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Accused ex-priest to be tried in May

ST. CHARLES □ The trial of Catholic priest Mark Campobello on charges he sexually assaulted young girls is slated to begin May 24.

The date was set Thursday in Kane County Court.

Campobello was arrested in December 2002 while serving at St. James Parish in Belvidere. He first was charged with sexually assaulting a then-14-year-old Geneva girl between January and May 1999. During that time, Campobello lived at St. Peter Parish in Geneva and was assistant principal at Aurora Catholic High School.

In November 2003, prosecutors brought another set of charges alleging that Campobello sexually assaulted a then-15-year-old girl between November 1999 and March 2000. He was still at the Geneva-Aurora posts at the time.

Both sets of charges began when the young women went to police or a lawyer. Campobello, 38, has pleaded not guilty to all charges.

In a related case, the Illinois Appellate Court is considering whether the Rockford Diocese, which includes Kane County, must turn over personnel records on Campobello. Kane County Judge Timothy Sheldon ordered that some documents be given to prosecutors. The church refused and appealed.

Lawyers still are submitting documents on their arguments to the Appellate Court, which has not set a date to rule.

Campobello, who was relieved of his duties in Belvidere when he was arrested, was ordained in Rockford in 1991. He served at a number of parishes, including St. Peter and Holy Family in Rockford. He started in Belvidere in June 2001.