

Two priests facing trial on charges related to sex abuse at Vatican seminary

The Vatican City State prosecuting attorney requested an indictment against two priests on charges related to the sexual abuse of boys at a minor seminary located at the Vatican.

Following an investigation that began in November 2017, the Vatican prosecuting attorney issued notices Sept. 16 and Sept. 17 requesting that Father Gabriele Martinelli be tried for sexual abuse allegedly committed in the St. Pius X Pre-Seminary and that Father Enrico Radice, former rector of the seminary, be tried for aiding and abetting the abuse, the Vatican press office announced Sept. 17.

The alleged abuse occurred prior to 2012, the statement said.

Formally requesting the indictment against the two required the personal intervention of Pope Francis, the statement said, because at the time the crimes allegedly occurred, Vatican law required the victim himself to make the accusation within one year of the crime's occurrence.

The request for the indictments "was possible by virtue of a specific provision made by the Holy Father July 29," the Vatican statement said.

The pre-seminary is run by Diocese of Como, Italy, but located inside the Vatican. Boys in middle school and high school live there, serve Mass in St. Peter's Basilica and attend a Catholic school in Rome while considering applying to a seminary when they are older.

Reports of abuse began circulating in 2013 and were investigated by seminary staff and the Diocese of Como, the Vatican had said in November when it opened its own criminal investigation following media reports and a book that repeated the allegations.

In his book, *Original Sin*, the Italian journalist Gianluigi Nuzzi, whose books based on leaked Vatican documents were at the heart of two other Vatican trials, had written about one student sexually abusing another at the seminary.

The Italian television program *Le Iene* followed up with a program featuring an interview with a young Polish man, identified only as 21-year-old Kamil, who said he arrived at the pre-seminary at age 13, wanting to be an altar server for the pope. He said he was thinking only vaguely of becoming a priest one day.

Kamil claimed another student, one given responsibility by the rector for

determining the liturgical roles of all the students at papal Masses, regularly sexually abused his roommate.

Kamil said the older student would come into their room at night, get into bed with his roommate and abuse him. The alleged abuser was ordained to the priesthood in June 2017, "Le Iene" reported.

Father Martinelli, 26, now a priest of the Diocese of Como, allegedly is the older seminarian. Italian authorities have been conducting their own investigation of him.