

10-15-07 - Priest asks for sentencing delay, citing cancer
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NEW HAVEN, CT A former Darien priest who stole hundreds of thousands of dollars in church money is asking for a delay in sentencing, saying he is dying of cancer.

Rev. Michael Jude Fay pleaded guilty in federal court last month to interstate transportation of money obtained by fraud. Fay resigned last year as pastor of St. John Roman Catholic Church.

Fay, who faces up to 10 years in prison when he is sentenced Dec. 4, asked that his sentencing be delayed until April. He says his prostate cancer has spread to his bones and lymph nodes and has become resistant to chemotherapy.

Fay has begun a different chemotherapy designed to delay the cancer. His attorney says in a court filing that those in his condition generally have an expected lifespan of several months, but his doctor cautions against applying statistics to his case.

Fay wants the sentencing to occur after the treatment has been administered, saying the court would be in a better position to consider the impact of his illness on his sentence.

A judge has not ruled on the request yet. Prosecutors have not filed court papers.

Authorities say Fay set up secret bank accounts to pay for a life of luxury, including traveling around the world and buying a condominium.

Prosecutors said Fay took between \$1 million and \$2.5 million over seven years, but the priest has disputed that. He admitted to taking between \$400,000 and \$1 million.

Investigators working for the Bridgeport Diocese last year said that Fay, 56, used church money for limousines, stays at top hotels around the world, jewelry and clothing from Italy.

Fay shopped at Bergdorf Goodman, Saks Fifth Avenue and Nordstrom, drove a Jaguar, attended a sports club, bought jewelry from Cartier, spent \$130,000 for limo rides for himself and his mother, and stayed at hotels such as the Ritz Carlton, Hotel De Paris and the Four Seasons Hotel, the church report found.

He spent tens of thousands of dollars on home furnishings and meals and more than \$20,000 to mark the 25th anniversary of his ordination, according to the church report.