

Priest pleads guilty to theft  
NASHUA (NH) The Telegraph

By PATRICK MEIGHAN Telegraph Staff  
Published: Saturday, Dec. 13, 2003

NASHUA -All that remains is the \$8,000 question -why?

The Rev. Steven Kucharski on Friday pleaded guilty to stealing more than \$500 from St. John Neumann Church in Merrimack, where he was pastor. His plea encompassed thefts that occurred on six occasions between October 2002 and January 2003.

The plea did not include thousands of dollars allegedly missing from a church collection taken during a Christmas Eve Mass. However, as part of the plea deal, Kucharski must repay \$8,000, an amount that includes an estimate of money missing from that collection.

When he's sentenced in six to eight weeks, Kucharski faces up to eight months in jail on the Class B felony charge. He also has been ordered to stay off church grounds and have no contact with St. John Neumann Church administrative staff.

Under the plea deal, the sentence will be deferred for two years meaning that during that period Kucharski must appear before the court to argue why he should not serve any portion of the eight-month sentence he hadn't already served. The sentence also will be suspended for two more years, meaning that the priest could go to jail during that period on the theft charge if he gets into more trouble.

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**Sunday, November 9, 2003**

### [Priest accused in theft says deal ignored](#)

NASHUA (NH)  
Boston Globe

By Associated Press, 11/9/2003

**N**ASHUA -- A priest accused of stealing cash from the Christmas Eve collection and other occasions at a Merrimack church says that prosecutors have failed to honor a deal he struck with police.

Steven Kucharski of Lynn, Mass., was indicted on a felony theft charge in June. He's scheduled to face trial Nov. 17 in Hillsborough County Superior Court.

Kucharski and his lawyer, Gary Lenehan, asked the court to enforce a plea bargain he negotiated with Merrimack police Lieutenant Michael Dudash on Jan. 9, soon after learning that police were investigating thefts from St. John Neumann parish, The Telegraph reported yesterday.

The plea deal called for Kucharski to receive a 12-month jail sentence and a \$1,000 fine, both suspended. It also called for him to pay back the money and perform 100 hours of community service.

Dudash and Lenehan signed the agreement, and Kucharski planned to plead guilty to a misdemeanor theft charge the next day in Merrimack District Court, his lawyer said in court documents.

But late that afternoon, Dudash called Lenehan and told him the Hillsborough County attorney's office had told him not to go through with the plea, The Telegraph reported.

Posted by [Kathy Shaw](#) 9:21:54 AM

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### [Diocesan official tries to calm Nashua parish](#)

NASHUA (NH)  
New Hampshire Sunday New

By **SCOTT BROOKS**  
Sunday News Correspondent

**NASHUA** – The chancellor of the Diocese of Manchester chose calming words for Mass yesterday while filling in for the Rev. Gerard Desmarais, whose controversial resignation last week stunned parishioners at his church.

Arsenault, who said he came on behalf of Bishop John B. McCormack, urged parishioners at St. Joseph Parish to continue coming to church

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