

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

2 ROYAL CITY RECORD/NEW WESTMINSTER NOW SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1992

Priest receives five charges of sexual assault

Six charges of sexual assault laid against a former New Westminster priest have been reduced to five following a preliminary hearing in Burnaby provincial court last Tuesday.

Full trial proceedings begin in New Westminster June 15.

The charge of having sexual intercourse with a female under the age of 14 was dropped following a day and a

half long preliminary hearing in which two females testified against McCann, saying he had sexually abused them when they were teenagers. Judge Holmes placed a ban on publication of evidence given at the preliminary hearing.

McCann, 64, has been charged with having sexual intercourse with a female under the age of 16. He has also been charged with two counts of committing indecent assault and with two counts of committing acts of gross

indecenty.

The alleged offences took place while Father McCann was serving as a priest at St. Augustine's Church in Vancouver from 1972 to 1973 and at St. Peter's Church in New Westminster from 1975 to 1979.

Father McCann also served as parish priest in Nootka, B.C., Lethbridge, Alberta, Fort St. John, Edmonton and Ganges, Salt Spring Island.

Priest charged in sex offences

Police ask victims to come forward

By LORI PAPPALJOHN

Royal City Record/NOW reporter

Father John McCann, a Roman Catholic priest, was arrested and charged in New Westminster provincial court Thursday with six counts relating to sexual offences involving females under the age of 16.

Police are asking anyone having information to these incidents or similar incidents to contact them. The sexual assault charges include sexual intercourse, indecent assault and gross indecency all with a females under 14 years of age.

The alleged offences took place while Father McCann was serving as a priest at St. Peter's Church on Royal Avenue from 1975 to 1979 and at St. Augustine's Church in Vancouver from 1972 to 1973.

The complaints involve more than one female, police said, but refused to say how many. The arrest resulted after a six-month investigation sparked by complaints to the police department. Police say Father McCann was working with young people at the parish. He was in charge of St. Peter's when the alleged offences occurred. Former students say he also occasionally drove them to school in the church van.

Father McCann also served as parish priest in Nootka, B.C. from 1959 to 1963; St. Patrick's church, Lethbridge, Alberta from 1963 to 1970; Fort St. John, B.C. from 1981 to 1983; Edmonton, Alberta from 1984 to 1990; and Ganges, Salt Spring Island August 1990 until October 1990 at which time he was removed from duty.

Father Mendenhall, media spokesman for the Roman Catholic Church, refused to comment on the arrest, saying the issue was before the courts.

Police say investigation into the allegations is continuing. Police are also asking anyone having information pertaining to these incidents or similar incidents to contact Detective Hjordleifson or Sgt. Dehaas of the criminal investigation division of the New Westminster Police Department, 525-5411.

Father McCann was released on bail Thursday and will appear in court September 4.

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RC RECORD/NOW 25 DEC 1991