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Priest imposter posing with police

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I know Pope Benedict has declared this "The Year of the Priest," but that doesn't mean any old Joe can impersonate one.

This strange news item out of the City of Brotherly Love: A 26-year-old man dressed as a Catholic priest and entered the intensive care unit room of an injured Philadelphia police officer and comforted the officer and his family last month. Paul Schlear of North Philadelphia also has admitted to wearing an alb in processions at the funerals of two fallen police officers. According to one report, he pretended to talk to Cardinal Justin Rigali on his cell phone while at the hospital.

A statement from the Archdiocese of Philadelphia called the matter deeply disturbing. "The Archdiocese, which has fostered a close prayerful relationship with the men and women of the Philadelphia police force and their families, is pained by the duplicity of anyone who would betray the Church and cause such hurt to God's people in such a vulnerable position," the statement said.

Schlear apparently was a seminarian at St. Charles Borromeo near Philadelphia for a short time in 2002-2003. So far, no charges have been filed against him.

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