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[Priest who was attacked in Connellsville has roots in Monessen](#)

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The Connellsville church pastor who was attacked last week grew up in Monessen.

The Rev. Joseph E. Bonafed, 48, a 1979 Monessen High School graduate, suffered a head injury when he apparently walked in on a burglar March 3.

Bonafed was treated at Highlands Hospital in Connellsville and released after he was struck on the head with a blunt object last week, according to Catholic Diocese of Greensburg spokesman Jerry Zufelt.

The church is located at 148 E. Crawford Ave.

"Our understanding is that Father Bonafed was returning from a parish event through the rectory when this occurred. He was not able to say Mass Sunday, but we expect him back shortly," Zufelt said early this week.

The masked assailant reportedly was dressed in black. It is not known whether the suspect took anything, Zufelt said.

Zufelt referred further inquiries to Connellsville police. Chief Ed McSheffrey did not return phone calls seeking comment.

Zufelt said the assault occurred during the evening hours. He said the priest's injury "required a few stitches."

Bonafed also serves as administrator of St. Rita and St. John the Evangelist churches in Connellsville.

Immaculate Conception Church member Nancy Jacobyansky said parishioners were informed of the assault during Masses Sunday.

"It really is disturbing not only that this would happen to anyone, but especially that it would occur in the rectory to a priest. That makes it that much more disturbing," Jacobyansky said.

"He just was assigned here last fall and does seem like a very strong-willed person, and he will rise above this."

Bonafed formerly was assigned to St. Patrick Parish, Brady's Bend, Armstrong County.

The son of Susan and the late Joseph Bonafed, of Monessen, the priest received a bachelor's degree in accounting from California University of Pennsylvania.

His mother said he worked in the private sector for a number of years.

"Then he decided he wanted to be a priest," Susan Bonafed said Wednesday. "He was ordained in 1992."

Susan Bonafed said he studied for the priesthood at St. Vincent Seminary, near Latrobe.

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