

Criminal charges, sentence, lawsuits mar priesthood

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Congregations from coast to coast were rocked this week after two priests were arrested, one B.C. pastor was sentenced to 15 months in jail and the Roman Catholic Church settled a \$200,000 lawsuit with a man who was sexually assaulted by a priest in the 1970s.

A Quebec Roman Catholic priest was arrested Wednesday and charged with nine counts of sexual assault on four boys who attended a private Catholic school in the 1980s.

Raymond-Marie Lavoie, 69, was a teacher at the Seminaire St. Alphonse, in Ste.-Anne-de-Beaupre, just outside Quebec City, when the assaults are alleged to have taken place.

The first man, who was 12 at the time of the events, pressed charges against Lavoie in 2008.

The provincial police launched an investigation and eventually found three other alleged victims, all boarders at the college, between the ages of 12 and 15 at the time.

Lavoie faces charges of sexual assault, indecent assault and gross indecency.

The arrest came one day after a prominent Anglican priest was arrested in Newfoundland and Labrador on charges of possessing and distributing child pornography.

Rev. Robin Barrett, 52, of Conception Bay South, near St. John's, was charged following a child exploitation investigation by Toronto police that tipped them off to a suspect in Newfoundland.

Barrett has been relieved of his duties at St. Paul's Anglican Church in Goulds, near St. John's, according to a news release from the Diocesan Synod of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador.

Meanwhile a man who was sexually abused by a Newfoundland priest 30 years ago won a \$200,000 settlement of his lawsuit against the Roman Catholic Church.

On Tuesday, the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corp. agreed to the settlement with the man, who was abused by the late Father James Hickey in the 1970s. Hickey, a prominent priest, died in 1992. He was convicted in the late 1980s of numerous counts of sexual abuse.

Eight other men, who were also abused by Hickey, are seeking compensation from the church, which a judge ruled earlier this year is liable for the abuse.

At the other end of the country a British Columbia pastor was sentenced to 15 months in jail after he admitted making an explicit video that simulated the rape of a young teenager.

Larry Robert Collins, 45, a pastor from the Church of Nazarene in Surrey, B.C., was nabbed following an investigation that began back in June 2008.

Investigators found a video showing a teenage victim in sexually explicit scenes, interspersed with photographs of the girl covered in writing that encouraged her "rape," said Const. Rosiane Racine of the B.C. Integrated Child Exploitation Unit.

After the evidence trail led to Collins, the pastor confessed to making the video and distributing it on the Internet.

He was convicted of possession of child pornography. Collins was also originally charged with distributing child pornography, but that count was stayed by the Crown.

With files from Canwest News Service, Vancouver Province and St. John's Telegram

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