NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Rape of elderly nun shocks community; teen arrested, charged in case

Chuck Moody Catholic News Service | Dec. 18, 2013
Pittsburgh

An 18-year-old Pennsylvania man has been charged in the Dec. 13 rape of an 85-year-old retired member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Baden.

The sister, who has not been identified out of respect for her privacy, was attacked in the parking lot of St. Titus Church in Aliquippa, about 30 miles northwest of Pittsburgh.

Andrew Bullock, 18, of Aliquippa, was arrested later that day in connection with the attack on charges of felony rape, aggravated assault, sexual assault, indecent exposure, simple assault and reckless endangerment.

He was taken to the Beaver County Jail in Beaver, where he was held on $50,000 bond pending a preliminary hearing Thursday before District Judge James DiBenedetto.

Aliquippa police said Bullock admitted to the attack during questioning after initially denying any involvement.

The victim was taken to Allegheny General Hospital in Pittsburgh for treatment and released Dec. 14.

"The Sisters of St. Joseph are deeply saddened and heartbroken by the assault of one of our sisters," Sr. Mary Pellegrino, congregational moderator, said in a statement released to the media.

"During this difficult and sensitive time, we ask that you honor and respect Sister's privacy. As we offer continued prayers of healing for our sister, we also pray for the young man who has been arrested in the assault," she said.

"We are grateful for the outpouring of support and prayers from the Aliquippa community where Sister lives, the St. Titus Parish where she serves, and the many well-wishers from across the country," Pellegrino added.

She described the victim as "a passionate advocate of nonviolence, peace and justice," who conducts a monthly prayer vigil for peace in the chapel at the motherhouse.

The victim told police she was walking in the church parking lot when she was approached from behind by a man who asked her if she needed help. She said she told the man she didn't need help and thanked him. The man then exposed himself, the victim told police. She began to walk away, and the man attacked her, punching her head and face, and sexually assaulted her, she told police.

Police said Bullock had been seen in days prior to the attack wearing similar clothing the attacker wore when he assaulted the victim. The tread pattern and size of Bullock's boots were similar to a footprint made in the snow of the church parking lot where the attack occurred, police said.

Sr. Diane Cauley, a member of the congregation, spoke at the 4 p.m. Mass Dec. 14 at St. Titus. She said the sisters were "deeply saddened and heartbroken to learn about the assault" on their fellow sister, and she reported

that the victim did not suffer any broken bones but did undergo surgery to reset her jaw, which was dislocated in the attack. She will recuperate at the motherhouse.

Cauley said the victim -- and all the Sisters of St. Joseph -- have appreciated "the many outpourings of prayer and support that have come on her behalf -- especially from the people of this parish, and others in Aliquippa."

"As we offer prayers of healing for our sister, we also pray for -- and ask you to pray for -- the young man who has been arrested in the assault," she added.

"As Sisters of St. Joseph, we live and work to bring all people into union with God and with one another. Sister ... manifests that spirit every day. Any of you who know her know that she would be the first among us to forgive the wrong that has been done to her," she said.

"We ask that you honor her life by reaching out to all victims of violence; to pray for those whose lives have led them to seek violence as a solution to whatever situation has brought them to desperation; and during this season of Advent," she continued, "to pray that God's healing presence may enter our world through the hearts and hands and mouths of each of us as Emmanuel to the world -- God with us."

[Chuck Moody is senior staff writer at the *Pittsburgh Catholic*, newspaper of the Pittsburgh diocese.]

The Next Step FORWARD [1]

DONATE NOW [1]

Enjoy this article?
Help support more like it by **donating today!** [1]

Source URL (retrieved on *08/04/2015 - 23:52*): http://ncronline.org/news/faith-parish/rape-elderly-nun-shocks-community-teen-arrested-charged-case

Links:
[1] http://ncrnews.org/webathon/donate/article-end