

Indiana bishop warned officials of priest's history of sex abuse

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FORT WAYNE, Ind. — A Northern Indiana bishop warned Roman Catholic Church officials nearly 20 years ago that a now-defrocked Boston priest who is accused of molesting 130 boys had a history of sexual relations with boys.

Bishop John M. D'Arcy of the Fort Wayne-South Bend Roman Catholic Diocese was an auxiliary bishop in the Boston archdiocese when he told Boston Cardinal Bernard Law of his concerns in a 1984 letter.

In it, D'Arcy urged Law to rethink the assignment of then-priest John Geoghan to a parish where he would have contact with children.

"(Father) Geoghan has a history of homosexual involvement with young

boys. I understand his recent departure from St. Brendan's, Dorchester may be related to this problem," D'Arcy wrote.

Law nonetheless approved Geoghan's transfer and stayed silent about the former priest, who now faces allegations that he fondled or raped 130 children between 1962 and 1995.

Geoghan, 66, was defrocked in 1998 and convicted Jan. 18 in the first of three child sex abuse cases.

Law, meanwhile, faces accusations of negligence and deceit amid calls for him to resign. He has said he won't because he wants to help repair the damage to the church.

D'Arcy, who was transferred to Indiana a few months after writing his letter to Law, said he had forgotten about it until last spring, when a law-

yer in Boston called to tell him a copy of the letter had surfaced.

As an auxiliary bishop, D'Arcy had the authority to recommend priests for placement, although the final decision rested with his superiors.

After he was transferred to Indiana in early 1985, D'Arcy said he immersed himself in his work, forgetting about his letter about Geoghan.

"I never knew anything was happening with Geoghan," he said. "I didn't know all these things were going on."

D'Arcy said he does not believe he was transferred to Indiana and made a bishop to silence his complaints about Geoghan. He said priests are able to turn down requests to go to a particular diocese.