

Priest Is Sentenced To 10 Years in Prison

An archdiocesan priest who taught for seven years at Bishop DuBourg High School was sentenced to 10 years in prison Nov. 20 after pleading guilty in October to 10 counts of second-degree deviate sexual assault.

Father James A. Funke, 39, had been charged with the sexual molestation of two teen-age boys. He was arrested last year after an investigation by police prompted by a call on the child-abuse hotline.

Archbishop John L. May, writing in his column in this week's St. Louis Review, noted that the sentencing of an archdiocesan priest for a crime was the first such incident in the history of the archdiocese. Last year when Father Funke and another teacher at DuBourg, Jerome B. Robben, were arrested Archbishop May said the allegations were a shock and a "heavy sorrow for all our Catholic community."

Robben, 45, is serving a six-year prison term after pleading guilty on counts of sodomy and deviate sexual assault and on 17 counts of

years. He previously had been principal of Compton Heights Catholic School in St. Louis and in 1979 was honored by Mayor James Conway for his service to the inner-city school.

Father Funke also had been known as an active and dedicated teacher. In sentencing him, St. Louis County Circuit Judge William M. Corrigan said he had betrayed years of respect. The judge called the priest a disgrace to his religion, his profession and the community and said he would have given him the maximum sentence, 50 years in prison, had prosecutors asked for it.

Auxiliary Bishop Edward J. O'Donnell, in a statement for the archdiocese, noted that Judge Corrigan said a priest should be held to a higher standard of morality. "We willingly accept that responsibility in the tradition of thousands of self-giving priests throughout the world," he said.

"We pray for all victims of abuse, we pray for Father Funke and we pray that the community and the Church