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## Who is that priest?

by Tom Gallagher

NCR Today

For those of us who are devotees of the epic and iconic *Godfather* movies, here in New York City, we have a real Godfather-like drama unfolding in a nearby courtroom. A mysterious priest, "Father Peter," is attending a murder and racketeering trial of two gangsters. Apparently, though, he won't give his full name and affiliation. Kind of interesting.

From the New York *Daily News*:

The Colombo boss's family priest appears to have taken a vow of silence.

Meet "Father Peter," possibly the only man of the cloth who clams up when asked his name.

Over the past week, he has made on-and-off appearances at the racketeering and murder trial of gangsters Thomas (Tommy Shots) Gioeli and Dino (Little Dino) Saracino. When he attends, Father Peter sits in the front row next to Gioeli's wife, Maureen, giving jurors a clear view of his black suit and priest collar.

But when asked his name and his assigned parish, he takes the fifth.

"I think it would be better if I didn't say anything," he told the *Daily News* last week.

Father Peter first popped up on Gioeli's radar as a "follower" of the accused killer's Internet blog.

Gioeli's defense lawyer, Adam Perlmutter, confirmed the priest's first name and his bona fides as a clergyman.

"I don't think I know his last name," Perlmutter said, declining to answer whether he will call him as a character witness.

He said Father Peter runs a retreat in Western Massachusetts, but wouldn't explain his link to Gioeli.

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A clue emerged Tuesday from the testimony of hit man Dino Calabro, who said Gioeli passed an order to whack a gangster in the garden of Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Massapequa Park.

"That's the garden where Tommy would go and pray," Calabro said.

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