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Albuquerque N.M. — September 13, 2019

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This 1989 file photo shows Fr. Arthur Perrault in Albuquerque, N.M. The former Roman Catholic priest found guilty of aggravated sexual abuse in New Mexico is scheduled to be sentenced Friday, Sept. 13, 2019, in Santa Fe. Federal prosecutors are requesting a sentence of more than 30 years in prison for Perrault, once a pastor at an Albuquerque parish and a chaplain at Kirtland Air Force Base. The 81-year-old maintained his innocence throughout his trial in April. (The Albuquerque Journal via AP/File)

A former Roman Catholic priest is scheduled to be sentenced Friday in Santa Fe, where a jury found him guilty this year of sexually abusing an altar boy in the early 1990s before fleeing the country.

Federal prosecutors are requesting a sentence of more than 30 years in prison for 81-year-old Arthur Perrault, once a pastor at an Albuquerque parish and a chaplain at Kirtland Air Force Base.

Perrault — who pleaded not guilty to charges after he was returned to the United States from Tangier, Morocco, in 2017 — maintained his innocence throughout his trial in April.

Federal authorities said their pursuit of Perrault that led them to Morocco, a country that does not have an extradition treaty with the United States, showed how far they were willing to seek justice. Perrault is among more than 70 clergy members who the Santa Fe Archdiocese has identified as credibly accused of abusing children in New Mexico.

The archdiocese also is in the midst of bankruptcy proceeding as a result of the church-wide abuse scandal, which has spanned the globe.

Perrault first arrived in New Mexico in the 1960s after church officials in Connecticut sent him to a center that treated priests accused of abuse located in the secluded Jemez Mountains north of Albuquerque. The facility was operated by the religious order Servants of the Paraclete.



In this Nov. 29, 2018, file photo, the sun sets on a sign in front of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe offices in Albuquerque, N.M. A former Roman Catholic priest found guilty of sexual abuse in New Mexico is scheduled to be sentenced Friday, Sept. 13, 2019, in Santa Fe, N.M. Federal prosecutors are requesting a sentence of more than 30 years in prison for Arthur Perrault, once a pastor at an Albuquerque parish and a chaplain at Kirtland Air Force Base. Perrault maintained his innocence throughout his trial in April. (AP Photo/Susan Montoya Bryan/File)

At Perrault's trial, several men testified against the former priest, saying he abused them as children in his car, a church rectory and other locations. However, his court convictions stem only from the treatment of the one boy at the base in Albuquerque and a veterans' cemetery in Santa Fe.

The two sites are within federal jurisdiction, which federal authorities say allowed them to file charges against him. The charges carried no statute of limitations.

Prosecutors wrote in a recent court filing that they tried Perrault on charges that represented only a "small fraction" of his crimes, saying he had many more victims and that abuse had also occurred at other locations.

The victim at the center of the prosecutors' case said Perrault took him on excursions to amusement parks and the military base in Albuquerque and had

touched him inappropriately as many as 100 times starting when he was 10.

The abuse ended in 1992, the year Perrault vanished from the state. An attorney had been preparing two lawsuits at the time against the Archdiocese of Santa Fe alleging Perrault had sexually assaulted seven children.

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