

## Madden disputes timeline

By Susan Shultz

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[http://www.acorn-online.com/news/publish/article\\_9077.shtml](http://www.acorn-online.com/news/publish/article_9077.shtml)

The Rev. Michael Madden, who recently left St. John Parish and the priesthood, told The Darien Times on Wednesday that it would be “news” if the diocese were to be honest about the last few months’ events.

“After seeing firsthand the chancery actions over these last several months, it would be news to me if they decided to tell the truth,” Father Madden said.

He called The Darien Times in response to this week’s op-ed by Nancy Matthews, chancellor of the Diocese of Bridgeport, who said that last week’s Darien Times editorial (“Thankful for Mike”) was “very wide of the mark.”

The op-ed was posted at [dariantimes.com](http://dariantimes.com) on Tuesday evening and appears on page 5A of today’s issue.

Matthews outlined the timeline of when Bishop Lori and other diocesan officials learned of allegations of misconduct by the former pastor, the Rev. Michael Jude Fay, beginning with a call from Father Madden on April 26 and a meeting he had with Bishop Lori the next day.

On May 9, Matthews wrote, the bishop and diocese chief financial officer Norm Walker met with Father Fay, who “denied any wrongdoing.”

“The diocese had been working hard to gather sufficient proof to demand Father Fay’s resignation and to make it stick according to requirements of church law,” she wrote.

Father Madden said the diocese already had sufficient proof by then, and its lack of action against Father Fay was what prompted both he and bookkeeper Bethany D’Erario to hire the private investigator who uncovered how Father Fay misused parish money.

“After Father Fay’s initial meeting with the bishop on May 9, when the diocese had in hand substantial evidence of wrongdoing, the fact that he was allowed to leave the chancery, get into his hired car, drive to LaGuardia, and fly back to his Fort Lauderdale home was a grave concern to Beth and me as to what exactly was going on,” Father Madden told The Darien Times.

“We were concerned about what Father Fay might say that would implicate us in his activities, and our hiring of the private investigator was a prudent safety precaution on our part to insure we would be protected from such implications,” he said.

In Matthews’ op-ed piece, she writes of the events that occurred on Friday, May 12.

“On May 12, Bishop Lori spoke with Father Madden to again thank him for his efforts, discuss the meeting with the Parish Finance Council, and to authorize him to be his personal representative in handling the administrative affairs of the parish, pending the appointment of a new pastor,” she wrote.

Father Madden disputed the above facts as reported by Matthews.

“On May 12, the bishop told me that Father Fay would return to the parish on that Monday, May 15, and he was to remain in the parish through Wednesday evening, and attend the volunteer appreciation dinner, and then, on Thursday, Father Fay would be going on a leave of absence. I heard nothing about a new pastor being named. It wasn’t until the news broke Wednesday that suddenly Father Fay resigned,” he said.

Father Madden reiterated that he had no idea how severe the diocese’s reaction would be to his hiring the investigator.

“I never considered for a moment that the bishop had an exclusive right to investigate a potentially criminal matter — imagine my surprise a week later when I found out he thought he did,” Father Madden said.

Matthews also writes that when Father Madden was asked about the private investigator, “Father Madden denied any knowledge of who had hired the investigator.”

While he admits that he was not forthcoming with volunteering the information, Father Madden said he did not lie.

“Nancy Matthews asked me numerous times if I had any idea who would have hired the private investigator, and I told her that it could be anybody. If she had ever asked me if I hired the investigator, point blank, I would have said yes,” he said.

Father Madden also said that he voluntarily told Deloitte that he had hired the investigator and that the notion that he lied was “ridiculous.”

When contacted regarding Father Madden's comments, diocese spokesman Joseph McAleer stood by the op-ed piece by Nancy Matthews and all prior diocese comments.

"The diocese and its officials have been transparent, candid, thorough and truthful in all of their statements regarding Saint John Parish," he wrote in an e-mail.

Father Madden said that above all, his main goal throughout this process was to get to the truth.

"My focus and interest in all of this was to get to the truth of the matter, and what was really going on; it was not focused on advancing people's careers," he said. "Including my own, obviously."