

Post alleges priest had homosexual relations

WASHINGTON (CNS) — In a series of articles before the ordination of Father George Stallings as a bishop in his breakaway church, *The Washington Post* said the former Catholic priest had several homosexual relationships.

The *Post's* Page One series April 29-May 1 encompassed the controversial priest's activities as a pastor in the Archdiocese of Washington, his establishment of the Imani Temple and his subsequent break with the church.

But among new disclosures was a report that a second former altar boy claimed to have had a sexual relationship with Father Stallings. The series also said a man who had met Father Stallings at a gay bar in Washington claimed he and the priest were lovers for two years, and that he had been put on the payroll at Father Stallings' parish.

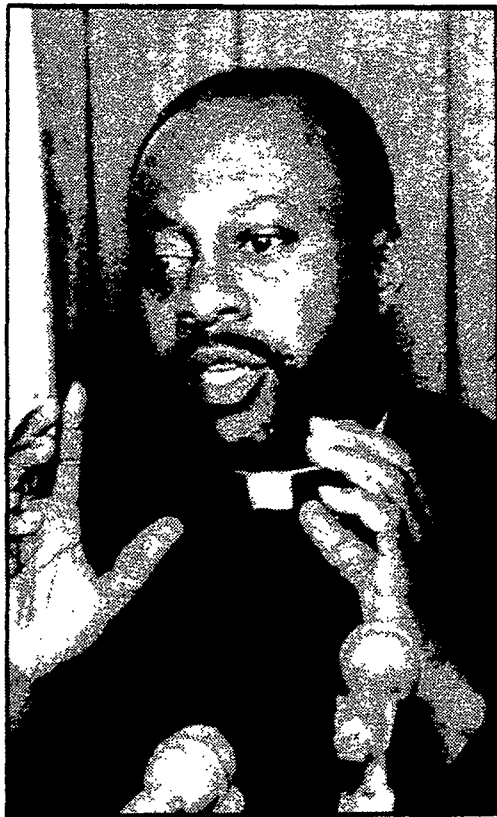
Father Stallings' spokesman, William Marshall Jr., declined to comment to Catholic News Service on specifics in the series, as did Wilbur Pinder, a spokesman for the Washington archdiocese. Marshall and the archdiocese had refused comment to *The Post* as well.

"We feel we've had to say everything there is to say and there's nothing more to add to it," Pinder said.

Marshall said of the series: "Father (Stallings) is in discussion with his attorneys."

When allegations by the first altar boy about a sexual relationship with Father Stallings were raised last September, the priest said he would not "dignify with a response the scurrilous and baseless" charges.

The *Post* series reported that Father Stallings broke Washington archdiocesan policy by not living in the rectory at St. Teresa of Avila Church, where he was



AP/Wide World Photos
A published report alleges that Father George Stallings, who broke from the Catholic Church last year, had a two-year homosexual relationship with an employee.

pastor from 1976 to 1988, but instead at Augustus Manor, a house he purchased in Washington.

The new allegations of sexual misconduct by Father Stallings were made to *The Post* by Derek Edwin Brown, who said he met the priest at a gay bar in 1987. They entered into a two-year sexual relationship, he added.

Brown said he was hired in 1987 as a pastoral assistant at St. Teresa of Avila for \$17,000 a year, with such duties as opening mail and helping publish the parish bulletin.

The *Post* also reported that a former altar boy, now 25, also said in a signed statement that he and the priest had a sexual relationship that began when Father Stallings was associate pastor at the altar boy's home parish.

The relationship continued, the unidentified former altar boy said, when Father Stallings was made pastor of St. Teresa of Avila.

Father Stallings was scheduled to be ordained a bishop of the African-American Catholic Congregation, the church he founded, on May 12.

Ordaining Father Stallings will be Archbishop Richard Bridges of San Bernardino, Calif., from the Independent Old Catholic Church of Southern California.

Archbishop Bridges said the 10-year-old church is not a member of the Old Catholic Union of Utrecht, but has applied to join.

The Union of Utrecht is a loose affiliation of Old Roman Catholic churches that broke from Roman Catholicism in the 19th century over nationalist concerns or Vatican I definitions of papal primacy. The only U.S. church member is the Polish National Catholic Church.

Father Stallings incurred automatic excommunication in February when he said that his church, which he established last July, would be independent of Rome.

He has since made statements that differ from Roman Catholic doctrine or discipline on matters of abortion, birth control, marriage, general absolution, intercommunion, divorce and remarriage, women's ordination and clerical celibacy.

The *Post* also reported that Father Charles Stephney, who was dismissed from the Precious Blood order in March, had been hired by Father Stallings in 1987 as an assistant at St. Teresa of Avila without the permission of Cardinal James A. Hickey of Washington.

The *Post* reported allegations that Father Stephney had made sexual advances to teenage boys while in jail ministry in Cincinnati.

Priest found dead, tortured in Colombia

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The dead and mutilated body of Father Tiberio Fernandez was found in western Colombia several days after he was kidnapped, Vatican Radio reported.

The body, bearing signs of torture, was found April 24 near the city of Roldanillo in western Colombia, said Vatican Radio.

Father Fernandez, a Colombian, was probably the victim of gunmen hired by drug smugglers, the radio station said.

Father Fernandez and three companions were kidnapped a week earlier near Trujillo, a city 180 miles west of the capital of Bogota. The three companions are still missing, according to the radio station.

Father Fernandez was a parish priest in Trujillo.

The government declared a military emergency, the equivalent of a state of siege, in the region where the body was found, Vatican Radio reported.

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