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# Beloved Connecticut Priest Accused of Stealing \$1 Million from Parish



By EAMON McNIFF  
June 22, 2010

A Connecticut priest with a reputation of caring for the poor has shocked his parishioners after being [accused of faking a terminal illness](#) to cover up the alleged theft of \$1 million from his diocese.

The Rev. Kevin Gray, a 26-year veteran of the Hartford Catholic Diocese, is being [investigated](#) by the Waterbury, Conn., police department for allegedly taking money over a seven-year period from a savings fund established for the Sacred Heart parish, money that was to be used for building renovations and church debt, according to the police.

"It's hard for all of us to hear and believe this news," the Rev. John

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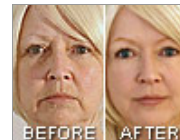
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Gatzak, spokesman for the Hartford Archdiocese told ABC News today.

According to Gatzak, the archdiocese became **suspicious** over the past year as they asked Gray to submit several years' worth of annual financial reviews from his parish.

Gray allegedly said he was unable to complete the reviews because of a serious **terminal illness** he was battling and asked for more time.

Gatzak said that although they gave Gray some leeway and extra time to submit his reports, they began to look at his parish financial records and say they made some troubling discoveries.

"It's been determined over the past seven years that annual reports were not forthcoming, and although every church has to have a financial counsel to make sure funds are used properly, Father Gray never had a financial counsel at Sacred Heart, we don't know how he didn't," Gatzak said.

Gatzak, 64, said the news has been ever more painful for the parish and it's **parishioners** because of the fact that they believed Gray was battling a serious illness, an illness they now believe may have simply been a lie to try and give the priest more time to allegedly cover up the lost funds.

### Archdiocese Questioning Whether Priest Faked Terminal Illness to Cover Up Alleged Theft

"We are now questioning whether or not he was telling the truth regarding his illness. We don't know yet," Gatzak said.

Gray's priestly faculties have been removed, and he is awaiting the outcome of the investigation at an undisclosed location, Gatzak said. The diocese declined to disclose his whereabouts and he could not be reached for comment.



WABC

Father Kevin Gray accused of stealing \$1 million from Waterbury, Ct Parish.



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The archdiocese turned over their findings to the Waterbury Police on May 21, and news of the alleged embezzlement was delivered this past Saturday to parishioners.

Gatzak said they decided to tell the Sacred Heart parishioners because Gray had been removed and rumors of his absence had began to surface and the archdiocese wanted to get the truth out.

"We believe the parish has the right to know the truth. We wanted to wait for a police report, but there were rumblings in the parish, rumors beginning to spread. So rather than wait it was important to come out with the truth in what was going on," Gatzak said.

Gatzak said when the news was delivered during Saturday mass, parishioners were left heart broken.

"It's been especially tough on parishioners. Father Gray did such good work for the parish. He was very compassionate. He was helpful especially toward the poor. He has such an enormous impact on these people, he was good to his people," Gatzak said.

Gatzak said he visited with people outside the church after the 6 p.m. mass, finding them in tears over the news, and full of stories about a priest they loved and [admired](#).

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