

Waite Park

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ment finished its investigation Monday.

Waite Park Police Chief Ken Dickinson, who headed his department's investigation, declined Wednesday to provide any official details. "Because of what's involved, I'm not going to say anything," Dickinson said.

Other authorities close to the investigation also declined to comment, saying any comment would be inappropriate while charges are pending.

"It's been kept pretty quiet," one source said. "Anytime anything like this happens, it's pretty shocking."

The investigation has not been conducted any differently than any other police investigation even though a Catholic priest is involved, sources say. "They're no different than anyone else," one source close to the investigation said.

Gauthier has no known record of any similar behavior, sources say.

A Sauk Centre priest who is a close friend of Gauthier's said today he was shocked when he heard of the allegations. The priest described Gauthier as a friendly, gregarious man "who was really concerned about his people."

Local church officials apparently were aware of the police investigation, sources said. Gauthier freely offered the one statement he gave to the police and did not have a lawyer present during the interview, the sources said.

Gauthier, who was born in Tingwick, Quebec, on June 9, 1903, had been chaplain at St. Michael's Hospital in Sauk Centre since 1952, according to records kept by the St. Cloud Catholic Diocese.

The hospital was sold to the city of Sauk Centre in 1971 but Gauthier stayed on for a time in his capacity as chaplain, according to hospital officials.

In recent years he has lived at the Riverview Manor nursing home in Sauk Centre, where he also carried out chaplain's duties.

Gauthier, who was ordained in 1930, celebrated Mass both at the hospital and the nursing home and performed other priestly duties at parishes in the Sauk Centre area when needed.

After ordination, Gauthier worked as an assistant pastor, a pastor and as a chaplain in various hospitals. He also was co-editor of a French-language newspaper in Canada, according to records.

Gauthier was officially certified a priest in the St. Cloud Diocese on Dec. 1, 1952.