

## Geneva priest 'truly sorry'

### Church leader denies role in documentary

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Posted Friday, September 01, 2006

Following the order of his superior, the Rev. Msgr. Joseph F. Jarmoluk begged forgiveness of his Geneva parish Thursday.

In a 45-minute Mass called specifically to deliver an apology, Jarmoluk spoke briefly. He said that in the course of his 51 years, he has said and done things that were not in keeping with the witness God intends Christians to present to the world about their faith.

"For that I am truly sorry," Jarmoluk said.

Bishop Thomas Doran, head of the Rockford Diocese, directed Jarmoluk early last week to apologize to his parish, St. Peter Catholic Church, for unspecified actions, according to an Aug. 15 letter Jarmoluk sent parishioners.

"I think it's a shame that this has happened to Father Joe and the St. Peter's parish and it's an insignificant group of people who keep this going," said Kim Koechley, a parishioner. "There is no evidence of wrongdoing on Father Joe's part."

Doran ordered Jarmoluk to dismiss his personal attorney and stop production of a documentary, radio show and Web site message board, the letter said. Jarmoluk wrote that he was ordered to "seek the forgiveness of people whom I might have offended and to forgive those who have offended me."

About 100 people were in the half-empty church yesterday to hear Jarmoluk obey that command.

In a homily, the Rev. Joel Ripinger, a priest from Marmion Abbey in Aurora, told parishioners he knew that the horror of sexual abuse by clergy is compounded when parishioners feel they can't trust their leadership.

But, "the time for blaming and naming must give way for healing," he said, calling for people to forgive each other and work on healing the parish.

"It was very, very beautiful. I am glad I went," said Mary Lu O'Halloran, a St. Peter parishioner. "A seed was planted tonight. A new beginning for a beautiful parish."

Jarmoluk did not explain his role in the documentary "Forsaken: A Monsignor's Silent Fight to Save his Faith," produced by CTL-TV.

On its site, [www.cinecura.com](http://www.cinecura.com), CTL explains that its several-part series currently in

production will explore how Jarmoluk was the subject of a conspiracy between Geneva Mayor Kevin Burns, Kane County State's Attorney John A. Barsanti, and a group of parishioners.

Owen Phelps, Rockford Diocese spokesman, said Wednesday that Jarmoluk had assured superiors that he had nothing to do with the documentary. And on its Web site, CTL said it has not been funded by Jarmoluk,

The subject of the documentary stems from the actions of former St. Peter priest Mark Campobello, who was convicted in 2004 on two counts of sexual abuse of two girls beginning in 1999.

One girl was a 14-year-old St. Peter Elementary School student assaulted by Campobello during the first half of 1999. The other was an Aurora Central Catholic High School student who was 16 and 17 when the incidents occurred between November 1999 and March 2000.

While Campobello is now in prison on an eight-year sentence, a suit by the two girls against the Rockford Diocese for their handling of the case is ongoing.

Several former and current St. Peter parishioners, including O'Halloran, have spoken out in the past few years to urge the diocese and Jarmoluk to fully explain their role in the Campobello incidents.

In a message board created by CTL, this group has been nicknamed the "Group of 14" for their supposed number. Several people posting messages in support of Jarmoluk threatened the 14 and accused them of lying.

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