sexually abusing two men in the early 1970s while serving as a priest at a parish in Alamogordo, N.M. The lawyer representing the two alleged victims said Friday that he had heard from about 10 others since the lawsuit was filed, contending they, too, had been abused by Holley at the Alamogordo parish.

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The Worcester Diocese, which initially recommended Holy to treatment and continued to supervise his assignments, now fears that the Roman Catholic priest may have abused young boys in at least four dioceses — including Worcester, one in New Mexico and two in Texas — during his 20 years as an active priest, according to a source close to the diocese. The source also said the diocese was told by another person that he had been abused by Holy when the priest was assigned to one

of the four churches in the Worcester area.

Holy, now 65 and living in Denver as a retired priest, has been unavailable for comment since the lawsuit was filed. Late last week, the Worcester Diocese ordered the Connecticut-born Holy back to Massachusetts for medical evaluation.

According to church sources, Holy's return will mark the first time that diocese officials have seen him since the early 1970s, when he was located by the Order of the Paraclete Treatment Center to serve in nearby parishes.

But neither the priests nor the congregations at the churches appear to have been told by diocese or Paraclete officials that Holy and Porter had been undergoing treatment for pedophilia.

"How could he have gone from church to church across the country doing things like this for 25 years," said the East Douglas man, who has accused Holy of sexual abuse. "Were there no adults willing to stand up?"

According to the 40-year-old man, Holy abused him and several of his East Douglas friends separately before making the westward move.

All were about 10 years old at the time and for the most part came from lower-middle class families that served as the core of the St. Denis parish. Parishioners had welcomed Holy's arrival enthusiastically, believing the tall, outgoing priest might be spiritually able to succeed the Rev. Richard Don, an aging priest who had presided at St. Denis for many years.

Holy seemed to have special affection for the altar boys and other preadolescent males in the parish, often inviting small groups to visit him in the rectory or church basement following afternoon Catholic youth education classes, the source said.

Invariably, however, Holy would tell an off-color story or joke, and then bring out a collection of Playboy magazines or look of cards that showed couples in sexually graphic poses, the man said.

The man allegedly suggested that into sexual encounters on numerous occasions, the communications specialist recalled Saturday, Holy, he said, would first place the hand of one of the boys in his reach and begin masturbating or take out his penis and engage the boys in fellatio.

The man said he recalls five different times within the St. Denis complex where Holy abused him, including on the altar and within the sacristy. Although the boys knew they were engaging in improper behavior, the communications specialist said, they never disobeyed Holy's directives not to tell their parents or others of the acts.

"We knew we were being naughty but here the priest was being naughty with us and telling it was our secret," the man said.

Now, 30 years later, the man said

troubled priests near Albuquerque. Although the number of alleged victims may be far less, Holy's case is raising many of the same questions of institutional responsibility and priorities that came out of the case of James R. Porter, the former Fall River priest, who allegedly molested nearly 100 youths in the 1980s.

Both men were sent by their dioceses to New Mexico for treatment and both were released periodically by the Order of the Paraclete Treatment Center to serve in nearby parishes.

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Ex-students at Wisconsin school accuse friars of molesting them

become aware of who molested.

The newspaper said it interviewed eight men who attended the school.

Two friars accused have left the school, at least two have died and one still worked at the school in the past week, the newspaper said. The number of friars accused could not immediately be determined.

Four were identified by name in the newspaper article.

On Sunday, Rebarth said the friar involved in the 1987 episode was fired in 1988, but while Rebarth was in Rome that year, the diocese was reviewed by the provincial council on the basis of a psychological evaluation and professional advice.

"When new information was revealed last week," the leader "was surprised from his duties," Rebarth said.

Most of the eight accused acted not to be identified in the article. Three said they attempted suicide partly because of what they said the friars did.

Michael Buckles, 58, of San Diego, said the Journal had had more than 40 sexual encounters with a teacher between 1975 and 1978, including one sex act and two abortions. He also reported sexual contact with two other friars. In another episode, he said he was at a Catholic pre-nuptial house in Detroit at age 17 when a priest entered his room and had sex with him.

Buckles was one of the two accused who entered the Capuchin order and received money for therapy sessions in 1975 and 1976. He said he did not immediately report his encounters because he thought acts could lead to expulsion.

According to Bishop Larry T. Mathison, head of the Amariello Diocese in Texas, Bishop Harrison told him that Holy had a problem with molesting children and that the diocese had sought to help the priest by sending him to the Paraclete center for treatment.

"Bishop Harrison told me that he knew Holy had a problem which is why they sent him out here," Bishop Mathison said in a telephone interview. "That once he [Holy] had come out here they had lost track of him."

Bishop Mathison said he had contacted Holy after Holy was accused of making advances toward a 15-year-old nephew of a newly ordained priest at St. Joseph's Church in Amariello in 1982. The nephew and his parents were visiting from Mexico and were staying at the same rectory where Holy was living, Bishop Mathison said.

The teenager later told his uncle that Holy approached him late one night and invited him to his room to watch a movie on television that featured soft-core pornographic scenes. While the movie was in progress, Holy allegedly tried to show the boy sexually explicit photographs. The boy, however, refused Holy.

Bishop Mathison said he had also been told by Bishop Joseph A. Foreman, head of the San Angelo diocese where Holy had served before coming to Amariello, that Holy had "multiple problems" with pornography and young boys during his several years there.

Holy left Amariello and returned to Albuquerque where he worked as a pastor at St. Joseph's Hospital until 1987. He then moved to Denver and worked for a year as a chaplain at St. Anthony's Hospital before retiring.

The Worcester Diocese issued a compassionate statement last week to anyone who might have been abused by Holy.

However, according to Reardon, the church is not ready to make public its personnel file on Holy.

Also, Reardon said, while the diocese stands ready to offer psychological counseling, if necessary, to any who may have been abused by Holy, the diocese has not started an active campaign to seek out potential victims.

He said the diocese's policy in dealing with such allegations was spelled out in a statement by Bishop Harrison in mid-October, about a week before he was contacted for the first time by an alleged victim of Holy.

While the diocese may be restricted by the legal process in how it responds to every allegation, Bishop Harrison pledged not to assign any priest to a ministry if it is accurately accused of misconduct. He also said an children and parents to make known to the diocese any complaint concerning sexual misconduct immediately, emphasizing that it had been a grievous error to keep such allegations private in the past.

Perhaps the most open admission of the diocese's knowledge of Holy's problems appears to have been made by Bishop William J. Harrison, head of the Worcester

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