

## &#145;Criminal case vs Filipino priest accused of rape to continue&#146;

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FARGO, North Dakota. (AP) &#151; The Cass County prosecutor says he will continue to seek the return of a man dismissed from the priesthood after leaving the country.

Fernando Sayasaya, believed to be in the Philippines, is accused of fondling two boys in the mid 1990s, when he served parishes in Fargo and West Fargo. He is charged with gross sexual imposition in Cass County.

The Fargo Roman Catholic Diocese said Thursday that the Vatican recently dismissed Sayasaya as a priest. The Fargo diocese had relieved him of his duties in August 1998, when the allegations involving juveniles first surfaced.

Cass County State&#146;s Attorney Birch Burdick said authorities are still working to return Sayasaya to North Dakota to face charges. He said he had been notified of the church&#146;s action.

"It doesn&#146;t have any impact on our prosecution. We&#146;re looking at behavior that occurred several years back," Burdick said. "What the Catholic Church does or doesn&#146;t do with him now isn&#146;t our particular concern."

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