

Former Zephyr Cove priest's lawsuit tossed

By Martha Bellisle, Reno Gazette-Journal

A Washoe District Court judge has thrown out a lawsuit filed by a Catholic priest who claimed the Diocese of Reno and its bishop defamed and wrongly fired him after he raised concerns about a deacon and alleged death threats.

In his order, Judge Patrick Flanagan granted the diocese's motion to dismiss the case filed by Richard DeMolen, the former pastor of Our Lady of Lake Tahoe church in Zephyr Cove, saying the First Amendment prevents a court from becoming involved in a contractual dispute involving a religious organization.

Jeffrey Dickerson, DeMolen's lawyer, said they plan to appeal the ruling.

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