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Ex-priest begins sentence for abuses

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Page: 3

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Former Geneva priest Mark **Campobello** traded in his clerical collar for handcuffs Friday to begin his eight-year prison sentence.

The 39-year-old turned himself in to Kane County Judge Timothy Sheldon and was transported to the Kane County jail after being handcuffed in front of his victims and close to two dozen people from the community he had vowed to shepherd.

"It's good to have closure," said Geneva Police Detective Joe Heinrich as he left the courtroom.

Campobello declined to answer questions from the media and didn't make eye contact with crowd in the courtroom. Instead, his eyes darted about and he wiped sweat from his brow while he waited his turn before the judge.

He pleaded guilty May 13 to counts of aggravated criminal sexual abuse against a 14-year-old from St. Peter's School Elementary School in Geneva and a 16-year-old from Aurora Central Catholic High School.

He faces eight years in prison, but could get out earlier with time off for good behavior.

"Is it enough? No. It probably isn't enough," said Assistant State's Attorney Jody Gleason. "The girls were happy with it. We are happy with it. But I don't know if you can ever put a number on what happened to these girls."

The state's attorney's office is still pushing the Rockford Diocese to hand over internal records on **Campobello** and people the church interviewed about the abuse.

The 2nd District Appellate Court ruled the church must produce the documents, but the church can still appeal that ruling.

The documents could be used in a civil suit against **Campobello** or if more charges were ever brought against him.

"We think kids in Illinois are safer now that Father **Campobello** is going to jail," said Barbara Blaine, president of the Chicago-based victim's rights group Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests. "We believe it is unlikely that these girls were the only victims."

She praised the courage of those who told police about **Campobello** and urged other abuse victims to come forward, if only to seek healing.

Prosecutors are not looking into cases of additional abuse.

Although **Campobello** went to jail Friday, he can still withdraw his guilty plea deal through June 13 and seek a trial.