News
Vatican



St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican and the city of Rome are seen in this 2015 aerial view file photo (CNS/Paul Haring)



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Vatican City — September 17, 2019

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Vatican prosecutors have requested the indictment of an Italian priest on charges of sexual abuse that occurred at least seven years ago at a minor seminary located within the Vatican walls.

The prosecutors also requested the indictment of the rector of the seminary at the time of the alleged crime, on charges of aiding and abetting abuse, the Vatican press office announced Sept. 17.

The requested indictments appear to be the first of their kind for sexual abuse committed on Vatican territory.

The requests concern Fr. Gabriele Martinelli, the alleged abuser, and Fr. Enrico Radice, the former rector, and regard their behavior during their time at the Pius X Pre-Seminary, which is run by the Italian Diocese of Como but located inside the Vatican.

The Vatican launched an investigation into the seminary last fall after an Italian book included allegations of sexual abuse at the institution, which is primarily a dormitory for young men who act as altar servers during morning Masses at St. Peter's Basilica.

The Vatican press office gave no details about the alleged abuse, but said it had occurred "before 2012."

The statement said that the first investigations into the allegations started in November 2017, but had been initially impeded by earlier Vatican City law that required victims to report alleged abuse within a year of its occurrence.

Pope Francis ordered an exception be made in this case on July 29, said the statement.

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