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ALLEGATION HIGHLIGHTS A CHURCH'S STRUGGLES

Summary: A Portland case points to the constraints the archdiocese faces in ensuring it has an accurate portrait of the **priests** it hires. When the Rev. Gus Krumm was abruptly removed from his Roman Catholic parish last month after disclosing past "indiscretions," most members of the Southeast Portland church knew nothing about an accusation of sexual misconduct in his past.

They didn't know that Krumm had been accused of molesting a 10th-grade boy in 1981 and that Krumm's Franciscan superiors had paid money to settle the claim. They also didn't know that Archbishop John Vlazny was aware of the settlement when he appointed Krumm head pastor of Ascension Parish in Portland nearly four years ago. As the nation's bishops debate what should be done with **priests** accused of **abusing** children, Krumm's case illuminates the struggles of the Archdiocese of Portland to ensure that no **priests** pose a risk. Vlazny acknowledges that more scrutiny is necessary and may push for a review board of non-clergy members to help make hiring decisions.

"One of the suggestions that strikes me as a very good one is a lay review board," he said. "I should have to get their consent."

Krumm's case is significant because it shows how little the archdiocese knows about the background of 181 religious order **priests**, active and retired, who live and work in Oregon but who are primarily accountable to superiors based elsewhere.

Krumm's superior, the Rev. Finian McGinn, declined to say where Krumm is staying and rejected an interview request. McGinn is the provincial minister of a Franciscan order based in Oakland, Calif.

Krumm, a 48-year-old Franciscan friar, has denied molesting the 10th-grader.

After Krumm was removed from Ascension on May 21, a statement read at Mass the following Sunday said Krumm had disclosed "indiscretions which occurred in the early 1970s and mid-1980s." McGinn would not provide details, although he said they did not involve the accusation by the 10th-grader. He said Krumm is undergoing **psychological** tests and will work with experts who deal with **priests** accused of sexual misconduct.

When Vlazny decided to appoint Krumm to Ascension, he relied on McGinn's word to determine that Krumm would not pose a risk in Portland.

McGinn told Vlazny that two internal investigations had cleared Krumm. Vlazny said he sought few details.

"They said it was a false allegation, and I accepted that, and I didn't feel I should be conducting an investigation of our own," Vlazny said last week.

Unlike diocesan **priests**, who usually are ordained here and report directly to Vlazny, religious order **priests** move in and out of the archdiocese. They are financially supported by their superiors, who often are based in other states. The superiors nominate them for posts here, and Vlazny can approve or reject the nominations.

Religious order **priests** staff about 35 of the 125 parishes in the archdiocese, which includes about 300,000 Roman Catholics west of the Cascades. Others teach at schools and live at abbeys.

Vlazny maintains personal histories of the 100 active diocesan **priests**, but not of the religious order **priests**. Those files stay with their superiors. And if someone complains about a religious order **priest** to his superior, there is no clear path to Vlazny's desk.

Krumm is an example.

McGinn told parishioners that no incident of sexual misconduct had been reported and no complaints had been received about Krumm during his tenure at Ascension. However, a former youth minister who feared that Krumm posed a risk to children did complain a year ago.

"As parents, you just can't accept red flag behavior from a **priest** just because he's a **priest**," said Kristina Kallen, the former youth minister, a mother of three who has attended Ascension since childhood.

Following the chain of command, Kallen met with McGinn a year ago. She told him that Krumm was pressuring her to hire as youth leader a man whom Krumm knew had been banned from working with children in parishes in Orange County, Calif. A spokeswoman for the Diocese of Orange confirmed that the man was banned in 1999 after his roommate was convicted of sexually **abusing** teen-agers in their home.

Kallen ultimately refused to hire the man.

McGinn told The Oregonian that he had talked to Krumm and "put certain restrictions on this kind of thing," but he did not see a need to share Kallen's complaint with Vlazny.

Vlazny said two factors played into his decision to appoint Krumm.

First, McGinn told him that two internal investigations had cleared Krumm. McGinn told The Oregonian he did not know what those investigations entailed, except that one of them was conducted by "people within the order, by psychologists." He did not know why the Franciscans paid to settle a claim they considered false.

Second, Vlazny said he took into account McGinn's "glowing" report about Krumm's 10-year tenure at his California parish.

As a result, Vlazny said, it would not have been fair to reject Krumm because of the settlement.

"It seems to me that I'd be victimizing somebody who might already have been victimized with the false allegations," Vlazny said.

McGinn said the earlier accusation against Krumm was not part of the "indiscretions" mentioned in the statement at Mass on May 26. The earlier claim arose in the early 1990s, when Krumm's accuser was among more than 30 students who accused friars at St. Anthony's

23-year period.

Krumm taught at the school in the 1980s, before becoming an associate pastor at a Huntington Beach, Calif., parish.

In 1993, a panel of parents, therapists and an attorney concluded that 11 friars at St. Anthony's had molested 34 boys from 1964 to 1987. The friars' names were kept confidential. McGinn said Krumm was not among them.

However, the Franciscans paid an out-of-court settlement to Krumm's accuser in 1995. McGinn would not reveal the amount.

"In all these settlements, it does not necessarily mean that there was guilt involved," McGinn said.

In 1998, McGinn nominated Krumm to fill the opening at Ascension, the only parish in the archdiocese staffed by the Franciscans. Known for their brown cassocks and founder, St. Francis of Assisi, the Franciscans have served Ascension for decades.

Looking back at his decision to hire Krumm, "I think now I would probably have a review board with me," Vlazny said. "Maybe they might have some questions. We would go back to the Franciscans again, do our due diligence."

Earlier this year, the Archdiocese of Portland published a child **abuse** policy that codified old safeguards and called for new ones, such as a hotline and clearer reporting process for complaints, plus more background checks and training for employees and volunteers who work with children.

The policy was required as part of the archdiocese's settlement in 2000 with 23 men who accused Maurice Grammond, a suspended Oregon **priest**, of sexually **abusing** them as boys.

Vlazny said he had been considering a review board before Krumm's removal, in anticipation of a national bishops meeting June 13 in Dallas, Texas.

"I think everyone's looking for the bishops to be more in sync and to be more accountable to our people."

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