

Gambling Nun Pleads Guilty to Theft From New York Churches

A Roman Catholic nun with an admitted gambling addiction faces up to six months in prison for stealing about \$128,000 from two churches where she worked in western New York, prosecutors and her attorney said on Tuesday.

Sister Mary Anne Rapp, 68, pleaded guilty on Monday to grand larceny in Orleans County, just west of Rochester, New York. In addition to time in prison, she will make partial restitution of the stolen money, prosecutors said. Sentencing is scheduled for July 1.

Rapp admitted to stealing money from two churches to fund a gambling addiction from 2006 to 2011, according to the county's district attorney.

"She's extremely remorseful, and she's done what she can now to address the underlying problem," her attorney James Harrington said.

He said she underwent treatment for gambling addiction after being confronted about the missing money following an audit requested by a new pastor for the two churches in 2011.

The two churches—St. Mark's in Kendall and St. Mary's in Holley—lie about eight miles apart in upstate New York, near the shore of Lake Ontario.

Rapp used some of the money to gamble at a casino in Niagara Falls, New York, which is about 60 miles to the west, he said.

"No one's above the law," Joseph Cardone, the Orleans County District Attorney said. "You certainly can't prey on parishioners of a church who give money in support of their cause."

Reporting by Jonathan Allen in New York; editing by Ellen Wulforth and Lisa Shumaker.

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