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Fort Worth Roman Catholic Diocese settles lawsuit with women raped by priest

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FORT WORTH - Two women raped and sodomized by a Roman Catholic priest at Federal Medical Center Carswell have reached an out-of-court settlement with the Diocese of Fort Worth, according to a statement from attorneys for the women.

In 2007, Vincent Bassie Inametti, 51, pleaded guilty to sexual abuse of the women and the next year was sentenced to four years in prison.

Terms of the settlement, reached this week, were not disclosed at the women's request, said Tahira Khan Merritt, a Dallas attorney for one of them.

"They are both afraid of Inametti," she said. "He said he would kill them."

Inametti, described as a "predatory wolf" in the women's 2008 lawsuit, was a member of a religious order called the Missionary Society of St. Paul, based in Nigeria. It is unclear whether the process to defrock him is under way. Before 2000, Inametti served in parishes in Eastland County as well as at Our Mother of Mercy Catholic Church in Fort Worth.

"Under the terms of the arbitration agreement, we're restricted on commenting," said Jeff Hensley, diocese spokesman.

In court filings, the diocese had argued that no evidence showed it employed Inametti during the time he was accused of sexually assaulting the women. Both women were serving long sentences for drug distribution offenses.

"Inametti was employed by [the] Federal Bureau of Prisons at the time" of the assaults, according to the diocese's filings.

Attorneys for the former inmates, identified in the lawsuit as Jane Doe I and Jane Doe II, responded that Inametti counseled, heard confessions, converted inmates and conducted Mass for them.

"As a priest, he was granted faculties to minister by the Fort Worth bishop and thus assigned by the diocese," according to the lawsuit.

According to a joint statement by Merritt and Robert L. Greening of Dallas, who represented Jane Doe I, the diocese knew that Inametti had fathered a child and that other reports described his behavior with women as aggressive and inappropriate.

"The diocese dumped a dangerous priest off on the federal prison system when they knew or should have known he had problems, including prior reports of physical and emotional misconduct against vulnerable women," they said. "He was too risky to work as a priest in a parish, but the church had no qualms about representing to the government that he was 'suitable' as a prison chaplain."

Jerry A. Murad Jr., a Fort Worth attorney for Jane Doe II, challenged the diocese to release the names of all priests who have been accused of sexually abusing vulnerable adults.

The diocese posts on its website a list of priests who have allegations "with a semblance of truth" against them involving sexual misconduct with minors.

Inametti was sentenced far above federal guidelines by U.S. District Judge Terry Means. The judge called Inametti's conduct "grossly predatory, threatening, traitorous and abusive."

Inametti, who is a naturalized U.S. citizen, is set for release in October 2011.

-- [Darren Barbee](#)