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FLOOR DEBATE

January 18, 2006 LB 57

Nash, who is in his mid-fifties, came to Alaska to enter the seminary in 1978. He was a deacon with St. Paul Catholic Church until his ordination as a priest in 1980. He ministered in Juneau, Ketchikan, K-e-t-c-h-i-k-a-n, and Petersburg. When the church received Post's formal complaint, Nash was ministering at the Cathedral of the Nativity in Juneau. He denied the accusation in a written statement and voluntarily stepped aside while the allegations were being investigated. Witnesses at a review board hearing in February said Nash told boys to remove all their clothes except their underwear and allow Nash to tickle them. He also required the boys to massage his neck, shoulders, and feet. He required one boy to drop both his trousers and underwear so he could spank him on his bare buttocks. Nash admitted that the witness accounts were substantially correct. He denied some of the more serious allegations, Bishop Warfel said. Attempts to reach Nash for comment were unsuccessful, because he has an unpublished phone number in Omaha. A message left at the home of his lawyer was not immediately answered. A Juneau lay committee looking into the allegations sent its findings to the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith in Rome. Bishop Warfel notified the Vatican that there was sufficient evidence that Nash had sexually abused minors. Warfel said he was notified December 23 that the Vatican had dismissed Nash on November 18. Quote: As such, Mr. Nash is no longer a priest of the diocese of Juneau and is forbidden to present himself as a priest, or to engage in priestly ministry. He is also relieved of the obligations associated with ordained priesthood, including that of celibacy, Warfel said in a letter to the Juneau diocese. As part of the dismissal agreement, Nash will receive retirement benefits when he reaches age 65. The diocese also has agreed to help the victim Post fight what it describes as an "unjust lawsuit." The diocese is helping the victim fight this unjust lawsuit brought by the defrocked priest, Nash, alleging that Post defamed him when making the allegations of sexual abuse. Bishop Warfel said he was disturbed by the ex-priest's insistence that his behavior did not constitute sexual abuse of minors. Quote: The actions which Mr. Nash admitted were, by their nature, sexually abusive, violating the intimacy, privacy, freedom that are so important to sexual well-being, most especially for children and adolescents, Bishop Warfel said. Now, that shows that not every