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# Lawsuit filed against Legionaries of Christ

Jason Berry | Jun. 21, 2010

A lawsuit against the Legionaries of Christ and the estate of Fr. Marcial Maciel Degollado was filed today on behalf of Raul Gonzalez, Maciel?s son who claims he endured years of abuse by his father. The suit was filed by attorney Joel T. Faxon of Connecticut in Superior Court of New Haven, in association with attorney Jeff Anderson of Minnesota.

Anderson has scheduled a press conference to be web-streamed at his office in St. Paul, with the plaintiff Raul Gonzalez, later this morning.

The 12-count complaint, alleging negligence and sexual battery, seeks monetary and punitive damages "in excess of $15,000" -- a common legal term. When he died in 2008, "all of Father Maciel's assets were taken by the Legionaries of Christ as the Legionaries required Maciel to give all of his possessions to the Legionaries," the lawsuit alleges.

The lawsuit makes no reference to where Maciel's will or estate is located. It says the religious order "knew or should have known that Maciel had a child, that he was using Legionaries? funds to support Raul and his family, and that Maciel was misrepresenting himself to his son."

Although the Vatican is not a defendant, a copy of the lawsuit made available to NCR before filing said that "from at least the 1950?s until 2002 the Legionaries, Fr. Maciel, the presiding Pope, the Vatican, and its officials engaged in a conspiracy to conceal their knowledge of Maciel?s abuse of children."

The sharpest language in the complaint quotes from Juan Vaca's 1976 letter to Maciel, accusing him of abusing 20 Legion seminarians: ?Using the same excuse that you were in pain, you ordered me to remain in your bed. I was not yet thirteen years old; you knew that God had kept me intact until then, pure, without ever having seriously stained the innocence of my infancy, when you, on that night, in the midst of my terrible confusion and anguish, ripped the masculine virginity from me.?

The complaint says that the "Legionaries had a duty to supervise the performance of Maciel in his duties, including his role in supervising and providing spiritual instruction, guidance and counseling to minors. In breach of this duty, the Legionaries failed to take appropriate measures to prevent injury to minors, including Raul."

Anderson issued a press release Friday announcing that the suit would be filed. Jim Fair, the Legion of Christ spokesman, declined to comment, saying that he had not seen the legal petition.

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