

Trial to begin in May for priest accused of sexual abuse

By Rita Hoover
Staff writer

The trial of a former Geneva priest charged with sexual abuse with an eighth-grade student at St. Peter Catholic School will begin this spring.

Mark A. Campobello, 38, of Belvidere, will appear before Judge Timothy Q. Sheldon Monday, May 24, at the Kane County Judicial Center in St. Charles.

Campobello was indicted Jan. 2, 2003 on five counts of criminal sexual assault and 10 counts of aggravated criminal sexual abuse

for allegedly abusing the 14-year-old Geneva girl between January and May 1999 while he was serving as a priest at St. Peter Catholic Church.

Court documents indicate the incidents allegedly took place at Campobello's private living quarters in the St. Peter Church rectory as well as the victim's home.

Jody Gleason, Kane County assistant state's attorney, confirmed Feb. 2 that the church's current resident priest, the Rev. Joseph Jarmoluk, has been subpoenaed to testify in the case.

Jarmoluk, who has been criticized recent-

ly by a national organization of victim advocates for allegedly chastising a St. Peter parishioner who questioned the church's handling of the incident, announced to the parish Jan. 31 that he had cancelled plans for a three-month Australian sabbatical.

Gleason said she has "no reason to believe" the trip's cancellation was "related to the subpoena at all." Catholic Diocese of Rockford officials could not be reached for comment, although Owen Phelps, spokesperson for the diocese, said he had no knowledge of the subpoena or the cancellation of the sabbatical.

Gleason said she expects the case to go to trial and confirmed the victim's willingness to testify. Court documents indicate prosecutors have five audio cassette tapes containing conversations between the victim and Campobello.

If found guilty, Campobello could serve three to seven

years with probation for the sexual abuse charges, and between four and 15 years without probation for the sexual assault charges.

Campobello also is awaiting a second trial date on aggravated criminal sexual abuse charges for acts that allegedly occurred between Nov. 1, 1999 and March 31, 2000, with a student at Aurora Central Catholic High School. Campobello was employed as a teacher at the high school at the time of the alleged incidents.

Aggravated criminal sexual abuse is a Class Two felony, punishable by up to seven years in prison, if found guilty.

In May 2003, the Catholic Diocese of Rockford was charged with contempt of court and fined \$100 when they refused to turn over documents subpoenaed by the state pertaining to Campobello's personnel records.

That case is being handled by the Chicago-based law firm Hinshaw & Culbertson.



**Mark
Campobello**