# **Appendix A**
# Credibly Accused Clergy

# Appendix A

Appendix A contains summaries of 72 clergy determined by the Attorney General to have been credibly accused of child sexual misconduct in the Diocese of Providence, based on the totality of information in this Office's possession.[1] In deciding whether to include an accused individual in this Appendix, the Attorney General relied on records voluntarily produced by the Diocese of Providence to the Office of Attorney General pursuant to the July 2019 MOU (see Appendix D), as well as law enforcement records, records of criminal and civil proceedings, victim and witness interviews, and publicly available information.

Each summary describes, to the extent this information was available, the subject priest or deacon's assignment history, the known child sexual misconduct allegations against him, and the Diocese's responses to those allegations. To ensure and maintain survivors' privacy, their names have been omitted, except for survivors who expressly agreed to the inclusion of their names here and elsewhere in the Report.

Importantly, unless otherwise noted, the details in this Appendix are only allegations, not facts proven in a courtroom or otherwise admitted by the accused individuals, and so the named subjects in this Appendix (and as referenced throughout the Report) are generally entitled to a presumption of innocence. At the same time, that a member of the clergy is not included in this Appendix should not necessarily be taken as an indication that the Attorney General deemed allegations against him or her to be untrue; it simply means that, as of the time of the publication of this Report, there was insufficient information in this Office's possession to deem that individual credibly accused of child sexual misconduct, as defined herein.

Finally, four criminal prosecutions resulted from this Investigation. One defendant, Father Edward Kelley, died while his case was pending, and so he is included here. Because the remaining three individuals are still awaiting trial, this Appendix does not contain summaries of the allegations against them. They, too, are presumed innocent until they are convicted at trial or plead guilty.

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[1] The phrase "child sexual misconduct" means "Sexual Misconduct Perpetrated Against a Child by Diocesan Personnel" as defined in the July 2019 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Attorney General Neronha and Bishop Tobin. *See* Appendix D, § I.C. Likewise, "credibly accused" as used here and elsewhere in the Report means that an individual is the subject of one or more "credible allegation" as set forth in the MOU, namely: "[A]n allegation of Sexual Misconduct Perpetrated Against a Child where there is a reasonable basis to believe that the alleged conduct more likely than not occurred, as determined by the Attorney General." *Id.*, § I.D.

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# Father Joseph Abruzzese

| Born | Ordained | Suspended | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| May 14, 1959 | Nov. 17, 1990 | Nov. 9, 1993 | No |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1990 – 1991 | Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church, North Providence |
| 1991 – 1992 | St. Francis de Sales Church, North Kingstown |
| 1992 – 1993 | St. Anthony Church, North Providence |
| 1993 | *Suspended on leave* |

## Summary

Father Joseph Abruzzese pled *nolo contendere* for sexually assaulting a 16-year-old boy in Roger Williams Park in 1993 while he was assigned to St. Anthony Parish in North Providence, Rhode Island.

The Diocese suspended Father Abruzzese from ministry a few days after the assault was reported to the police. During his suspension, Abruzzese continued to live at the rectories of St. Joseph and St. Ann in Providence and continued to receive financial support from the Diocese. He appealed his suspension to the Bishop of Providence and to the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith ("CDF") several times but was never returned to ministry.

In 2025, this Office sent a letter to Father Abruzzese to offer him an opportunity to meet with the Rhode Island State Police to respond to the conduct summarized below. Abruzzese met with the State Police in November 2025 and denied the allegations.

Father Abruzzese is listed on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy and remains suspended as of the date of this Report.

## The Reported Abuse and Diocesan Response

On October 29, 1993, a 16-year-old boy reported to a Providence Police officer that Father Abruzzese sexually assaulted him in Roger Williams Park in Providence. The complainant told the police that a man unknown to him had approached him in civilian clothes, offered him money, then grabbed him by the genitals and exposed himself. Police were able to identify Abruzzese by his vehicle's license plate number. Father Abruzzese was charged with one count of second-degree sexual assault and one count of disorderly conduct.

Abruzzese admitted to the police that he was in the park on October 29, 1993, but maintained that the interaction with the complainant began when the boy threw a rock at his car and that he never physically touched the boy.

Bishop Louis Gelineau suspended Father Abruzzese's priestly faculties after he was charged and ordered him to vacate his residence at St. Anthony Rectory in North Providence, on November 9, 1993. The Diocese paid for Abruzzese's legal representation in the criminal case.

Director of the Diocese Office of Education and Compliance Robert McCarthy interviewed the complainant on March 12, 1994. During the interview, the complainant confirmed the details of the initial police report and denied Father Abruzzese's claim that he had thrown a rock at the priest's car. McCarthy decided not to interview Abruzzese until the criminal proceedings had concluded. On August 29, 1994, McCarthy presented the case to a Diocesan advisory committee (the "Consistory") and asked the committee to determine, "1. Should F. Abbruzzese [sic] plead nolo contendre [sic] to these charges, what should be the Diocese of Providence stance in regards to Fr. Abbruzzese's [sic] priestly ministry? 2. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions regarding: a. Testing; b. Treatment; c. Administrative Procedures."

On September 21, 1994, the committee met and made various recommendations. Notably, three of the five members recommended that Abruzzese not be immediately placed on administrative leave or suspended following a plea of *nolo contendere* but recommended additional actions, including a polygraph, an independent evaluation, and treatment.

Abruzzese pled *nolo contendere* to the charge of second-degree sexual assault on September 23, 1994, in Providence County Superior Court, and the court sentenced him to five years of probation.

Following Abruzzese's plea, Director McCarthy undertook a Diocesan investigation of Abruzzese. As a result of this investigation, which included an interview of the priest in which he denied sexually assaulting the complainant, as well as external evaluations, McCarthy concluded that the complainant's accusations were supported. McCarthy recommended that the Diocese not reinstate Abruzzese.

Bishop Gelineau decided that Father Abruzzese would not be reinstated to ministry in the Diocese on September 20, 1996. Bishop Gelineau chose not to reinstate Abruzzese to ministry rather than initiate a penal trial under canon law. He informed Abruzzese that he could not recommend him to another Bishop and would have to "supply information about the reasons why he cannot . . . and I would have to be honest about giving the full story."

On June 7, 1997, Bishop Gelineau instructed Abruzzese to move out of the rectory of St. Joseph where he had been residing. Five months later, on November 1,

1997, Abruzzese wrote to Gelineau's successor, Bishop Robert Mulvee, to thank the Bishop for helping him find new residency at St. Ann's Church in Providence.

In January 1999, Bishop Mulvee received a letter from The Coalition for Sexually Abused Victims stating that Abruzzese had been observed publicly participating in liturgical celebrations at the Cathedral for ordinations and Holy Thursday, as well as Midnight Mass at St. Ann's Church in Providence, where he resided at the time.

In 2003, the CDF wrote to Bishop Mulvee authorizing the Diocese of Providence to undertake an administrative penal process under canon law to determine whether Abruzzese should be dismissed from the clerical state or subject to some other canonical penalty. Bishop Mulvee replied to the CDF seeking further clarification about this process and the appropriate provisions of canon law that should apply. The CDF did not reply at the time.

In February 2004, Abruzzese wrote to Bishop Mulvee to inquire about the status of his canonical case. Abruzzese insisted that he was innocent of the charges and claimed that the complainant, whom he described as a "troubled teenager," had recanted the allegations to a religious sister of the Diocese some time ago. Abruzzese added that he had "mentioned this to Father Godin on more than one occasion" and explained that his civil attorney had documentation regarding the alleged recantation. A week later, Chancellor John Darcy replied by letter to Abruzzese stating that "no one assisting the Bishop has ever been informed of a recantation by your accuser" and instructing Abruzzese to forward any records regarding the alleged recantation to Monsignor Paul Theoroux, adding that he would forward this new information to the CDF.

In December 2005, Abruzzese petitioned the Diocese for a judicial penal process rather than an administrative penal process, and Bishop Thomas Tobin referred Abruzzese's request to the CDF. In March 2006, the CDF informed Bishop Tobin that its 2003 decision was not appealable and instructed the Diocese to proceed with an administrative penal process.

The Diocese commenced an administrative penal process in 2006. As part of that process, Abruzzese's canonical advocate submitted a defense brief on his behalf, including, among other information, a statement from Abruzzese denying the allegations made by the complainant in his 1993 criminal case and explaining why he decided not to contest the charges and pled *nolo contendere* in 1994; several character witness statements from clergy and laity who spoke of Abruzzese's high moral character; evidence that mental health professionals who had evaluated Abruzzese in the 1990s determined that he had no psychosexual disorders and no other serious health concerns; information that the 1993 complainant suffered from a history of mental health and behavioral problems; and, a 2004 statement signed by a religious sister who claimed that the complainant had recanted his allegations to her in 1994, while she was working at St. Raymond's Parish in Providence.

In 2008, upon the conclusion of the administrative penal process, Bishop Tobin and the canonical assessors determined that there was insufficient evidence to establish Abruzzese's guilt of a canonical delict to a moral certitude, the standard under canon law for the application of a canonical penalty. However, in a January 2008 letter to the CDF seeking guidance about how to proceed, Bishop Tobin remarked:

> I believe that [Abbruzese's] reappointment to ministry in this or any other diocese would be in conflict with the *Charter* and *Norms* adopted by the Bishops of the United States in 2002. While the evidence in the case does not rise to the moral certitude required to conclude that a canonical crime has been committed, most would still deem it a credible accusation, thus precluding the possibility of public ministry. Furthermore, I am certain that if Father Abruzzese were restored to any ministry, the victim advocacy groups would immediately respond in a manner that would be damaging to the diocese, to Father Abruzzese, and to whatever parish or place that he would be assigned to. Our deliberations also raised the concern that if the Congregation were to insist upon his reassignment to ministry, not only would the Holy See be subject to intense criticism, but it could also establish liability in the unfortunate event that there would be a future accusation. Thus, I find myself in the dilemma of acknowledging uncertainty regarding the crime while at the same time being of the strong conviction that I cannot reassign Father Abruzzese to priestly ministry in the diocese."

Due to his concerns, Bishop Tobin refused to restore Abruzzese to active ministry.

Thereafter, Father Abruzzese appealed his suspension to the CDF and to Bishop Tobin several times, hoping that the CDF would instruct the Bishop to restore his faculties. These appeals were denied.

In 2025, this Office sent a letter to Abruzzese offering him an opportunity to be interviewed by the State Police regarding the conduct to which he pled *nolo contendere*. State Police interviewed Abruzzese in October 2025, and he denied the accusation. He admitted that he was in Roger Williams Park in Providence on October 29, 1993, but maintained that the interaction with the complainant began when the boy threw a rock at his car causing damage and denied ever physically touching the boy. Abruzzese described the complainant as a "troubled teenager" and claimed that the allegations were false. He stated that discussions with Diocesan officials influenced his decision to plead *nolo contendere* in his criminal case. Abruzzese confirmed that the Diocese paid for his attorney's fees and for two psychological evaluations during the pendency of his criminal case, which, according to Abruzzese, "came back all fine."

Abruzzese stated that after the conclusion of his criminal case, he learned that the complainant allegedly recanted his accusation to a religious sister who worked in the Diocese. Abruzzese's lawyer later obtained a signed statement from this religious

sister dated September 1, 2004, attesting that the complainant had admitted to her in 1994 that he lied about the incident with Abruzzese, and provided this statement to Diocese. However, Abruzzese also stated that when his attorney's investigator confronted the complainant about the alleged recantation, the complainant denied ever recanting his allegations against Abruzzese to this religious sister.

Diocesan records confirm that the Diocese received and considered the above-mentioned statement from the religious sister and other evidence during the administrative penal process ordered by the CDF to adjudicate whether Abruzzese was guilty of a canonical delict. Although Bishop Tobin ultimately concluded that there was insufficient evidence to establish Abruzzese's guilt of a canonical delict to a moral certitude, according to Abruzzese, Bishop Tobin nonetheless maintained that he could not assign Abruzzese to public ministry, reportedly telling him during a conversation that he'd "have people protesting at my door" if he did so "because of the climate we are in." Abruzzese reported that Bishop Tobin issued an administrative decree upholding Abruzzese's suspension from public ministry. Tobin told Abruzzese he was free to appeal the decision to the Vatican, and Abruzzese did so.

Abruzzese stated that in mid-2025, he received a decree from The Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura, the highest authority in the Catholic Church. He claimed that, according to an unofficial Latin translation of the decree, the Supreme Tribunal found that Bishop Tobin had erred in permanently removing Abruzzese from ministry without having found Abruzzese guilty of any delict through a canonical penal process and ordered the Diocese to restore Abruzzese's faculties to minister. Abruzzese reported that he shared this decree with the Diocese and had not received a reply as of the date of his October 2025 interview with State Police. When asked what he expected would happen next, Abruzzese responded that he assumed the Church would likely choose to retire him, as it had done with other comparable cases involving priests accused of clergy sexual abuse. Once retired, Abruzzese stated that he believed he would be entitled to a pension and other benefits available to retired priests.

Abruzzese stated that the Diocese did not subject him to any formal monitoring since his suspension in 1993. He stated that, from the time of his 1993 suspension until approximately 2002 or 2003, Bishops Gelineau and Mulvee instructed him to "lay low." Abruzzese reported that during this time, he was permitted to live in the rectories of St. Joseph's and St. Ann's, while serving in various administrative roles for the Diocese and working in local hospitals. However, after approximately 2002 or 2003, in the wake of the clergy abuse crisis and the Catholic Church's adoption of the *Dallas Charter*, Abruzzese was ordered to vacate his residence in the rectory and no longer permitted to serve the Diocese in any official capacity.

When asked about his current designation, Abruzzese stated that he remains an Incardinated priest designated by the Diocese as "unassignable." He stated that he has not held a public ministry assignment since his 1993 suspension and denied engaging in any ministerial activities after approximately 2003. Abruzzese asserted that, based on the outcome of his canonical case, his faculties to minister should

technically have been restored. However, he reported that he has complied with the restrictions placed on his ministry by Bishop Gelineau and his successors so that he could continue receiving financial support from the Diocese. According to Abruzzese, he still receives a monthly support allowance from the Diocese, which he believes the Diocese is canonically obligated to provide as long as he remains an incardinated priest.

State Police efforts to reach the complainant in 2025 were unsuccessful. The religious sister to whom the complainant allegedly recanted in 1994 passed away.

In 2025, this Office sent a letter to the Diocese requesting information regarding Father Abruzzese's priestly status, the status of his appeal to the Vatican, and any records regarding any interviews of the complainant or the religious sister to whom the complainant allegedly recanted his allegations back in 1994. As of the date of this Report, the Diocese did not reply with this information.

**Status**

Father Abruzzese remains suspended from ministry as of the date of this Report. He was never laicized or dismissed from the clerical state. He is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Monsignor John Allard

| Born | Ordained | Retired | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jul. 7, 1949 | Sep. 19, 1975 | Feb. 21, 2013 | Apr. 27, 2018 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1974 – 1975 | St. Cecilia Church, Pawtucket |
| 1975 – 1984 | Immaculate Conception Church, Cranston |
| 1977 – 1982 | Providence South Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) Center, Providence |
| 1984 – 1986 | St. Aloysius Church, Woonsocket |
| 1984 – 1996 | Diocesan Office of Youth Ministry, Providence |
| 1986 – 2001 | Diocesan Office of Evangelization & Spirituality, Providence |
| 1986 – 1996 | Our Lady of Good Help Church, Burrillville |
| 1996 – 2013 | St. Agatha Church, Woonsocket |
| 1996 – 2013 | Precious Blood Church, Woonsocket |
| 2006 – 2013 | Father Marot CYO Center, Woonsocket |
| 2013 | *Retired* |

## Summary

Beginning in October 1981 and over the following two years, Monsignor John Allard—who would go on to serve as Director of the Diocesan Office of Youth Ministry—reportedly sexually abused a teenage altar boy on numerous occasions. The abuse occurred in the rectory of Immaculate Conception Church in Cranston, Rhode Island, as well as at both Allard's residence in Chepachet and the complainant's family's home. The complainant disclosed the abuse to the Diocese in February 2013. Director of the Diocese Office of Education and Compliance Robert McCarthy forwarded the allegations to law enforcement, who determined the case was barred by the statute of limitations. The Diocesan Review Board deemed the allegations credible after Monsignor Allard admitted that they were true, and in February 2013, the Diocese placed Allard on administrative leave and ordered him to a "life of prayer and penance." He died in 2018.

Allard is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

## The Reported Abuse and Diocesan Response

In 2013, the complainant told Monsignor Albert Kenney, Diocesan Vicar General, that Allard had sexually abused him beginning when he was approximately 15 years old. The complainant was a Diocesan employee at the time he made this report. Monsignor Kenney reported the abuse to Robert McCarthy, Director of the Office of

Education and Compliance, on February 11, 2013. The next day, Bishop Thomas Tobin initiated a canonical investigation into the allegations and tasked McCarthy with leading the investigation.

McCarthy met with the complainant on February 12, 2013, and conducted an interview at the Office of Education and Compliance in Cranston. The complainant provided specific dates, times, and locations of the abuse, and agreed to take a polygraph examination if necessary. Specifically, the complainant disclosed that Allard sexually abused him between 15-25 times over an approximately two-year period beginning in October 1981, while Allard was an Associate Pastor at Immaculate Conception Church in Cranston. The complainant told McCarthy that Allard first abused him during a sleepover at the rectory at Immaculate Conception. That night, after the complainant asked Allard to be his confirmation sponsor, Allard invited the boy to his bed, where he stripped him naked and sexually assaulted him. The next morning Allard told the boy what they had done was a sin, and that week Allard drove the boy to confession in Providence. Similar abuse occurred over the next year or two, while the boy was between the ages of 15 and 17 years old, at Immaculate Conception, Allard's home in Chepachet, and at least once in the complainant's home. The complainant told McCarthy the abuse stopped around the time he turned 18 years old, while he was preparing to graduate from high school and the Diocese transferred Allard to a church in Woonsocket.

The complainant also told McCarthy that, upon reflection about the years leading up to the abuse, Allard exhibited a pattern of behavior toward him which he came to recognize as grooming: as early as middle school, Allard would pay him "special" attention and frequently insisted on giving him hugs when the two were alone before or after a Mass in the sacristy of Immaculate Conception Church.

Allard's Diocesan personnel file confirms that the Diocese transferred him from Immaculate Conception to St. Aloysius Parish in Woonsocket in June 1984. It also assigned him as Assistant Director of the Office of Youth Ministry in Providence at that time.

The day after the complainant's interview, McCarthy reported his allegations to Major Michael Winquist, Detective Commander of the Rhode Island State Police. The State Police opened an investigation on February 14, 2013, and closed it on February 26, 2013, after the detective interviewed the complainant and determined that there was no allegation of first-degree sexual assault. The detective informed the complainant that criminal prosecution would not be possible because the three-year statute of limitations for second degree sexual assault had expired.

McCarthy interviewed Monsignor Allard at St. Agatha's Church in Woonsocket on February 20, 2013. When McCarthy asked Allard whether the allegations were true, Allard replied, "[i]t's true," and said there were 20-25 instances of abuse. Allard also told McCarthy that he "never raped him or anything like that. It was more fondling, touching kind of thing."

McCarthy sent a letter the same day to Monsignor Kenney to inform him of Allard's admissions. On February 21, 2013, Auxiliary Bishop Robert Evans wrote to Allard and informed him that the Review Board was consulted and the allegations had been found credible. Bishop Tobin placed Allard on administrative leave, prohibited him from saying Mass and performing other sacraments, barred him from appearing publicly in clerical attire, and mandated he vacate Saint Agatha's rectory in Woonsocket, effective February 25, 2013. The following day, the Diocese told local news media that Allard had "taken responsibility for his actions," but also acknowledged that the Diocese had "no set program in place to monitor ex-priests who admit to molestation."

Bishop Tobin closed the canonical investigation on August 30, 2013, and determined that the complaint lodged against Allard was credible. Tobin forwarded the information and his *votum* to the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith ("CDF") on September 1, 2013. In his *votum*, Bishop Tobin recommended *against* Allard's removal from the clerical state, writing:

> Monsignor Allard is 64 years old, and will never again serve in active ministry. At this time, I do <u>not</u> believe he is a danger to young people, and I respectfully remind the Congregation that this is the first and only known allegation of abuse against him. For these compelling and grave reasons, I do not recommend that the Congregation impose a penalty; and I believe that an extrajudicial or penal process is not necessary in this manner. I respectfully request that the Congregation, due to his age, allow the accused to request early retirement from me. This would give the accused "senior priest status" and allow him to dedicate his retirement to private prayer and penance.

On October 31, 2013, the CDF ordered Bishop Tobin to retire Allard from ministry and impose upon him "a life of prayer and penance." The CDF also told Tobin that "further canonical and pastoral vigilance regarding [Allard] is left to [your] discretion . . . including monitoring and ensuring that the priest is not a danger to minors."

It is unclear what, if any, further steps the Diocese took in this regard. In fact, just over a year after the CDF's order, Allard was back on the premises of his former parish, St. Agatha's, working as a part-time cook in the parish rectory. And it appears the Diocese only became aware of this situation because of a June 2015 audit of St. Agatha's finances, when a Diocesan auditor flagged that since November 2014, Allard had been receiving a weekly check from the church to cook dinners there a few nights a week. Upon learning of this situation, Bishop Tobin (through Auxiliary Bishop Evans) instructed the parish to stop compensating Allard, noting in a letter that "this step is prudent given the sensitive nature of John's status and the subsequent publicity following his resignation as pastor, especially considering the reason for it. It could serve as a source of confusion for the Faithful and even a matter of scandal were it to be made known that parish funds were used in this fashion, despite however well-intentioned it may be." Nevertheless, it does not appear that the Diocese halted Allard from continuing to work at St. Agatha altogether, and according to an internal

memorandum about the situation, Bishop Evans opined that Allard's presence at St. Agatha "does not appear to be in violation of any diocesan guidelines," though Evans also noted that certain "hesitation[s]" had been raised about it.

**Status**

Monsignor Allard died on April 27, 2018. His funeral did not include a public viewing and his obituary did not refer to him as "Monsignor."

The Diocese included Allard on its List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

## Brother Roger C. Argencourt

| Born | Ordained | Retired | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jan. 16, 1938 | N/A | N/A | Sep. 23, 2002 |

### Partial Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1972 – 1978 | Bishop Guertin High School, Nashua, NH |
| 1981 – 1986 | Mount Saint Charles Academy, Woonsocket |
| 1986 – 2002 | Bishop Guertin High School, Nashua, NH |

### Summary

Brother Roger C. Argencourt, also known as Brother Odillion, was a member of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart religious order who reportedly sexually abused an eighth-grade student at Mount Saint Charles Academy during the 1985-1986 school year. The complainant reported to the Woonsocket Police Department in 2002 that Argencourt sexually assaulted him when he was a 12- or 13-year old student at Mount Saint Charles Academy, where Argencourt served as a teacher. Brother Argencourt reportedly performed oral sex on the complainant in the basement of the school after the complainant agreed to help Argencourt carry school supplies there. The complainant disclosed the incident to a counselor later in life before reporting his allegations to the police.

### The Reported Abuse and Diocesan Response

In early 2002, the complainant reported his abuse to the Woonsocket Police Department. Law enforcement investigated the matter with this Office, but Argencourt died suddenly, in September 2002, before the matter could be presented to a grand jury. The Diocese learned of the allegation and criminal investigation in June 2002, when it was contacted by the principal of Mount Saint Charles, who around that time had been in touch with the Woonsocket Police Department. The principal advised McCarthy that records from Mount Saint Charles Academy confirmed that the complainant was a student at the school during the 1985-1986 school year when the abuse reportedly occurred, and that Brother Argencourt served as a teacher at the school during this time. Around the same time that this complainant came forward, Argencourt was publicly accused of sexually abusing several other male students at Bishop Guertin High School, another Sacred Heart Brothers-run school in New Hampshire, where Argencourt taught both before and after his tenure at Mount Saint Charles. At the time that the Diocese learned of the Rhode Island complainant's allegation in June 2002, Argencourt was on leave and receiving "treatment" at Saint Luke Institute in Maryland.

Argencourt was never criminally charged for any of his reported assaults. The New Hampshire-based allegations were, according to reporting there, outside of the criminal statute of limitations, and resulted only in civil actions. Mount Saint Charles informed the parents of students there about the allegations in a letter in early October 2002. According to the letter, this allegation was the only known complaint from Brother Argencourt's time at Mount Saint Charles.

In 2023, Rhode Island State Police attempted to contact the complainant to discuss his allegations without success.

**Status**

Brother Argencourt died in 2002. He is not listed on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

## Father Daniel Azzarone

| Born | Ordained | Laicized | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mar. 11, 1951 | Jun. 16, 1978 | Jun. 12, 2009 | No |

### Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1978 – 1980 | Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, Providence |
| 1980 – 1981 | St. Clement Church, Warwick |
| 1981 – 1983 | St. Paul Church, Cranston |
| 1983 – 1990 | St. Ann Church, Providence |
| 1990 – 2001 | St. Mary Church, Cranston |
| 2001 | *Suspended on Leave* |
| 2009 | *Laicized* |

### Summary

Father Daniel Azzarone was accused of child sexual abuse by at least six boys and convicted of raping two. The alleged abuse spanned Azzarone's time in ministry, with the first reported incident taking place during his first Diocesan assignment in 1978, to subsequent reported incidents near the time of his arrest and subsequent removal in 2001. The Diocese first received an accusation that Azzarone molested a fifteen-year-old boy in 1985. Then, in 1992, the Diocese received another report alleging that Azzarone had sexually assaulted a boy in 1978. A third allegation was reported to the Diocese by a victim's mother in August of 1999. Despite these reports, Azzarone continued to practice ministry until his arrest in 2001. On April 5, 2002, Azzarone was indicted on six counts of first-degree sexual assault and one count of second-degree sexual assault. Azzarone ultimately pled *nolo contendere* to two counts of first-degree sexual assault. He was sentenced on September 6, 2005, to ten years in prison, with three years to serve, seven years suspended with probation, and ordered to register as a Level III Sex Offender.

Azzarone was laicized by Pope Benedict XVI on June 12, 2009. He is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

The Attorney General sent Azzarone a letter in 2024 offering him an opportunity to meet with State Police and respond to the allegations summarized below. He has not responded as of the date of this Report.

**The Reported Abuse**

The first reported incident of sexual abuse of a child by Azzarone allegedly took place around 1978 at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Providence while he was in his first year of priesthood. Complainant A wrote a letter to the Diocese in September of 1992 in which he stated that the first time Azzarone abused him, Azzarone gave him alcohol and then sexually assaulted him. In the same letter, Complainant A also stated that he had been abused by clergy members other than Azzarone and named another child whom Azzarone had reportedly sexually abused. Complainant A also reported that Azzarone sexually assaulted him a second time, during a day trip to see the Pope in Boston, Massachusetts. There are no further details of that incident in the files produced by the Diocese. Complainant A stated he was under 18 years old at the time of these incidents.

Complainant B reported that Azzarone sexually assaulted him at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church to Director of Education and Compliance Robert McCarthy in 2006. According to Complainant B, Azzarone abused him over a dozen times between 1979 and 1980, beginning when Complainant B was 10 years old. Complainant B reported that Azzarone groomed him by showing him pornographic magazines, touched his genitals, attempted to masturbate him, and forced Complainant B to masturbate Azzarone. The complainant also reported being photographed in the nude and being told that "'God wants to see you the way you were born.'" On one occasion, Azzarone allegedly performed oral sex on Complainant B in the Rectory of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Complainant B told McCarthy that Azzarone was transferred after these incidents, and replaced with another Diocesan priest, Father Joseph D'Angelo, who also reportedly sexually abused the complainant.

Azzarone was accused of sexually assaulting a third boy ("Complainant C") from 1979 to 1982, when the boy was nine or ten years old. Complainant C reported the abuse through his attorney to Diocesan attorney William Murphy in 2004 and then to Director McCarthy in 2005. Complainant C told McCarthy that he knew Azzarone from the time he was born; Father Azzarone baptized him, gave him communion at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, and eventually Complainant C served as one of Azzarone's altar boys. Complainant C told McCarthy that Azzarone showed him pornographic magazines, talked to him about masturbation, touched his genitals, and orally raped him. Complainant C reported that Azzarone abused him on seven subsequent occasions over the course of about a year. Complainant C named two fellow altar servers at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, Complainant B and Complainant B's brother, whom he stated may also have been abused by Azzarone. He later alleged that Father Joseph D'Angelo abused him after he replaced Azzarone at Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

Another boy ("Complainant D") reported that Azzarone gave him alcohol, removed his clothes, and fondled his genitals and buttocks on multiple occasions in 1980 when he was 15 years old. According to Complainant D, the molestations occurred both in Azzarone's room in St. Paul's Rectory in Cranston and at St. Clement's Church in Warwick. Complainant D reported the abuse to Forensic Mental Health

Services of Connecticut in 1984. Forensic Mental Health Services of Connecticut notified the Rhode Island Department of Children and Their Families ("DCF"), on December 27, 1984.[2] The Diocese learned of the allegations no later than March 8, 1985, when a representative of DCF spoke to Diocesan Monsignor William Varsanyi, who reported the allegations to Auxiliary Bishop Kenneth Angell. Azzarone was confronted by Diocesan attorney William Murphy and denied the allegations.

From November 2000 to November 2001, Azzarone repeatedly sexually assaulted a 15-year-old boy ("Complainant E") while assigned to St. Mary's Church in Cranston. Complainant E first met Azzarone when he began 4th grade at St. Mary's School. The first instance of abuse reportedly took place in November of 2000, on a cruise that was sponsored by the church. The abuse consisted of oral sex and masturbation. According to Complainant E, Azzarone sexually assaulted him approximately 30-40 times. He reported that Azzarone frequently consumed alcohol with him and regularly instructed him to purchase marijuana and cocaine. Complainant E also disclosed that he was present during an alleged assault on Complainant G, described below. Complainant E reported the abuse to his high school principal in 2001 and then to the Cranston Police Department. As described further below, Azzarone was ultimately charged and convicted of sexually assaulting Complainant E.

Azzarone abused another boy ("Complainant F") at St. Mary's Church from May to November 2001. The complainant was 16 years old at the time of the abuse. Azzarone provided alcohol and marijuana to Complainant F, showed him pornographic films, and performed oral sex on him. This Complainant reported the sexual assault to the Cranston Police Department in 2001. As described further below, Azzarone was ultimately convicted of sexually assaulting Complainant F.

The father of another boy ("Complainant G") reported to Bishop Tobin in 2005 that he believed his son was drugged by Azzarone at St. Mary's rectory in July of 2001. Complainant G was 16 years old at the time of the reported incident. On the night in question, the boy's parents allowed him to go out to dinner with Azzarone and a few other boys from the parish, provided Azzarone brought him home by 10:00 pm. When Azzarone did not return the boy, Complainant G's father went to pick him up at the rectory and found the boy limp, surrounded by vomit, and dressed in Azzarone's clothes. Documents indicate that Complainant G later reported during arbitration proceedings with the Diocese that he remembered waking up naked in the shower and Azzarone fondling his genitals before Azzarone got him out of the shower and dressed him in Azzarone's clothes. As described further below, Complainant G declined to press charges against Father Azzarone at the time.

[2] In June 1991, the name of DCF was legislatively changed to Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF).

In early 2022, a man ("Complainant H") met with members of the Rhode Island State Police and the Office of the Attorney General to report that, between 1994 and 1996, beginning when he was 15 years old, Father Azzarone sexually abused him on multiple occasions. In a written statement provided to the State Police and this Office, Complainant H reported that he worked at St. Mary Church rectory as a boy (a statement which was corroborated by Diocesan records) and was first sexually assaulted by another Diocesan priest, Father Alfred Lonardo, in July 1994. The following week, Complainant H wrote, he attempted to confide in Azzarone, St. Mary's assistant pastor at the time. Azzarone invited Complainant H to his third-floor attic apartment at the rectory where, according to Complainant H's written statement, he served him alcohol, told him to "relax and lay down" on the couch, removed his shoes, and began rubbing his feet. Multiple records corroborate Complainant H's claim that Azzarone lived in a third-floor attic suite in St. Mary's rectory. According to Complainant H, Azzarone then removed the teenager's shorts and performed oral sex on him. Complainant H alleged that Azzarone continued to have sexual relations with him on various occasions over the next few years. These incidents reportedly typically involved dinner and drinks at high-end restaurants, followed by more alcohol back at Azzarone's rectory apartment, where, Complainant H reported, Azzarone would fondle and perform oral sex on him. Complainant H recalled one evening when Azzarone and Lonardo took him and "another boy" in a limousine to Boston, where they went out to dinner and drank excessively. Complainant H alleged that Father Azzarone followed him into the restaurant bathroom and groped him in the stall.

Complainant H reported that the abuse traumatized him and caused him to abandon his dream of becoming a priest. In an impact statement provided to the State Police and this Office, Complainant H wrote that the alleged abuse "took away any feeling of security and/or safety" and made him feel "helpless and alone" with "enormous pain and [a] secret [that he] could not tell anyone."

The Rhode Island State Police interviewed Azzarone as part of its investigation into Complainant H's allegations. Azzarone admitted that he knew Complainant H and said that it was "possible" he had sexual contact with him but insisted that if it did occur it was consensual, because Complainant H had made advances toward Azzarone. Azzarone also recalled the dinner trip to Boston with Lonardo that Complainant H described in his statement, even remembering the name of the fourth person who had joined them, adding that that person was in his twenties at the time of the trip. Whereas Complainant H recalled that Azzarone had followed him into the men's room at the restaurant, Azzarone told the detectives that it was Lonardo who went to the men's room and the complainant who followed him. He also said that the limousine dropped off the four of them at the St. Mary's rectory that night, but he did not remember anything further.

In addition, the State Police located and interviewed the individual whom Azzarone identified as accompanying them on the Boston trip. This witness likewise recalled the dinner trip to Boston with Azzarone, Lonardo, and Complainant H, but said it occurred in 1999 or 2000 and happened when he was in his 20s. He added that

he is approximately two years older than Complainant H, suggesting that the complainant may have been in his late teens or early twenties on that occasion.

The Rhode Island Attorney General's Office ultimately declined to prosecute Complainant H's allegations against Azzarone and Lonardo due to insufficient evidence that either priest employed "force or coercion" when engaging in oral sex with the complainant when he was approximately 15 years old or older. The applicable statute of limitations had also run on any second-degree sexual assault allegations.

**Diocesan Response**

According to records produced by the Diocese, the Diocese first learned of a child sexual abuse allegation against Azzarone on March 8, 1985, when a DCF representative spoke to Monsignor William Varsanyi regarding the allegations brought by Complainant D. Monsignor Varsanyi's notes of the meeting indicate that the DCF employee was "directed by the Department to contact the Diocese and ask our cooperation in preventing child molestation in the future by a priest of the Diocese." He further stated that DCF "is not investigating, they are not [illegible] charges, they are not going to the police. They simply ask us to help this priest in a professional manner." Finally, the DCF employee told Varsanyi that the complainant is "now in a mental institution." Varsanyi reported the allegations to Auxiliary Bishop Kenneth Angell. According to a memorandum authored by an unknown Diocesan official on April 29, 1985, Diocese attorney William Murphy met with a DCF employee regarding the allegation of abuse by Complainant D. Parts of the memorandum are illegible, but a note at the bottom reads, "met with Father Azzarone who denied all allegations." There is no further record of the Diocesan response to this notification, though Azzarone later informed a medical professional at the National Institute for the Study, Prevention and Treatment of Sexual Trauma ("NISPTST") that the Diocese had investigated a report in 1985 and "the matter was dropped," and a 2007 referral to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith ("CDF") noted that an allegation in March 1985 was "[i]nvestigated, no action taken." There is no record that the Diocese referred this allegation to law enforcement.

The Diocese was again informed of an allegation of sexual abuse against Azzarone in September 1992, when Complainant A sent a letter to Father Azzarone and sent a copy to Bishop Gelineau disclosing the abuse. He wrote:

> Dear Dan,
>
> I'm writing to you and all the people that had sex with me before I was eighteen. You weren't the first, but it was illegal. You also had sex with [redacted] when he was a minor too. How many other boys have there been? How many are still in danger of the same thing[?] I'm sending a copy of this to the bishop, so eyes will be on you. It was illegal so be careful or you could be imprisoned.
>
> I hope my letter has touched you[.]

Later that month, a therapist who was treating Complainant A also reported the abuse to the Diocese. Two months later, on the day following Complainant A's death, his mother sent a letter to Bishop Gelineau explaining that the letter previously sent by her son that commenced with "Dear Dan" concerned alleged abuse by Daniel Azzarone and a relative of Complainant A. She concluded her letter by writing:

> I expect a reply in the immediate future as to how you will handle this situation. Father O'Connell was allowed to prey on numerous young people over the years and nothing was done until a law-suit [sic] was brought. I do hope this will not become necessary in order for you to handle the situation in the proper manner. If we do not receive a reply soon, the Providence Journal will be notified.

On November 24, 1992, at Bishop Gelineau's direction, Diocesan attorney William Murphy sent a letter to the Director of DCYF notifying her of the allegations. DCYF subsequently informed Diocesan officials that they would not investigate due to the complainant's adult status at the time the allegations were made, but rather, all pertinent information would be forwarded to the Rhode Island State Police. It is not clear whether the information was forwarded to the State Police, and there is no record of an investigation at the time. As noted above, by the time DCYF learned of these allegations, Complainant A was deceased.

Bishop Gelineau responded to Complainant A's mother via letter on December 7, 1992. He expressed his condolences on Complainant A's death and informed her that Attorney Murphy had reported the allegation to DCYF and that Gelineau had directed Attorney Murphy to investigate the allegation. Murphy interviewed Complainant A's parents just after Christmas 1992 and they reportedly provided him with amateur photographs of the Pope, presumable to corroborate Complainant A's claim that he had accompanied Azzarone on a trip to Boston to see the Pope.

Following this allegation, Bishop Gelineau ordered Azzarone to submit to an outpatient evaluation at the National Institute for the Study Prevention and Treatment of Sexual Trauma (NISPTST). After the evaluation, Azzarone agreed to undergo a polygraph examination in Hagerstown, Maryland which was administered in July 1993. During this examination, Azzarone denied ever having sexual contact with Complainant A. The results of the polygraph indicated that Azzarone had not been truthful in his denials.

Even though the Diocese had two separate complaints against Azzarone and had obtained the results of a polygraph examination which concluded that his denial of sexual contact with Complainant A had not been truthful, Bishop Gelineau decided to return Azzarone to parish ministry.

Complainant A's mother wrote another letter to Bishop Gelineau dated June 21, 1993. She expressed frustration that six months had passed and she and her husband had not received the results of Attorney Murphy's investigation into her son's

complaint. "The Apostles spread the Good News about Jesus. The only good news your parishioners would welcome now is that you are aggressively seeking to correct the serious problems that have been revealed and I don't mean the headline lawsuits," she wrote. "Although a threat to your pocket-book seems to be the only thing that really makes you sit up and take notice." "An illness can be forgiven," she added, "but a suspected pedophile being allowed in the proximity of other children where he most certainly will engage in the criminal act if given the opportunity, is something that cannot be forgiven." She concluded by expressing her opinion that "[o]f course the problem is not new, it was simply mishandled and the general public is only now learning how widespread the problem is. Be brave! Do something about it."

Gelineau met with Azzarone on August 24, 1993, regarding the allegations and specified the following four conditions for Azzarone to stay at St. Mary's: (1) the Bishop would have to inform Father Lonardo and "have him . . . be very vigilant," as well as ask him to prevent Azzarone from having any responsibilities related to youths, (2) he would have to regularly check-in with another clergy member, (3) Director McCarthy, "would have to be informed and give advice," and (4) he would have to give great emphasis to his spiritual life.

On August 31, 1993, Diocesan attorney William Murphy informed Bishop Gelineau by letter that he had advised Complainant A's mother that he had concluded the investigation. "I explained to her essentially that Fr. Azzarone continues to deny any misconduct with her son," Murphy wrote. "I told her that all of the investigative leads she had provided had proved inaccurate. . .. I told her that his examinations had failed to demonstrate any indication of pedophilic activity or inclinations." And he added, "I did not refer to the polygraph examination" (emphasis in original). Murphy then noted that the woman was "grateful for the thoroughness of the investigation."

A few months later, in September 1993, Father Norman Godin, who was the Minister for Priests at the time, wrote to Bishop Gelineau, "in regards to the polygraph report, I question both the validity of the test and have reservations as to the manner and conditions in which this test was administered to Rev. Azzarone. Reverend Azzarone has stated that he was extremely nervous when undergoing this testing. . .." A year later, in November 1994, McCarthy wrote in an internal document that the OEC had only then learned about Complainant A's complaint from 1992, and that he would review Azzarone's file for "possible irregularities," at the Bishop's request.

In August 1999, Complainant D's mother reported the alleged sex abuse detailed above to the pastor of Saints Rose and Clements Parish. The records do not indicate whether Complainant D's mother was aware that Complainant D had originally reported his abuse by Azzarone in 1985, and that the Diocese was aware of that report. The pastor informed Moderator of the Curia Monsignor Paul Theroux, who in turn apprised Director McCarthy, of the complaint. On September 7, 1999, McCarthy interviewed Complainant D's mother who stated that she had been told by a counselor at a group home that her son had been sexually abused. Two weeks later, in an internal memorandum, McCarthy noted that the complainant recently told his father that Azzarone had only touched him in the form of "hugging around the

shoulders," and that the complainant's psychiatrist told him that he "cannot tell fantasy from reality" and it was therefore "impossible to give any credibility to any statement made by [Complainant D] as to what happened, if anything." McCarthy also noted that Complainant D was too "unstable" to interview because he suffered from psychiatric disorders. McCarthy concluded that "[t]here is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation." Even though this was a second, unrelated, complaint against Azzarone by that time, and even though this complainant had first disclosed his abuse some 14 years earlier, McCarthy closed the case without confronting Father Azzarone or conducting any further investigation. He also did not report the allegation to law enforcement.

The Diocese received its third complaint against Azzarone two years later, in 2001. Complainant E reported the abuse to the assistant principal of his high school on November 14, 2001. The assistant principal contacted the Cranston Police Department which immediately initiated an investigation. Complainant E informed the police of the abuse detailed above and that he had received 79 missed calls from Azzarone the night before, dozens of which were accompanied by voicemail messages.

On November 15, 2001, Cranston police arrested Azzarone on charges of first-degree sexual assault and contributing to the delinquency of a minor. That night, the Cranston Police also interviewed Complainant F and Complainant G, who had been listed as other potential victims by Complainant E. Complainant G, whose allegations are detailed above, did not wish to pursue charges at that time. In 2006, however, he and his parents sued Bishops Gelineau and Mulvee, the Roman Catholic Bishop corporation, and St. Mary Church in Cranston. The case settled for $40,000 later that year following arbitration between the parties.

Following his arrest, the Bishop suspended Azzarone from active ministry.

On November 19, 2001, Complainant D's mother reported to McCarthy that her son had recently disclosed to her, and to her younger son, that he was molested by Azzarone. McCarthy responded by contacting the Cranston Police, who reportedly informed him that detectives would reach out to the Complainant's mother. According to an internal memorandum by McCarthy, Cranston Police informed McCarthy in March 2002 that it would not move forward with a prosecution based on Complainant D's allegations because he would, as McCarthy put it, "not make a credible witness."

On November 19, 2001. Complainant A's mother wrote a letter to a Cranston Police detective attaching the letter that her son had sent to Bishop Gelineau and Father Azzarone in 1992 disclosing his abuse, and she informed the detective that the Diocese was thus aware of Father Azzarone's activities since 1992. She concluded her letter by stating "Please convey my support for the young man who was very brave in coming forward at this time . . .."

The Pastor of St. Mary's Parish, Father Alfred Lonardo was interviewed by police regarding the allegations against Father Azzarone on November 21, 2001. Father Lonardo denied any knowledge of pornographic videos, alcohol consumption by minors, or youths sleeping overnight in the rectory, but noted that the location of his room on the second floor of the rectory would have prevented him from hearing anything taking place in Azzarone's room. Father Lonardo proceeded to inform police that, in and around 1995, Bishop Gelineau had informed him of a complaint against Azzarone regarding sexual misconduct. Bishop Gelineau asked Father Lonardo to "ensure that [Azzarone] had no further unsupervised contact with altar-servers."

On April 5, 2002, Azzarone was indicted on six counts of first-degree sexual assault and one count of second-degree sexual assault of Complainants E and F. On September 6, 2005, Azzarone pled *nolo contendere* (no contest) to two counts of first-degree sexual assault, admitting that he coerced Complainant E and Complainant F to have sex with him at St. Mary's rectory. The other four charges of first-degree sexual assault, and the second-degree sexual assault charge, all of which pertained to Complainants E and F, were dismissed as part of the plea agreement. Azzarone was sentenced to ten years in prison, with three years to serve and seven years suspended with probation. He was ordered to register as a Level III sex offender.

In 2004, the Diocese settled a lawsuit brought by Complainant E for $1.35 million. The Diocese also reached civil settlements with Complainants F and G the following year for approximately $300,000 and $50,000, respectively. In 2008, it settled a lawsuit brought by Complainant D for approximately $400,000.

In August of 2004, Complainant C's attorney submitted an affidavit detailing his allegations of sexual abuse by Azzarone to Diocesan attorney William Murphy in support of a demand letter seeking $25,000 "without the need for mediation." It is unclear what action Murphy took in response to the letter, if any, but in August 2005, the attorney reportedly called the OEC to report the abuse. An OEC memorandum states that McCarthy spoke to two detectives at the Rhode Island State Police regarding Complainant C's allegations on August 22, 2005, but there is no detail in the memorandum of what exactly was discussed.

Complainant C and his attorney met with OEC Director McCarthy while Complainant C was incarcerated at the Adult Correctional Institutions to discuss his allegations a few days later. Complainant C explained that when Azzarone assaulted him, he felt disgusted, but also confused because "at the same time this is someone I trusted." Complainant C also noted that the abuse stopped when Azzarone suddenly "was just gone and nobody knew why he left." Records show that Azzarone was transferred in 1980 from Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Providence to St. Clement Church in Warwick. During the interview, McCarthy noted that Azzarone "may end up going to jail if he's convicted" and that Complainant C was "not the only victim[,] there have been other victims . . . . And this will be just one more nail in his coffin . . . if they believe your allegations." McCarthy asked Complainant C if he ever thought about telling any of the police officers he encountered in his life about his alleged abuse. Complainant C responded that he did not, because he was

embarrassed and because "growing up where I grew up, you don't wanna be somebody to tell on somebody." When McCarthy asked Complainant C if he knew of anyone else who had been assaulted, Complainant C said no but mentioned other altar boys who served with him and may have been, including Complainant B. At the conclusion of the interview, McCarthy referred Complainant C to Dr. Michael Hansen, Director of the Diocese's Office of Human Formation and Outreach, for counseling and support. It does not appear that McCarthy discussed referring the complaint to law enforcement during the interview. Complainant C told State Police in 2019 that he reached a settlement with the Diocese, but we were unable to confirm from the records produced by the Diocese whether Complainant C's claim was ever mediated or settled.

An OEC memorandum states that McCarthy met with members of the State Police again on August 30, 2005, who reportedly provided McCarthy with information from the Department of Corrections Identification Department on Complainant C and his criminal record.

On January 13, 2006, the Vicar General and Chancellor, Monsignor John Darcy, wrote to Azzarone advising him that he could seek voluntary laicization and avoid a canonical penal process by the CDF. Azzarone responded by maintaining his innocence and rejecting the offer to request dispensation from his obligations to the clerical state.

On June 6, 2006, Complainant B's attorney wrote to Diocesan attorney William Murphy suggesting a settlement between the two parties. After about a year delay, McCarthy interviewed Complainant B with his attorney present. Complainant B reportedly provided McCarthy with photographs of him with Father Azzarone and Father D'Angelo. At the close of the interview, McCarthy offered the counseling services of Dr. Hansen, which the complainant accepted. McCarthy subsequently reported Complainant B's allegations to the Rhode Island State Police in 2007 while Azzarone was incarcerated. In a May 2007 memorandum to Monsignor Theroux, McCarthy described Complainant B as "very consistent with his description of the assaults" and "also consistent in his story about Fr. Azzarone becoming a father figure . . . ." An August 2007 OEC memorandum noted that Complainant B had a criminal history. It appears from the records produced to this Office that Complainant B did not receive any financial compensation from the Diocese. Complainant B's case was presented to the Review Board on May 16, 2007. There is no record of the Board's determination, if any, on that date.

In 2021, Complainant B's attorney informed State Police that he would not present his client to provide a statement and was seeking a civil remedy. In 2022, State Police spoke with Complainant B, who advised that he did not wish to move forward with possible criminal charges or provide a formal statement.

On December 20, 2007, Bishop Tobin wrote a letter to the CDF listing *six* credible accusations against Azzarone relating to Complainants A, C, D, E, F, and G, and requesting that he be permanently dismissed from the clerical state. The Diocese

reported to the CDF that the Roman Catholic Bishop of Providence settled suits and arbitrations totaling over $2 million, plus counseling fees, in response to credible allegations against Azzarone. Azzarone was laicized by Pope Benedict XVI on June 12, 2009.

In 2019, Complainant C provided a statement to the Rhode Island State Police regarding his allegations against Father Joseph D'Angelo. In 2022, the State Police contacted Complainants B and C as part of this Office's Investigation. Neither complainant wished to discuss the alleged abuse by Azzarone at that time or provide a formal statement. In 2023, State Police attempted to obtain a statement from Complainant C. He agreed to provide a statement after he spoke with his attorney but then wrote a letter advising that he did not wish to make a statement because he did not want to relive the pain or have his name on a criminal statement. He thanked the State Police for their "concern, advice[,] and empathy." In November 2024, the Attorney General sent Azzarone a letter inviting him to respond to the allegations described here. To date, this Office has not received a response.

**Status**

Azzarone is no longer in active ministry and is a registered Level III Sex Offender. He is listed on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Brother Robert (aka Peter) Barnes

| Born | Ordained | Removed | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dec. 25, 1921 | N/A | N/A | 2008 |

**Partial Assignment History**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1950s – 1960s | De La Salle Christian Brothers |
| February 23, 1980 | Incardinated as a priest of the Diocese of Norwich |

**Summary**

The Diocese received two complaints against Brother Peter Barnes, a member of the De La Salle Christian Brothers religious order: the first complainant reported to the Diocese in 2002 that Barnes sexually assaulted her in 1963, when she was 17 years old, and the second complainant reported to the Diocese in 2019 that Barnes sexually assaulted him when he was 10 years old in the 1950s. The Diocese referred both allegations to law enforcement, but neither could be prosecuted: the first was not prosecutable due to the statute of limitations and the second because Barnes was deceased.

**The Reported Abuse and Diocesan Response**

In 2002, an adult woman ("Complainant A") reported to Director of Education and Compliance Robert McCarthy that Barnes "raped" her in her home in East Providence in 1963 when she was 17 years old. McCarthy interviewed Complainant A and one of her sisters on May 10, 2002. During the interview, Complainant A also reported that her sisters were sexually abused by other members of the Christian Brothers, and the complainant's sister stated that she witnessed the alleged assault on Complainant A. After consulting with the Office of the Attorney General, Rhode Island State Police decided that the evidence was insufficient to support a rape charge because the complainant could not definitively state that penetration had occurred. As a result, prosecution was foreclosed by the statute of limitations.

Records provided by the Diocese indicate that Complainant A pursued a civil claim against the Christian Brothers, and while she did not wish to file a claim against the Diocese, she asked to participate in the Diocesan arbitration program which would have offered her and each of her sisters between $10,000 and $50,000. It is unclear whether the Diocese permitted Complainant A's participation in the program and what, if any, compensation she or her sisters received.

In April 2019, an adult male complainant ("Complainant B") reported to the Diocese that Barnes sexually assaulted him when he was 10 years old by fondling his

genitals and masturbating him. The abuse reportedly occurred in the 1950s and Complainant B reported that he lived near St. Raphael's Academy in Pawtucket, where Barnes was working at the time. Director of Compliance Kevin O'Brien interviewed the complainant on May 8, 2019, at the Office of Compliance, and noted that he was "readily able to provide specific, detailed information regarding the allegations." O'Brien forwarded the allegation to an official of the Christian Brothers Order and to Rhode Island State Police, who determined that the offense was not prosecutable as Barnes was deceased. Diocesan records indicate that the Diocese presented this case to the Diocesan Review Board for review on October 15, 2019. This Office did not receive any records regarding the Board's determination.

In 2024 and 2025, the State Police contacted both complainants, who each confirmed their previously reported allegations.

**Status**

Brother Barnes is deceased. He is included on the Diocese of Norwich, Connecticut's "List of Clergy with Allegations of Substance of Sexual Abuse of a Minor." The Diocese did not include him on its List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father Francis Xavier Battel

| Born | Ordained | Leave | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jun. 2, 1931 | May 25, 1957 | 1969 | Dec. 16, 1977 |

**Assignment History**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1957 | St. Mary Church, Pawtucket |
| 1957 – 1962 | St. Joseph Church, Providence |
| 1958 – 1962 | LaSalle Academy, Providence |
| 1962 – 1963 | St. Lawrence Church, North Providence |
| 1962 – 1963 | LaSalle Academy, Providence |
| 1963 – 1964 | Jesus Savior Church, Newport |
| 1964 – 1967 | Blessed Sacrament Church, Providence |
| 1967 – 1968 | St. Pius X Church, Westerly |
| 1968 – 1969 | St. Mary Church, Pawtucket |
| 1969 | *Leave of Absence* |

**Summary**

Father Francis Xavier Battel reportedly sexually abused a 14- to 15-year-old boy who worked in the rectory of St. Mary's in Pawtucket in the 1960s while Battel was assigned to the parish. The complainant reported to the Diocese that Battel touched his genitals and attempted to kiss him on the mouth and that another boy had also reported being abused by Battel.

The complainant reported the abuse by email to Monsignor John Darcy on March 30, 2010. Monsignor Darcy forwarded the complaint to Director of the Diocese Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") Robert McCarthy. Later that day, Moderator of the Curia Monsignor Paul Theroux informed McCarthy that Battel had abandoned his ministry in the late 1960s and had died in 1977.

McCarthy interviewed the complainant on April 9, 2010. During the interview, the complainant provided McCarthy with the details of the abusive incidents and reported that he was aware of another boy who claimed he was abused at the same time. According to the complainant, the boy once ran into a Catholic Youth Organization ("CYO") hall and stated that Battel had attacked or molested him. Battel was reportedly transferred from St. Mary's several days later. According to Diocesan records, Battel took a leave of absence from St. Mary's in 1969 – shortly after the reported incidents would have taken place. The complainant reported that although he tried to ask where Battel was transferred to, it was a "closed issue" and "no one would talk." The complainant provided McCarthy with that boy's last name but was

unable to recall his first name. Our review did not reveal any records of McCarthy following up on this information or any other investigation by the Diocese.

Diocesan records indicate that McCarthy presented the allegation to the Diocesan Review Board on June 15, 2010. There is no record of the Board's determination on that date, if any occurred.

According to McCarthy's records, he reported the allegations to the Rhode Island State Police in April 2010. There is no record of police opening an investigation as Battel was deceased.

In February 2024, as part of this Office's investigation, the State Police contacted the complainant who confirmed his previously reported allegations. Additionally, the complainant disclosed to State Police that he told one of his friends about the abuse within the same month that the abuse took place. Attempts by State Police to contact this individual were unsuccessful.

**Status**

Father Battel is deceased. He is not included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father Roger Belhumeur

| Born | Ordained | Retired | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mar. 29, 1926 | May 27, 1961 | Jun. 24, 1994 | Sep. 28, 2010 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1961 – 1962 | St. Joseph College, Mountain View, CA |
| 1962 – 1963 | Immaculate Conception Church, Cranston |
| 1963 – 1965 | Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, West Warwick |
| 1963 – 1973 | Our Lady of Providence Seminary, Warwick |
| 1965 – 1969 | St. Rose of Lima Church, Warwick |
| 1969 – 1973 | Immaculate Conception Church, Cranston |
| 1973 – 1979 | Mary, Immaculate Queen Novitiate, Newport |
| 1979 – 1991 | St Agnes Church, Providence |
| 1991 – 1994 | St. Mary Church, Newport |
| 1994 | *Retired*, Pastor Emeritus, St. Agnes Church, Providence |

## Summary

Father Roger Belhumeur reportedly sexually assaulted a teenage boy approximately 30-40 times while working as the assistant pastor of St. Rose of Lima in Warwick. The alleged abuse lasted about a year, from 1969 to 1970, but stopped when the complainant's father complained to the Diocese in May 1970. It does not appear that the Diocese relayed the allegations to law enforcement at the time.

In 2005, that complainant personally reported the alleged abuse to Chancellor John Darcy and was interviewed soon after by Robert McCarthy, the Director of the Diocese's Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC"). Following the interview, McCarthy stated that he found the complainant's account to be credible, but again, there is no record that McCarthy or any other Diocesan official reported the allegations to law enforcement. In 2018, McCarthy's successor, OEC Director Kevin O'Brien, reported the allegations to the Rhode Island State Police after discovering that law enforcement may not have been previously notified of the abuse. But since Belhumeur passed away in 2010, the case was no longer prosecutable.

In early 2022, a second complainant reported to the Diocese that when he was between 11-12 years old, in approximately 1975, Father Belhumeur repeatedly abused him at St. Mary's Church in Newport. Within days of receiving this complaint, OEC Director O'Brien relayed the allegations to State Police, who interviewed the complainant that same month.

Father Belhumeur is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

**The Reported Abuse**

In about 1969, while an assistant pastor at St. Rose of Lima in Warwick, Father Belhumeur reportedly sexually assaulted a teenage boy ("Complainant A") between 30 and 40 times, over a span of approximately one year. Complainant A, a parishioner at St. Rose, was hired by Belhumeur to work in the rectory. In an interview with OEC Director McCarthy, Complainant A recalled that Belhumeur first assaulted him while he was watching television at St. Rose. According to Complainant A, Belhumeur fondled his genitals on that occasion, and repeated the same conduct three or four more times. Complainant A told McCarthy that following those initial assaults, Belhumeur began to force Complainant A to perform oral sex on him and also orally raped the complainant.

Most of the reported abuse took place in the rectory of St. Rose, but when others occupied the rectory, it occurred in the church itself. On several occasions, Belhumeur reportedly took Complainant A to a car wash in Warwick, fondled him while going through the automatic wash cycle, and then drove him down to Arcadia State Park in Richmond where he continued to molest him. The complainant also reported that, on one occasion, Belhumeur unsuccessfully attempted to rape him while in the rectory of the Immaculate Conception Church in Cranston, where Belhumeur had recently been re-assigned.

In January 2022, a second man ("Complainant B") also came forward alleging that, in approximately 1975, Belhumeur had abused him repeatedly as an 11–12-year-old altar boy, while Belhumeur was serving as a priest in Newport. In an interview with State Police, Complainant B alleged that Belhumeur and two other priests[3] had abused him repeatedly at St. Mary's Church in Newport, forcing him to perform oral sex on them.

**Diocesan Response**

In May of 1970, after learning that Father Belhumeur reportedly abused his son, Complainant A's father wrote a letter to "the authorities of the Diocese of Providence" imploring them to take action. Complainant A told McCarthy that the abuse immediately stopped once his father contacted the Diocese. There is no indication that the Diocese contacted law enforcement at the time.

On July 13, 1970, in a letter to Bishop Russel McVinney, Belhumeur stated that he began a "retreat" during which he would "attempt to rededicate himself to Christ's priesthood" and thanked the Bishop for his "fatherly understanding." Records received by this Office provide no further detail regarding this "retreat." Nor is there

[3] The complainant could not recall the name of one of the other two priests, and this Office was unable to substantiate his claim against the other.

any indication in Belhumeur's personnel file of any other action taken by the Diocese due to the complainant's allegations; rather, Belhumeur continued his career as a Diocesan priest for another 24 years following this initial complaint.

On September 9, 2005, Complainant A contacted Chancellor Darcy to report his alleged abuse directly to the Diocese. Darcy forwarded his complaint to McCarthy, who apprised Bishop Tobin of his plan to interview the complainant three days later. When asked during the subsequent interview what he would like the result of his report to be, Complainant A replied, "I'd like to see how you make out with Roger Belhumeur." When the complainant showed further interest in McCarthy meeting Belhumeur "face to face," McCarthy reminded him that "he's gonna turn eighty this March, so I don't know if he's got all his marbles." He then recommended that the complainant seek help from Diocese psychologist Dr. Michael Hansen.

On September 16, 2005, after discovering the letter written by Complainant A's father, McCarthy met with the complainant again. During this meeting, McCarthy again suggested that Complainant A meet with Dr. Hansen, and he agreed to do so.

In a letter to Dr. Hansen on September 19, 2005, McCarthy related that Complainant A was "stunned, to say the least" when he was shown a copy of the letter written by his father in 1970. McCarthy went on to state that he was "convinced of [Complainant A's] veracity and truthfulness" and saw "no need at this time to interview Father Belhumeur, who is 80 years of age at this time." There is no indication in the Diocesan records produced to this Office that the Diocese notified law enforcement following Complainant A's meetings with McCarthy or the discovery of the corroborating letter from 1970.

In November 2018, OEC Director Kevin O'Brien contacted the Rhode Island State Police to notify them that he could not find any record of this allegation being reported to law enforcement, even though Diocesan files revealed that McCarthy, his predecessor, found the allegations to be credible. The State Police responded by creating an incident report, though it was immediately closed since Belhumeur had died eight years earlier.

In January 2023, the State Police contacted Complainant A, who advised that he was aware that Belhumeur was deceased and that no charges could be brought. He also advised that he felt the Diocese had handled the complaint appropriately and did not wish to pursue criminal charges at the time he disclosed his abuse. In November 2024, Complainant A once again confirmed his allegations to State Police.

Complainant B came forward with his complaint against Father Belhumeur in early 2022. He left a voicemail for Director O'Brien, stating that he had been abused as an altar boy in Newport years before. After unsuccessfully trying to call Complainant B back, O'Brien relayed the complaint to State Police a week later. The State Police interviewed Complainant B later that month and obtained a detailed account of the alleged abuse. Internal Diocesan correspondence reveals that, following this interview, O'Brien and others confirmed that although Belhumeur was

not assigned to St. Mary's Parish in Newport in 1974-75, when the reported abuse occurred, he frequently visited that parish to assist with mass. The final note in the Diocesan records indicates that this case was presented to the Diocesan Review Board on March 3, 2022. There is no record of the Board's determination on that date, if any occurred.

In November 2024, Complainant B confirmed the accuracy of his allegations to the Rhode Island State Police. This complainant also claimed that when he reported his alleged abuse to the Diocese in 2022, an unknown male claiming to be with the State Police contacted him and threatened that if he did not drop the complaint he would be sued. This claim could not be verified. Complainant B shared with the State Police his struggles with substance abuse and mental health that he attributed to his reported sexual abuse. As noted above, Complainant B's allegations about a second priest could not be substantiated and he did not identify a third priest who allegedly abused him.

**Status**

Father Belhumeur died on September 28, 2010. He is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father Mario Bordignon

| Born | Ordained | Retired | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dec. 5, 1923 | Jul. 18, 1950 | N/A | Dec. 22, 1992 |

**Partial Assignment History**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1951 – 1959 | St. Anthony Church, New Haven, CT |
| 1959 – 1964 | Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church, Bristol |
| 1988 – 1992 | St. Bartholomew Church, Providence |

**Summary**

Father Mario Bordignon was a non-Diocesan priest of the Scalabrini Order. In February 2013, a complainant reported to the Diocese that, during the summer of 1964, Father Bordignon sexually assaulted her on several occasions when she was 15 years old. She reported that "Father Mario" was a family friend who accompanied the victim and others on trips to swim in the Palmer River in Barrington. On approximately five or six occasions, Bordignon reportedly put his hands on her breasts and vagina.

The Diocese referred the matter to the Rhode Island State Police on February 26, 2013, the day after receiving the complaint. In early March 2013, Director of the Diocese's Office of Education and Compliance Robert McCarthy interviewed the complainant at her home. She provided detailed descriptions of Father Bordignon, the abuse he reportedly inflicted on her, and the impact that it had on her life and faith. Later, Director McCarthy assembled photographs of approximately 80 different priests, and the complainant specifically identified Bordignon as her abuser. McCarthy discussed the matter with the Diocesan Review Board in a meeting on April 9, 2013. We do not have any records regarding the outcome of that meeting. Meanwhile, State Police closed its investigation after learning that Bordignon had died in 1992.

The day following his March 2013 interview of the complainant, Director McCarthy forwarded a description of the allegations and a transcript of the interview to the Scalabrini Order. Within days, the attorney representing the Scalabrini Order contacted McCarthy and opined that any civil claims by the complainant were time-barred.

In early April 2013, the complainant contacted Director McCarthy again to express her frustration that the Scalabrini Order still had not contacted her to discuss her reported abuse. The following day, McCarthy wrote another letter to the Provincial of the Scalabrini Order, relaying the complainant's frustrations and adding that "I want

you to be personally aware of how a victim is treated by your Order and the feelings that it generates." He also provided the complainant's contact information. A week later, McCarthy received another letter from the lawyer representing the Scalabrini Order noting that these were merely "allegations" dating back approximately 49 years and stating the Scalabrini Order's Provincial "will himself decide on a pastoral basis whether to speak with [the complainant]."

In February 2024, the Rhode Island State Police attempted to reach out to this complainant several times without success.

**Status**

Father Bordignon is deceased. He is not included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father Dennis Brodeur

| Born | Ordained | Retired | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jul. 1, 1951 | Jul. 23, 1977 | No | Jan. 1, 2004 |

**Assignment History**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1976 – 1977 | Holy Trinity Church, Central Falls |
| Summer 1977 | St. Catherine Church, Warwick |
| 1977 – 1980 | St. Jude Church, Lincoln |
| 1980 – 1982 | Faculty, St. Ambrose College, Davenport, IA |
| 1982 – 1986 | Faculty, Center for Health Care Ethics, St. Louis, MO |
| 1986 – 2004 | Sisters of St. Mary Health Center, St. Louis, MO |

**Summary**

Father Dennis Brodeur reportedly sexually abused a young teenage boy on multiple occasions in the late 1970s and early 1980s, while Brodeur was serving as assistant pastor of St. Jude's Parish in Lincoln, Rhode Island.

The Diocese was first contacted about the alleged abuse on January 6, 2004, only a few days after Father Brodeur's death on January 1. That day, the Vice Chancellor for the Archdiocese of Atlanta called the Diocese's Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") to relay a complaint it had received from a local Atlanta priest. The priest advised that on January 2, a couple told him that their adult son had recently disclosed that he had been abused by Brodeur as a 13-year-old boy when the family lived in Rhode Island. By early February 2004, OEC Director Robert McCarthy had spoken with the Atlanta priest who was counseling the complainant's parents, and Dr. Michael Hansen, the Diocese's Director of the Office of Human Formation and Outreach, had been in contact with the complainant's parents.

In October 2004, the complainant, who resided out of state, agreed to an in-person interview with McCarthy and Dr. Hansen at the OEC in Providence. During that interview, the complainant reported that he was molested repeatedly by Brodeur at his family's home in Lincoln when he was 13-14 years old. Brodeur was close friends with the complainant's parents, whom he met at St. Jude's Parish, and he spent significant amounts of time in their home. The complainant stated that Father Brodeur would enter his bedroom at night, while his parents were home, to "tuck him in," and that this escalated to repeated instances of masturbation and Brodeur performing oral sex on the boy. The complainant reported that this likely occurred 5-10 times, and that he disclosed the abuse for the first time around the time of Brodeur's death.

Diocesan records indicate that the case was presented to the Diocesan Review Board on April 2, 2019. The same records note that the Diocese had "no law enforcement notification on file" with respect to the Brodeur allegations. Later that month, McCarthy's successor, OEC Director Kevin O'Brien, reached back out to the complainant at the request of the Review Board seeking "additional information to help sustain the allegations against Brodeur" as part of "the impending publication of the list of credibly accused priests." This included asking the complainant whether he was aware of other victims or had "additional information to support credibility" beyond the lengthy interview he had given to the Diocese 15 years before. The complainant indicated he had no such information. However, it does not appear that O'Brien notified this Office or the Rhode Island State Police of this complaint.

In 2025, as a part of this Office's Investigation, Rhode Island State Police contacted the complainant who confirmed his prior allegations against Brodeur. The complainant did not recall ever speaking with Director O'Brien regarding his complaint, nor was he made aware of the outcome of any possible Diocesan investigation into his complaint. The complainant stated that there were no other witnesses to his reported abuse, and that he did not disclose his allegations against Brodeur to anyone until after Brodeur's death in 2004, when he confided in his parents and later interviewed with former OEC Director McCarthy.

**Status**

Father Brodeur died in early 2004. The Diocese included him on its List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father James Campbell

| Born | Ordained | Laicized | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| June 25, 1945 | May 27, 1972 | 2005 | 2007 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1974 – 1975 | M.S.C. Center, Shelby, OH |
| 1975 – 1977 | St. Joseph Church, West Warwick |
| 1975 – 1977 | RI Medical Center, Cranston |
| 1978 – 1982 | Missionary, Bogota, Columbia |
| 1982 – 1991 | St. Therese of Jesus Church, Aurora, IL |
| 1991 – 2000 | Sacred Heart Monastery, Aurora, IL |
| 2000 – 2002 | M.S.C. Foreign Missions, Marshall Islands |
| 2002 | Sacred Heart Villa, Center Valley, PA |
| 2005 | *Laicized* |

## Summary

Father James Campbell, a priest of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart religious order, reportedly sexually assaulted a 15-year-old boy ("Complainant A") on multiple occasions from 1975 to 1976 in the rectory of St. Joseph's Church in West Warwick, at a hotel in Narragansett, and once in a hotel near Youngstown, Ohio. Complainant A reported the abuse in a letter to a reverend at St. Joseph's Church in August 1994, who forwarded the complainant's letter to Bishop Louis Gelineau later that month. The letter was also forwarded to the Director of the Diocese's Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") Robert McCarthy, but it does not appear that any investigative action was taken at that time nor was there a referral to law enforcement. McCarthy revisited the case in May 2002 after a priest who was involved in reporting the abuse asked for follow-up. McCarthy interviewed Complainant A on May 7, 2002, and referred the allegation to the Rhode Island State Police the same day.

Father Campbell was convicted in Massachusetts in December 2004 of molesting two children, a boy ("Complainant B") and a girl ("Complainant C"), on separate occasions in Uxbridge, Massachusetts, from 1975 to 1978 while assigned to St. Joseph Church in West Warwick. He died in 2007. Campbell is listed on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

## The Reported Abuse and Diocesan Response

Complainant A first reported his abuse to the Diocese in 1994 in a letter addressed to a priest at St. Joseph Church. Records indicate that, at the time of the report, Father Campbell was no longer serving in Rhode Island, but was at the Sacred

Heart Monastery in Aurora, IL. Complainant A reported that in 1975-1976, when he was about 15 years old, Campbell abused him multiple times in the rectory of St. Joseph Church in West Warwick, at a hotel in Narragansett, and once in a hotel near Youngstown, Ohio. The complainant reported that the abuse included unwanted physical touching of the back, buttocks, and digital penetration of his anus. According to the complainant, the abuse stopped when Campbell and the complainant had a conversation at a restaurant in Massachusetts and Campbell "wanted to apologize for what had happened unless . . . [Complainant A] wanted to continue."

The priest at St. Joseph's forwarded Complainant A's letter to Bishop Louis Gelineau on August 23, 1994. A memorandum from Monsignor George Frappier to Bishop Gelineau on August 23, 1994, states that Frappier had asked McCarthy to

> interview the young man in question to determine exactly what [the] accusations are in detail [and] to make a judgment as to their relevance, seriousness, etc. Subsequently, depending upon the findings, whether serious or unfounded, it might be appropriate for you to share Lt. Robert McCarthy's report with the provincial of the priest in question.

The records produced by the Diocese do not document any further action by McCarthy until 2002. There is no indication that McCarthy contacted or interviewed Complainant A in 1994 or contacted the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart to inform them of Complainant A's allegations. There is also no indication that the Diocese referred the allegation to law enforcement.

On May 1, 2002, the St. Joseph's priest who had forwarded Complainant A's letter to Bishop Gelineau sent a follow-up letter to Monsignor Paul Theroux expressing interest in a resolution. Theroux called McCarthy five days later regarding the investigation, at which time McCarthy related that because Campbell had moved out of state and was not a priest of the Providence Diocese, the Diocese had no reason to move forward in 1994. McCarthy called the Provincial Supervisor of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart religious order in Aurora, Illinois, on May 7, 2002, and was advised that Campbell was residing in Center Valley, Pennsylvania and that other complaints had been filed against Campbell while he was in Illinois. The same day, McCarthy interviewed Complainant A at the OEC office. During the interview, Complainant A told McCarthy he believed Campell also molested two other young men, who were brothers, at around the same time he was abused. Complainant A stated one of them had since committed suicide. Complainant A did not share the name of the other man with McCarthy due to ongoing litigation. The State Police does not have a record of McCarthy notifying them of this complaint.

On May 17, 2002, an attorney advised McCarthy that he was representing Complainant B and the estate of Complainant B's deceased brother, the two brothers previously mentioned by Complainant A, who reported that Campbell had sexually abused them in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. The attorney did not provide a description of the abuse, or the ages of the complainants at the time of the abuse, to

McCarthy. McCarthy opened an investigation into the allegations on May 17, 2002. The Diocese did not produce any materials related to the substance of McCarthy's investigation besides an undated memorandum in which McCarthy notes that he called the Provincial Supervisor of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart religious order on May 17, 2002, to apprise him of the second allegation against Campbell.

According to State Police records, Complainant B independently reported his abuse by Campell to the State Police in 2000. Complainant B's account detailed first- and second-degree sexual assaults in Massachusetts and Rhode Island in 1973. Complainant B alleged that Campbell gave him alcohol and then digitally and anally raped him during in the spring of 1973 while on a trip to Ohio when the complainant was 16 years old. He reported approximately 15 to 20 similar incidents of abuse over the following two years. State Police records also indicate that a detective notified McCarthy of the allegations following the interview with Complainant B in 2001. The State Police concluded that the applicable statute of limitations foreclosed prosecution.

On May 20, 2002, McCarthy presented Complainant A and Complainant B's allegations to the Diocesan Review Board. There is no record of the Board's determination on that date, if any occurred.

On December 17, 2002, McCarthy forwarded his investigative files involving both allegations to the Massachusetts State Police. On August 14, 2003, the Worcester County District Attorney's Office also requested these files. In a 2003 letter to a Massachusetts State Trooper with the Worcester District Attorney's Office, the priest who had reported Complainant A's allegations to the Bishop in 1994 expressed shock upon learning that they had not been investigated at that time.

On January 4, 2005, McCarthy notified Monsignor Theroux that Campbell had been convicted of various offenses against Complainant B and a 14-year-old girl in Massachusetts on December 22, 2004. Campbell pled guilty to one count of Rape, two counts of Assault and Battery, two counts of Delivering Alcohol to a Minor, and one count of Unnatural and Lascivious Acts. Campbell was sentenced to 90 days in prison and 10 years of supervised probation. He was ordered to register as a sex offender and to have no unsupervised contact with children under the age of 16.

In January 2005, Diocesan counsel wrote to Complainant B's attorney, stating that the Bishop had a policy of providing a pre-approved payment of $25,000 and compensation for therapy expenses to victims of sexual abuse, and that Complainant B could contact him for further information. Diocesan records do not indicate whether Complainant B sought or received any compensation or reimbursement for therapy expenses.

In 2024, State Police efforts to contact Complainant A were unsuccessful.

**Status**

Father Campbell is deceased. The Vatican granted his request for laicization sometime prior to February 2005. He is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father Robert Carpentier

| Born | Ordained | Retired | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Feb. 12, 1941 | Jun. 3, 1967 | 2006 | May 9, 2012 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| Summer 1967 | St. Clare Church, Misquamicut |
| 1967 – 1969 | Precious Blood Church, Woonsocket |
| 1969 – 1973 | St. Agatha Church, Woonsocket |
| 1973 – 1976 | Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Church, Woonsocket |
| Summer 1976 | St. Mary Church, Newport |
| 1976 – 1982 | Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church, North Providence |
| 1982 – 1992 | St. Theresa of the Child Jesus Church, Nasonville |
| 1992 | St. John the Evangelist Church, North Slatersville |
| April – May 1992 | *Medical Leave of Absence,* Institute of Living, Hartford, CT |
| 1992 – 1994 | *Sabbatical,* Boston College |
| 1994 – 2006 | *Leave of Absence* |
| 2006 | *Retired* |

## Summary

Father Robert Carpentier reportedly sexually abused two boys in Woonsocket in the late 1960s and early 1970s, while serving as a priest at St. Agatha's Church and Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Church in Woonsocket. He admitted the abuse of one of his complainants ("Complainant A"). He died before the second complainant ("Complainant B") came forward.

According to the records produced by the Diocese, it first learned of Complainant A's allegation against Carpentier in April 1992, when Complainant A's family reported it to Auxiliary Bishop Kenneth Angell. In a subsequent meeting between Angell, Bishop Louis Gelineau, and Carpentier on April 9, 1992, Father Carpentier admitted to abusing Complainant A and agreed to resign from his position. There is no indication in the Diocesan records produced to this Office that the Diocese notified law enforcement about the abuse at the time. Complainant A filed a civil suit against Carpentier and the Diocese in October 1992, which ultimately was included in a landmark 2002 settlement between the Diocese and multiple victims of clerical abuse for $13.5 million. Father Carpentier remained on a leave of absence from April 1992 until his "official" retirement in 2006, during and after which he continued to receive compensation and benefits from the Diocese. He died in May 2012.

In April 2020, the Diocese received another complaint against Father Carpentier from Complainant B, who, through an attorney, reported that Carpentier abused him while Carpentier was serving as a priest at St. Agatha in Woonsocket. The Director of the Diocese Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC"), Kevin O'Brien, forwarded the allegation to Rhode Island State Police at the end of June 2020.

Father Carpentier is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

**The Reported Abuse and Diocesan Response**

In April 1992, a family member of Complainant A met with Auxiliary Bishop Angell and reported that Complainant A had recently disclosed to them that he had been abused by Carpentier as a 13-year-old boy between 1973 and 1974, while Carpentier was a pastor at Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Church. Carpentier was close with Complainant A's family, who were parishioners at Our Lady Queen of Martyrs. Carpentier used his position of trust with the family to groom Complainant A, leading to fondling, masturbation, and oral sex. The sexual abuse continued for over a year and included out-of-state trips with Complainant A.

Following the April 1992 report, Auxiliary Bishop Angell scheduled separate meetings with both Complainant A's family and Carpentier. At their meeting, Complainant A's mother disclosed the abuse, adding that she had confronted Carpentier after she learned about it in November 1991, and Carpentier reportedly admitted the abuse to her then. After meeting with Complainant A's family, Auxiliary Bishop Angell and Bishop Louis Gelineau met with Carpentier. According to Angell's handwritten notes, Carpentier admitted "that indeed he had sexually molested [Complainant A] when the latter was 13 years old." Carpentier also agreed in the meeting to resign from his parish and to be evaluated at the Institute of the Living Center in Hartford, Connecticut. There is no record that the Diocese reported the sexual abuse to law enforcement.

Following his meeting with Bishops Angell and Gelineau, Carpentier drafted a letter to his then-parishioners at St. John the Evangelist in North Slatersville, in which he explained that he was taking a "medical leave of absence" due to "mental tiredness and anxieties." According to records from Complainant A's attorney in connection with the subsequent civil suit against the Diocese, Carpentier said that in "confessing" his abuse of Complainant A (presumably a reference to the Catholic sacrament), "no one ever said I should tell the parents."

Bishop Angell offered to help pay for Complainant A's therapy. Yet in a September 1992 letter to Angell, Complainant A's mother accused Angell of making false promises and refusing to pay for their counseling. Three days later, Bishop Angell responded with a check, saying that it had been delayed by "a great deal of red tape." He informed her that she would be helped with future bills "as needed."

Father Carpentier stayed at the Institute of Living in Hartford, Connecticut from late April 1992 until May 25, 1992. According to Bishop Gelineau's notes regarding

Carpentier's discharge from the Institute, they found "no problem . . . that needs attention," and Carpentier was deemed "not a pedophile!" (Emphasis in original) Still, Carpentier remained on leave from priestly duties, and in a June 1992 letter he expressed his desire to Bishop Gelineau to take a "sabbatical" in a priestly community. Gelineau agreed, and the Diocese funded a "sabbatical" for Carpentier at Boston College, beginning around the fall of 1992 and running through spring 1994.

In late October 1992, Complainant A sued Carpentier and the Diocese. His complaint alleged that Carpentier "frequently and regularly exploited the powers of his position to perform lewd and lascivious, homosexual acts" with the victim, all "undertaken in the course and within the scope of his employment as a priest." The Diocese continued to support Carpentier financially and personally in the ensuing years while Complainant A's civil case was still pending. For example, in November 1993, Diocesan priest Father Evans authorized the fiscal office to continue Carpentier's salary, room and board, and tuition payments "from January 1994 until further notice at the level currently in effect." Gelineau noted in a May 1993 internal memorandum that they needed to "buy time till [the] court case is resolved."

In January 1994, Robert McCarthy—the newly-hired Director of the OEC—responded to a letter from Rhode Island State Police Detective John Flaherty, who had inquired about the location and status of certain priests who had been publicly accused of sexual misconduct, including Carpentier. McCarthy wrote back that Carpentier was then residing at Regina Cleri, a residence for retired priests in Boston, and that Carpentier had "no faculties and [was] not permitted to function as a priest in the Diocese of Providence."

Complainant A's civil case against the Diocese was still pending in June 2002 when the lawyer representing Complainant A and several other clergy abuse plaintiffs subpoenaed Diocesan investigator McCarthy for testimony and to produce internal Diocesan records relating to the priests who had been sued for sexual abuse. In a widely publicized July 2002 decision, Superior Court Judge Robert Krause rejected the Diocese's objections and ordered the Diocese to produce the records sought by Complainant A and others. The Diocese promptly settled the cases against Carpentier and others two months later for $13.5 million.

About 18 years later, in April 2020, counsel for Complainant B wrote the Diocese a letter alleging that Carpentier abused his client as a young boy, when Carpentier was a priest at St. Agatha's in Woonsocket. Kevin O'Brien, who had replaced Robert McCarthy as the OEC Director, attempted to interview Complainant B, but as of June 2020 he was unable to complete an interview due to the COVID-19 pandemic. O'Brien then forwarded the complaint to the Rhode Island State Police on June 30, 2020. State Police subsequently closed the investigation because Complainant B was not willing to give a statement.

**Status**

Father Carpentier remained on a leave of absence until he retired in 2006. He died on May 9, 2012. Carpentier is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Brother Vincent Cavanaugh

| Born | Ordained | Removed | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dec. 4, 1888 | N/A | N/A | 1966 |

**Assignment History**

Unknown

**Summary**

Brother Vincent Cavanaugh was a member of the Congregation of the Christian Brothers ("Christian Brothers") religious order who was employed by LaSalle Academy, a Catholic school located in Providence, Rhode Island, during the 1950s. In October 2004, a complainant called the Diocese Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") to report that Brother Vincent Cavanaugh sexually abused him as a 13-year-old student at LaSalle Academy. On a subsequent call with OEC Director Robert McCarthy, the complainant alleged that the assaults took place in the summer of 1956 in Lincoln Woods Park and at a private home on the waterfront in Rhode Island, and that the abuse consisted of "mainly touching." The complainant further reported that Brother Cavanaugh also abused his younger brother when he was 11 years old. The Christian Brothers confirmed that Brother Cavanaugh was previously assigned to the school where the abuse reportedly occurred, and that he was deceased.

McCarthy interviewed the complainant again by telephone in late 2004. During that call, the complainant provided additional details regarding the accusation: growing up poor, his mother contacted the school seeking a scholarship for both of her sons to attend, and she was put in contact with Brother Cavanaugh. Repeatedly, Brother Cavanaugh took the complainant and his brother swimming in a state park and private waterfront home during the summer of 1956 when they were 13 and 11 years old, respectively—where he would rub sunscreen over the boys' bodies, including by reaching into their shorts and touching their genitals. The complainant reported that he and his brother experienced this four times. Later in life, the complainant added, his brother, who was deceased, disclosed that Brother Cavanaugh was his first sexual partner.

In a subsequent letter to McCarthy, the complainant reported that Brother Cavanaugh had the boys put suntan lotion on his own body in the same manner – by reaching into his shorts and touching his genitals. The complainant told McCarthy that he reported this information to the former president of LaSalle Academy in the fall of 2004 and was told at the time that Brother Cavanaugh had died. He also told McCarthy that he wanted an apology from the Christian Brothers and that he was uncertain whether he would like financial compensation.

In a January 2005 letter to the complainant, McCarthy explained that he had been in touch with the Christian Brothers, who advised "they could find no material regarding Brother Cavanaugh that would lead them to suspect any misconduct regarding either you or your brother or any individual." At the same time, McCarthy said, he had expressed to the Christian Brothers his belief that the complainant was "honest," had not embellished any of the allegations, that the allegations "very well could have happened" based upon his training and experience, and that the Christian Brothers were prepared to provide counseling. Having investigated the allegations and because Brother Cavanaugh had died, McCarthy closed the matter. Diocesan records do not reflect a referral of this allegation to law enforcement.

In 2024, the Rhode Island State Police attempted to contact the complainant to discuss his allegations but discovered that the complainant had passed away.

**Status**

Brother Cavanaugh died in 1966. He is not included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father Paul Charland

| Born | Ordained | Suspended | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Apr. 24, 1945 | May 15, 1971 | Aug. 26, 2011 | No |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1971 – 1975 | St. Augustine Church, Providence |
| 1975 – 1979 | Christian Youth Formation Center, North Kingstown |
| 1979 – 1982 | St. Joseph Church, Cumberland (residence) |
| 1979 – 1982 | St. Raphael Academy, Pawtucket |
| 1979 – 1982 | St. Joseph Church, Cumberland |
| 1982 | House of Affirmation, Whitinsville, MA |
| 1983 | SS. John & Paul Church, Coventry |
| 1983 – 1986 | St. Agatha Church, Woonsocket |
| 1986 – 1990 | Holy Ghost Church, Tiverton |
| 1990 – 1992 | St. Lawrence Church, North Providence |
| 1992 – 2006 | St. Paul the Apostle Church, Foster |
| 2006 – 2007 | Mount St. Rita Health Centre, Cumberland |
| 2007 – 2009 | St. Francis House, Woonsocket |
| 2009 – 2011 | Various Nursing Homes, Providence Area |
| 2011 | *Suspended and Retired* |

## Summary

Father Paul Charland was accused of sexually assaulting at least two girls, one in the 1980s, and another in the late 1990s. His personnel file reveals that the Diocese received multiple complaints about his inappropriate behavior with girls and women during his tenure, though there are no specific allegations beyond those of the two girls. Although Charland's conduct was reported to, and investigated by, the Rhode Island State Police, he was never criminally charged as prosecution of the second-degree sexual assault allegations of the girls was foreclosed by the applicable three-year statute of limitations. Bishop Thomas Tobin suspended Father Charland from ministry in 2011 after an adult woman alleged that he had inappropriately hugged and kissed her.

Father Charland is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

## The Reported Abuse and Diocesan Response

In 2002, a woman ("Complainant A") reported to the Diocese that Father Charland sexually abused her in 1980 or 1981 while he was working at St. Raphael's Academy as a guidance counselor and Catholic Youth Organization teacher.

Complainant A, who was about 15 years old at the time of the alleged abuse and a student at St. Raphael's Academy, reported that Charland kissed and groped her on multiple occasions on campus, and once while helping her into and out of his private boat in Newport. She also claimed that she saw Father Charland abuse her friend in a similar manner during the same Newport boating trip. During her 2002 interview with Director of the Diocese Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") Robert McCarthy, Complainant A also disclosed that she was sexually abused by two other individuals.

It appears that the Diocese had received notice of this conduct near the time it had occurred. In 1982, a priest who ran a retreat program at the Father Barry Center in Pawtucket, learned of these incidents from a third-party in whom Complainant A had confided. The priest informed Bishop Angell, in a letter dated January 25, 1982, that he learned Father Charland's behavior "covers ten years. Incidents are reported to me by youth, a single adult male formerly in Fr. 'C's' employ, as well as by a married couple." The priest confronted Charland regarding the alleged abuse and reported in his letter: "In my presence he could not deny the report that in his Saint Raphael Academy office an underclass student, age 15, told me first-hand of being kissed by him on the lips, and of feeling his tongue inside of her mouth." Charland excused himself as "overly friendly." In response, the priest advised the Bishop, "I am not recommending any suspension . . . , [b]ut not to force [Charland] into a counseling process is a disservice to him, the kids, and to the [C]hurch." He added, "[t]he Pawtucket School Committee suspended a teacher indefinitely and without pay pending the outcome of its own investigation into a similar matter. I am shamed into writing to you, because they, the hirelings, seem to take these things more seriously than I, the shepherd."

In 1982, Bishop Gelineau sent Charland to the House of Affirmation, a treatment center for Catholic priests in Whitinsville, Massachusetts. He continued to receive some treatment there, at the direction of Bishop Angell, while beginning a new assignment at Saints John & Paul Church in Coventry in 1983.

Father Charland remained in ministry for the next decade, moving between several parishes in Woonsocket, Tiverton, and North Providence. In 1992, Charland's transfer to St. Paul the Apostle Church in Foster caused an outcry. Several parishioners wrote to Diocese officials expressing concerns about their new pastor and rumors of his conduct with children. "I am afraid that our parish children are at risk," wrote one parishioner. Chancellor William Varsanyi assured the parishioners that there was no cause for alarm. "I am writing to you again concerning Father Paul Charland, your pastor," Varsanyi wrote in a December 1992 letter to a parishioner. "Having discussed your concerns with Father Charland and with a number of knowledgeable people, I can assure you that your fears are groundless."

In June 1993, Varsanyi invited eight St. Paul the Apostle parishioners to attend a meeting with several Diocese officials and Father Charland. Director of Priests Personnel, Monsignor Robert Evans, claimed that "no one at this meeting could cite any evidence or allegation whatsoever regarding inappropriate behavior," and

Chancellor Varsanyi again assured the parishioners that there was no foundation for their concern.

In the summer of 1999, Father Charland invited a family he had known for several years to join him on his sailboat, which was moored in Wickford. One of the family members was a 15-year-old girl ("Complainant B"). Father Charland and the family spent the day sailing Narragansett Bay. Complainant B later reported to the Rhode Island State Police in 2003 that Charland groped her on multiple occasions during the excursion in July of 1999 and kissed her goodbye on the mouth at the end of the day. State Police interviewed Complainant B and her father, who reportedly witnessed Charland grab his daughter's buttocks and kiss her goodbye at the end of the day. Her father told State Police that he confronted his daughter about his observations later that same evening, however, she did not want to file a police report, and therefore no report was made to police or the Diocese at the time. Complainant B later disclosed the incident to work colleagues who drove her to Rhode Island State Police Headquarters in 2003 to make a report. State Police interviewed Charland as well, who denied the allegations. Because the alleged conduct, if proven, would have constituted second-degree sexual assault, prosecution was foreclosed by the three-year statute of limitations. In 2024, State Police attempted to contact Complainant B regarding her allegations without success.

The State Police notified OEC Director McCarthy of Complainant B's allegations on January 23, 2003. By that point, McCarthy was already aware of the earlier allegation against Charland, brought by Complainant A in April 2002. McCarthy had not forwarded the April 2002 complaint to law enforcement because Complainant A had apparently told McCarthy she did not want to contact law enforcement. According to McCarthy's notes, on February 3, 2003, Complainant A spoke with McCarthy and a detective with the Rhode Island State Police about her allegations. She reportedly told them "that she was not interested in pursuing any criminal prosecution involving Father Charland but wanted him held accountable for his actions." McCarthy's notes indicate that the detective, in conversations with this Office, concluded that the applicable statute of limitations on the alleged offenses had expired, and that "it would be very difficult to prove, but they were quite concerned seeing there was a pattern involving similar conduct, which has gone on for a number of years."

Director McCarthy interviewed Complainant B on January 30, 2003. He then interviewed Charland about Complainant A's and Complainant B's allegations shortly thereafter on February 4, 2003. During the interview, Charland admitted to kissing Complainant A on the lips on a boat in 1980 but denied knowing her friend. After consulting his calendar, Charland stated that he'd been sailing with Complainant B and her parents on July 11, 1999, out of Wickford Harbor on his sailboat, and recalled helping Complainant B out of his boat, though he denied any intentional inappropriate touching. Charland claimed he could not recall what brought about the occasion where he kissed a 15-year-old girl and he excused his behavior by telling McCarthy "I must be giving signals uh, or . . . I guess I don't know how people respond

to my attempts at affection." According to McCarthy's notes from that interview, he also discussed proper boundaries and the importance of perception.

On February 7, 2003, McCarthy informed State Police about his interview of Charland. A March 2003 letter from McCarthy to Bishop McManus states that his office had not interviewed Complainant A's friend. It does not appear that the Diocese followed up again until 2011. In a December 2011 letter to Complainant A, Director Robert McCarthy explained that Bishop Evans had instructed him to follow up on Complainant A's 2002 statement as well as the identity and contact information of her friend in an effort to hold Charland accountable under canon law, however, there is no indication in the files produced by the Diocese of any follow-up or interview of Complainant A's friend. State Police efforts to reach Complainant A's friend in 2025 were unsuccessful.

The Diocesan Review Board reviewed the 1999 boating incident in June 2003. Bishop McManus subsequently issued a Canonical warning to Charland in a July 2003 letter, threatening suspension unless Charland complied with the Board's orders that Charland invite only clergy onto his boat and arrange for a psychological evaluation on the issue of "maintaining appropriate boundaries." Charland remained pastor of St. Paul the Apostle in Foster, where he had served for over a decade.

Thereafter, Bishop Mulvee sent Charland for an evaluation in February 2004. Notably, the Diocese declined to provide the examining psychiatrist with access to Charland's confidential personnel file, and Charland declined to authorize release of his House of Affirmation treatment records. Following the evaluation, the Minister for Priests, Father Normand Godin, met with Charland to discuss the report. In a memorandum to Bishop McManus dated March 10, 2004, Godin indicated that Charland admitted he had "at times acted immature and inappropriate" but he was willing to follow recommendations and work with Godin to "accomplish his goals." In June 2006, Bishop Tobin ordered Charland to submit to another evaluation after it was discovered that he did not follow previous recommendations and the Review Board expressed "serious concerns."

Later that month, Bishop Tobin assigned Charland to a chaplaincy at Mount St. Rita Health Center. Charland's transfer to Mount St. Rita marked the unofficial end of his parish ministry. For the remaining five years of his career, Charland would only be assigned to nursing homes and assisted living centers.

In May 2011, an adult complainant reported to the OEC that Father Charland had harassed her at St. Casimir Parish in Providence earlier that same year on numerous occasions. She reported to Director McCarthy that Charland had hugged and kissed her without her consent. She stated that she had confided in a local pastor who advised her to come forward. McCarthy reported the complaint to Rhode Island State Police on May 6, 2011, but State Police determined that the elements did not meet the criteria to go forward with a criminal complaint and did not investigate further. McCarthy interviewed Father Charland on June 16, 2011. During the interview, Charland admitted to kissing the adult woman on the lips and hugging her. In 2024,

State Police contacted the complainant who confirmed her previous allegations. By then, however, the statute of limitations had long run.

On August 22, 2011, a Canon Law professor at Boston College, visited the Providence Chancery to review the allegations against Charland. In a memorandum to Bishop Evans, he noted that the complaints received in 2002 and 2003 (Complainants A and B) should have been reported to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith ("CDF," now the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith) pursuant to the Pope's 2001 Apostolic Letter. The professor also noted, "[t]he investigator [McCarthy] should have greater familiarity with his canonical role."

On August 26, 2011, Bishop Tobin opened a canonical investigation into the allegations against Charland. In a decree pronouncing the investigation, Bishop Tobin noted that it was prompted by the allegation made against Charland in May 2011. In the same decree, the Bishop suspended Charland from public ministry pending the outcome of the investigation and granted Charland permission to honorably retire as a "Senior Priest" and permission to live in Regina Cleri. Bishop Tobin acknowledged that the complaints received in 2002 and 2003 "were examined informally by diocesan officials but without reaching a formal conclusion" and that, "even though the evidence suggested that a violation of [canon law] had taken place, a report was never forwarded to the uniquely competent Supreme Tribunal of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith for determination of how the disputed facts of the case would be properly adjudicated." There is no record indicating that any of the allegations against Charland were ever reported to the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith. In a memorandum to file dated July 13, 2016, Chancellor Timothy Reilly recorded that Bishop Tobin had instructed him *not* to forward "the allegation (from the 1980s when Father Charland was assigned to St. Raphael Academy in Pawtucket) involving Father Charland and a minor[,]" likely Complainant A's allegation, to the CDF because the Bishop did not believe the allegation was credible. It is unclear on what basis Bishop Tobin determined the allegation was not credible, especially in light of Charland's admission to kissing the complainant and the Diocese's own prior assessment of the complaint.

This Office sent a letter to Charland in 2024 offering him an opportunity to provide a statement to the State Police regarding the allegations against him. In response, Charland sent this Office a letter stating that "[a]t age 79 now, I do not wish to respond to the invitation to meet with representatives of the State Police," and denied all the allegations, describing them as "misinterpretations" of his attempts to "show care and concern for adults and youth." He added that the Diocese sent him for "counseling and examination out of town and in Rhode Island and decided to grant [him] early retirement from all public priestly duties."

**Status**

Father Charland is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

## Father Eugene Corbesero

| Born | Ordained | Laicized | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Apr. 27, 1933 | Feb. 9, 1962 | Nov. 25, 1983 | 2016 |

**Partial Assignment History**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1962 | Our Lady of Sorrows Church, Grand Rapids, MI |
| 1963 – 1971 | Consolata Society for Foreign Missions, Somerset, NJ |
| 1971 – 1972 | Consolata Society for Foreign Missions |
| 1972 – 1973 | Archdiocese of Hartford, Milton, CT (residence)[4] |
| 1973 – 1975 | Our Lady of Consolation Church, Charlotte, NC |
| 1973 – 1975 | St. Dorothy Catholic Mission, Lincolnton, NC |
| 1976 – 1977 | St. Lawrence Church, North Providence |
| 1981 | *Left order* |
| 1983 | *Laicized* |

**Summary**

Father Eugene Corbesero was a religious order priest of the Consolata Society for Foreign Missions who reportedly sexually abused a boy at St. Lawrence Church in North Providence in the mid-1970s. The complainant reported to the Rhode Island State Police in 2025 that a visiting priest named "Father Eugene" attempted to fondle him at St. Lawrence Church when he was a 9- or 10-year-old altar boy there between 1976 and 1978. According to the complainant, "Father Eugene" approached him while he was changing out of his robe after altar services, picked him up, placed him on a table, began tickling him, unbuttoned the complainant's pants, and tried to fondle him. The complainant did not disclose any skin-to-skin contact or other sexual contact. According to the complainant, there were no witnesses to the incident, and he never reported the allegations against Father Eugene to the Diocese of Providence or law enforcement, though he stated that he recently told his brother. State Police interviewed the complainant's brother who confirmed that the complainant had confided in him just a few years ago that a visiting priest named "Father Eugene" assaulted him when he was around 10 or 11 years old.

The complainant first disclosed the incident to the State Police in March 2025 during an interview regarding allegations he made against another Diocesan priest, Father Paul Reynolds. The complainant described "Father Eugene" as a white male with dark hair, at least six feet tall, with "large hands," who wore thick black glasses

[4] Corbesero resided within the Archdiocese of Hartford but, according to the Archdiocese, did not have faculties to serve there.

and worked as a visiting priest at St. Lawrence Church. He provided State Police with the name of a friend who reportedly once asked him if he was ever abused by "Father Eugene." State Police contacted the complainant's friend, who could not remember the complainant, but disclosed that he had an uncle named Eugene Corbesero who once served as a religious order priest and later left the Church.

Law enforcement investigated the matter and identified a Father Eugene Corbesero, a white male with dark hair and approximately 5 feet 9 inches tall, as a religious order priest of the Consolata Society for Foreign Missions who served in the Diocese of Providence between approximately 1976 and 1977 and died in 2016. According to Diocesan records, Corbesero was reassigned from the Diocese of Charlotte to the Diocese of Providence in October 1976 and served as an assistant pastor at St. Lawrence Church in North Providence until October 1977. Corbesero left the order between approximately 1979 and 1981 and was released from the clerical state in 1983. Corbesero later married.

According to public reports, in December 2019, the Diocese of Charlotte released a list credibly accused clerics, which included Father Eugene Corbesero. It noted that in March 1995, the Diocese of Charlotte received a report that Corbesero sexually abused a teenage boy sometime between 1973 and 1975, while assigned to Our Lady of Consolation Church in Charlotte. According to the Diocese of Charlotte, Corbesero had been assigned by his order, the Consolata Society for Foreign Missions, to work in the Charlotte diocese during the time of the alleged abuse. When the allegation was made in 1995, then-Charlotte Bishop William Curlin determined it was credible and alerted Corbesero's order to verify he was no longer in ministry. Diocesan records reflect that in early 1995, Monsignor Robert Evans of the Diocese of Providence inquired about Father Corbesero's status with his order's Regional Superior, who replied by letter that Father Corbesero had been laicized on November 25, 1983, at his own request.

In August 2006, the parents of a 12-year-old boy reported to New Jersey police that Father Corbesero molested him at a sleepover at Corbesero's New Jersey home in Franklin Township, New Jersey, where his order had an outpost. According to public reports, the boy left the bedroom where the incident occurred and called both 911 and his mother and reported the assault. Corbesero was 73 years old at the time. Father Corbesero admitted the abuse and pled guilty in October of 2007 to charges of second-degree sexual assault and endangering the welfare of a child. He was sentenced to serve five years in prison.

**Status**

Father Corbesero was laicized in 1983 and died in 2016. He is named on the credibly accused lists of the Diocese of Charlotte and Archdiocese of Hartford. He is not included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father John Crafton

| Born | Ordained | Suspended | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jul. 31, 1913 | Dec. 21, 1940 | N/A | Jan. 12, 1989 |

**Partial Assignment History**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1974 – 1976 | St. Joseph Hospital, Providence |
| 1982 | Auxiliary Chaplain, Little Sisters of the Poor, Pawtucket |

**Summary**

Father John Crafton was a priest with the Missionary Society of St. Columban (also known as the Columban Fathers) who reportedly sexually abused a young girl for six or seven years beginning when she was about five years old during the 1960s. The abuse reportedly consisted of religious rituals that Father Crafton filmed. The complainant reported the abuse to the Diocese in June 1994 and again in 2006.

The Missionary Society of St. Columban lists Crafton as the subject of a credible allegation of sexual abuse of a minor that reportedly occurred in the 1960s, but he is not included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

**The Reported Abuse and Diocesan Response**

The complainant first reported the abuse in a June 1994 letter to the Diocese of Providence. In the letter, she stated that Crafton sexually abused her as a child while Crafton was residing at the Columban Seminary in Bristol, Rhode Island. She requested that the Diocese pay the costs of her psychiatric treatment. Diocesan records confirm that Crafton resided at the Columban Seminary in Bristol at least as of January 1976. He died in January 1989. Bishop Gelineau forwarded the complainant's letter to a Columban order priest of the St. Columban's Retirement House in Bristol, "for the response you deem necessary and suitable according to the procedures you have established for such cases."

In 2002, the complainant wrote a letter to Bishop Robert Mulvee and her attorney in which she again recounted her abuse. This letter referenced her earlier report to Bishop Gelineau in 1994. The complainant's letter recounted "years of abuse" by Crafton between the ages of five and 11, and described a "particular memory that still haunt[ed] her." She described a three-day period when Crafton took her to a beach house in another priest's vehicle where, she wrote, he sexually abused her. The abuse ended when Crafton received a phone call prompting him to drive to Roger Williams Park. There, she recounted, they met two priests in another vehicle. One priest collected Crafton, and the other drove the complainant home. According to the

complainant, when she asked the Columban order priest in 1994 why the Columban Order did not alert her parents to the incident, his response was "[i]t wasn't our place to do that." In her 2002 letter, the complainant sought an apology and compensation for lifetime counseling (rather than one-year), because, as she described, "the magnitude of this sexual violence is life-long." Documents indicate that the Order denied her request for lifetime therapy, and there is no other record in the files produced to this Office of a response by the Diocese at that time.

The complainant again reported her abuse to then-Director of the Diocese Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") Robert McCarthy by email on April 3, 2006. McCarthy reported the allegation to the Superior of the Columban Fathers by letter dated April 17, 2006. Two days later, the Provincial of the Columban Fathers informed McCarthy that the Order had received a complaint from the same complainant in 1994. The Provincial stated that there was no investigation and that, as the complainant had claimed in 2002, the Order had agreed to provide therapy for one year, which the Provincial described "as an act of charity." An attorney for the Order also informed McCarthy that this complainant filed a lawsuit in Rhode Island Superior Court against the Columban Order. There is no record of the lawsuit, or any resulting settlement, in the files provided by the Diocese to this Office. There is no record indicating that any Diocesan official further investigated the complaint or referred the allegation to law enforcement.

On March 11, 2021, OEC Director Kevin O'Brien informed this Office by letter that the Columban Order was releasing a list of Columban priests credibly accused of sexual abuse of minors. O'Brien wrote that the list included "five Columbans who, while not Providence Diocesan priests, had some limited connection to the State of Rhode Island during their career." Crafton was included on the list. According to O'Brien, Crafton was assigned as Auxiliary Chaplain for Little Sisters of the Poor in Pawtucket in 1982. O'Brien specified for each of the other four entries on the list that the reported abuse took place outside the Diocese of Providence. He did not make that specification for Crafton.

In July 2024, the Rhode Island State Police contacted the complainant, who confirmed her previously reported allegations. She also noted another individual whom Crafton possibly abused and offered to ask that person (whom she did not identify) to speak to the State Police. As of the date of this Report, the State Police have not heard from that individual.

**Status**

Father Crafton died in 1989. He is listed on the Missionary Society of St. Columban list of Columban priests whom its Review Board concluded were the subject of credible allegations of sexual abuse of a minor. The Diocese did not include him on its List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father Joseph D'Angelo

| Born | Ordained | Laicized | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jan. 3, 1947 | Apr. 21, 1979 | Sep. 22, 2006 | Jan. 15, 2026 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1977 – 1978 | Immaculate Conception Church, Westerly |
| 1978 – 1979 | St. Anthony Church, Providence |
| 1979 | St. John Church, Providence (residence) |
| 1979 | Rhode Island Hospital, Providence |
| 1979 – 1980 | St. Augustin Church, Newport |
| 1980 – 1981 | Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church, Providence |
| 1981 | St. John Church, Providence (residence) |
| 1981 | Rhode Island Hospital, Providence |
| 1981 – 1983 | St. Margaret Church, East Providence |
| 1983 – 1994 | *Suspended* |
| 1994 – 1997 | Diocese of Isernia-Venafro, Italy |
| 1997 – 2006 | *Suspended* |
| 2006 | *Laicized* |

## Summary

Father Joseph D'Angelo is accused of sexually abusing at least four boys during his four years as a priest in the Diocese of Providence. He was accused of abusing two boys in 1980 and 1981 while assigned to Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish in Providence, and at least two other boys from 1981 to 1983 while assigned to St. Margaret Parish in East Providence.

In April 1983, a St. Margaret parishioner reported to Bishop Louis Gelineau that Father D'Angelo had directed "unnatural acts of affection" at her children, and a pastor noted that a mother accused D'Angelo of assaulting her son around this same time. In response, Bishop Gelineau suspended D'Angelo and instructed him to undergo an evaluation by the Servants of the Paraclete religious community at its facility in New Mexico. Instead, Father D'Angelo fled to Rome, where he appealed his suspension to the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith ("CDF") in person.

Bishop Gelineau refused to return Father D'Angelo to ministry in the Diocese of Providence without an evaluation. In 1991, however, Gelineau agreed to allow D'Angelo to find work in another Diocese. In 1993, Vatican officials discussed the need to laicize D'Angelo immediately due to a complaint from the family of a boy in Murialdo, Italy. There is no record of that complaint in the records produced by the Diocese. The Vatican did not laicize D'Angelo, however, and he subsequently worked

in the Diocese of Isernia-Venafro, in Italy, with approval from Bishop Gelineau and Vatican officials.

The Diocese eventually referred Father D'Angelo to the CDF for laicization in 2006 and the Vatican laicized him later that year. He is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

**Ordination**

Father D'Angelo applied for ordination through the Diocese in 1975 after another religious order denied him admission to the priesthood. The Diocese requested that D'Angelo receive a psychological evaluation at the University of Rhode Island before accepting him as a candidate. Although the report noted issues "that might present a problem in regular parish activities," the Diocese ultimately accepted D'Angelo as a candidate for ordination.

Questions regarding D'Angelo's fitness persisted, and he received a three-day psychological evaluation at the House of Affirmation in Whitinsville, Massachusetts, in November 1977, at the Diocese's request. Bishop Gelineau determined that D'Angelo should continue with outpatient therapy while continuing in diaconal ministry.[5]

In 1978, D'Angelo received several negative evaluations from laity and co-workers who recommended that he not be ordained. Bishop Gelineau and Auxiliary Bishop Kenneth Angell decided not to ordain D'Angelo in 1978 because, "he does not seem to be adaptable to the specific ministerial needs of our type of diocese." D'Angelo appealed Bishop Gelineau's decision to the Diocesan Grievance Committee in November 1978. On December 11, 1978, Bishop Gelineau instructed D'Angelo to terminate his diaconal ministry at St. Anthony Parish in Providence, move out of the rectory, and find work elsewhere. D'Angelo grieved this determination as well, and the Church's Grievance Committee found in his favor. Bishop Gelineau ordained D'Angelo in 1979.

**Parish Assignments and Abuse Reports**

*St. Augustin Church (1979)*

Bishop Gelineau first assigned Father D'Angelo as Assistant Pastor of St. Augustin Church in Newport in April 1979, where he developed a poor relationship with the pastor of the church. The pastor then wrote to Bishop Gelineau to convey his concerns about D'Angelo in a January 1980 letter: "I have tried heroically to cover up the situation so that parishioners will not be scandalized but . . . with the passage of time, it is becoming impossible to do this much longer." He also wrote that D'Angelo

[5] Priests serve as transitional deacons before being ordained as priests.

was "annoying an altar boy," and that the boy's mother had threatened to report the behavior to the media. There is no further record of this complaint.

*Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church (1980)*

After receiving this complaint, Bishop Gelineau transferred D'Angelo to be Assistant Pastor of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church in Providence later in 1980, where he reportedly sexually abused two altar boys ("Complainant A" and "Complainant B").[6] Although there are no contemporaneous records specifically documenting these allegations, an undated statement attributed to the pastor of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church, who supervised D'Angelo there, states that D'Angelo was removed from his responsibility of overseeing altar boys at the church because "he was continually harassing the boys and embracing them . . . Father was in the habit of trying to get the boys to go to confession in a room adjoining the sacristy. Although the boys would come out upset, [the pastor] could not interrogate [D'Angelo] because of the seal of Confession."

Complainant A reported that D'Angelo sexually abused him to Director of the Diocese Office of Compliance ("OEC") Kevin O'Brien via email in October 2019. The complainant, who in 2005 had alleged that he was also abused by Father Daniel Azzarone, reported that D'Angelo began molesting him shortly after he replaced Azzarone at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church. O'Brien reportedly tried to reach the complainant but did not hear back.

Director O'Brien forwarded the report to the Rhode Island State Police later that month. In 2020, the State Police formally interviewed Complainant A (with his attorney present). During his interview with the State Police, Complainant A recounted that he was having nightmares and upon seeing a photograph of D'Angelo in 2019, "it just all came back." He recalled that D'Angelo fondled his genitals and called him the "favorite altar boy." According to Complainant A, the abuse reportedly escalated into sexual assaults that included penetration and forced masturbation. Father D'Angelo reportedly gave Complainant A money after a number of these assaults and kept the boy's underwear. Complainant A told investigators that D'Angelo told Complainant A that it was a "secret" and "we're men, men don't share secrets."

During Complainant A's interview with the State Police, Complainant A said that he went to the pastor of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish during D'Angelo's tenure and told him that he no longer wanted to serve Mass with D'Angelo. The pastor reportedly asked him why and whether D'Angelo "put his hands on you or something." Complainant A told the State Police that he gave the pastor a "knowing stare," and the pastor replied, "[i]t's all right, you won't serve Mass with him [anymore]."

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[6] Complainants A and B both alleged that they were also sexually abused by Father Daniel Azzarone, D'Angelo's immediate predecessor at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church.

Complainant A reported that "next thing you know, D'Angelo was gone." In 2023, State Police again contacted Complainant A to discuss his allegations, but he did not wish to make any further statements at that time because he did not wish to file a complaint "no matter how disgusting the crime" and he did not "want to relive [his] pain under these circumstances."

While he was assigned to Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church in 1980, D'Angelo also reportedly abused Complainant B, who was 10 or 11 years old at the time. Complainant B's counsel (the same attorney who represented Complainant A in 2005 in his claim against Father Azzarone) contacted the Diocese's attorney, William Murphy, in 2006 to report that Complainant B had been abused by D'Angelo and by Father Azzarone. In Complainant A's 2005 interview with McCarthy regarding his report of abuse by Azzarone, Complainant A recalled that Complainant B and his brother were fellow altar servers at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church who also may have been abused by Azzarone. An OEC memorandum indicates that the Review Board discussed this matter with Bishop Thomas Tobin at a meeting in May 2007, but the records produced to this Office do not provide any additional information about that discussion. Then-OEC Director Robert McCarthy interviewed Complainant B (with his attorney present) in May 2007 about the allegations. Complainant B told McCarthy that D'Angelo masturbated in front of him more than once and made him touch D'Angelo's penis. He also stated that D'Angelo took him to Moonstone Beach in South Kingstown – a nude beach at the time – and took photographs of him, though it is not clear from the records whether the boy was naked in the photographs. Complainant B also reported that Father D'Angelo would have him, and his brother, sit on D'Angelo's lap and rub his body against them while erect, and that this occurred downstairs in the church on at least two occasions. Complainant B also disclosed his belief that the alleged abuse caused him difficulty maintaining relationships and trouble with the law. He reported that he did not disclose the abuse to anyone else. In a letter to Monsignor Paul Theroux summarizing his interview of Complainant B, McCarthy noted that Complainant B was "very consistent with his description of the assaults" and "was very cooperative and soft spoken."

McCarthy reported the results of his interview to Diocesan attorneys. A subsequent letter from McCarthy to Complainant B's attorney indicates that McCarthy also informed Monsignor Theroux and Dr. Michael Hansen, the victim advocate for the Diocese, of Complainant B's allegations. McCarthy advised Complainant B's attorney that he planned to ask Monsignor Theroux to place the matter on the Review Board's agenda for its September 6, 2007 meeting, but the agenda from that date does not include Complainant B's allegations or any reference to D'Angelo.

McCarthy also noted that he reported the complaint to the Rhode Island State Police, however the State Police does not have a record of receiving this complaint at the time (it should be noted that prosecution would have been foreclosed as the alleged conduct fell outside the applicable statute of limitations). During this Investigation, the State Police attempted to contact Complainant B regarding his

previously reported allegations. In 2022, the complainant informed State Police that he did not want to make any further statements.

On May 12, 1981, Bishop Gelineau recommended that the Personnel Board find a new placement for D'Angelo. D'Angelo was removed from Mt. Carmel Church and sent to Rhode Island Hospital before being assigned to St. Margaret Parish in East Providence.

*St. Margaret Parish (1981-1983)*

Bishop Gelineau assigned D'Angelo as Assistant Pastor of St. Margaret Parish in East Providence later in 1981. There, D'Angelo reportedly abused two boys ages 11 and 12 ("Complainant C" and "Complainant D"). Complainant C alleged in a 1996 lawsuit against D'Angelo and Diocesan officials that D'Angelo touched Complainant C's genitals multiple times at various locations within the church and rectory. Father D'Angelo reportedly told Complainant C that the sexual behavior was normal between a priest and a child and repeatedly instructed him not to tell anyone about the alleged abuse. According to Complainant C, he disclosed the abuse to the pastor of St. Margarat's parish and other diocesan officials. In June 1996, then-OEC Director McCarthy spoke with a priest who knew Complainant C; the priest told McCarthy that Complainant C was dismissed from seminary after it was discovered that he had lied in his application. In or about June 1996, McCarthy contacted Complainant C's attorney to arrange for an interview of Complainant C. It does not appear that the interview ever took place. In 2024, State Police attempted to contact Complainant C to confirm his previously reported allegations and learned that he had died.

Complainant D was a student at St. Margaret's School between 1981 and 1983 when D'Angelo reportedly sexually assaulted him. D'Angelo reportedly removed the boy from class regularly to see him, and at one point told the boy that he wanted to "tie [him] up and whip him with whips and chains." Complainant D recounted his alleged abuse in a September 20, 2018 letter to OEC Director O'Brien. Complainant D wrote that he and his mother had confronted D'Angelo at the St. Margaret's rectory at the time. Complainant D described how D'Angelo asked for forgiveness while the pastor was "lingering in the hall, not in the room, but overseeing and listening to the events being discussed." Complainant D also told the Diocese and law enforcement in 2018 that he had reported his abuse to St. Maragaret's School officials. Complainant D reported that nothing happened following his complaint, besides D'Angelo being "taken away." "The police were not called," Complainant D wrote. "No other discussion ever happened. It was just swept under the rug."

Director O'Brien interviewed Complainant D on October 31, 2018, and referred the allegations to Rhode Island State Police a week later. Rhode Island State Police investigated the claims and determined that D'Angelo could not be charged because the reported second-degree sexual assault was outside the three-year statute of limitations. In 2024, State Police contacted Complainant D, and he confirmed his previously reported allegations.

The Diocesan records produced to this Office reflect several documented reports of abuse by D'Angelo at St. Margaret's in 1983. In April of that year, a St. Margaret parishioner wrote to Bishop Gelineau to report that Father D'Angelo had directed "unnatural acts of affection" at her children and requested a meeting with the Bishop. It does not appear that this parishioner was the parent of either Complainant C or Complainant D, suggesting that D'Angelo may have had other victims at St. Margaret. That same month, Bishop Gelineau met with the parishioner and her husband. According to a subsequent letter from Bishop Gelineau to the Vatican, the parents reported to Gelineau that D'Angelo "was asking strange questions in confession" of a sexual nature, and "would keep children in confession for a long period of time." Gelineau omitted any reference to the "unnatural acts of affection" that the parishioner mentioned in her letter, instead characterizing D'Angelo's behavior as "strange ways" and "disobedience."

Bishop Gelineau also enclosed with his July 1983 letter to the Vatican a formal statement by the pastor of St. Margaret's Parish, in which the pastor recounted an allegation by yet another boy's mother that D'Angelo had sexually assaulted her son. According to the statement, the mother accused D'Angelo of fondling the inside of her son's thigh, and her son reportedly told her that D'Angelo "almost had an accident" because he was, as the pastor put it, "so carried away." The pastor said that he warned D'Angelo not to pay too much attention to sexual matters when hearing Confession, as parents had started to complain.

In 2025, State Police contacted the man whose mother made the report about D'Angelo. He confirmed that his mother worked at the St. Margaret Church rectory and that he also worked at the rectory in middle school. He recalled that D'Angelo brought him desserts and made him cookies, and one night came downstairs wearing a robe and looked as if he was not wearing anything underneath. He also recalled an incident where he accepted an offer for a backrub from D'Angelo. After D'Angelo asked it if "felt good," the boy believed he was making a "move on him," but did not tell him to stop because D'Angelo was older and an authority figure. He reportedly told his mother about the incident, who then informed the pastor. The pastor asked the boy about the incident, and D'Angelo apparently left the parish immediately thereafter. The man also told State Police that his mother informed him that D'Angelo was then sent to a place in New Mexico for treatment and they assumed he was retired. He denied that D'Angelo touched his inner thigh.

In response to these reports, Bishop Gelineau met with Father D'Angelo on April 30, 1983, and offered him three options: (1) treatment from the Paraclete Fathers at the Via Coeli treatment facility in New Mexico, (2) to visit a religious house for intense spiritual direction, or (3) move home and seek psychological counseling on his own. D'Angelo refused all three options.

**Suspension and Move to Rome**

Bishop Gelineau informed Father D'Angelo in a July 1, 1983 letter that he terminated his assignment at St. Margaret Parish and suspended his faculties. The

Bishop again instructed D'Angelo to undergo an evaluation at the Servants of the Paraclete treatment facility in New Mexico and informed him that he would not receive financial support from the Diocese until he did so.

Father D'Angelo again refused. In an August 1, 1983, letter to Bishop Gelineau, D'Angelo wrote that sending him to Via Coeli would be demeaning and scandalous: "[t]he implication of an assignment to Via Coeli is well enough known as to need no further comment." D'Angelo then traveled to Rome to appeal his suspension to the CDF in person. The CDF requested that Bishop Gelineau give D'Angelo another chance. Bishop Gelineau agreed only on the condition that D'Angelo undergo an evaluation and treatment. D'Angelo returned to the United States in 1984 but did not obey Gelineau's instruction to receive an evaluation. Instead, he moved to Everett, Massachusetts, outside the Diocese's boundaries.

In July 1984, Father D'Angelo filed complaints with the Diocese Grievance Committee against Bishop Gelineau and his former pastor, accusing them of defaming him and violating canon law. He returned to Rome to again appeal to the Vatican in person. In December 1984, Cardinal Silvio Oddi informed Bishop Gelineau that the Sacred Congregation of Clerics wanted to find an American bishop who would accept D'Angelo, with Gelineau's approval. Gelineau replied in January 1985 that he would *not* approve of such a transfer because D'Angelo had disobeyed him by practicing public ministry in the Diocese of Providence (by "[bringing] the Blessed Sacrament to shut-ins in a parish where he had formerly served as an assistant"), and in Rome, despite an official suspension.

Father D'Angelo would stay in Italy for the remainder of his ministry, following several failed attempts to get Bishop Gelineau to reconsider. Additional correspondence between Bishop Gelineau and the Vatican in 1990 indicated that D'Angelo continued to try to return to the Diocese and the Bishop refused unless D'Angelo submitted to counseling and an evaluation. In 1991, in response to a request from the Vatican, Bishop Gelineau agreed to release D'Angelo from the Diocese of Providence so he could be incardinated into another diocese if he could find another bishop to accept him.

On January 22, 1993, the Vicar General of the Diocese of Rome, Cardinal Camillo Ruini, wrote to Cardinal Jose Sanchez, Prefect of the Congregation of the Clergy, to express serious concerns about D'Angelo and report that he had to be dismissed. Ruini's letter made vague references to D'Angelo's attitude and concerns "from the family of a boy." Ruini concluded the letter by recommending that D'Angelo be laicized. Cardinal Sanchez wrote to Bishop Gelineau on January 30, 1993, to request the Bishop's perspective. Sanchez noted that the situation had been exacerbated by "further problems" but did not specifically mention sexual misconduct. Bishop Gelineau informed Sanchez that he approved of D'Angelo's laicization.

But in July 1994, Cardinal Sanchez informed Gelineau that D'Angelo would remain in ministry and serve Bishop Gemma in the Diocese of Isernia-Venafro, Italy. Gelineau replied on July 26, 1994, that he "had no reason to believe that Father

D'Angelo in any way changed in those areas which were identified as problematic throughout the past ten years," but had no objection to D'Angelo serving in another diocese.

In June 1996, Complainant C sued D'Angelo, Bishop Mulvee, and other Diocesan defendants for his alleged sexual abuse by D'Angelo in 1981. This suit apparently prompted Bishop Gelineau's successor, Bishop Robert Mulvee, to write Cardinal Ruini in Rome and recommend that he resume his original plan to laicize D'Angelo.

On December 1, 1997, Vicar General of the Diocese of Providence, William Varsanyi, notified D'Angelo in a letter that his priestly faculties had been suspended again due to the sexual abuse allegations made by Complainant C in the 1996 lawsuit. Varsanyi wrote that D'Angelo was "prohibited from doing priestly ministry anywhere." D'Angelo wrote back, vigorously denying Complainant C's allegations.

In November 1998, Bishop Mulvee wrote to Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Secretary of State of the Vatican City State, to insist that D'Angelo be laicized as soon as possible. Mulvee explained that D'Angelo had authored a long letter of defense to the Superior Court of Rhode Island in which he not only denied Complainant C's allegations but also claimed that Bishop Gelineau had conspired with other bishops and Church officials to cover-up for priests involved in immoral activity. Bishop Mulvee also noted that he had only recently received letters of correspondence between the Vicariate of Rome and the Congregation of the Clergy that indicated D'Angelo had been accused of "pedophilia" "in Rome itself." Mulvee warned that the letters could have "disastrous results" in the hands of attorneys.

In official communications to the Providence County Superior Court in 1998 and 2000, seeking, among other relief, dismissal of Complainant C's 1996 lawsuit against D'Angelo and Diocesan officials, D'Angelo vehemently denied Complainant C's allegations and declared his innocence. D'Angelo claimed to be in possession of several letters sent by Complainant C to D'Angelo between 1987 and 1995 that purportedly demonstrated Complainant C's "manifest admiration, emulation, gratitude, friendship, and filial affection towards and for [D'Angelo]," which, D'Angelo insisted, proved the allegations against him were "totally, completely, and absolutely false!" D'Angelo also alleged that his refusal to write a letter of recommendation in support of Complainant C's seminary application in the 1990s, followed by Complainant C's subsequent "rejection" from both a religious institute and diocesan seminary that same decade, was further evidence of Complainant C's lack of credibility and motive to lie. In his letter, D'Angelo made several additional allegations against Complainant C, his attorneys, and other involved in the lawsuit accusing them of engaging in a joint "conspiracy" to "ruin [D'Angelo's] personal and priestly reputation."

Complainant C's lawsuit settled in 2002 for $750,000 as part of a mass-settlement of lawsuits brought by 36 plaintiffs against Diocesan officials related to clergy sexual abuse.

The Diocese referred D'Angelo to the CDF yet again for laicization in April 2006. The official referral produced to the CDF listed three accusations against D'Angelo. The first accusation listed was "[u]nspecified 'unnatural acts of affection'" against a group of children of unspecified age in 1983. The second accusation was "[f]ondling of the inner thigh" of a boy of unspecified age who worked in the St. Margaret Parish buildings in 1983 (as originally described by the St. Margaret's pastor in his statement that Bishop Gelineau first relayed to the Vatican in July 1983). The third accusation listed was "[g]enital fondling and other sexual assaults" of Complainant C, an 11-year-old boy, in 1981.

In Bishop Tobin's 2006 *votum* (authoritative opinion) to the CDF regarding D'Angelo, he noted that Monsignor Theroux spoke with Complainant C on several occasions during mediation of his lawsuit and found his account of abuse to be "highly credible." Bishop Tobin also specified that sexual abuse of minors "was not the primary basis of Fr. D'Angelo's suspension from priestly ministry in 1983." "However," the Bishop continued, "early in his priesthood, his pattern of poor judgment and inappropriate behavior as a cleric included the suggestion of impropriety with minor boys."

The Vatican laicized D'Angelo on September 22, 2006.

The Diocese did not refer any of the complaints against D'Angelo to law enforcement until 2007, when McCarthy noted that he forwarded Complainant B's complaint to the State Police. Director O'Brien referred Complainants D's and A's allegations to the State Police in 2018 and 2019, respectively, shortly after he received them. It does not appear that Complainant C's report, which was made in the context of civil litigation, was ever referred.

In September 2019, D'Angelo emailed this Office. He claimed that the allegations in 1983 were the result of a conspiracy and denied "any and all misconduct that is falsely attributed" to him. He also alleged that the hierarchical members of the Diocese included his name on the Credibly Accused List, and included the lawsuit brought by Complainant C in the global settlement in 2002, to "get even with [D'Angelo] for coming to Rome, Italy in 1983 for the purpose of denouncing all of them to Vatican Authorities for committing the sin and crime of abuse of power . . ." In 2025, this Office emailed a letter to D'Angelo offering him an opportunity to respond to the allegations summarized here through an interview with the State Police. We received no response.

**Status**

Father D'Angelo died in January 2026. He is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Monsignor Anthony DeAngelis

| Born | Ordained | Retired | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Oct. 14, 1909 | Mar. 18, 1935 | Nov. 1, 1979 | Jan. 23, 1990 |

**Assignment History**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1935 – 1936 | St. Bartholomew Church, Providence |
| 1936 – 1936 | Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church, Providence |
| 1936 – 1979 | Sacred Heart Church, West Warwick |
| 1979 | *Retired* |

**Summary**

In 1994, Dr. Ann Hagan Webb[7] reported to the Diocese that Monsignor Anthony DeAngelis sexually assaulted her on multiple occasions between 1957 and 1965, when she was a young girl. The assaults reportedly took place in the rectory of Sacred Heart Church in West Warwick. The initial investigation was presented to the Diocese's "Review Committee for the Protection of Children" on August 29, 1994. The Committee determined that the Diocese had no legal or financial obligation to Dr. Webb based on what they viewed to be unsubstantiated allegations. Ultimately, however, the Diocese provided Dr. Webb with minimal financial compensation and paid for her counseling over an extended period of time. Dr. Webb also reported the abuse to the Rhode Island State Police on March 31, 2014. The State Police informed her that since Monsignor DeAngelis died in 1990, they would take her statement but there could be no criminal investigation.

DeAngelis is listed as "publicly accused" by the Diocese of Providence.[8] This is the only allegation of sexual misconduct against him in the files produced by the Diocese to this Office.

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[7] Dr. Ann Hagan Webb authorized this Office to publish her name.
[8] On its website, the Diocese explains the term "publicly accused:"

> Each of these priests retired in good standing. After their deaths, allegations were made against them dating back 37 and 54 years, respectively. Each priest is the subject of a single allegation. The claims were investigated at the time they were received, but could not be verified or substantiated without any corroborating witnesses or facts. Based upon the Director's standards, process and procedure, the accused would not have been included on the list. However, each priest has been the subject of significant publicity at recent legislative hearings. This media coverage eroded the consideration given to reputational harm and warranted a separate category.

**The Reported Abuse and Diocesan Response**

Dr. Webb reported that Monsignor DeAngelis repeatedly sexually assaulted her at Sacred Heart School from the time she was in kindergarten, when she was five years old, and continuing through junior high school, when she was twelve years old. DeAngelis was the pastor of Sacred Heart Church at the time. She reported repeated instances of forced masturbation, oral sex, digital vaginal penetration, and at least one instance of DeAngelis raping her with a crucifix.

Dr. Webb called the Office of Education and Compliance on February 1, 1994, after first reporting her abuse to Monsignor Robert Evans. Diocesan investigator Robert McCarthy met with Dr. Webb on February 14, 1994. In 2024, Dr. Webb met with members of this Office and shared her experience of reporting to the Diocese. She stated that during her meeting with McCarthy, "he talked most of the time and bragged about being in the State Police" and informed her that he would need to interview her therapist, local priest, and parents "to see if she was lying." As a result, she had to disclose her abuse to all those individuals in anticipation of McCarthy contacting them. To her knowledge, however, McCarthy never followed up with any of them.

McCarthy then sent a letter to a Diocesan advisory committee (the "Consistory") on August 29, 1994, summarizing the investigation and that the allegations came about during a process known as "Recovered Repressed Memory." Following the summary, McCarthy posed the following questions to the committee, in part: "1. Should an investigation be undertaken on allegations made against a member of clergy or anyone who is deceased? 2. What are the moral, legal and financial obligations of the Diocese, if any?" The committee met on September 21, 1994, and after reviewing the material, concluded that the Diocese had no legal or financial obligation based on what they believed to be unsubstantiated allegations, "and that whatever the Diocese chose to do to assist Complainant in this unsubstantiated allegation would be Pastoral in nature."

Dr. Webb told members of this Office that when she called McCarthy to check on the status of her case, he told her, "I wasn't the most important case, that my case was in a holding pattern indefinitely, that the perpetrator was dead and the claims were unsubstantiated, that I had no right to information about Monsignor DeAngelis files, that I was abusing him by calling him and asking, and that because DeAngelis was dead my case depended on another woman's case where the priest was dead." McCarthy also told Dr. Webb that the Diocese would need her full psychiatric records to provide compensation for therapy.

On November 2, 1994, Diocesan attorney William Murphy sent a letter to Dr. Webb's sister, who was acting as her attorney, and stated that the Diocese required Dr. Webb's entire psychiatric record and notes before considering financial assistance. Murphy wrote, "if your sister, Complainant, is willing to provide her entire psychiatric record, including not only reports but contemporaneous notes taken by all therapists,

there is a possibility that there will be some assistance . . . . I emphasize that this is a possibility, not a guarantee." Dr. Webb told this Office that she felt "naked – like I was backed into a corner and had to give them [my records]."

The Diocese closed its investigation on March 12, 1996, and paid Dr. Webb $12,500 for counseling. In exchange, she was asked to sign a release form from the Diocese stating that she would not seek further financial compensation, and that the payment was not an admission of guilt by the Diocese. Dr. Webb later contacted Dr. Michael Hansen, the Diocesan "Director of Human Formation and Outreach," on January 13, 2004, seeking additional compensation for counseling expenses. Diocesan records indicate that the Diocese paid a total of $51,455 to cover the cost of Dr. Webb's therapy (which included the original $12,500 she'd received). Dr. Webb explained to this Office, "I needed something that would validate me, and by signing that form and receiving a check from Diocese, I could look at it and it felt like they believed me, even though they didn't say they did."

On March 31, 2014, Dr. Webb contacted the Rhode Island State Police and made a complaint against DeAngelis. She recounted her allegations and informed the police that she had reported the abuse to McCarthy in 1994 and was unhappy with the response and the reaction of McCarthy and the Diocese of Providence. The State Police informed her that since the suspect was deceased no criminal investigation could be conducted.

**Status**

Bishop Gelineau granted Monsignor DeAngelis permission to retire on November 1, 1979. DeAngelis died on January 23, 1990, at the age of 80. On its website, the Diocese of Providence identifies Monsignor DeAngelis as "publicly accused" (as opposed to "credibly accused").

## Father Normand Demers

| Born | Ordained | Suspended | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sep. 14, 1932 | May 31, 1958 | Mar. 25, 2002 | Jul. 21, 2018 |

### Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1958 – 1958 | St. Francis of Assisi Church, Wakefield |
| 1958 – 1959 | St. John the Evangelist Church, Slatersville |
| 1959 – 1965 | St. Vincent de Paul Church, Coventry |
| 1965 – 1973 | Our Lady of Fatima Hospital, North Providence |
| 1970 – 1980 | Lasalle Academy, Providence |
| 1971 – 1976 | Adult Correctional Institutions, Cranston |
| 1973 – 1976 | Dismas House, Providence |
| 1974 – 1990 | St. Joseph Church, Providence |
| 1989 – 1989 | Providence Haitian Project, Haiti |
| 1989 – 1990 | *Suspended*, Saint Luke Institute, Suitland, Maryland |
| 1990 – 2002 | St. Martha Church, East Providence |
| 1998 – 1998 | St. Joseph Hospital, Providence |
| 1998 – 2002 | Our Lady of Fatima Church, North Providence |
| 2002 – 2004 | *Suspended on leave* |
| 2004 | *Retired* |

### Summary

Over a more than thirty-year period between 1965 and 1997, Father Normand Demers reportedly sexually abused at least eleven boys and young men while serving as a priest for the Diocese of Providence. The Diocese reported several, but not all, of these allegations to law enforcement, and none resulted in a prosecutable criminal case. Members of the Diocesan hierarchy first received notice of possible misconduct as early as 1965, but Demers remained in ministry until 2002. Demers was sent to Saint Luke Institute, a treatment facility, for approximately five months in 1989-1990, after the Diocese learned that he was accused of sexual misconduct with one or more boys in Haiti. After his discharge, he returned to the Diocese and a parish assignment at St. Martha Church in East Providence where he served for another dozen years. Demers was finally suspended from active ministry in 2002 – by that time, the Diocese had received at least five separate reports of abuse against Demers. The Diocesan Child Protection Advisory Board voted unanimously not to reinstate Demers in December

2002. He retired on March 12, 2004, and died on July 21, 2018. Demers is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

**The Reported Abuse**

Canada Trip - 1965

The first reference to any sexual misconduct allegation against Demers in the documents produced by the Diocese appears in a January 1965 letter that Demers sent to Reverend Daniel Reilly. In the letter, Demers refers to a "serious accusation [that] was recently made against me, an accusation that I most emphatically deny . . . I have not made any kind of indecent action upon anyone at any time." Handwritten notes on the same letter read: "guilty of great imprudence – going on a trip to Canada with 5 boys – sleeping in a truck turned into a hostel – and actually sleeping in the same bed with a boy named [redacted] from Coventry. Although the boy said N.J.D. did not touch him immodestly or [illegible], some of his actions and words made him suspicious of Fr. Demers intentions. Fr. D. admitted such actions and words. Apparently, the other boys felt the same – and had no desire to sleep in his [illegible] while N.J.D. was their [sic]."

At the time of this incident, Demers was assigned to the St. Vincent de Paul Church in Coventry. The records produced by the Diocese do not indicate what action the Diocese took in response to these accusations, but Demers' assignment history makes clear that he was transferred to Our Lady of Fatima Hospital around this time and remained there until 1973.

Fatima Hospital 1967-1970

A mere two years after the Canada trip, Demers was again accused of inappropriate contact with a boy while he was assigned as chaplain at Our Lady of Fatima Hospital, in North Providence. Around 1967, Complainant A reported seeing Demers naked in the same bed as a shirtless teenage boy and hugging the boy, while at a cottage at Lake Mishnock in West Greenwich. The boy was between the ages of 15-18 years old. Soon after, Complainant A relayed what he saw to the Controller of Fatima Hospital, who reportedly called the Diocese. The records produced by the Diocese do not indicate what if any actions the Diocese took in response to this report. In 2002, Complainant A again contacted the Diocese to directly report what he observed.

In 2002, Complainant B wrote the Diocese a letter in which he alleged that Demers sexually abused him on one occasion between 1969 - 1973, when the complainant was anywhere between 12 and 14 years old. Demers was assigned to

Fatima Hospital at the time, and Complainant B's mother was a patient there. Complainant B reported that Demers asked Complainant B's mother if he could take her son swimming and out to dinner, and she agreed. Demers picked up Complainant B in his car, drove him to dinner, then told him that he forgot his swimsuit and needed to go back to his room in the hospital rectory to retrieve it. Complainant B accompanied Demers to his bedroom in the rectory, where Demers asked to see Complainant B's swimsuit. Demers then grabbed Complainant B from behind, started wrestling with him, and began rubbing Complainant B's groin over his bathing suit with his hands. Demers then reportedly rubbed his penis up against Complainant B's body over his bathing suit. Complainant B said that he asked Demers to stop and let him go, yet Demers refused. Eventually, Complainant B broke away, and Demers offered to go down the hall to get him some ice cream. Demers then drove Complainant B home. Complainant B explained that he waited for Demers to give him a ride because he thought his father would be angry with him for walking home in the dark. During his interview with Director of the Diocese Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") Robert McCarthy, Complainant B positively identified Demers in a photograph from the 2001 Official Directory of the Diocese. Complainant B told McCarthy that he never disclosed the abuse to his parents. In his 2002 letter to the Diocese, Complainant B demanded the Diocese remove Demers from ministry and compensation of some kind for the loss of his childhood and the struggles that he attributed to his reported sexual abuse.

Dismas House 1974-1976

The Diocese continued to keep Demers away from parish assignments in the 1970s but, despite the fact that the Diocese had at least two separate complaints against Demers concerning his interactions with boys, the Diocese saw fit to assign him to LaSalle Academy and Dismas House, where he worked exclusively with youth. Demers reportedly sexually assaulted several boys and young men while assigned as the Administrator of Dismas House, a Providence halfway house founded by Demers and owned by the Diocese. These boys were particularly vulnerable as they were involved in the criminal justice system and their residency at the Dismas House was in lieu of incarceration or a condition of release.

Complainant C reported to the Diocese that he was 17 years old and residing at Dismas House in 1974 after being charged as a juvenile with a series of crimes. While there, Demers reportedly coerced Complainant C to have sex a dozen or more times, threatening that, if he did not participate, Demers would have him sent to the Adult Correctional Institutions (ACI) where he would be raped by inmates. Complainant C first reported his alleged abuse in a letter to Bishop Thomas Tobin on July 15, 2005.

Complainant D reported to the Diocese that Demers sexually assaulted him when he was a 15 or 16-year-old boy working at the Dismas House as a condition of his scholarship to LaSalle. Complainant D reported the abuse to the Diocese in 2002. He

stated that, in 1974 or 1975, Demers groped his genitals over his clothing while Demers was driving him to work.

Demers allegedly sexually assaulted an 18-year-old young man, Complainant E, between 1975 and 1976. In a December 2005 interview with Director McCarthy, Complainant E stated that he had spent a total of eight months at Dismas House as an alternative juvenile sentence. While there, he said, Demers repeatedly forced him to engage in oral and anal sex. The Diocese first learned of Complainant E through a letter Complainant H sent to the Diocese in March 2005 (discussed below).

Demers allegedly sexually assaulted a 16 to 18-year-old male, Complainant F, in the mid-1970s while he was also a resident of the Dismas House. The complainant reported three instances of abuse by Demers that involved oral and anal sex among other acts. The assaults took place at Dismas House, Demers' car at Roger Williams Park, and in Boston. Complainant F first reported the abuse in a letter to Director McCarthy on February 15, 2007. McCarthy conducted an in-person interview of Complainant F in June 2007.

Demers allegedly sexually assaulted a 13-year-old boy, Complainant H, on two separate occasions in the 1970s. The first alleged instance took place in 1970 at a residence at the Regency Apartments in Providence, where Demers, along with an unidentified adult male, gave the boy marijuana and alcohol and forced him to engage in oral sex and other sexual acts. Demers reportedly assaulted Complainant H again in 1976 while he was committed to Dismas House. According to Complainant H, Demers pulled back the curtain while the complainant was showering and grabbed the complainant's testicles on a separate occasion. Complainant H reported this abuse to the Diocese in 2002 and again in 2005.

While there is no record indicating that the Diocese was aware of reports of sexual abuse of Complainants C, D, E, F and H by Demers at the time it happened, the Diocese did receive at least one contemporaneous report of abuse against Demers while he was the administrator of the Dismas House.

In 1976, the Diocese received its third report of sexual abuse of a teenaged boy by Demers. Still, it did nothing. Complainant G reported that he was abused by Demers at Dismas House during a July 8, 1976, hearing in Superior Court before Judge Anthony Giannini, which concerned Complainant G breaking the conditions of his release from prison. Attorneys from both the Office of Attorney General and the Public Defender's Office were present for the hearing. Due to the age of the case, we could not locate records of this matter or contact this complainant. However, Demers' personnel file included a transcript of the court proceedings. According to the transcript, Complainant G told Judge Giannini on the record that he had fled Dismas

House because Demers was "making passes at me." Complainant G went on to describe repeated incidents where Demers allegedly touched him inappropriately and without his consent, including one episode where Complainant G awoke to Demers pulling the sheets off him and hugging him while Complainant G was naked in bed. Complainant G testified during his hearing that this "happened a number of times, you know, just hugging me and grabbing me and hugging me." Complainant G alleged that Demers had repeatedly shown him inappropriate photographs and had tried to kiss him. When asked by Judge Giannini whether he would take a polygraph test, Complainant G agreed.

A day after the hearing, Demers drafted a letter to the Diocesan Personnel Board regarding his application to become pastor of St. Joseph's Parish in Providence, explaining that "[t]he time has come . . . for me to disassociate myself with Dismas House on a full time basis." The Diocese agreed, and Demers was transferred to St. Joseph's in early August 1976. It also appears that Judge Giannini, who presided over the hearing with Complainant G, contacted a Diocesan priest directly regarding the allegations. Among the Diocesan personnel files provided to this Office is a handwritten note from Judge Giannini, dated September 28, 1976, stating: "Father, Will you please read this transcript and then call me at your convenience either at the courthouse or at my house." It is unclear from the documents produced to whom, and why, the judge sent the note. Of note, Judge Giannini had previously served as the State Deputy for the Knights of Columbus and later sat on the Diocesan Finance Council. There is no indication the Diocese took any steps to investigate these allegations or discipline Demers. We could not locate any records indicating whether this Complainant's allegations were investigated by the Attorney General's Office or law enforcement at the time.

St. Joseph's Church 1977-1978

Abuse allegations trailed Demers to his next post at St. Joseph's Church in Providence. There, in 1977 or 1978, Demers reportedly sexually abused Robert Houllahan, who was seven or eight years old at the time.[9] Mr. Houllahan recounted to this Office in 2026 that his brother had recently had surgery, and expressed his belief that Demers took advantage of that situation to abuse him. This is consistent with other allegations that likewise suggest Demers's pattern of preying on vulnerable boys. Mr. Houllahan first disclosed his allegations to the Diocese through an attorney in July 2012, and was interviewed by the State Police in July 2014 and again in October

[9] Robert Houllahan authorized this Office to publish his name.

2018. During the first interview, Mr. Houllahan alleged that one Sunday, while attending CCD at St. Joseph's, he was brought by a nun to an upstairs room at St. Joseph's and placed on a couch. According to Mr. Houllahan, Demers entered soon after and allegedly put his fingers in Mr. Houllahan's mouth, inserted his finger into Mr. Houllahan's rectum, and told him that he had an "evil spawn." During the second interview, Mr. Houllahan further disclosed that he was drugged during the incident, and added that there was a second, naked adult male in the room with Demers who orally raped Mr. Houllahan.

In a 2026 letter to this Office, Mr. Houllahan shared how these incidents impacted him:

> [A]s I have gotten older I really see my reaction and the trauma as having put me into decades of psychological and emotional prison with deep trust issues. I had obvious ptsd and disconnection in first and second grade.... I had been doing poorly in school and could not concentrate or feel interest. I avoided any physical interactions. I had bad stomach pains plus some nervous tics and did not let people touch me. I felt completely unsafe and unsure about the world and adults I never knew if attention being paid to me by adult men was because of genuine interest or because they wanted to have sex with me. This continued on and affected all of my trust in my spectrum of relationships as an adult.

In addition, according to an anonymous letter in Demers's personnel file, in April 1985, a Diocesan priest spoke with a physician regarding concerns that Demers "had pictures of naked boys," and that there were "boys living in the rectory" at St. Joseph's. Likewise, in a December 1985 letter found in Demers's file, a religious sister who had served as a pastoral associate at St. Joseph's wrote to Father Demers to resign from her position, citing (among other reasons) the fact that she found photographs of nude men and women in Demers' bedroom, adding: "I find the presence of such pictures any place, least of all, a Rectory, offensive to me and questionable in a home where you have nine young men residing." The sister reiterated her complaint in further detail in a January 1986 letter to Bishop Gelineau (likewise preserved in Demers's file), to which she also attached a number of photographs from inside the St. Joseph's rectory; several, she wrote, "take into account the vast number of books dealing with homosexuality," while others (according to a subsequent memorandum prepared by OEC Director Robert McCarthy in 2002 that described his review of Demers's confidential file) depicted additional nude men and women.

Not having received any reply, the sister wrote again to Bishop Gelineau at the end of January 1986, threatening to bring her complaint to the media "unless I hear

from you in the near future." Bishop Gelineau finally replied two days later. In the letter, Gelineau wrote that he took the issues she raised "very serious[ly]," and said:

> With the special difficulties we have had in the Diocese recently, I certainly want to avoid any further causes for scandal. I would hope, therefore, that you would not go to the public media. That would certainly be very harmful to us. You mention the ultimate good of the Church, and it is my conviction now that by bringing it to my attention, you have fulfilled your responsibilities, and I would ask you to leave the rest in my hands.

There is no record that the Bishop took any further action to investigate the Sister's allegations at the time or to discipline Father Demers, though Demers later claimed in an interview with Director McCarthy in 2002 that Bishop Gelineau informed him that the Sister had sent Gelineau her photographs of Demers' materials inside the rectory. Demers also claimed that the Sister had not resigned, and that he had fired her because "she was not getting along with kids[,] she was very, very overly strict and overly demanding[.]" Father Demers remained at St. Joseph's Parish for several more years.

Haiti Allegations - 1989

In December 1989, Demers was accused of abusing several children while working in Haiti with the Providence Haitian Project in Port au Prince. Allegations included hugging a boy while the boy was asleep, conducting an explicit sexual education class, and making some boys go into his chambers to strip naked and try on clothes in front of him. Another Haitian boy alleged that Demers had engaged in "sexually intimate touching" of him in the summer of 1989 at St. Joseph's in Providence while he was visiting there.

The Diocese reportedly became aware of the allegations of misconduct in Haiti in 1989. Haitian officials conducted an inquiry into the allegations, and on December 4, 1989, the "Tribunal of Peace of Croix Des Bouquets" concluded that the allegations were without merit. In a December 3, 1989 letter, a religious order brother affiliated with the Haitian Project wrote to the Board of Directors of the Haitian Project defending Demers against the allegations.

Bishop Gelineau instructed Diocesan attorney William Murphy to summarize the allegations against Demers in a letter to Attorney General James O'Neill. In a letter dated December 6, 1989, Murphy described how an American volunteer with the Haitian Project had disclosed that, at the end of November, Haitian authorities visited the school and conducted interviews of several young men, and as a result "some kind

of judicial, perhaps criminal proceeding was instituted against Fr. Demers" based on an allegation of sexual misconduct involving an underage male. Murphy's letter included the contact information for the American volunteer and suggested that Attorney General O'Neill speak with her. He added that Demers was awaiting a formal letter from the Haitian authorities indicating that the inquiry would be closed without further proceedings, at which point Demers would be returning to Providence.

In a March 1990 response, Assistant Attorney General Randall White acknowledged Murphy's letter and sought additional information from the Diocese, including the name and contact information of the complaining witnesses in Haiti. Murphy replied the following week saying the Diocese did not know the identity of the putative complainant, did not have knowledge of his whereabouts beyond being likely in Haiti, did not have knowledge of his age, and did not have a "written or recorded statement" of the complainant. He again directed the Office of Attorney General to the initial American witness whose contact information Murphy had provided in his previous letter. Neither the records provided to this Office by the Diocese nor this Office's own records provide any further insight as to what, if any, additional investigation was undertaken by either the Diocese or this Office in response to the Haiti allegations.

In response to the Haiti allegations, Auxiliary Bishop Kenneth Angell suspended Demers on December 6, 1989, and sent him to Saint Luke Institute, a Catholic treatment center located in Suitland, Maryland. Demers's initial evaluation from Saint Luke, sent to Bishop Angell the day after Christmas 1989, notes a "history of complaints against Father Demers": these apparently included the recent Haiti allegations, as well as an accusation that Demers shared an adolescent boy's sleeping bag on a camping trip (potentially corresponding to the 1965 allegations from the trip to Canada, discussed above); Demers's collection of nude photographs (as was raised by clergy during Demers's tenure at St. Joseph's Church); as well as a report of possible inappropriate sexual contact with an adult male.

Demers was admitted to Saint Luke on December 27, 1989, and remained there for several months. Demers was released from Saint Luke on May 8, 1990. In the discharge letter to Bishop Angell, Saint Luke personnel opined that they were able to successfully address Demers' "inappropriate behaviors and poor judgment . . . before damage was done." Saint Luke recommended that the Diocese limit Demers's interaction with "under-aged young people" to meetings with another adult present, noting that while "this is common sense for any priest, [] for Father Demers it should be a practice without exception."

St. Martha Church, East Providence 1990-2002

Following his discharge from Saint Luke Institute, Bishop Gelineau assigned Demers to St. Martha Church in East Providence as temporary Assistant Pastor on August 10, 1990. There is no indication that any restrictions were formally placed on his ministry at that time, though it appears that Demers participated in a "continuing care" program through Saint Luke at least through July 1991. This is despite the fact that, by this point, the Diocese had at least four separate complaints against Demers involving sexual misconduct with underage boys.

While he was assigned to St. Martha's, Demers allegedly sexually assaulted a 19-to-21-year-old male exchange student, Complainant J, when he hosted him at his private residence in the summer of 1995 and again in 1997. The complainant claimed Demers pressed his clothed, erect penis up against his back in the night while sharing a sleeping bag, and alleged more than ten occurrences of unspecified, non-consensual sexual touching. Demers' alleged abuse of Complainant J was first reported in an email from Complainant J's mother to the Vicar General, Monsignor Albert Kenney, in November 2016.

In 1991, Demers reportedly abused a young man ("Complainant K") who had recently arrived from the Dominican Republic. The complainant reportedly met Demers in Santo Domingo when the complainant was 17 years old. He claimed that Demers told him that he would help him go to college in the U.S., as he had for many other students. The complainant reported that they kept in touch and when he was 18 or 19 years old, after it took him three months to travel to the U.S., Demers picked him up at a bus station in Rhode Island and brought him to a house where three other young men were living. Demers forced the complainant to share a bedroom with him and, on his second night at the house, Demers ripped Complainant K's shirt off and started kissing him all over his body. According to Complainant K, because he resisted and stopped the encounter, Demers kicked him out of the house, sent him back to the bus station, and told him never to speak about it or he would be deported back to the Dominican Republic. The complainant reported feeling "threatened by [F]ather Demers" and "ashamed and embarrassed."

**Diocesan Response**

Demers was still assigned to St. Martha in March 2002 when Complainant B mailed his letter to the Diocese alleging abuse by Demers at Fatima Hospital in 1970, as described above. On March 25, 2002, Chancellor John Darcy removed Demers "from active public ministry pending the outcome of the investigation." Diocesan investigator McCarthy opened an investigation and notified the Rhode Island State Police of Complainant B's allegations at the end of March 2002. McCarthy's March

2002 letter to a State Police memorializes a conversation he had with a State Police Lieutenant regarding Complainant B's allegations but does not reference the prior complaints the Diocese received about Demers by that time. The State Police advised McCarthy that Complainant B had to contact State Police to file a complaint before they could investigate the matter. It is unclear whether Complainant B contacted State Police; as of the end of May 2002, he had informed McCarthy that he was in the process of doing so, but in any event, the allegations were outside the criminal statute of limitations and therefore not prosecutable.

On March 30, 2002, McCarthy interviewed Demers in connection with Complainant B's recent disclosure to the Diocese. In that interview, Demers denied knowing Complainant B and denied all allegations of sexual abuse.

Meanwhile, on March 29, 2002, Auxiliary Bishop Robert McManus received a letter from an inmate at the ACI, Complainant H, who alleged that a priest whom he identified as possibly Demers sexually assaulted him when he was at Dismas House. McManus forwarded the letter to McCarthy, who opened an investigation on April 2, 2002. On May 31, 2002, McCarthy and an investigator with the Office of Attorney General interviewed Complainant H at the ACI. It was later determined that prosecution of Complainant H's allegations was foreclosed by the applicable three-year statute of limitations.

In April 2002, McCarthy conducted several interviews of witnesses who recounted incidents where Demers had asked Haitian boys to remove their clothing, nude swimming with boys, crawling into bed with a young man at a cottage, and other incidents. Shortly thereafter, on April 9, 2002, McCarthy reportedly had a meeting with an investigator for the Office of Attorney General, at the Office of Education and Compliance, "regarding a discussion of numerous matters of sexual misconduct." According to McCarthy, the Attorney General investigator advised him that a complaint had been made by an individual who alleged that he was sexually assaulted by Demers, but the investigator could not provide McCarthy with other specifics, including the address of the complainant or details of the assaults.

On April 19, 2002, Complainant A called Director McCarthy to report seeing Demers in bed with a shirtless teen in 1967. McCarthy interviewed Complainant A at his home on April 21, 2002. Over the course of the interview, McCarthy acknowledged prior allegations against Demers, including swimming with naked boys and having boys change in front of him, repeatedly referring to them as "smoke but no fire." The following day, McCarthy undertook a review of Demers's confidential files and noted in an internal memo his discovery of facts "which show a continual pattern of inappropriate sexual conduct."

By August 2002, Demers had retained private counsel to represent him and remained on administrative leave. McCarthy interviewed Demers again on November 4, 2002, and again Demers denied all allegations against him. On November 6, 2002, the Diocesan Child Protection Advisory Board met to discuss Demers and voted unanimously that Demers "should be asked to undergo further psychological examination at Saint Luke's Institute." The Child Protection Advisory Board met once more on December 19, 2002, and voted unanimously against reinstating Demers.

By July 2003, the Diocese had retained a psychologist to review the Demers files and to conduct an evaluation of Demers.

Demers' faculties remained suspended through his retirement on March 12, 2004.

Complainant C first reported his alleged abuse in a letter to Bishop Thomas Tobin on July 15, 2005. McCarthy opened an investigation on August 1, 2005. By the end of August 2005, McCarthy had met with members of the Rhode Island State Police in connection with Complainant C's recent allegations. In early September 2005, McCarthy, joined by a Rhode Island State Police detective, interviewed Complainant C. Complainant C did not want to pursue criminal charges but asked the Diocese to help pay for therapy, which they did. He was treated at a sexual assault and trauma resources center.

In a March 2005 letter to the Diocese, Complainant H reiterated his 2002 allegations and expressed a desire to pursue criminal charges. He also identified another inmate at the ACI who claimed that he had been raped by Demers, Complainant E. McCarthy opened an investigation and sent a letter detailing the allegations to Captain Stephen Lynch of the Rhode Island State Police, Major Crimes Unit, dated March 28, 2005. State Police detectives reviewed a transcript of McCarthy's May 2002 interview of Complainant H, interviewed Complainant H, and conferred with the Office of Attorney General. It was determined that prosecution of Complainant H's allegations was barred by the three-year statute of limitations in effect at the time of the alleged incidents.

In August 2005, McCarthy met with members of the Rhode Island State Police to discuss Complainant E's allegations against Demers. A few months earlier, Complainant E had contacted the Diocese to inform them that he would not speak with the Diocese any further regarding his allegations until he had retained legal counsel. McCarthy ultimately interviewed Complainant E at the ACI in December 2005. During the interview, Complainant E disclosed that in 1975 he had been sentenced as a juvenile and sent to Dismas House in Providence. There, Demers allegedly sexually assaulted him repeatedly. McCarthy noted in a subsequent letter

to Monsignor Theroux that the complainant recalled trust fall exercises with Demers at the Dismas House, which was consistent with Complainant C's account, and that he thought the complainant had "a very believable story." Because Complainant E's alleged abuse occurred, like Complainant H's, during the 1970s, his case was not prosecutable.

Complainant F first reported his alleged abuse in a letter to McCarthy on February 15, 2007. McCarthy conducted an interview with the complainant and his attorney on June 6, 2007. During the interview, Complainant F disclosed two incidents of forced oral sex and one instance involving non-consensual anal penetration. On June 7, 2007, McCarthy formally notified the Rhode Island State Police of Complainant F's allegations by letter, and State Police opened an incident report on August 14, 2007. State Police detectives first interviewed Complainant F on August 29, 2007. He was interviewed again, a decade later, after reporting his abuse to the State Police a second time. Both times, law enforcement concluded that prosecution was foreclosed by the applicable statute of limitations.

In late July 2012, Mr. Houllahan, through an attorney, reported to the Diocese that Demers sexually abused him at St. Joseph's Church in Providence when the complainant was approximately nine years old. McCarthy opened a Diocesan investigation into the allegations and reported them to the State Police. The State Police interviewed Mr. Houllahan in late July 2014, at which time Mr. Houllahan reiterated his allegations and disclosed suffering mental health issues arising from the alleged assault. In late August 2014, State Police informed Mr. Houllahan that prosecution was barred by the statute of limitations. Mr. Houllahan interviewed with State Police again, in late October 2018, to provide further details in connection with his earlier disclosures. In November 2024, State Police contacted Mr. Houllahan, who confirmed his allegations of abuse by Demers and told the detective that the abuse cost him his education, career, and possible romantic interests. He also stated, "[i]t is quite clear that the Catholic corporation continues to enable the endangerment of children."

In November 2016, the Diocese received an email alleging that Demers had sexually abused Complainant J while Complainant J was living in Rhode Island as an exchange student in the late 1990s. Diocesan investigator Kevin O'Brien conducted a recorded telephone interview of Complainant J, who was residing overseas, in January 2017.

During the interview, Complainant J said that he lived with Demers twice, first for two months in 1995, and then for six months in 1997, and alleged that during these trips, Demers repeatedly touched him in a sexual manner without his consent.

Complainant J was an adult at the time. Complainant J told O'Brien that Demers had other international students residing with him as well and suspected that similar things were happening to them. Complainant J opined that Demers preyed on him and other international students because he knew they relied on him to come to and remain in the United States. Finally, Complainant J said that in 1999 or 2000, he disclosed his experiences with Demers to another Diocesan priest, who reportedly told him that "the church knew" about Demers. O'Brien relayed Complainant J's allegations to the State Police on January 12, 2017. The State Police suspended its investigation in March 2017 because Complainant J had not responded in person to State Police headquarters for an interview. O'Brien interviewed Demers about Complainant J's allegations on April 18, 2017. Demers denied any wrongdoing.

While the Diocese never reinstated Demers' faculties after his 2002 suspension, Demers was never laicized or removed from the clerical state. In 2016, the Diocese learned that Demers had celebrated a Memorial Mass for a local priest at St. Martha's Parish. In response, Chancellor John Darcy sent Demers' a letter reminding him that

> Due to the revocation of your priestly faculties, you may not exercise any act of public ministry. This includes concelebration of Mass in any venue; therefore, as we agreed, a situation like yesterday's at St. Martha's Parish simply may not occur. This reminder is issued for the good of the People of God and to help minimize the potential for local scandal. Please know that any similar situation in the future could affect your current diocesan compensation.

In January 2026, Director O'Brien referred Complainant K's allegation to State Police and this Office, and noted that the complainant did not wish to meet with Director O'Brien because he reportedly felt that it would create anxiety and disappointment for him. Complainant K provided additional details of his abuse to State Police in February 2026, and noted that he reached out to multiple people at the Diocese a few months after he was abused but, according to the complainant, they "refused to talk to [him]." He did not wish to provide a formal statement to State Police because he was suffering from chronic depression and "reviving those horrific memories won't do any good to me." He also noted that Father Demers destroyed his life, he has seen numerous therapists, and to this day he has not recovered.

**Status**

Demers died on July 21, 2018. He is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father Alfred Desrosiers

| Born | Ordained | Suspended | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mar. 13, 1935 | June 25, 1961 | Apr. 2, 1993 | Feb. 15, 2001 |

**Assignment History**

| | |
|---|---|
| Summer 1961 | St. Michael Church, Smithfield |
| 1961 – 1962 | St. Jean Baptiste Church, Warren |
| 1962 – 1971 | Holy Family Church, Woonsocket |
| 1971 – 1978 | St. Joan of Arc Church, Cumberland |
| 1977 – 1983 | Mount St. Francis Day Care Center, Lincoln |
| 1978 – 1993 | Our Lady of Victories Church, Woonsocket |
| 1993 – 1997 | *Suspended on leave* |
| 1997 | *Retired* |

**Summary**

Between 1972 and the mid-1980s, while serving as a priest in the Diocese of Providence, Father Alfred Desrosiers reportedly sexually abused three teenage girls and one boy.

According to the Diocesan records produced to this Office, the Diocese of Providence received the first complaint against Desrosiers in March 1993, when a woman reported to Diocesan officials that she had been in a sexually abusive relationship with Desrosiers as a teenager. In response, Bishop Louis Gelineau removed Desrosiers from his parish and sent him to a sabbatical program at Boston College. The Diocese ultimately reported the complaint to the Rhode Island State Police early the next year (1994), and in September 1995, a grand jury returned an indictment charging Desrosiers with one count of raping the complainant when she was 15 years old in 1972.

Desrosiers died in 2001, while the criminal case against him was still pending. In late 2002, the Diocese paid several hundred thousand dollars to settle civil lawsuits brought by the victim in the criminal case as well as another female victim of Desrosiers. The Diocese received a third complaint against Desrosiers in 2012, and a fourth in 2019.

Father Desrosiers is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

**The Reported Abuse**

Father Desrosiers allegedly abused a teenage girl ("Complainant A") between 1972 and 1974, while serving as assistant pastor at St. Joan of Arc Church in Cumberland. Complainant A, who was between 15 and 17 years old at the time, was a member of the parish's Catholic Youth Organization ("CYO"). Desrosiers was close with her family and spent significant time in their home.

According to Complainant A, when she was in the ninth grade, Father Desrosiers offered her a part-time job at the rectory. Inside the rectory suite, Desrosiers allegedly touched the girl's breasts and genitals over and under her clothes, forced her to perform oral sex on him, kissed her, and ultimately raped her. Complainant A reported that Desrosiers gave her alcohol before sexually assaulting her. The alleged abuse also occurred at the girl's home: Desrosiers would sit with Complainant A under a blanket on her parents' couch, and "fondle [her] in the presence of [her] parents." Complainant A alleged further abuse by Desrosiers at retreats in West Hartford and Frog Rock, CT, and at a national CYO Convention in Indianapolis.

According to Complainant A, Father Desrosiers manipulated her by telling her that God had sanctioned his conduct. He told her, "what a gift of God [she] was to him, and how he needed [her] to be a better priest." Similarly, she said, Desrosiers "would repeat that the Lord was using [her], as he did Mary to bear Jesus, to make him a better priest, and that he needed [her]." When she told Desrosiers that he was hurting her, he allegedly told her to "close [her] eyes, pray, and it would be over soon." Having been religiously educated to view her priest as "a representative of God, and one who would transform the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, who could forgive sins, who could baptize, who was 'called by God' to be a priest," Complainant A "believed [Desrosiers] when he told [her] what he felt God was calling [her] to do in order to make him a better priest."

Complainant A said that she reported the allegations to the Director of the CYO for northern Rhode Island in 1974. Among the Diocesan records produced to this Office, there is neither a record of this report nor of any action that was taken in response. Complainant A reported the allegations to Church officials again in March 1993. As recounted below, the Diocese did not refer her allegations to law enforcement until nearly a year later. Following an investigation by the State Police, this Office presented the case to a grand jury which returned an indictment of Desrosiers for rape in 1995.

Father Desrosiers allegedly began abusing a second girl ("Complainant B") in 1974 or 1975, also while he was the assistant pastor at St. Joan of Arc Church. At the time, Complainant B was a 14- or 15-year-old CYO student and was working part-time at the church. Her family was very friendly with Desrosiers, and he was a frequent guest in their home. Desrosiers allegedly sexually assaulted Complainant B on three separate occasions. She reported the abuse to Church officials in 2019, after Desrosiers's death.

In 1975 or 1976, Desrosiers allegedly abused a third girl ("Complainant C") in the rectory of St. Joan of Arc Church. The complainant, who was 16 at the time of the alleged abuse, was sent to the church for "counseling" by her parents. Desrosiers reportedly took Complainant C to his room in the rectory, where he fondled her and kissed her breasts. The reported abuse occurred several times a week for approximately six months. Complainant A first told the Diocese about Complainant C in 1993. The next year, in 1994, Complainant C filed a lawsuit against Desrosiers and the Diocese. Beyond the filing of Complainant C's lawsuit, and Complainant A's brief mention of her to Diocesan officials, there is no indication in the Diocesan files produced to this Office of any other report to either the Diocese or to law enforcement regarding Complainant C.

In 1980, Desrosiers allegedly began abusing a fourth individual ("Complainant D"), an eight-year-old altar boy at Woonsocket's Our Lady of Victories Church, where Desrosiers was the pastor. Complainant D first reported the alleged abuse to Church officials in 2012, after Desrosier's death. According to Complainant D, Desrosiers asked the boy to come to the rectory early, before anyone else would be there, and raped him in his rectory bedroom. Complainant D reported that Desrosiers raped him approximately three to four times per year over the next four years. Complainant D also stated that Desrosiers forced him to perform oral sex on Desrosiers in a hallway of the church. Complainant D reported that Desrosiers often made him do this after he served as an altar boy at a wedding. According to Complainant D, Desrosiers would withhold his tips from the wedding until he performed oral sex because he "needed to earn it." Desrosiers allegedly referred to this as "earning [his] penance on [his] knees." This allegedly occurred a dozen times over the course of four years.

Desrosiers allegedly told the boy that it was his responsibility to teach him "about sex and love and that him using [Complainant D] to get his release . . . would allow him to become a better priest." Desrosiers allegedly told Complainant D that he would prevent him from getting into the junior high school he wanted to go to if he told anyone about the abuse and told him not to do anything that would make his parents not proud of him.

**Diocesan Response**

Records produced to this Office by the Diocese indicate that the Diocese first received notice of alleged sexual abuse by Father Desrosiers on March 23, 1993, when Complainant A called the Diocese and requested a meeting with Bishop Louis Gelineau. Complainant A met instead with Father Normand Godin, the Minister for Priests for the Diocese, and Father Jacques Plante, Assistant Chancellor and Secretary to the Bishop, on several occasions in March and April 1993. In a letter to Father Godin, Complainant A wrote that she "experienced my first sexual activities with this man. . . . One minute he would be teaching me to pray the rosary, the next we would be having sex—or should I say he was performing sexual acts on me."

On March 31, 1993, Father Plante met with Complainant A and memorialized their conversation in an April 1 memo addressed to Bishop Gelineau. Plante wrote that Complainant A had alleged that she was sexually abused by Father Desrosiers over a period of approximately two years, beginning when she was 15. Complainant A also named another woman who also alleged sexual abuse by Desrosiers during the 1970s, Complainant C. Plante told Complainant A that he could offer "no assurance" that Desrosiers would be removed from his parish and reportedly advised her to "get a lawyer."

On April 2, Bishop Gelineau met with Father Desrosiers in his office. Gelineau later testified that he had already determined, based on Plante's memo from the previous day, to suspend Desrosiers, and that the April 2 meeting was an "administrative" one to inform Desrosiers of the suspension. Gelineau recalled these events a few months later, in an August 1993 memorandum contained in Desrosiers's personnel file:

> When [Complainant A] was a teenager, she had an affair with the young priest who was assistant in her parish. The priest admits it. He says he was swept off his feet with love for [Complainant A]. He regrets it very much now. When [Complainant A] came to me about it, it was the first indication the diocese ever had about any misconduct on the part of this priest. I called him in. When he admitted it, I removed him from his parish immediately. He is on a leave of absence from priestly ministry now, although the diocese continues to support him.

Gelineau decided to arrange a "sabbatical/continuing education program" for Desrosiers at the Institute of Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry, sponsored by Boston College. Gelinau vouched for Father Desrosiers's acceptance, writing to Boston College in June 1993 that Desrosiers "is a priest in good standing." While at the Institute, Desrosiers lived in residence at Regina Cleri in Providence and commuted to Boston. The Diocese continued to pay him a salary and paid for the "educational program."

Gelineau also reportedly met with Complainant A five or six times in the months after her initial disclosure to the Diocese. At their first meeting, according to a June 1993 letter from Complainant A to Gelineau, Gelineau told her that the Diocese could provide three things: (1) payment of her therapy costs, (2) removal of Desrosiers from pastoral duties, and (3) help "getting on with the rest" of Complainant A's life. In her written correspondence with Gelineau, Complainant A also further detailed her experiences with Father Desrosiers, and mentioned three other women whom Desrosiers may have abused. Complainant A told Gelineau that while she was pleased with the Diocesan response regarding her therapy costs and Desrosiers's prompt removal from his parish, she was very concerned with the fact that, despite additional known allegations of abuse against Desrosiers, the Diocese had yet to "investigate Fr. D's behavior of the last years." Gelineau responded by informing Complainant A that there would soon be a person "to coordinate the responses to matters like the one you present to the Diocese," as well as a new advisory committee. He told her that

she should wait to present her concerns to this person, who would in turn advise Gelineau on how to proceed. In September 1993, the Diocese stopped paying for Complainant A's counseling because her financial demands became (in the Diocese's view) "exorbitant and unreasonable, and the Diocese could not, in justice, meet the additional demands."

In October 1993, Gelineau granted approval for Father Desrosiers to continue his "sabbatical" at Boston College for another semester. The following month, Sister Carol Regan from Boston College met with Gelineau. During the meeting, she reportedly said that she was "very disturbed" by the Diocese's failure to inform her of the "whole story" surrounding Desrosiers, and indicated that the Boston College program was "most probably not the type of program [Desrosiers] needs," given that it was "not therapeutic" but rather designed to prepare priests for a return to active ministry. In a follow-up memo, Monsignor Robert Evans suggested to Gelineau that he respond to Sister Regan by informing her, among other things, that Desrosiers "[was] not in need of a therapeutic program," and that "in light of what [was] presently known about [Desrosiers]" by the Diocese, there remained a possibility that he return to active ministry.

In November 1993, former Attorney General Arlene Violet contacted Gelineau about a possible financial settlement for Complainant A, whom she represented. In January 1994, Violet criticized the Diocese's failure to report the allegations to the Office Attorney General, and threatened legal recourse if the Diocese did not begin an investigation into Desrosiers. Counsel to the Diocese, William Murphy, responded by saying that he was "surprised that [Complainant A] has not yet reported the alleged criminal misconduct to law enforcement authorities. She is an adult, mature, and competent citizen with first-hand knowledge of the incidents. . . . [Y]ou can be certain that I cured her oversight."

Three days later—and nearly a year after Complainant A first disclosed her allegations of sexual abuse to the Diocese—McCarthy reported to the Rhode Island State Police that Complainant A "made allegations that she was sexually involved" with Desrosiers, and that "her consentual [sic] sexual misconduct with this priest has cause[d] her many difficulties over the years." McCarthy noted that he was requesting an inquiry "even though the events happened many years ago [because Complainant A] might have been a minor at the time."

At the end of February 1994, Complainant A filed a civil suit against Desrosiers, the Diocese, Bishop Gelineau, and other Diocesan officials. In March 1994, Complainant C likewise filed a civil suit against Desrosiers, the Diocese, Bishop Gelineau, Bishop Kenneth Angell (the Auxiliary Bishop of Providence), and St. Joan of Arc Church.

In August 1995, Gelineau was interviewed by the Rhode Island State Police regarding his knowledge of sexual misconduct between Desrosiers and Complainant A. Gelineau told the State Police that neither Desrosiers nor Complainant A ever characterized their "relationship" as sexual, but only as a romantic, albeit

"inappropriate," one, and it was solely on that basis that Gelineau removed Desrosiers from his parish assignment. Gelineau also said that "as far as [he] knew, the only relationship they had was that [Desrosiers] was in love with [Complainant A]." This is contradicted by the March and April 1993 letters to Gelineau from Msgr. Plante—which first brought Complainant A's allegations to Gelineau's attention, and on which Gelineau based his decision to remove Desrosiers from his parish assignment—that plainly and repeatedly refer to Complainant A's allegations as "sexual abuse."

Gelineau was also interviewed in September 1995 by the Attorney General's Office. He once again stated that he did not remember any specifics about sexual activity from his conversations with Complainant A. He opined that she primarily "wanted some help from the Church" and wanted him to assure her that Desrosiers "would not hurt anyone else." Desrosiers, Gelineau stated, had admitted that "it happened," but it "did not strike [Gelineau] as the whole relationship was wrong." Gelineau explained that he "had taken care of him" by removing him from his parish. Diocesan attorney William Murphy also stated that once Desrosiers admitted he had been in an inappropriate relationship, "there [was] no need to do the kind of fact investigation you would do in a criminal case."

On September 13, 1995, Desrosiers was indicted by a Rhode Island grand jury on one count of rape, for his alleged sexual abuse of Complainant A. In February 1997, while the criminal case was still pending, the Diocese retired Desrosiers with benefits, which include a monthly pension stipend, health and dental coverage, and permission to continue living in Diocesan housing.

The following month, in March 1997, Gelineau testified at a pretrial hearing in the criminal case that addressed whether Gelineau could be compelled to testify at Desrosiers's upcoming criminal trial regarding the contents of his conversations with Desrosiers about his alleged rape of Complainant A—which, as noted, included Desrosiers "admitting" to having an "affair" with Complainant A. This hearing was reportedly the first time in the United States that a bishop was required to testify in a criminal case regarding alleged child sexual abuse by a Catholic priest in his diocese. At issue was a 1960 state law—still in effect at the time of this Report—that says, in pertinent part, that "[n]o . . . priest . . . shall be allowed in giving testimony to disclose any confidential communication, properly entrusted to him or her in his or her professional capacity, and necessary and proper to enable him or her to discharge the functions of his or her office in the usual course of practice or discipline, without the consent of the person making the communication."

State prosecutors argued that Desrosiers's statements to Gelineau should be admitted into evidence without Desrosiers's consent because those conversations were administrative, not spiritual, such that the state law did not protect them. Gelineau and Father Norman Godin—whose own conversations with Desrosiers state prosecutors sought to introduce into evidence at trial—testified at the hearing that disclosing the contents of those conversations would violate church rules regarding confidentiality. On June 6, 1997, Superior Court Judge Thomas Needham ruled that neither Gelineau nor Godin could be compelled to testify at Desrosiers's trial, citing

the state law at issue. The week after the ruling, Bishop Gelineau announced his retirement.

The State appealed Judge Needham's ruling to the Rhode Island Supreme Court, but Desrosiers died in February 2001, prior to the Supreme Court's deciding the appeal—and thus ending the State's criminal case against Desrosiers. Internal records indicate that Complainant A's civil suit against Desrosiers and the Diocese went to arbitration and settled for over $300,000, while Complainant C's civil suit was included as part a $13.5 million dollar settlement reached between the Diocese and numerous abuse complainants in September 2002.

In September 2012, Complainant D's mother called Bishop Tobin's secretary and advised him that Complainant D was having flashbacks and other psychological issues as a result of sexual abuse he reportedly suffered from Desrosiers in the early 1980s at Our Lady of Victories Church in Woonsocket, RI. After contacting Complainant D's mother and his lawyer, McCarthy informed Rhode Island State Police about the allegations in October 2012. McCarthy interviewed both Complainant D and his parents in December 2012. Complainant D stated that he never told anyone about the abuse until he disclosed it to a friend. He said Desrosiers told him that "no one would ever believe anything that he said" because Desrosiers was a priest.

As a result of this conversation, McCarthy referred Complainant D to Paula Loud, the Victim Advocate for the Diocese. The State Police closed the investigation because Desrosiers had died. In June 2014, McCarthy learned from the State Police that certain individuals, including Complainant D, felt their sexual abuse allegations had not been appropriately handled by the Diocese. In response to this information, McCarthy informed the police of the status of the investigation into Complainant D's allegations and that, to date, he had been reimbursed $1,450 through the Assistance Program.

On February 28, 2019, Complainant B called Diocesan investigator Kevin O'Brien to report that she had been abused by a priest. O'Brien interviewed her the following week. In a case memo, O'Brien stated that the woman was able to provide "specific, detailed information regarding her allegations and . . . the activity described was generally consistent with that of previous victims of Alfred Desrosiers." O'Brien reported Complainant B's allegations to Rhode Island State Police the same day. The police determined that there was nothing further to investigate, as "the alleged crime would be out of the statute of limitations," and Desrosiers had died.

In November 2024, the State Police contacted Complainants B and C, who each confirmed their allegations against Father Desrosiers. Complainant B noted that she is still seeing a therapist. Complainant C disclosed that she has been hospitalized several times but insisted on the continued need "to keep saying more; keep the abuse in the light," and said that "for too many children, time and life stopped at the time of [their] abuse."

**Status**

Father Desrosiers remained on a leave of absence until he retired in February 1997. He died on February 15, 2001, while awaiting trial for rape. He is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father Paul Desrosiers

| Born | Ordained | Retired | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| May 12, 1913 | May 18, 1940 | Jul. 31, 1981 | Jun. 27, 1984 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1940 – 1943 | St. Vincent de Paul Church, Coventry |
| 1943 – 1946 | St. John the Baptist Church, West Warwick |
| 1946 – 1951 | St. Joseph Church, Woonsocket |
| 1951 – 1960 | Precious Blood Church, Woonsocket |
| 1959 – 1968 | Diocesan Tribunal |
| 1960 – 1973 | St. Joseph Church, Woonsocket |
| Jan. – Aug. 1973 | *Leave of absence* |
| 1973 – 1981 | St. John the Baptist Church, West Warwick |
| 1981 | *Retired* |

## Summary

Father Paul Desrosiers reportedly sexually abused two boys in the early 1960s when he was the administrator of St. Joseph Church in Woonsocket, RI. Both incidents were allegedly reported to the assistant pastor at St. Joseph, Father Adrien Menard, in the early 1960s and early 1970s. However, the records produced by the Diocese to this Office do not reveal what Menard—who would himself later appear on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy—did with these reports.

According to Diocesan records, the first documented child sexual abuse allegation against Father Desrosiers dates to November 1995, after Desrosiers's death. Robert McCarthy, the Diocese's Director of the Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") at the time, interviewed the complainant's parents, but did not contact the complainant or report the allegations to law enforcement. The Diocese received a second complaint against Desrosiers in July 2019. Kevin O'Brien, the current Director of the OEC for the Diocese, interviewed the complainant and promptly reported those allegations to the Rhode Island State Police.

Desrosiers is included in the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

## The Reported Abuse

Father Desrosiers reportedly abused a young boy, approximately 10-13 years old ("Complainant A"), between approximately 1961 and 1964. Complainant A was a student at St. Joseph's School, where Desrosiers was the administrator, at the time of the alleged abuse. Desrosiers was a family friend and would often come to

Complainant A's house for dinner. Desrosiers allegedly took the boy out of class frequently to accompany him on errands. He also reportedly took the boy on overnight trips to New York City, Long Island, and Desrosiers's private residence on Hiawatha Lake in Massachusetts. In a 2019 report to the Diocese, Complainant A stated that while Desrosiers often brought him there alone, on other occasions Desrosiers brought other young boys as well. Complainant A stated that he believed he was drugged during many of these trips. Desrosiers allegedly kissed the boy on the mouth, bathed him, masturbated him, and forced him to sleep in the same bed as Desrosiers. The alleged abuse occurred on a near-daily basis, Complainant A said, both in school and on these trips, and stopped after three years, when the boy moved on to high school.

Desrosiers allegedly sexually abused an eight-year-old boy ("Complainant B"), in 1963 or 1964, when Desrosiers took Complainant B and another young boy on a trip to Narragansett beach. Both were altar boys at St. Joseph Church. According to Complainant B, after a day at the beach, Desrosiers brought Complainant B and the other boy to a hotel room, where Desrosiers began drinking alcohol. Inside the hotel room, Desrosiers reportedly tried to kiss Complainant B and touch his genitals, and Complainant B said he began to cry, at which point Desrosiers drove the boys home.

**Diocesan Response**

While the first documented report of child sexual abuse by Desrosiers dates to 1995, the information contained in the records produced by the Diocese suggest that at least some church officials had prior knowledge of possible misconduct by him. In November 1995, the pastor of St. Joseph Church contacted OEC Director Robert McCarthy and reported that he had spoken with Complainant B's mother, who told him her son had just disclosed to her that he was sexually abused by Father Desrosiers when he was a boy. McCarthy interviewed Complainant B's parents six days later. They stated that their son was never the same after taking a trip with Desrosiers during the early 1960s, as he returned "very, very angry." The parents told McCarthy that Complainant B did not specifically disclose to them Desrosiers's alleged sexual abuse until their October 1995 conversation. They recalled him coming home from the trip six hours late and lying on the back seat of their car in a fetal position. Another boy on the trip reportedly told his mother that Desrosiers "couldn't keep his hands off [Complainant B]." At the time of the alleged abuse, Complainant B disclosed to his parents that Desrosiers had licked his face. Complainant B's mother told McCarthy that she immediately confronted Father Adrian Menard, of St. Joseph Church, with this information. Father Menard reportedly responded, "yeah, I think we know that. He's done that to others, I assumed there was going to be a follow-up." McCarthy noted there were no records that Father Menard reported Desrosiers's behavior to Diocesan leadership. McCarthy told Complainant B's parents that Desrosiers had been placed on leave prior to his retirement in July 1981.

McCarthy advised Complainant B's parents of the Bishop's "pastoral response," which stated that all abuse victims would receive an offer of counseling on a nonprejudicial basis. McCarthy also gave Complainant B's parents information about

approved mental health providers and reimbursement. He told the parents, "contrary to what people believe, and we don't make this a public thing . . . the Church does support [Complainant B]." While McCarthy told Complainant B's parents that he would contact Complainant B and the other boy who was on the trip, there is no indication McCarthy did this—nor is there any indication McCarthy undertook any other investigative steps or referred the allegations to law enforcement at the time.

In February 2024, as part of this Office's investigation, Rhode Island State Police interviewed Complainant B regarding these allegations. Complainant B confirmed many of the details that his parents had provided to McCarthy in 1995, and disclosed additional ones, including the facts that he disclosed to his parents at the time that Desrosiers allegedly abused him. Complainant B also told the State Police that his mother had confronted both Desrosiers and others at St. Joseph's regarding the alleged abuse. Complainant B told State Police of the enormous trauma these events have had on his life. And he confirmed that the Diocese never contacted him about the reported abuse.

On July 31, 2019, Complainant A emailed the OEC to report that he was sexually abused by a pastor at St. Joseph Church in the 1960s. On August 7, 2019, OEC Director Kevin O'Brien interviewed Complainant A. Complainant A alleged that he was regularly sexually abused by Desrosiers when he was between the ages of 10 and 13 years old. Complainant A also disclosed that he had approached Father Menard when he was about 20 years old to discuss the incident, and Father Menard allegedly "apologized for what happened." According to Complainant A, Father Menard reportedly added that he had told Complainant A's parents to keep their son away from Desrosiers, but his parents did not believe Menard.

Director O'Brien provided Complainant A with contact information for Dr. Michael Hansen, the Director of Outreach and Prevention, to coordinate therapy. Complainant A also named other individuals whom he suspected might also have been sexually abused by Desrosiers. There is no indication in the Diocesan records produced to this Office that the Diocese attempted to reach out to any of these individuals. However, O'Brien immediately reported Complainant A's allegations to the Rhode Island State Police. The State Police subsequently contacted Complainant A and notified him that due to Desrosiers' death, they could not continue with a criminal investigation.

In February 2024, the State Police interviewed Complainant A who reiterated his allegations and explained how it has impacted his life. The State Police also attempted to contact the individuals whom Complainant A mentioned might also have been abused by Desrosiers. Two could not be reached, and two others denied being abused.

**Status**

Father Desrosiers retired from active ministry in July 1981. He died from injuries sustained in a bus accident in Spain in June 1984. He is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father Louis Diogo

| Born | Ordained | Suspended | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dec. 11, 1920 | Jun. 23, 1946 | Nov. 2005 | Apr. 4, 2015 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1954 – 1954 | Church of Jesus Saviour, Newport |
| 1954 – 1957 | St. Anthony Church, West Warwick |
| 1957 – 1964 | St. Francis Xavier Church, East Providence |
| 1964 – 1965 | Church of Jesus Saviour, Newport |
| 1965 – 1972 | Our Lady of the Rosary Church, Providence |
| 1972 – 1993 | St. Elizabeth Church, Bristol |
| 1993 | *Retired* |
| 2005 | *Faculties Restricted* |
| 2000 – 2006 | St. Francis Xavier Church (Residence), East Providence |

## Summary

Father Louis Diogo reportedly sexually abused two pairs of young sisters in the 1950s and 1960s, while serving as a pastor at St. Francis Xavier Church in East Providence. The Diocese of Providence received the first complaint against Diogo in February 1993. At the same time, the Diocese learned that a local media outlet was prepared to run a story about the allegations. In response, Bishop Louis Gelineau arranged for Diogo to retire from ministry at St. Elizabeth Church in Bristol. Days after interviewing the complainant, the Diocese helped Diogo prepare a public statement that the allegations against him were "false rumors." Lawyers for the Diocese and Diogo corresponded with the local news outlet, and the story apparently never ran.

The Diocese received a second complaint against Diogo in February 1997. Although the Diocese was informed around this time by the prosecutor's office in Massachusetts that at least one of the complaints was "quite credible," but could not be prosecuted due to the statute of limitations, the Diocese again placed no additional restrictions on Diogo's ministry. It was not until November 2005, when one of the aforementioned complainants contacted the Diocese and the local press because Diogo continued to say mass in Rhode Island, that the Diocese restricted Diogo's faculties to private mass only.

The Diocese received the third and fourth complaints against Diogo in March 2006. In response, the Diocese reminded Diogo that his faculties were restricted to private mass and declined to take further action on the basis that Diogo was, by that point, 85-years-old. It does not appear that the Diocese ever reported either

complaint to law enforcement. In 2024, State Police attempted to contact all four complainants. They discovered that two are deceased, and they were unable to reach the other two.

Diogo died in April 2015. He is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

**The Reported Abuse**

Diogo reportedly sexually abused a 13- to 15-year-old girl ("Complainant A"), in the late 1950s. She reported that Diogo, who was in his forties at the time, molested her and her sister ("Complainant B") at their family's home in Massachusetts. Diogo gave Complainant A and Complainant B piano lessons there every week for approximately two years. Complainant A alleged that during these occasions, Diogo would try to kiss and fondle her, and at times pressed himself against her with his erect penis. Complainant A stated that Diogo gave her a white sapphire ring and told her that it was "like being engaged, and she would be his girl."

Complainant B likewise alleged that Diogo fondled, kissed, and inappropriately touched her, beginning when she was approximately five years old. When Complainant B was approximately 10 years old, Diogo reportedly took her out of school, brought her to her aunt's house, placed her on a bed, and began "French kissing" her. Complainant B reported that the inappropriate touching continued for the next several years, even after the piano lessons that Complainants A and B took with Diogo had ended.

In approximately 1958, Diogo reportedly began abusing another girl ("Complainant C"). Complainant C reported that the abuse started when she was approximately 14 years old and continued into her twenties. Diogo was a family friend and would visit Complainant C and her sister, Complainant D, at their family's home in Massachusetts. Complainant C reported that Diogo first abused her when she went to see him at St. Francis Xavier Church in East Providence to discuss her interest in potentially becoming a nun. Complainant C alleged that Diogo told her to stay in school and kissed her on the mouth. Other instances of alleged kissing, fondling, and Diogo masturbating in Complainant C's presence reportedly continued into her twenties and stopped when she left the country for work.

Diogo also reportedly abused Complainant D, Complainant C's younger sister. Complainant D reported that she was first abused by Diogo when she was 10-11 years old in the sacristy of St. Francis Xavier Church, where Diogo allegedly kissed her on the lips, pressed himself against her, and grabbed her hand and placed it on his penis. Complainant D reported that similar instances of abuse occurred over the next several years.

**Diocesan Response**

According to an unattributed memo from Diogo's personnel file dated February 18, 1993, a reporter with Channel 12 news contacted the Diocese that day regarding a story it intended to run concerning allegations of sexual abuse against Diogo. The Channel 12 reporter told the Diocese that Diogo apparently admitted to the allegations in a recorded telephone conversation with the victim. The memo's author noted that he subsequently called Diogo at St. Elizabeth Church, and Diogo indicated that the source of the complaint was likely Complainant A, with whom Diogo recently spoke on the phone without knowing that the conversation was being taped. Diogo said that while he never abused Complainants A or B, he "possibly touched them in ways they are now interpreting badly, but there was never any sexual touching." According to the memo, Channel 12 did not end up running the story that evening. The following day, Channel 12 called St. Elizabeth and was informed that Diogo had been placed "on leave" for an indeterminate period. The memo concludes with a note that Diogo wanted to "set in motion the process for him to retire from St. Elizabeth's."

On February 22, 1993, Complainant A met with Monsignors William Varsanyi, Salvatore Matano and Reverend Robert Evans to discuss her complaint. She told the Monsignors that Diogo abused her when she was 13-15 years old, and indicated that she had recently retained an attorney, would be meeting soon with a representative of the Bristol County District Attorney's Office (because the alleged abuse occurred in Massachusetts), and had also spoken with Channel 12 news. Complainant A added that she had recently confronted Diogo on a recorded telephone call and that her lawyer had a copy of the recording. Monsignor Matano told Complainant A that he would notify Diocesan lawyer William Murphy and Bishop Louis Gelineau of her allegations, and that Bishop Gelineau would subsequently decide whether to confront Diogo. Additionally, Monsignor Varsanyi asked Complainant A whether she "gave any encouragement to Father to do the things she alleges," and Complainant A responded "no, and [] added that her younger sister who was about 8 years of age when Father started similar activity with her, certainly never gave any encouragement." The Diocese offered Complainant A counseling, but Complainant A said she wanted to speak with her lawyer first.

On February 24, 1993, Diocesan lawyer Murphy mailed a letter directly to Complainant A requesting a copy of her recorded call with Diogo. The next day, the Diocese released a public statement about Complainant A's allegations, noting that because she had not yet turned over a copy of her recorded phone call with Diogo, the Diocesan "investigation is incomplete" and it is "unable to comment further." Nevertheless, by the following day (February 26), Bishop Gelineau had apparently already determined that Diogo could return to his duties at St. Elizabeth, and the Diocese helped prepare a statement for Diogo to read to parishioners upon his return. The statement characterized the allegations as "false rumors," and explained Diogo's absence as "personal time to assess and to deal appropriately with them."

The next week, on March 1, 1993, Complainant A met with a child abuse investigator from the Bristol County District Attorney's Office in Massachusetts. The investigator memorialized the interview in a contemporaneous typewritten memo that was ultimately acquired by the Diocese in 1997 (in connection with Complainant B's disclosure). In addition to detailing Diogo's alleged abuse of her, Complainant A said that while it was occurring she disclosed it to a high school friend, whose relative was a Catholic priest at a nearby church; that priest reportedly confronted Diogo at the time, and that was when his piano lessons with Complainants A and B ceased. There is no indication in the records received by this Office that the Diocese became aware of this confrontation or the basis for it around the time that it occurred. Complainant A also informed the District Attorney investigator that a few weeks prior to their meeting, on February 11, 1993, she confronted Diogo on a recorded telephone call. According to Complainant A, Diogo told her that if anything happened, he did not do it maliciously, stating that "a lot of people French kiss, and he didn't see what was wrong with that." Diogo reportedly also said that fondling breasts was "something that he does with children." Complainant A provided a copy of the recording to the investigator at the time of their meeting. In a subsequent 1997 conversation between the District Attorney investigator and OEC Director Robert McCarthy, the investigator said that Complainant A was "quite credible," but the DA's office declined to prosecute Diogo because the statute of limitations had run on what would otherwise have been charged as a second-degree sexual assault in Massachusetts.

On March 21, 1993, Bishop Gelineau met with Diogo and arranged for his "retirement" from St. Elizabeth, effective in June of that year. The Diocesan records provided do not explain what caused the Diocese to change its position regarding Diogo's continued employment from the previous month. Upon his "retirement," Diogo was appointed "pastor emeritus" of St. Elizabeth, apparently with no restrictions on his ministry. In a June 1993 letter from Bishop Gelineau to parishioners of St. Elizabeth declining their invitation to speak at Diogo's "retirement" party, Gelineau praised Diogo, writing that he hoped "our Church will continue to be blessed by his priesthood. His retirement from administration will allow him to concentrate on spiritual ministry which he does so well."

In early February 1997, Complainant B contacted the Office of Education and Compliance and spoke over the phone with Director McCarthy. Complainant B told McCarthy that both she and her sister (Complainant A, who had disclosed her allegations to the Diocese and law enforcement four years earlier) were abused by Diogo in Massachusetts during the 1950s and 1960s, adding that she had already spoken with the Bristol County District Attorney's Office. Complainant B said she sought compensation for therapy. The next day, at McCarthy's request, Complainant B submitted a written statement to the Office of Education and Compliance reiterating her allegations against Diogo. McCarthy also met with Bishop Gelineau and Monsignor Varsanyi to discuss Complainant B's allegations. McCarthy spoke with Varsanyi again the following day, and among other things, Varsanyi told McCarthy that Complainant B had not previously come forward with her own allegations against Diogo. Around this time, McCarthy spoke with the investigator at the Bristol

County District Attorney's Office who interviewed Complainant A in 1993. On February 18, 1997, apparently as part of the Diocesan investigation into Complainant B's allegations, McCarthy interviewed Complainant A at her home. During the interview, Complainant A played for McCarthy the recording of her February 1992 phone call with Diogo. By the end of March 1997, McCarthy had concluded that Complainant B's allegations were credible and the Diocese began reimbursing Complainant B for her therapy costs. McCarthy did not interview Diogo at the time.

Even though the Diocese had two credible allegations against Diogo, the Diocese did not take any steps to suspend Diogo's faculties or otherwise restrict his ministry or activities until November 2005. At that time, Complainant B contacted both the Diocese and local news media to complain that Diogo had recently said mass at St. Francis Xavier Church in East Providence. According to a November 11, 2005, news article by WPRI Channel 12, Monsignor Theroux told the media that the Diocese was not aware that Diogo had been saying mass, but that it had ordered him to stop. Around the same time, in response to a request by Monsignor Theroux, Director McCarthy prepared a summary of Complainants A & B's allegations. On December 7, 2005, the Bishop's Advisory Board met to discuss the recent publicity surrounding Diogo, and the Board agreed that Diogo should be interviewed.

On March 13, 2006, Diogo met with Director McCarthy, Monsignor Darcy, and Dr. Michael Hansen. McCarthy's memo of the meeting notes that Diogo "was all over the map" but he "denied any misconduct with either" Complainant A or B. Monsignor Darcy informed Diogo at the meeting that his ministry "would be restricted for the time being . . . until this matter has been cleared up," meaning he could only say private masses. This appears to conflict with the Diocese's public statement to WPRI Channel 12 months earlier, when it said in November 2005 that it had already ordered Diogo to stop saying mass. Diogo was also informed at the March 2006 meeting that Bishop Tobin had requested a new inquiry into the allegations of Complainants A and B.

The following day, Complainant C contacted the Diocese for the first time to disclose her own allegations against Diogo. On March 20, 2006, McCarthy conducted an in-person interview of Complainant C. Complainant C said there were too many instances of "inappropriate conduct" to count and added that she had written a letter to Diogo regarding her allegations in 1996 or 1997, but Diogo never responded. The only other person she ever disclosed her allegations to, she said, was her therapist. She expressed her belief that her sister, Complainant D, had also been abused by Diogo, and gave McCarthy her sister's contact information, saying that Complainant D would be willing to speak with him.

On March 24, 2006, McCarthy spoke with Complainant D on the phone. During their conversation, Complainant D alleged that Diogo abused her in the sacristy of St. Francis Xavier Church beginning when she was about 11 years old. Complainant D reiterated and further detailed these allegations in an in-person interview with McCarthy on March 31, 2006. She reportedly told her husband about the abuse in the late 1960s, spoke to a guidance counselor at her job in the late 1980s or early 1990s,

and told her daughters, but she never made any official reports prior to the disclosure to the Diocese. McCarthy wrote a memo summarizing his interview with Complainant D in which he observed that "we now have four separate women all in their late fifties to early sixties who have indicated that when they were juveniles beginning around age eleven they were each assaulted by Father Diogo numerous times." It does not appear that McCarthy notified law enforcement of these complaints.

Once more, McCarthy spoke with Diogo and advised him that two more women had filed complaints against him. Once again, Diogo denied any inappropriate conduct with these women, "except for maybe an affectionate kiss." Diogo repeated that denial several days later, on May 9, 2006, when he met with McCarthy, Monsignor Darcy, and Dr. Michael Hansen. Both at the meeting and in a follow-up letter, Monsignor Darcy reiterated to Diogo that his faculties were restricted to saying private mass only, pending the outcome of the Diocesan investigation.

At the end of May 2006, Complainants A and B requested to appear at the June meeting of the Bishop's Advisory Board. McCarthy responded that this was not the protocol, but they could write a letter for him to submit to the Board. Complainant B did so, alleging that the Diocese had not properly dealt with Diogo in light of the sisters' allegations against him. She claimed that Diogo "continued a high-profile role in the Portuguese community[,] saying mass and administering sacraments at will" after the allegations were brought to the Diocese's attention. At the end of her letter, Complainant B asked the Diocese to hold a mass at St. Francis Xavier for Diogo's victims and expressed her view that Diogo should be completely removed from the clerical state.

Responding to Complainant B by letter on June 26, 2006, Monsignor Theroux, Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia, wrote that "the Bishop has done all he can do in response to this situation," namely suspending Diogo's faculties. Theroux added that "[a]lthough you would like to see [Diogo] removed from the clerical state, that penalty is beyond the authority of the Bishop and, quite frankly, the Holy See is generally not inclined to take such an extreme measure when the priest is 85 years of age[,] preferring to restrict his ability to function as a priest as Bishop Tobin has already done." Theroux did not respond to Complainant B's request that the Diocese arrange a mass for Diogo's alleged victims. In early July 2006, McCarthy wrote letters to each of the four complainants providing the same general update regarding Diogo's suspended faculties.

In February 2008, Diogo requested permission to travel to Portugal. Bishop Tobin granted this request, and Monsignor Darcy reminded Diogo that he was not to celebrate a public mass. Monsignor Darcy also informed Diogo that he would be notifying the bishops in Portugal of Diogo's status. These letters said that Diogo was on a restricted ministry as the result of "alleged inappropriate behavior with minors from many years ago," adding that "[e]stablishing the facts of these allegations is all but impossible." This same sequence of events occurred each year from 2009 to 2013.

**Status**

Father Diogo died on April 4, 2015. He is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father Charles Dolan

| Born | Ordained | Retired | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Feb. 17, 1904 | Dec. 20, 1930 | No | Nov. 9, 1977 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1931 | Cathedral of SS. Peter & Paul, Providence |
| 1931 – 1932 | Sacred Heart Church, Taunton, MA |
| 1932 – 1933 | St. Mary Church, Taunton, MA |
| 1933 | St. Francis Church, Wakefield |
| 1933 – 1937 | Immaculate Conception Church, Providence |
| 1937 – 1941 | St. Joseph Church, Pawtucket |
| 1941 – 1942 | St. Leo the Great Church, Pawtucket |
| 1942 – 1943 | St. Bernard Church, Wickford |
| 1943 | St. Agnes Church, Providence |
| 1943 – 1949 | Sacred Heart Church, Providence |
| Summer 1949 | Via Coeli Monastery, Jemez Springs, New Mexico |
| 1949 – 1952 | St. Francis Home (Annex of St. Joseph Hospital), Warwick |
| 1952 – 1953 | St. Brendan Church, Riverside |
| 1953 – 1955 | St. Anthony Church, Woonsocket |
| 1955 – 1958 | Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church, Providence |
| 1958 | St. Ann Church, Cranston |
| 1958 – 1967 | Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church, Providence |
| 1967 – 1971 | St. Patrick Church, Providence |
| 1971 | *Retired* |

## Summary

Father Charles Dolan reportedly sexually abused at least two teenage girls from 1938 through the early 1950s. Dolan reportedly raped a 15-year-old girl in the rectory of St. Joseph Church in Pawtucket in 1938. In 1949, Dolan received "treatment" at Via Coeli in New Mexico, though the records received by this Office do not indicate what the "treatment" was for. Upon Dolan's return to Rhode Island, he allegedly sexually abused a second complainant who also alleged that he abused several other girls in the early 1950s at St. Brendan Church in Riverside. Dolan remained in ministry until 1971 and died in 1977. Although records produced by the Diocese to this Office contain references to Dolan as a "sick priest" as early as 1949, the first documented explicit reference to child sexual abuse allegations does not appear until 1992.

Father Dolan is included on the Diocese of Providence's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

**The Reported Abuse and Diocesan Response**

Father Dolan reportedly repeatedly sexually abused a teenage girl ("Complainant A") beginning in 1938, while the girl was 15 years old and Father Dolan was serving at St. Joseph Chuch in Pawtucket. Dolan reportedly raped the girl in the rectory of the church and had other sexual contact with her at Dolan's family's home in Pawtucket. In 1940, Dolan reportedly told Complainant A to discuss the alleged abuse with another priest at St. Joseph. According to Complainant A, that priest began having sex with Complainant A when she turned 18 years old. Complainant A did not disclose this alleged abuse to the Diocese until 2002.

Diocesan records indicate that Father Dolan was transferred from St. Joseph in 1941, though there are no reasons provided for the transfer. Between 1941 and 1943, Dolan was transferred to three different parishes. The records we reviewed do not provide any reasons for the transfers. In 1943, Dolan was transferred a fourth time, again without any documented reason, this time to Sacred Heart Church in Providence, where he remained until 1949. In the summer of 1949, Dolan was sent to Via Coeli Monastery, a Catholic treatment center in New Mexico run by the Congregation of the Servants of the Paraclete. In a June 21, 1949, letter to Via Coeli, Bishop Russell McVinney referred to Dolan as a "sick priest." There is no other record of any specific reason for Dolan's treatment. In late August 1949, Via Coeli recommended to Bishop McVinney that Dolan could resume active duty as a priest. In September 1949, McVinney assigned Dolan as chaplain of St. Joseph Hospital in Warwick, where Dolan remained for nearly three years, when he was transferred to St. Brendan Church in East Providence.

In the early 1950s, while assigned to St. Brendan, Father Dolan reportedly sexually abused at least one other girl, Complainant B. She disclosed her allegations in a letter to the Diocese in late 1992. Complainant B alleged that she and her sister were among the "numerous little girls from the parish" whom Dolan abused there. Complainant B alleged that Dolan "would take some of us to his room, have us undress, take pictures. Others he would fondle, caress, or have intercourse with. Then he would take us over to his cousin's home in Riverside [and] offer us alcohol, among other things. At Sunday mass as he distributed communion to us he would tell us that he loved us." According to Diocesan records, Father Dolan served at St. Brendan for only a year, from 1952 to 1953, when he was transferred to St. Anthony Church in Woonsocket. There are no records documenting the reason for this transfer in the records produced by the Diocese. Dolan was transferred to different parishes multiple times between 1953 until his retirement in 1971.

Following Complainant B's late 1992 letter to the Diocese disclosing her allegations, Bishop Gelineau responded with his own letter in late January 1993, explaining the Diocese's process for handling abuse allegations and offering to help coordinate and pay for Complainant B's counseling. Complainant B accepted Gelineau's offer, and in her written response she told Bishop Gelineau that his "letter of validation will long be remembered as a major step toward closure on this painful time in my life." Diocesan lawyer William Murphy wrote the Complainant in March

1993 to ask that she regularly provide the Diocese treatment records to support continued payment. It does not appear that the Diocese interviewed Complainant B about her allegations.

Complainant A reported her abuse by Dolan to the Diocese in May 2002. Director of Education and Compliance Robert McCarthy interviewed Complainant A twice, in May and December of that year, to obtain the details of the allegations. Complainant A was offered counseling through the Diocese but declined. The Diocese did not report either complaint to law enforcement, presumably because Dolan was long dead.

**Status**

Dolan died on November 9, 1977. He is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father John Doran

| Born | Ordained | Retired | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mar. 1, 1925 | Jun. 3, 1950 | Jan. 23, 1992 | Jun. 1, 1992 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1950 – 1950 | St. Clare Church, Misquamicut |
| 1950 – 1954 | Sacred Heart Church, East Providence |
| 1954 – 1955 | St. Rita Church, Warwick |
| 1955 – 1960 | Blessed Sacrament Church, Providence |
| 1957 | Veterans Hospital, Providence (part time) |
| 1960 – 1968 | St. Patrick Church, Providence |
| 1968 – 1969 | St. Timothy Church, Warwick |
| 1969 – 1971 | St. Leo the Great Church, Pawtucket |
| 1971 – 1976 | St. Mary Church, Providence |
| 1976 – 1992 | St. Matha Church, East Providence |
| 1992 | *Retired* |

## Summary

Father John Doran allegedly sexually abused an 11- or 12-year-old altar boy around 1962, while assigned to St. Patrick Parish in Cranston. The reported abuse consisted of Doran regularly pressing his erect penis against the boy from behind. On one occasion, the complainant reported that Doran grabbed his genitals, kissed him, and attempted to make the boy touch Doran's genitals.

The complainant first reported to the Diocese in early March 2002. Within a few days of receiving the complaint, Robert McCarthy, Director of the Diocese's Office of Education and Compliance, interviewed the complainant over the phone. When describing his allegations to McCarthy, the complainant offered a detailed description of the gym at St. Patrick, where one of the alleged incidents occurred. The complainant added his suspicion that other altar boys had also been abused by Father Doran and mentioned the name of an acquaintance who served alongside him at St. Patrick. The complainant thanked McCarthy for his prompt outreach, stating that he had "no axe to grind with the Diocese" and just wanted to ensure that Doran did not pose a danger to any other children. He further inquired whether the Diocese had any other complaints on file for Doran. McCarthy told the complainant during the interview that Doran had died in 1992, but that he would follow up with any information about previous complaints.

A few days later, McCarthy summarized the interview in a letter to Monsignor Paul Theroux, the Moderator of the Curia, and asked him to check Father Doran's files

for any other complaints that had been made against the priest. In mid-April, McCarthy noted in an internal memorandum that there was no pending litigation against the Diocese relating to any alleged abuse by Father Doran, and that Doran's "confidential file would have been destroyed upon his death."[10] The complainant emailed the Diocese several times in mid-April and early May asking for updates because he had not heard anything from McCarthy following his interview. In one such email, the complainant added that he also wished to speak with McCarthy about a separate abuse allegation concerning a former teacher and coach at the Catholic high school he attended in Rhode Island.

McCarthy responded to the complainant by email in early May to inform him that there were no pending cases against the Diocese relating to Father Doran, and that Doran's confidential files had been destroyed, so it was not possible for McCarthy to determine whether previous allegations had been made against him. There is no indication in the Diocesan records provided to this Office that McCarthy spoke with the complainant again, including about the complainant's additional abuse allegation regarding a high school teacher. Nor is there any indication that McCarthy took any further investigative steps in this matter, such as contacting the person whom the complainant said served alongside him as a St. Patrick altar boy or referring the complainant's allegations to law enforcement. Finally, there is no indication in the Diocesan records that the complainant's allegations against Doran were ever presented to the Review Board or that Doran was considered for inclusion on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

In 2024 and 2025, as part of this Office's investigation, Rhode Island State Police spoke with the complainant to discuss this incident. The complainant confirmed his allegations against Father Doran and indicated that he had not disclosed the alleged abuse to anyone before contacting the Diocese. He also described the toll this took on him, causing the complainant severe relationship and trust issues throughout his life, yet noted that the Diocese had never offered him counseling services. He declined to identify the former teacher who reportedly abused him, informing State Police that the teacher passed away. However, he stated that the teacher was not a Diocesan or religious order priest and that the Diocese did not investigate this allegation.

**Status**

Father Doran died in 1992. He is not included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

[10] There are other examples among the Diocesan records produced to this Office of the Diocese (specifically the Office of Education and Compliance) representing that a given priest's confidential files were destroyed. At the same time, during this Investigation, the Diocese represented to this Office that it is not aware of any files being destroyed.

# Monsignor Louis Dunn

| Born | Ordained | Retired | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dec. 19, 1920 | May 31, 1947 | Jun. 24, 1994 | Apr. 18, 2001 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1947 | St. Bernard Church, Wickford |
| 1947 | St. Benedict Church, Warwick |
| 1947 | St. Mary Church, West Warwick |
| 1948 – 1950 | Lateran University, Rome, Italy |
| 1950 – 1956 | Cathedral of SS. Peter & Paul, Providence |
| 1950 – 1952 | Assistant Chancellor, Diocese of Providence |
| 1952 – 1953 | Vice Chancellor, Diocese of Providence |
| 1953 – 1956 | Vicar for Religious, Diocese of Providence |
| 1956 – 1964 | Mother of Hope Novitiate, Warwick |
| 1963 | St. Joseph Church, Hopkinton |
| 1964 – 1967 | Christ the King Church, South Kingstown |
| 1964 – 1994 | Diocesan Tribunal, Diocese of Providence |
| 1967 – 1994 | St. Thomas Church, Providence |
| Apr. 1994 | *Suspended on leave* |
| Jun. 1994 | *Retired* |
| 1997 | St. John Vianney Residence, Providence |

## Summary

Monsignor Louis Dunn was accused of sexually assaulting at least five girls and young women during his tenure as a Diocesan priest. In June 1997, he was convicted of first-degree sexual assault of a 21-year-old woman in June 1982. In that case, and several others, Dunn's pattern of abuse involved pursuing relationships with vulnerable females beginning when they were younger than 18 years old and continuing into their early 20s, and using his position of authority as a priest to manipulate them into consuming alcohol and drugs before sexually assaulting them.

The Diocese was first made aware of Monsignor Dunn's conduct around 1967, when the father of a University of Rhode Island ("URI") freshman whom Dunn had reportedly sexually assaulted contacted the Diocese to complain about Dunn's problematic and potentially criminal behavior toward girls and young women at Christ the King Parish in South Kingstown. Soon after, Bishop Russell McVinney transferred Dunn to St. Thomas Parish in Providence, where he reportedly sexually assaulted at least two more women.

Dunn was placed on administrative leave in April 1994 and indicted in March 1996. After he was found guilty following a bench trial, the trial justice sentenced Dunn in December 1999 to a ten-year suspended sentence with probation. He remained confined to a nursing home until his death in April 2001. Despite his conviction, it does not appear that the Diocese took any steps to laicize him.

The Diocese includes Dunn on its List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

**The Reported Abuse and Diocesan Response**

The Diocese appointed Dunn to multiple positions over the course of his ministry where he had access to, and responsibility for, girls and young women. In 1953, following Dunn's prior appointments as Secretary to the Bishop, Vice Chancellor, and Chancellor of the Diocese of Providence, Bishop Russell McVinney appointed Dunn as Vicar for Religious. In this role, Dunn was the Bishop's representative to all the female religious order communities of the Diocese, including those involving girls and young women preparing to enter religious life, and acted in the Bishop's capacity. Part of that preparation reportedly included Dunn's command that girls and young women kneel before him on their hands and knees and kiss his feet to prove their humility and worthiness to God. In 1956, Bishop McVinney appointed Dunn as Chaplain of the Mother of Hope Novitiate in Warwick, a convent of the Sisters of Our Lady of Providence religious order created by Bishop McVinney, where Dunn was responsible for contacting as many girls and young women as possible to recruit them into that community.[11]

By the mid-1960s, concerns reportedly arose that Dunn became too controlling of the girls and young women with whom he interacted. In 1963 or 1964, a leader in the Sisters of Our Lady of Providence reportedly wrote to Diocesan officials to express her concern for the health and well-being of the girls and young women who were under Dunn's influence. It is unclear what, if anything, was done in response to this letter, but in 1964, the Diocese transferred Dunn and appointed him as Pastor of Christ the King Church at URI in South Kingstown, where he reportedly sexually abused a girl and two young women.

According to a 1994 witness statement given by a former Providence Police Officer, in 1964 or 1965 she wrote a letter to Bishop McVinney in which she disclosed that her college roommate at URI told her that Dunn made unwanted sexual advances at her at the rectory and that the roommate was "very upset and depressed." She also recalled writing that Dunn did not belong at URI and that his behavior warranted a Diocesan investigation. The records produced by the Diocese did not

[11] Bishop McVinney also appointed Dunn to be the Defender of the Bond on the Diocesan Tribunal in 1964, where he was responsible for arguing the validity of marriages in annulment proceedings and ensuring that those proceedings satisfied Canon law requirements.

include this letter and it is unclear whether the Bishop took any action in response to it.

Complainant A

In 1965, Dunn reportedly sexually abused a 17-year-old girl he met while serving as pastor of Christ the King Church ("Complainant A"). Complainant A and her family attended church there, and Complainant A sought spiritual advice from Dunn regarding a romantic relationship. Dunn reportedly encouraged Complainant A to end that relationship, enticed her to spend more time with him at the rectory, provided her with prescription drugs and alcohol, and began having sex with her when she was 17. Dunn's sexual relationship with Complainant A continued into her freshman year at URI, and at 18 years old she may have become pregnant with Dunn's child. Dunn reportedly arranged for Complainant A to see a doctor under an assumed name and undergo a medical procedure. According to Complainant A, the stress of her relationship with Dunn, and her dependency on the drugs and alcohol that he gave her, led Complainant A to drop out of college, leave Rhode Island, and ultimately leave the Catholic Church.

In a sentencing letter that Complainant A's father authored nearly 30 years later as part of Dunn's criminal trial, he indicated that he informed the Bishop's office around 1967 that Dunn was engaged in inappropriate and potentially criminal behavior, but his efforts "fell on deaf ears." Complainant A's father likewise stated in a sworn affidavit that he called Bishop McVinney's office regarding serious concerns about Dunn, but the office informed him that the Bishop "would not meet or speak with me, and I was referred to Msgr. Daniel P. Reilly." He said he then met with then-Chancellor Reilly on several occasions regarding Dunn's conduct, and Reilly reportedly told him that Dunn was a "standing problem," but that Dunn was going to be transferred from Christ the King and Reilly "believed this would take care of the problem." Reilly testified in a deposition in 2002 that he had no recollection of meeting or speaking with Complainant A's father. Diocesan records confirm that Dunn was transferred to St. Thomas Parish in Providence in 1967, but they contain no reference to any other complaints received about Dunn around this time or otherwise indicate that the Diocese took any steps to investigate Dunn or to restrict his ministry.

Complainant A wrote a letter to the Office of Attorney General in May 1997 in which she disclosed her alleged abuse. Among other details, she asserted in the letter that her father had confronted Monsignor Reilly about Dunn's misconduct, that Reilly knew that what had happened to Complainant A was a "recurring problem" with Dunn, and that Reilly told Complainant A's parents that Dunn would be transferred and expressed his view that this would "take care of things."

Complainant B

While assigned to Christ the King, Dunn reportedly sexually assaulted at least two other young women who were attending URI at the time. In a July 1997 sentencing letter to Rhode Island Superior Court Associate Justice Stephen J.

Fortunato, Jr. as part of Dunn's criminal trial, Complainant B wrote that Dunn "victimized" her between 1964-1969, beginning when she was a college student. She wrote that Dunn "prayed with me then he gave me drugs and alcohol . . . claimed that he was there to help me with my faith, my understanding of God and then he used me to satisfy his own desire." Complainant B disclosed her abuse directly to Dr. Michael Hansen and Monsignor Theroux around July 2006; she indicated that she had received a $25,000 arbitration award from the Diocese as compensation. According to an Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") memorandum, Dr. Hansen found Complainant B to be "quite credible."

Complainant C

Complainant C likewise met Monsignor Dunn as an 18-year-old freshman at URI, where she attended daily mass at Christ the King. In a December 1995 letter to the Assistant Attorney General handing Dunn's prosecution, Complainant C described how Dunn first offered her work in the rectory of the parish, before engaging in a pattern of increasing attention and physical contact. According to Complainant C, this culminated in the first of several sexual assaults by Dunn, in which he mixed religious ritual activities with sexual conduct to seduce Complainant C. Complainant C reported that, in the late spring or summer of 1965, she drank champagne with Dunn on the second floor of the rectory at Christ the King before Dunn brought her to a bed and raped her. She wrote that when she became pregnant with Dunn's child in 1966, Dunn sent her to Los Angeles, where Complainant C gave birth to a baby girl in March 1967 and immediately gave her up for adoption. Complainant C returned to Rhode Island and Dunn reportedly continued to have a sexual relationship with her until his transfer to St. Thomas in Providence later that year.

In Complainant A's 1997 letter to this Office, she also described how, after Dunn and Complainant C came to her house for a birthday party when Complainant A turned 18, Complainant C informed her she was leaving college and going to California. When Complainant A later told Dunn that she planned to visit Complainant C that fall, he reportedly admitted that Complainant C had gone to California because she was pregnant with his child.

In March 1996, Dunn was indicted for raping Complainant C in the spring of 1965. The trial began in June 1997, and Complainant C testified for several hours. The following day, the trial judge granted Dunn's motion for judgment of acquittal on the grounds that there was insufficient evidence that Dunn used force against Complainant C. Complainant C subsequently civilly sued Dunn and members of the Diocesan hierarchy in federal court in 1997, but in March 1999 the court dismissed that lawsuit on statute of limitations grounds.

It does not appear that Complainant C ever received any monetary compensation from the Diocese.

Complainants D and E

In the spring of 1968, Dunn reportedly abused a 17-year-old girl ("Complainant D") while he was assigned to St. Thomas Church in Providence. Complainant D civilly sued Dunn and members of the Diocesan hierarchy, including Bishops Angell and Gelineau, for her alleged abuse in March 1995 in Rhode Island Superior Court. According to her complaint, Dunn provided her with drugs and alcohol and eventually "engaged in sexual acts with her" using "force, psychological intimidation, and/or coercion." Complainant D's case was among several that the Diocese settled for $13.5 million in late 2002. In November 2024, Complainant D spoke with representatives of the Attorney General's Office and confirmed her prior accounts that Dunn raped her when she was approximately 17 years old.

In 1975 or 1976, Dunn met a 14-year-old girl ("Complainant E"), who described herself as "a faithful Catholic," who attended Mass at St. Thomas Parish. In 1977, on a bus ride home from a conference of the Charismatic Movement in Atlantic City, New Jersey, where incest had been a conference topic, Dunn reportedly asked to sit with Complainant E and told her that God had told him that she had been sexually abused by her father and had sent Dunn to help her heal by acting as the father figure she never had. Because Complainant E had not previously disclosed her abuse to Dunn, she readily responded to his offer of support. Dunn reportedly began grooming Complainant E and became a father-figure to her, controlling when she could go out, disciplining her, and reviewing her report cards. In addition to instructing her to work at the rectory, he reportedly introduced her to alcohol and unsuccessfully tried to pressure her to consume prescription drugs to "relax." Complainant E later testified that the first time Dunn sexually abused her, she awoke to find him on top of her and

> Dunn pulled out his Bible and started reading from the Song of Songs and told me that God told him that he had never been able to be loved by a woman, and God sent me to him as a gift, and that I had to . . . it was like my obligation and responsibility, and he kept reading . . . and I just, I think I just kind of died, and he told me . . . he never felt like he was a man, a whole man because of this, and I was the – I was there because God wanted me to teach him that he could be loved by a woman, I was there to heal him and I believed him.

Complainant E testified that she believed Dunn when he told her "that this was God's purpose for [her], and that this is what [she] had to do." Between 1978 and 1982, Dunn induced Complainant E to engage in repeated sexual activities that involved digital penetration and oral sexual intercourse on a weekly and sometimes daily basis, culminating in an incident where Dunn raped Complainant E in her Providence apartment in June 1982.

Complainant E disclosed her abuse to friends and family beginning in October or November 1993. A friend of Complainant E testified at Dunn's criminal trial that she confronted Dunn about his relationship with Complainant E, and he admitted that he had sex with Complainant E at the friend's beach house. According to an affidavit

signed by this witness in support of Complainant E's civil case, Dunn asked her to keep his relationship with Complainant E confidential until he retired. She refused.

The friend also testified at Dunn's criminal trial that she wrote a letter to Bishop Gelineau to "tell him that he had a very dangerous man in a very powerful position at St. Thomas." She stated in her affidavit that she overheard the Bishop's secretary at the time, Monsignor Jacques Plante, tell Complainant E on the phone that Bishop Gelineau was only willing to see Complainant E alone in a "pastoral visit;" otherwise, the Bishop would consider Complainant E "an adversary" and referred her to the newly hired Director of the Diocese Office of Education and Compliance, Robert McCarthy. Complainant E refused the Bishop's demand.

In an internal memorandum to file dated March 1994, Bishop Gelineau wrote that he spoke with the friend on the phone, who encouraged the Bishop to speak with Complainant E. According to his notes, she told him that a lawsuit might be avoided through a public apology. Gelineau wrote that he told her that Dunn was not at St. Thomas and "is to have an assessment of his needs." He concluded the memorandum by stating that he told her "[he] would consider next steps."

In a February 25, 1994, memorandum to Bishop Gelineau, Director McCarthy noted that Complainant E had recently begun informing laity and clergy that she had been in a sexually abusive relationship with Dunn. Just a week earlier, on February 18, Monsignor Robert Evans noted in a memorandum to Bishop Gelineau that Dunn had just expressed to him an interest in retiring in June 1994; this memo contains no reference to any allegations of sexual abuse, however.

Bishop Gelineau met with Dunn and Dunn's colleague from St. Thomas on the morning of February 26. According to Gelineau's notes of the meeting, Dunn admitted to meeting Complainant E when she was 17 and that the two had subsequently engaged in what Dunn characterized as a yearslong "affair."

By early March 1994, the Diocese had secured Dunn a lawyer. McCarthy interviewed Dunn at his lawyer's office on March 10; Dunn admitted to having a lengthy relationship with Complainant E, but he repeatedly denied having intercourse with her. McCarthy also asked Dunn if he was familiar with Complainant D. Dunn admitted he was, but he denied giving her alcohol or pills, and said he could not recall whether he ever had sexual contact with her. McCarthy then asked Dunn whether he had sexual contact with anyone besides Complainants D and E. Dunn admitted he had sexual relationships with multiple women, including Complainants D and E, and that he had impregnated a 21-year-old woman who gave birth to a child in 1967 who was subsequently adopted.

As a part of his investigation, McCarthy also interviewed specific members of the St. Thomas Parish community, including the assistant pastor, who expressed doubts about the credibility of the complainant. He told McCarthy that after learning of these allegations, he and Monsignor Dunn met with Bishop Gelineau. The assistant pastor recalled that, before they spoke, the Bishop warned them to be careful and that

if called into court, he would have to say what he knows. By April 6, 1994, the Diocese had placed Dunn on administrative leave. On May 16, 1994, Dunn wrote a letter to Bishop Gelineau formally asking to resign from his position at St. Thomas, citing "failing health" and the "stress and pressures of the duties as pastor." Dunn was officially "retired" on June 24, 1994.

On December 4, 1995, Complainant E filed a civil lawsuit in Rhode Island Superior Court against Bishop Gelineau and other members of the Diocesan hierarchy, including Dunn, Bishop Reilly, Bishop Angell, the Roman Catholic Bishop corporation (a corporation sole), and St. Thomas Parish in Providence.

On March 27, 1996, a grand jury indicted Dunn on one count of "rape" of Complainant C and, because the incident occurred after the enactment of Rhode Island's sexual assault laws, one count of "first-degree sexual assault" of Complainant E.

The rape case involving Complainant C was tried before a jury in early June 1997. As previously noted, Judge Fortunato granted Dunn's mid-trial motion for a judgment of acquittal on the ground that the State presented insufficient evidence to meet the necessary elements of a rape charge.

Dunn's trial for the sexual assault of Complainant E began in late June 1997. Dunn elected to have the case tried before the same judge who had acquitted him of raping Complainant C, rather than a jury. Complainant E testified to the various ways that Dunn abused her, including the incident on June 7, 1982, when Dunn sexually assaulted her. Much of the conduct described by Complainant E during her trial could not be charged because it fell outside of the applicable statutes of limitations.

A religious order priest, who also knew Monsignor Dunn, testified for the State at Dunn's criminal trial that he indeed went to Complainant E's apartment uninvited in 1982, where he discovered an "uncomfortable" Dunn there with the complainant, and he "felt that something was awry." He also testified that, on February 23, 1994, after he learned of Dunn's abuse of Complainant E, Dunn called him and asked if he would hear Dunn's confession. The priest testified that he refused, and Dunn then admitted to having had a sexual relationship with the complainant, though he claimed it did not involve intercourse. The priest testified that he explained some of the damaging effects of clergy sexual abuse to Dunn and Dunn asked if the priest could do a healing service, but he responded that he felt it was too late. He later elaborated in an affidavit in civil litigation that he believed Dunn's attempts to have him hear Dunn's confession and conduct a healing service were intended to "eliminate me as a witness."

At the close of the evidence, Judge Fortunato found that the State had proven beyond a reasonable doubt that Dunn sexually assaulted Complainant E on June 7, 1982. Prior to sentencing, however, the court received multiple letters from various parishioners attesting to Dunn's peaceful nature. Based on his review of those letters, the judge *sua sponte* (independently, without the issue having been raised by the

parties) overturned his own verdict and granted Dunn a new trial. He did so based on his finding that Dunn had ineffective assistance of counsel because his attorney failed to introduce character evidence. The State appealed, and in March 1999, the Rhode Island Supreme Court reversed Judge Fortunato's ruling as clearly erroneous. The Court remanded the case back to the Superior Court for sentencing and, in December 1999, Judge Fortunato sentenced Dunn to a 10-year suspended sentence with probation. He ordered Dunn to remain at St. Antoine Residence in North Smithfield, where he was living at the time. Dunn died a little over a year later, on March 18, 2001.

Complainant E was the only plaintiff who refused to join the $13.5 million global settlement between the Diocese, Complainant D, and several other abuse complainants in 2002, instead choosing to pursue her civil claims against Bishops Gelineau, Reilly, and Angell, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Providence, and Saint Thomas Church in Providence. Her lawsuit was dismissed on statute of limitations grounds in August 2003, which the Rhode Island Supreme Court upheld in February 2008. Of her decision to pursue her claims against the Diocese and its leaders, Complainant E told members of this Office that her quest for justice had never been about money; rather, it was about holding the Diocese publicly accountable for a cover-up. If she had settled, none of the discovery would have become public, and there would have been no admission of liability by the Diocese.

In February 2011, Complainant E filed a federal lawsuit in United States District Court for the District of Rhode Island, alleging a conspiracy and coverup among the Diocesan hierarchy and others, including lawyers and members of the judiciary, but a federal judge dismissed her case without prejudice in July 2012 due to a procedural error. Complainant E told members of this Office in 2025 that she did not refile the complaint because she felt "exhausted and disillusioned with the court system," having sought justice for her abuse for so many years. Complainant E has never stopped reaching out to the U.S. Attorney's Office, this Office, and members of the judiciary, in her efforts to obtain full disclosure and accountability by the Diocese of Providence and others.

**Status**

The Diocese took no steps to laicize Monsignor Dunn following his conviction for first-degree sexual assault. He died in April 2001. In 2019, the Diocese included Dunn on its List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Monsignor Michael W. Dziob

| Born | Ordained | Retired | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dec. 9, 1917 | May 30, 1942 | N/A | Nov. 27, 2012 |

**Assignment History**

| | |
|---|---|
| Jun. – Oct. 1942 | St. Joseph Church, Central Falls |
| 1942 – 1944 | Catholic University, Washington, D.C. |
| 1944 – 1945 | St. Joseph Church, Central Falls |
| 1945 – 1946 | Cathedral of SS. Peter & Paul, Providence |
| 1946 – 1947 | St. Joseph Church, Central Falls |
| 1947 – 1948 | St. Hedwig Church, Providence |
| 1948 – 1973 | Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, North Providence |
| 1973 – 1993 | St. Leo the Great Church, Pawtucket |
| Jun. 1993 | *Retired*, Pastor Emeritus, St. Leo the Great Church, Pawtucket |

**Summary**

In June 2020, a 38-year-old man contacted the Diocese through his attorney to report that he was sexually abused by Monsignor Michael Dziob at St. Leo the Great School, in Pawtucket, in the early 1990s, when the complainant was approximately nine years old. The following week, the Director of the Diocese's Office of Education and Compliance, Kevin O'Brien, responded by letter to schedule an interview. Director O'Brien conducted a videoconference interview of the complainant in early August 2020. Dziob was dead by this time, having passed away in November 2012.

The complainant told O'Brien that he was sent to St. Leo School around 1991, when he was nine or ten years old and in the fourth grade. The complainant was born with a disability and used crutches as a child. His mother had also recently passed away, so he was in constant disciplinary trouble and was frequently sent to Dziob's office in the parish rectory. According to Diocesan records, Dziob was assigned as pastor at St. Leo the Great from January 1973 until his retirement in June 1993. The first time the complainant was sent to Dziob's office, he said, Dziob unbuttoned his pants and fondled him. He reported that these incidents progressively worsened and occurred over 100 times from the beginning of his fourth-grade year until Dziob's retirement at the end of the following school year. The complainant recalled one particular incident around Mother's Day: he ran to the bathroom to cry after refusing to participate in the classroom activity of creating Mother's Day gifts and was sent to Dziob's office. Monsignor Dziob reportedly took all of the boy's clothes off, placed him on his lap, and fondled him.

The complainant told O'Brien that he had never disclosed the alleged abuse to anyone prior to contacting his lawyer a few months before. He never told his father, he said, because Monsignor Dziob would reportedly tell him during the encounters, "you don't want me to tell your father that you misbehaved." Additionally, the complainant provided detailed descriptions of Dziob's appearance as well as his office in the parish rectory. He also invited O'Brien to interview his father, who occasionally picked him up from Dziob's office, and his sister, who had attended St. Leo's with him and witnessed his misbehavior. Asked his reason for coming forward, the complainant explained that he contacted an attorney only after reading something about a recent change in the statute of limitations. Finally, he said he believed that Monsignor Dziob had targeted him due to his disability and struggles with his mother's passing, and explained that the alleged abuse resulted in his loss of faith and a lifetime of relationship problems and substance abuse.

O'Brien gave the complainant contact information for the Diocese's Victim Assistance Coordinator and encouraged him to reach out to discuss therapy. The week after the interview, O'Brien notified the Rhode Island State Police and this Office of the allegations, adding that the Diocese had no other complaints against Dziob on file, and that Dziob had died eight years earlier. It is not clear what, if any, additional steps O'Brien took to investigate the complaint, such as interviewing the complainant's father or sister or otherwise attempting to confirm the details that the complainant provided. It is also not clear whether the complainant received any financial compensation from the Diocese. The allegations were presented to the Diocesan Review Board in October 2020. As of the publication of this Report, the Diocese has not added Monsignor Dziob to its List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

In August 2020, following O'Brien's referral, the State Police contacted the complainant's attorney to invite the complainant to speak further with law enforcement. The State Police ultimately spoke with the complainant in 2024 and again in 2025. He confirmed his allegations against Father Dziob, and though he initially could not recall speaking with anyone from the Diocese, he later remembered that he first made a complaint about Dziob through his attorney and then participated in a videoconference interview with O'Brien. The State Police also spoke with his sister who stated that although she never witnessed any sexual abuse or inappropriate behavior, she did notice her brother's behavior change once he entered the fourth grade, which would have been around the time the abuse reportedly occurred. The complainant's sister stated that the complainant first disclosed his abuse to her in around 2020.

**Status**

Monsignor Dziob is deceased. He is not included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Brother Raphael Edes

| Born | Ordained | Retired | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mar. 8, 1939 | N/A | Yes | No |

## Assignment History

1978 – 1994 St. Raphael Academy, Pawtucket

## Summary

Brother Raphael Edes is a member of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (the "Christian Brothers") religious order who served at St. Raphael Academy in Pawtucket, a Diocesan school. Two adult males reported to the Diocese that Brother Edes allegedly sexually abused them when they were students at St. Raphael between 1986 and 1990. In an interview with the Rhode Island State Police in 2025, Brother Edes admitted sexual contact with one of these complainants but claimed that it was consensual; he denied sexually abusing the other complainant.

According to records produced by the Diocese to the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office, the Diocese received the first complaint against Brother Edes in October 1994, when an attorney for one of the complainants contacted the Diocese. There is no record of any Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") response to this allegation beyond a single memorandum authored by former OEC Director Robert McCarthy acknowledging receipt of the complaint. It does not appear that the Diocese referred these allegations to law enforcement or took any steps to investigate this complaint at the time.

The Diocese received a second complaint against Brother Edes in September 2018. McCarthy's successor, OEC Director Kevin O'Brien, reported the allegation to the Rhode Island State Police after speaking with the complainant. The State Police determined that Edes could not be charged as the reported conduct fell outside of the applicable three-year statute of limitations.

Although records reflect that the Diocese found the 2018 complaint credible, and that the Diocese later learned that Edes had "two additional credible allegations on file with the Congregation of Christian Brothers," including the 1994 complaint, the Diocese does not include Brother Edes on its List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

## Allegations and Diocesan Response

The Diocese first learned of Complainant B's allegations in 1994, when he, through an attorney, reported that Edes sexually abused him between 1986 and 1990

while Complainant B was a student at St. Raphael Academy. On October 11, 1994, Diocesan attorney William Murphy informed then-OEC Director McCarthy that an attorney representing Complainant B had contacted him to file a complaint of sexual abuse against Brother Edes. Director McCarthy's October 11, 1994, memorandum to "Most Reverend Thomas Tobin" about this conversation is the only record of an official OEC response to this allegation. Oddly, though Bishop Tobin is listed as the recipient of this memorandum in 1994, he did not become Bishop of Providence until 2005. In 1994, Tobin was Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Pittsburgh. In 2025, this Office contacted the Diocese to seek an explanation for this discrepancy. As of the date of this report, the Diocese did not reply.

Around 2000, Complainant B filed an amended civil complaint against Edes, Saint Raphael Academy, the former principal of St. Raphael Academy, and the Christian Brothers in Providence County Superior Court, alleging that Edes sexually assaulted him, and that the principal of St. Raphael Academy, the school, and the order covered it up. The parties reportedly settled the lawsuit. There is no further record of the details of the abuse or of any OEC investigation into this complaint in the files the Diocese produced to this Office, however, Complainant B reported that he received a sum of approximately $15,000. Further, it does not appear that the Diocese referred Complainant B's allegations to law enforcement.

In 2025, as a part of this Office's investigation, Rhode Island State Police interviewed Complainant B, who accused Edes of sexually abusing him on multiple occasions sometime between 1986 and 1990, beginning when he was a freshman or sophomore at St. Rafael's Academy. Complainant B told police that he attended St. Raphael Academy on a scholarship and that the alleged abuse usually occurred after school and during tutoring sessions with Edes and also occurred during the summer when school was not in session. Complainant B reported that the alleged abuse began with touching, and over time involved sexual intercourse. Edes reportedly told Complainant B that "this has to stay between us" and warned him that he would lose his scholarship if anyone found out. Complainant B stated that the alleged abuse stopped when he graduated. Complainant B stated that he did not disclose the alleged abuse to anyone at St. Raphael Academy at the time because he was concerned that if he told anyone his scholarship would be revoked, and he did not want to disappoint his parents. Later in life, the complainant confided in his ex-wife, his mother, and a therapist, and his mother contacted a lawyer and initiated a lawsuit against Brother Edes and St. Raphael Academy, and that he was awarded $15,000. Complainant B also shared with State Police the negative impact the alleged abuse had on him during his high school years and throughout his life, reporting that he struggled with substance use and medical issues that contributed to his difficulty in recalling the exact dates and times of his alleged abuse by Edes.

On September 20, 2018, OEC Director O'Brien received an email from Complainant A, accusing Edes of grabbing his genitals in 1986 when he was student at St. Raphael Academy. Complainant A reported that when he was a senior at the school, Edes let the complainant and other boys hang out inside the bookstore during lunch, where he would frequently ask about the details of their sex lives. On one

occasion, Edes reportedly grabbed Complainant A's penis in Complainant A's car after he had offered to gives Edes a ride across the school campus. Edes reportedly looked at Complainant A, smiled, and told him "you'd better get used to it." Complainant A said that he threatened to report Edes to the school principal if he ever did it again and never spoke to Edes again. Complainant A stated that he reported the abuse to a teacher at St. Raphael a few years after he graduated. He reported to the Diocese's OEC in 2018, after the clergy sexual abuse scandal in Pennsylvania became public.

On September 21, 2018, O'Brien forwarded Complainant A's email to the point of contact for complaints against Christian Brothers in Rhode Island. O'Brien also referenced Complainant B's report from 1994 in this email and stated that he intended to report Complainant A's allegation to Rhode Island State Police after speaking with Complainant A. On October 5, 2018, O'Brien received an email from the Director of Administration for the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the District of Eastern North America confirming that Edes had been assigned to St. Raphael Academy from 1978 to 1994 or 1995, and that he had left the Christian Brothers order in July 1995. The Christian Brothers further advised O'Brien that they had two other accusations of sexual abuse against Edes on file: the first concerning Complainant B, and the second concerning an individual not mentioned elsewhere in Edes' Diocese of Providence files. According to the Director of Administration for the Christian Brothers, both complaints were investigated and both complainants sought legal action against Edes and the Christian Brothers. Complainant B reportedly settled out of court, while the other complainant stopped responding to legal counsel.

O'Brien interviewed Complainant A on October 31, 2018. O'Brien's case activity report memorializing his interview with Complainant A reflects his determination that the complainant was credible. O'Brien also noted in an internal memorandum that "Brother Raphael Edes has two additional credible allegations on file with the Congregation of Christian Brothers and one on file with the Office of Compliance." O'Brien then forwarded Complainant A's allegations and the full transcript of the interview to the Rhode Island State Police on November 6, 2018. In his letter, O'Brien informed the State Police that the Christian Brothers reportedly had two additional sexual abuse allegations against Edes, one of which was settled out of court, and that Edes was likely living in Rhode Island. The Christian Brothers also separately informed the State Police of Complainant A's allegations. The Christian Brothers further informed the State Police that they would begin an investigation.

In 2018, a State Police detective spoke with Complainant A, who confirmed his prior allegations. The detective informed Complainant A that there could be no criminal charges against Edes because the applicable three-year statute of limitations had expired. In May 2019, the same detective spoke with Edes by phone. Edes confirmed that he had been a member of the Christian Brothers assigned to St. Raphael and that he knew Complainant A. He neither confirmed nor denied the allegations.

The Diocese's Review Board reviewed Edes' case on February 5, 2019. There is no record of the Board's recommendation or determination on that date, if any occurred, in the files provided by the Diocese to this Office.

In 2024, as a part of this Office's investigation, State Police again spoke with Complainant A. Complainant A reported that he never sued the Diocese, never received any financial compensation from the Diocese, and never received any follow-up from the Diocese after reporting the abuse in 2018.

In 2025, this Office sent a letter to Edes offering him an opportunity to be interviewed by the State Police regarding the child sexual abuse allegations made against him. In response, the Rhode Island State Police interviewed Edes in 2025, who stated that he entered the novitiate to become a Christian Brother in June 1957. He reported that he was assigned to teach at St. Raphael Academy beginning in 1978, and prior to that he was assigned to teach at "La Salle," a school operated by the Christian Brothers and located in Long Island, New York. Edes then admitted to engaging in "touching" of the "genital areas" and oral sexual intercourse with Complainant B on multiple occasions while he was assigned to St. Raphael Academy but claimed that this occurred when Complainant B was a senior, "maybe 17, or 18 years old," and that it was consensual. Edes denied other forms of sexual contact. Edes stated that his "relationship" with Complainant B ended around 1990 after the Christian Brothers and Edes' mother learned of the incidents. Edes recalled that a brother with the Christian Brothers arranged for Edes to receive psychological treatment at a facility in New Mexico for several months in 1994. He stated that he left the Christian Brothers when he returned from treatment. Edes further stated that, apart from attending treatment in New Mexico, the Christian Brothers never formally disciplined him, and he denied having any restrictions placed on his ministry. Edes denied ever having to pay for any damages in any civil case related to his alleged abuse of Complainant B.

Edes denied any inappropriate or sexual contact with Complainant A. However, Edes admitted that he "might have" performed consensual oral sexual intercourse on another unidentified male student at St. Raphael Academy when the student was a senior in high school. Finally, Edes admitted that he engaged in oral sexual intercourse with a different male student at "La Salle" in Long Island, New York, when the student was a senior and Edes was serving as his teacher. Edes expressed regret and stated that he is "not angry" but "upset" by what he did.

**Status**

Brother Edes is currently retired. The Diocese does not include him on its List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father John Joseph Keough Feeney

| Born | Ordained | Retired | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jan. 23, 1901 | Jan. 22, 1928 | 1971 | Nov. 10, 1974 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1928 – 1929 | St. Brendan Church, Riverside |
| 1929 – 1937 | St. Bernard Church, North Kingstown |
| 1937 – 1941 | St. Matthew Church, Cranston |
| 1941 – 1943 | Sacred Heart Church, Woonsocket |
| 1941 – 1943 | Mt. St. Francis Orphanage, Woonsocket |
| 1943 | St. Patrick Church, Cumberland |
| 1943 – 1951 | St. Augustin Church, Newport |
| 1951 – 1971 | St. Joseph Church, North Scituate |
| 1971 | *Retired* |

## Summary

According to a complainant who came forward in 2004, Father John Feeney reportedly sexually assaulted two teenage boys around 1965. In October 2004, the complainant informed the Diocese during an in-person interview that when he was approximately 15 years old, in the summer of 1965, Father Feeney sexually abused him in a beach house in Narragansett, Rhode Island. Specifically, the complainant informed Director of the Diocese Office of Education and Compliance, Robert McCarthy, that in the late summer of 1965, he and three other teenagers around his age spent time at the Narragansett beach house belonging to Diocesan priest William O'Connell (who was later convicted of sexually assaulting multiple children). One evening, Complainant A reported, he recalled drinking alcohol and playing cards at the beach house with Father O'Connell, Father Feeney, and others. The complainant alleged that he went to bed, and when he woke up, Father Feeney was behind him "rubbing up against him," and O'Connell was in front of him. The complainant characterized this as an assault. He also alleged that he witnessed Father Feeney sexually assault one of the other boys present at O'Connell's beach house that night and believed Father Feeney to have sexually abused yet another boy on a different occasion.

The boy whom the complainant reportedly witnessed being penetrated that night by Father Feeney had raised his own abuse allegations with the Diocese two years earlier, in April 2002. He reported that Father William O'Connell had raped him, but he made no direct accusations against Father Feeney. In a letter written around the time that he came forward, he said that Father Feeney "was often mentioned as another person who frequented Father [O'Connell's] cottage of sin. I have no direct

evidence about this man, but I do trust those who told me." In 2004, this individual settled a civil suit against the Diocese based on his allegations of sexual abuse by O'Connell.

There is no indication that the Diocese referred the complaint against Father Feeney or the complaint against Father O'Connell to law enforcement at the time they were raised. Nor does it appear from the Diocesan records produced to this Office that the Diocese made any effort, following the complainant's October 2004 interview with Director McCarthy, to contact the other two boys who were reportedly present at O'Connell's beach house on the night in question.

In 2024, the Rhode Island State Police were unable to reach the complainant but confirmed that one of the other boys who was reportedly present at Father O'Connell's beach house that night, whom the complainant believed was later also abused by Father Feeney, was deceased. State Police were unable to obtain sufficient information regarding the fourth boy reportedly present that night to make an identification.

**Status**

Father Feeney is deceased. The Diocese did not include him on its list of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father Oscar Ferland

| Born | Ordained | Retired | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mar. 16, 1918 | Dec. 23, 1944 | Jun. 1, 1991 | Jul. 8, 1998 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1945 – 1953 | St. Patrick Church, Harrisville |
| 1953 – 1956 | St. Brendan Church, Riverside |
| 1956 – 1967 | St. Michael Church, Providence |
| 1967 – 1972 | Christ the King Church, Kingston |
| 1968 – 1972 | University of Rhode Island, Kingston |
| 1972 – 1991 | St. Luke Church, Barrington |
| 1991 | *Retired* |
| 1991 – Death | Part-time help at various parish assignments, including St. Joseph's in Hope Valley, St. Bernard's in Wickford, and St. Aidan's in Cumberland |

## Summary

Between 1964 and 1991, Father Oscar Ferland allegedly sexually abused several young girls and a boy. He was also accused of voyeurism by one complainant. The incidents reportedly occurred at St. Michael's Church in Providence, St. Luke's Church and School in Barrington, and St. Joseph Church in Hope Valley as well as at a private pool. The reported incidents range from inappropriate staring and physically touching children without their consent, to sexual assault of a young boy. At least twice during Ferland's lifetime, a complainant or witness brought complaints about Ferland to Diocesan personnel—including with Father (and later Auxiliary Bishop) Robert McManus—but those complaints do not appear to have been documented or acted upon by the Diocese.

Ferland retired as a Diocesan priest in 1991, died in 1998, and was subsequently included on the Diocese's 2019 List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

## A Chronology of the Reported Abuse

The earliest instance of alleged sexual abuse of a child by Ferland dates back to 1964, when Ferland worked at St. Michael's Church in Providence. Ferland reportedly sexually assaulted a boy ("Complainant A") from the time the boy was six years old to when he was 10 years old. The allegations included several instances of unwanted touching and one incident where Ferland allegedly raped the boy at the St. Michael's rectory. On several occasions, Ferland reportedly placed the boy on his lap and forced

the boy to touch Ferland's erect penis. Complainant A did not report this abuse to the Diocese until 2018 as further described below.

Multiple complainants alleged that Ferland sexually assaulted them when he was assigned to St. Luke's Church in Barrington in the 1980s. Ferland allegedly sexually abused a nine-year-old girl ("Complainant B") there on multiple occasions between 1982 and 1983. The reported abuse occurred both in the rectory and the school. When Complainant B reported these incidents to the Diocese in 2006, she also identified Complainant C, who she said was abused in a similar fashion. Complainant B said she often witnessed Ferland touching her classmate in an intimate fashion. She said Ferland would quote the Gospel, saying "[l]et the little children come to me," before allegedly lifting the girls up, exposing their underwear, and placing his hands on their buttocks.

Complainant C reported that she too was assaulted by Ferland at St. Luke's School. She alleged that there were more instances of abuse than she could count, but she recalled a particular incident in a pool in 1986, when Ferland allegedly placed his hand on her vagina. She similarly recalled other alleged instances at St. Luke's School where Ferland placed his hands on and between her legs. Complainant C disclosed these incidents to the Diocese in 2007.

Ferland allegedly sexually assaulted a 13-year-old girl ("Complainant D") on three separate occasions at St. Luke's School between 1983 and 1984. The reported abuse consisted of unwanted touching of the girl's buttocks on a basketball court, groping the complainant's breasts and vagina in a swimming pool, and frequently placing the girl on his lap and moving her back and forth, simulating sexual activity while touching her vagina and buttocks.

Finally, in June 1994, Ferland reportedly opened a bathroom door and stared at a ten-year-old girl ("Complainant E") while she used the facilities at St. Joseph's Church in Hope Valley. According to Complainant E, who was actually the first to report Ferland's misconduct to the Diocese as described below, Ferland pushed the bathroom door open enough to be able to make eye contact with her and watched her for over a minute.

**Diocesan Response**

All the documented reports of Ferland's sexual abuse of children date to after his death. However, as will be described below, it appears that the Diocese had at least some indication of possible misconduct as early as the 1980s, when he was at St. Luke's School.

The first documented report of abuse to the Diocese dates to June 2002, nearly four years after Ferland's death. On June 17, 2002, a pastor at St. Joseph's Parish in Hope Valley informed Director of the Diocese Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") Robert McCarthy that he had just received a complaint from the family of Complainant E. According to the pastor, Complainant E, who was 17 years old at the

time, recently disclosed to her family that when she was 10 years old, Ferland had opened the door of a bathroom stall at St. Joseph's Parish and stared at her while she used the toilet. McCarthy interviewed Complainant E and her parents on June 27, 2002. Complainant E explained that their usual priest was on vacation and Ferland had filled in for a weeknight rosary prayer. Complainant E and her parents indicated that this was the first time they had disclosed this incident to anyone outside of their family and expressed that they only wanted it shared with the Bishop. McCarthy ultimately shared this report with the Rhode Island State Police in October 2006, in connection with a second complaint the Diocese received about Ferland.

On September 28, 2006, Dr. Michael Hansen, the Diocesan Victim Advocate, advised McCarthy at a Diocesan Review Board meeting that Complainant B also brought a complaint against Ferland. McCarthy met with Dr. Hansen and Complainant B on October 2, 2006. Complainant B alleged that she had been assaulted multiple times by Ferland, and mentioned the names of several other women who might shed additional light on her allegations, including Complainant C. At the end of her interview, Complainant B indicated that she wished to speak with the State Police, and McCarthy forwarded the information to the State Police Major Crimes Unit. State Police detectives interviewed Complainant B on October 10, 2006, and they subsequently informed her that prosecution was not possible because Ferland was deceased.

As part of McCarthy's Diocesan investigation of Complainant B's report, he interviewed both Complainant B's father and sister in December 2006. Complainant B's sister corroborated Complainant B's account of Ferland allegedly touching girls' legs inappropriately, including hers, adding that one of her friends also alleged that Ferland touched her. Complainant B's father volunteered at St. Luke's between the 1980s and early 2000s. During his interview with McCarthy, he recalled an outburst by Complainant C in a class that he was teaching. According to Complainant B's father, Complainant C said during class that Ferland had touched her inappropriately and mentioned an incident of Ferland allegedly putting his hands on her legs in the school gym. Complainant B's father also told McCarthy that he had heard rumors about Ferland "touching girls," and he resolved to confront Ferland at the time. According to Complainant B's father, he and Ferland met in Ferland's office in the rectory, and after he told Ferland what he had heard, Ferland, rather than denying it, said "I was thinking of retiring and now I think I'm going to retire."

Complainant B's father told Director McCarthy that he also met with Father (and later Auxiliary Bishop) McManus. At the time of their meeting, McManus worked and lived at St. Luke's alongside Father Ferland and served as Diocesan Vicar for Education. Complainant B's father said that he discussed with McManus the common knowledge that Ferland was inappropriately physical with young girls at school, picking them up off the ground and touching them, and they agreed that they did not understand why Ferland did this. Complainant B's father specifically recalled telling McManus what Complainant C had recently alleged in the confirmation class about Ferland touching her. He said that McManus did not react or respond to what he was being told; yet when the meeting ended, McManus "understood what I was

telling him and now it was up to him to do whatever he was going to do." Not long after this, Complainant B's father recalled, Ferland retired from St. Luke's. Diocesan records provided to this Office include Ferland's March 1991 letter to Bishop Gelineau formally asking to retire. There is, however, no contemporaneous reference in the Diocesan records we received to the information Complainant B's father shared with Bishop McManus.

Later in McCarthy's discussion with Complainant B's father, the father said that when McManus was made Bishop, he went to speak with him about Ferland a second time. It is not clear whether Complainant B's father was referring to when McManus became Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Providence, in early 1999, or when McManus became the Bishop of Worcester, in 2004—but in either case, Ferland was already deceased. According to Complainant B's father, the two agreed that Ferland's public conduct of "picking up little children" was "cover" for other behavior.

McCarthy spoke with Bishop McManus about Ferland in early January 2007, when he was the Bishop of the Diocese of Worcester. McCarthy wrote in his memo that Bishop McManus "advised me that on numerous occasions, he had observed Msgr. Ferland picking up small children, especially young girls, but that at no time did he observe any inappropriate touching. Bishop McManus also advised me that he had spoken with [Complainant B's father] . . . concerning this activity, but at that point, other than this activity, nothing else was discussed."

McCarthy interviewed Complainant C on February 12, 2007. Complainant C confirmed that she had disclosed Ferland's inappropriate touching during a confirmation class, as Complainant B's father had described. She also specifically mentioned an incident from when she was 10 years old: she and her sister accompanied Ferland to the home of a friend of his who had a pool. While in the pool, she said, Ferland lifted her up and "placed one of his hands on her vagina." Complainant C told McCarthy that similar incidents occurred "too many times to count," adding that Ferland would "place his hands up and down the thighs and buttocks of not only her, but her sister and other girls who attended St. Luke's School." In addition to her sister, Complainant C gave McCarthy the name of another girl who had reportedly disclosed to her that Ferland had inappropriately touched her at St. Luke's. There is no indication in the Diocesan records provided to this Office that McCarthy followed up with either woman.

In June 2017, Complainant D emailed the Office of Compliance to report that she was sexually assaulted by Ferland between 1983 and 1984, when she was 13 years old. OEC Director Kevin O'Brien interviewed Complainant D on September 7, 2017, and referred her allegations to the State Police about 10 days later. Complainant D reported two separate incidents of unwanted sexual touching of her buttocks and vagina and a series of similar incidents where Ferland touched her intimate parts and simulated sexual action. During the interview, Complainant D stated that she reported the alleged abuse to the principal of St. Luke's at the time. According to Complainant D, the principal called her a liar and threatened to throw her out of school. There is no indication in the Diocesan records received by this Office that the

principal identified by Complainant D—who was indeed the principal of St. Luke's at the time, but who had died by the time of Complainant D's disclosure—documented Complainant D's disclosure or informed anyone else about them.

In January 2018, Complainant A sent a letter to the Office of Compliance in which he disclosed that he had been sexually abused by a priest in the rectory of St. Michael Church between 1964 and 1968, when he was approximately six or seven years old. Complainant A was an inmate at the Adult Correctional Institutions (ACI), serving a sentence for first-degree child molestation and first-degree sexual assault. Complainant A's letter to the Diocese did not specify a perpetrator but inquired whether a priest named Ferland had ever been assigned to St. Michael's. Director O'Brien confirmed that Ferland had been assigned to St. Michael's between 1956 and 1967, and that Complainant A was a student there between 1964 and 1968. O'Brien and members of the State Police interviewed Complainant A in late February 2018. Complainant A alleged that when he was eight or nine years old, Ferland bent him over his desk in the rectory of St. Michael's and raped him. Ferland allegedly told the boy that it was the "right thing to do" to get closer to God and later told him not to tell anyone what happened because "it would affect [the boy's] relationship with God." Complainant A described other interactions that Ferland deemed "special love," where Ferland would place the boy on his lap and make him touch his erect penis. Complainant A told the interviewers that he had previously disclosed these allegations only once, to the Providence Police Department, in approximately 2006, but he heard nothing further. His disclosure to the Diocese, he said, was simply to inform the Diocese what had happened to him.

In November 2024, a State Police detective contacted Complainant D, who confirmed her prior account of abuse by Ferland and that she had reported it to the principal of St. Luke's School at the time. She further shared that her abuse affected all aspects of her life. She reported that she lost her faith in the Catholic Church and would continuously question how God could send a "Man of God" to do these things to her. Lastly, she stated that this has caused her to be hyper-protective of her children, never letting them attend a Catholic church or school.

**Status**

Ferland retired in June 1991 and died at the age of 80 on July 8, 1998. He is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father John Ferry

| Born | Ordained | Retired | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Apr. 23, 1926 | Feb. 2, 1957 | N/A | Apr. 11, 1988 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1957 – 1965 | St. Rose of Lima Church, Warwick |
| 1962 – 1965 | Our Lady of Providence Seminary, Warwick |
| 1965 – 1967 | Assistant Editor, *The Providence Visitor*, Providence |
| 1967 – 1973 | Editor, *The Providence Visitor*, Providence |
| 1965 – 1967 | St. Margaret Church, Rumford |
| 1967 – 1973 | St. Margaret Home, Providence |
| 1973 – 1988 | St. Rose of Lima Church, Warwick |

## Summary

During the 1960s, Father John Ferry reportedly sexually abused four boys and a young man between the ages of 15 and 18 years old. In each instance, Ferry reportedly provided the teens with alcohol before touching them inappropriately. Ferry predeceased all the allegations made against him.

The Diocese included Ferry on its 2019 List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

## The Reported Abuse

The first instance of reported misconduct by Father Ferry dates to approximately 1963. Complainant A, who was a 15-year-old student at the Our Lady of Providence Seminary at the time, later alleged that Ferry took him to Ferry's parents' home where Ferry served him alcohol and tried to fondle him. Complainant A reported that he told Father Ferry to stop and that Ferry immediately complied, and that nothing further occurred. Complainant A later told the Rhode Island State Police that he had left a voicemail for the Diocese in the 1990s disclosing this incident, but that he never heard back at the time. He reported it again to the Diocese in 2002—long after Father Ferry had died. Another man, Complainant E, who was a 14-year-old student during 1963 to 1964, also later disclosed that Ferry provided him with alcohol and touched his penis at around that time.

While he was the editor of the *The Providence Visitor,* Father Ferry reportedly abused three other teenagers. Complainant B alleged that when he was sixteen years old and working at *The Providence Visitor*, in approximately 1965, he was sexually assaulted by the paper's assistant editor. Complainant B reported that on more than one occasion, this assistant editor brought him to the assistant editor's mother's

house in Providence, located across the street from St. Anthony Church, provided him alcohol, and fondled him. Although Complainant B could not recall the name of the paper's assistant editor, Diocesan records revealed that Father Ferry served as the Assistant Editor of *The Providence Visitor* from August 3, 1965, until his promotion to Editor on February 1, 1967.

Complainant C was a 15-year-old boy working for *The Providence Visitor* in 1965 when Ferry allegedly took him to Arcadia Park in Exeter. Complainant C reported that Ferry laid out a blanket in the woods and served him alcohol. According to Complainant C, he lost consciousness and cannot remember what happened until Ferry dropped him off at home.

Complainant D was a parishioner at St. Margaret's Parish, where Ferry was assigned as Pastor in 1967. Ferry offered the 18-year-old young man a job at *The Providence Visitor*. As noted below, Complainant D reported to the Diocese in 2002 that, on one occasion, Complainant D helped Ferry move some items from the church. After work, the two drank alcohol together and Ferry allegedly pushed the young man onto a couch and grabbed his testicles.

**Diocesan Response**

Complainant D reported his alleged abuse to the Diocese in 2002. He emailed the Diocese on March 31, 2002, and spoke with Robert McCarthy, Director of the Diocese Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC"), a few days later. During their initial conversation, McCarthy informed Complainant D that the Diocese had no other complaints against Ferry on file. The two agreed to speak further on April 8. During that conversation, Complainant D told McCarthy that after the incident with Ferry, he never returned to the Catholic Church. He added that he disclosed the incident to his father, mother, and aunt immediately after it occurred, and later his wife and several friends, but did not report to the Diocese. He stated that he decided to come forward because he wanted the Diocese to have a record of it. There is no indication in the records provided by the Diocese to this Office that McCarthy relayed Complainant D's allegations to law enforcement.

On April 4, 2002 (the same day that Director McCarthy spoke with Complainant D), Monsignor Paul Theroux wrote a memo to McCarthy explaining that he had recently been contacted by Complainant A who alleged that Ferry attempted to fondle him when he was 15 years old. McCarthy opened an OEC case for Complainant A's allegations that same day, though there is no indication in the Diocesan records produced to this Office that McCarthy contacted Complainant A or referred his allegations to law enforcement. There is also no indication that Complainant A and Complainant D were in contact with one another regarding their respective allegations against Father Ferry.

In early March 2004, prompted by an article in *The Providence Journal* regarding the Diocese's outreach to clergy abuse victims, Complainant B contacted Dr. Michael Hansen, Director of the Office of Human Formation and Outreach, to

report that Ferry had abused him. Director McCarthy met with Complainant B on March 5, 2004, and conducted a recorded interview with him. There is no indication in files produced by the Diocese to this Office that McCarthy relayed Complainant B's allegations to law enforcement.

Complainant C disclosed his allegations to the OEC on February 25, 2013. Director McCarthy interviewed Complainant C the next day and immediately forwarded the allegations to Rhode Island State Police. Rhode Island State Police memorialized the allegations in a report, but closed the matter because Ferry was deceased. McCarthy also interviewed Complainant C's sister who confirmed to him that Complainant C told her that he was abused by a priest 22 years earlier.

In November 2024, a State Police detective contacted Complainant C, who confirmed the information he had previously disclosed to the Diocese. Complainant C told the State Police that he had struggled with insomnia, alcoholism and post-traumatic stress disorder which he has attributed to his past abuse.

Also in November 2024, a State Police detective contacted Complainant A, who confirmed the accuracy of his prior disclosure to the Diocese. He also told the detective that he attended Our Lady of Providence Seminary in Providence and that his dream was to become a priest, but after his interaction with Ferry, he changed his mind and transferred to another school. He also told the detective that he observed Ferry abuse another individual, Complainant E, but that he did not report the incident out of fear.

The State Police investigated Complainant A's information and contacted Complainant E. Complainant E told the detective that Ferry gave him alcohol and molested him when he was approximately 14 years old, but that he had never disclosed this incident to anyone else.

**Status**

Ferry died on April 11, 1988. He is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father Edmund Fitzgerald

| Born | Ordained | Suspended | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dec. 5, 1929 | May 25, 1957 | Jun. 21, 2002 | Aug. 7, 2002 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1957 | St. Thomas Church, Providence |
| 1957 – 1969 | St. Teresa Church, Pawtucket |
| 1969 – 1971 | St. Joseph Church, Ashton |
| 1971 – 1976 | St. Mary Church, Newport |
| 1976 – 1979 | St. Agnes Church, Providence |
| 1979 – 1980 | Our Lady of Providence Preparatory Seminary High School, Providence |
| 1980 | Rhode Island Hospital, Providence |
| 1980 | St. John Church, Providence |
| 1980 – 1981 | SS. Peter and Paul Church, Warwick |
| 1981 – 1984 | St. Mary of the Bay Church, Warren |
| 1984 – 1992 | St. Mary Church, West Warwick |
| 1992 – 1998 | St. Clare Church, Westerly |
| 1998 | Jesus Savior Church, Newport |
| 1998 | Eleanor Slater Hospital, Cranston |
| 1998 | St. Mark Church, Cranston |
| Aug. 1998 | *Suspended on leave* |
| Dec. 1998 | *Retired* |
| Feb. 1999 | *Faculties reinstated* |
| 1999 – 2002 | Part-time ministry at various parishes |
| Jun. 2002 | *Faculties suspended indefinitely* |

## Summary

Father Edmund Fitzgerald reportedly sexually abused at least eight children during his tenure as a priest with the Diocese of Providence. The reported abuse spanned from the late 1950s until the early 1980s, involved boys and girls, and occurred at several churches throughout Rhode Island, most prominently St. Teresa in Pawtucket and St. Mary of the Bay in Warren.

In 1993, a complainant reported that Fitzgerald abused her when she was 12 years old and working in the rectory of St. Mary of the Bay. Robert McCarthy, Director of the Diocese Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC"), interviewed the complainant three times. During these interviews, the complainant maintained a consistent version of events and positively identified Fitzgerald during a photographic identification procedure conducted by McCarthy. Nevertheless, McCarthy asked the

complainant to submit to a polygraph examination. McCarthy also directed Fitzgerald to submit to a polygraph. Ultimately, the polygrapher opined that the complainant was lying and Fitzgerald was telling the truth. On that basis, the matter was closed, the complaint was never forwarded to law enforcement, and Fitzgerald remained an active-duty priest in the Diocese.

By August 1998, a second and third complainant had come forward to report that Fitzgerald had abused them when they were children. Following these reports, the Diocese placed Fitzgerald on a temporary leave of absence and suspended his priestly faculties. At the time, Fitzgerald was serving as director of pastoral care at Eleanor Slater Hospital. Fitzgerald officially retired that December, citing his health. OEC Director McCarthy again concluded that the second and third complaints against Fitzgerald were unfounded. The Diocese reinstated Fitzgerald's faculties early the following year, in 1999, after Fitzgerald underwent a psychological evaluation at a well-known treatment center, which concluded in a report that Fitzgerald was "a relatively low risk for further sexual misconduct." Fitzgerald subsequently returned to part-time ministry at various parishes throughout the state.

By June 2002, a fourth and fifth complainant had come forward with child sexual abuse allegations against Fitzgerald. In the face of five sets of allegations against Fitzgerald, and despite his prior conclusions that the first three were unfounded, Director McCarthy now opined that Fitzgerald "need[ed] to be confronted again and also offered a polygraph examination." The Diocese suspended Fitzgerald's faculties in late June 2002, for a second and final time; yet it took no further steps to remove Fitzgerald from the priesthood. Three additional complainants came forward before Fitzgerald's death in August 2020.

The State Police reviewed all the complaints against Fitzgerald and concluded that the statute of limitations precluded further investigation and prosecution. Fitzgerald was never criminally charged.

The Diocese included Fitzgerald on its 2019 List of Credibly Accused Clergy. However, as of the publication of this Report, that list misleadingly states that Fitzgerald was "removed from ministry 8/27/1998," without clarifying that (1) the August 1998 "removal" was in fact a temporary suspension of Fitzgerald's faculties, which the Diocese reinstated just six months later based on the results of the treatment center evaluation, and in spite of the three known complaints against him; and (2) to the extent Fitzgerald did not have a permanent assignment after his temporary suspension in August 1998, that was primarily a function of his voluntary retirement in December of that year, not any personnel decision by the Diocese in response to the allegations against him. After the Diocese reinstated Fitzgerald's faculties in February 1999, he continued to engage in part-time ministry at parishes throughout the state, until his second suspension in June 2002.

**The Reported Abuse and Diocesan Response**

According to a July 1994 memo from Director McCarthy to Bishop Gelineau, the Diocese first became aware of an allegation of child sexual abuse against Fitzgerald around March 1993. At that time, a woman ("Complainant A") disclosed to Father Bertrand Theroux, pastor of St. Mary of the Bay in Warren, that she had been sexually abused by a priest at the church approximately 16 years earlier, when she was 11 or 12 years old. Theroux spoke with Monsignor Salvatore Matano, Vicar General of the Diocese, who suggested that Theroux speak with Diocesan lawyer William Murphy, and advised that Father Norman Godin would be available to counsel the complainant. According to McCarthy's memo, Murphy spoke with Theroux in April 1993 and advised him "regarding his standings and obligations in this matter regarding disclosures of information and identification." Nothing further appears to have been done in connection with Complainant A's allegations until late November 1993, when Father Godin separately contacted McCarthy to say that a woman who he had been counseling wished to meet with him regarding her allegation of child sexual abuse against a Diocesan priest.

McCarthy conducted a recorded, two-hour interview with Complainant A at the end of December 1993. Complainant A stated that when she was approximately 12 years old, she attended confession at St. Mary of the Bay, and her confessor priest "French kissed" her inside the confessional. Complainant A also worked part-time as an assistant in the rectory of the church, where this same priest reportedly kissed her repeatedly, touched her inappropriately, and on at least one occasion exposed himself to her and forced her to touch him. Asked by McCarthy to identify the priest, Complainant A said it was Father Fitzgerald. At a second interview in early January 1994, Complainant A immediately picked Fitzgerald out of a 51-priest photo array that McCarthy had prepared. When McCarthy asked Complainant A to review her allegations once more, she "did not vary from her original story," McCarthy wrote, and she also provided additional information, including that Fitzgerald had also allegedly kissed her sister in a confessional. McCarthy interviewed Fitzgerald in late March 1994, and Fitzgerald denied the allegations, suggesting that Complainant A came from a troubled family and had mental health problems. Fitzgerald also agreed to submit to polygraph. At a third interview of Complainant A in early May 1994, Complainant A likewise agreed to take a polygraph.

McCarthy arranged for polygraphs of Complainant A and Fitzgerald, administered by a former lieutenant of the Rhode Island State Police. In advance of the polygraphs, McCarthy met with the polygraphist several times and discussed the allegations "in great depth," including by allowing the polygraphist to review McCarthy's interview transcripts and other materials from his investigation. Fitzgerald and Complainant A took polygraphs in August 1994, and in a subsequent letter from the polygraphist to McCarthy, he opined that Complainant A had lied during the polygraph, while Fitzgerald had, in his opinion, told the truth. The polygraphist wrote that after he told Complainant A that her test indicated that she was lying, Complainant A said that Fitzgerald "did not pull down his slacks and under shorts and did not request for her to touch his penis." An undated OEC memorandum states that

based on McCarthy's investigation and the polygraphs, "it was revealed that [Complainant A] lied, and Father Fitzgerald was absolved and exonerated of any wrongdoing." There is no indication in the Diocesan records received by this Office that Complainant A's allegations were ever forwarded to law enforcement, or that the Diocese reopened her case in subsequent years after other complainants had come forward with their own allegations against Fitzgerald.

In January 1998, the Bishop transferred Fitzgerald to Jesus Saviour Parish in Newport. Following a public announcement about the transfer, a parishioner ("Complainant B") approached the parish priest and alleged that in the early 1960s, at St. Teresa in Pawtucket, Fitzgerald had instructed Complainant B's younger son, who was assisting Fitzgerald at the parish rectory, to "drop his pants." According to Complainant B, his older son witnessed this incident.

McCarthy interviewed both Complainant B and the older son soon after, and the son told McCarthy that he could not recall whether his younger brother was present for the incident, and that his memory was too fuzzy to provide any specifics. The older son also described for McCarthy his own relationship with Fitzgerald: Fitzgerald bought him clothing and "used to tell [him] what looked good on [him]," and he recalled an incident where Fitzgerald allegedly asked him (as a 13–14-year-old) to "remove his clothes to see how [he] was developing," yet the older son denied anything overtly sexual taking place. Complainant B told McCarthy that his younger son was estranged from the family and they had no contact information for him, so McCarthy appears not to have interviewed him. McCarthy also interviewed Fitzgerald, who denied the allegations. Soon after, McCarthy met with Bishop Mulvee and advised him that he "could find nothing illegal or immoral that might have taken place." McCarthy communicated the conclusion to Complainant B, adding as a result that Fitzgerald's transfer to Jesus Saviour would go through as planned. Complainant B told McCarthy that he and his family would, as a result, be leaving the parish. Again, there is no indication that the Diocese ever referred this matter to law enforcement.

Just two months later, in late March 1998, Fitzgerald sought reassignment from Jesus Saviour parish, citing tensions with the staff and congregation. Bishop Mulvee granted Fitzgerald's request in early April, appointing him to serve instead as Director of Catholic Pastoral Care at Eleanor Slater Hospital.

In August 1998, a man ("Complainant C") contacted the Diocese to allege that Fitzgerald abused him when he was an altar boy at St. Teresa between 1961 and 1968. McCarthy interviewed Complainant C the following day. During the recorded interview, Complainant C specifically recalled an incident when he was nine or ten years old where Fitzgerald allegedly forced him to perform oral sex on him inside a confessional, and another incident where Fitzgerald allegedly attempted to anally rape him in the church rectory. Complainant C also expressed to McCarthy his concerns over the fact that Fitzgerald was working at Eleanor Slater with people who had severe physical and mental handicaps. The same day, McCarthy spoke with Bishop Mulvee about the allegations. A few days later, McCarthy sent a letter about Complainant C's allegations to the State Police, who subsequently determined that

prosecution was barred by the statute of limitations because, at the time of the alleged conduct, the only criminal statutes under which Fitzgerald could theoretically have been charged were all subject to a three-year limitations period that had expired. There is no indication that McCarthy told the State Police about the prior allegations by Complainants A and B when he referred Complainant C's allegations in August 1998. On August 25, 1998, Fitzgerald was informed that he was being placed on leave and his faculties temporarily suspended.

On November 2, 1998, Fitzgerald formally requested to retire in a letter to Bishop Mulvee, citing health reasons as well as "the traumatic experiences of the past nine months." He added that "since I already am on administrative leave, it would seem natural and helpful to you and the Personnel Board simply to continue this status into peaceful retirement, without any undue problem being caused[.]" Bishop Mulvee granted Fitzgerald's request, effective December 5, stating that he was "deeply saddened [] by the recent events," and reminding Fitzgerald that his faculties remained suspended until "conditions permit[ted]" Mulvee to reinstate them.

On November 13, 1998, McCarthy drafted a memo to Bishop Mulvee summarizing his investigative findings and conclusions. McCarthy concluded (as he had with Complainants A and B) that Complainant C's allegations were "not sustained" due to insufficient evidence; he also opined that the allegations were likely "unfounded." McCarthy based his views on Complainant C's history of substance abuse and mental health issues—which Complainant C attributed to being abused by Fitzgerald—as well as the fact that Complainant C's father was allegedly the first person to suggest to Complainant C that Fitzgerald was responsible for his alleged abuse. McCarthy also noted that several witnesses who possibly could have been aware of Fitzgerald's alleged conduct denied any such knowledge. These witnesses included a childhood neighbor of Complainant C, as well as two police officers who had served as altar boys at St. Teresa in the 1960s, during Fitzgerald's tenure there. McCarthy also interviewed Fitzgerald, who denied the allegations, and provided a description of St. Teresa that conflicted with the one provided by Complainant C in his interview. McCarthy thus concluded that he found "no evidence that is even remotely reliable that Father Fitzgerald molested anyone," and opined that Complainant C was not to be believed. Fitzgerald would later write to McCarthy upon McCarthy's retirement in 2015, thanking him "for all the kindness and courtesy which [McCarthy] extended" to Fitzgerald while at OEC, and stating "[y]ou know that false charges have been lodged against me for many years." Despite McCarthy's findings, the Diocese, through the OEC, remained in communication with Complainant C in subsequent years, and at least as of mid-2018 the Diocese was providing financial support for Complainant C's counseling.

In early 1999, the Diocese referred Fitzgerald for an assessment at the Anodos Center at St. John Vianney Hospital in Pennsylvania. The referral specifically sought to address whether Fitzgerald was a pedophile. A subsequent report from the Anodos Center in February 1999 concluded, based on a three-day evaluation, that the allegations against Fitzgerald were "of questionable reliability," and that Fitzgerald "appears to be a relatively low risk for sexual misconduct with adolescents or children."

On February 16, 1999, Monsignor Evans relayed the report to Bishop Mulvee, stating in a cover letter that "[i]f your Excellency thinks it appropriate in view of this evaluation . . . [the Diocese] could indicate that [Fitzgerald] is now free to exercise his priestly faculties." Fitzgerald remained retired, but following the reinstatement of his faculties he began part-time ministry at various parishes throughout Rhode Island.

In April 2002, an Office of Attorney General investigator contacted McCarthy to relay that a man ("Complainant D") had recently disclosed that in 1961 or 1962, when he was about eight years old, Fitzgerald allegedly sexually abused him in the basement of St. Teresa in Pawtucket. Specifically, Complainant D told the Office of Attorney General investigator that Fitzgerald had put his hands inside his pants while Complainant D was lifting weights at St. Teresa. For the next several months, McCarthy unsuccessfully attempted to speak with Complainant D. It does not appear that the Diocese took any further steps to investigate Complainant D's allegations. Subsequent attempts by the State Police during the present Investigation to identify and speak with Complainant D were also unsuccessful.

In June of the same year, a fifth allegation was made against Fitzgerald. A man ("Complainant E") disclosed to a St. Teresa parish priest that, when he was 12 years old and preparing to become an altar boy, in about 1961, Fitzgerald abused him. In a subsequent interview with McCarthy, Complainant E alleged that Fitzgerald had agreed to teach him Latin, and at a private meeting, Fitzgerald asked him if he lifted weights, felt his arms and legs, and then allegedly fondled Complainant E's penis. Complainant E agreed to McCarthy's forwarding his complaint to the State Police, which McCarthy did the same day. The State Police later determined that because the alleged incident had occurred in 1961, it was barred from prosecution by the statute of limitations.

Two days after interviewing Complainant E, McCarthy wrote a letter to Monsignor Theroux, Moderator of the Curia. In it, McCarthy summarized the five sets of allegations that had been made against Fitzgerald by Complainants A, B, C, D, and E. McCarthy concluded: "I am bringing this to your attention as [Fitzgerald] who is currently retired still has faculties and is still currently serving and has contacted several clerics to advise them that he would be available to assist in any manner. I believe Father Fitzgerald needs to be confronted again and also offered a polygraph examination." Bishop McManus called McCarthy two days later and informed him that on the basis of his letter to Theroux, the Bishop was again suspending Fitzgerald's faculties, pending an ongoing Diocesan investigation into the allegations.

McCarthy again interviewed Fitzgerald on July 1, 2002, and Fitzgerald again denied all of the allegations against him. Once more, McCarthy arranged polygraphs of both Complainant E and Fitzgerald, who, McCarthy ensured, would be asked a series of questions not only about Complainant E's allegations, but about the predecessor allegations as well. According to the polygraphist, Complainant E's responses to the polygraph appeared "definitely truthful." With respect to Fitzgerald, the polygraphist said that the results were "inconclusive." Fitzgerald subsequently requested another polygraph, but it does not appear that he was given one.

By October 2002, Fitzgerald had retained a lawyer, and McCarthy told his lawyer that the five cases would be going before the Diocesan Review Board in the coming months. Fitzgerald's lawyer asked for an opportunity to appear with Fitzgerald before the Board, but it is unclear whether that occurred. There is also no indication in the records provided to this Office what, if anything, came of the Review Board's meetings about Fitzgerald. What is clear is that Fitzgerald's faculties remained suspended for the remainder of his life. At the same time, there is no indication that the Diocese took any further steps to remove him from the priesthood or impose any penalty on him.

In March 2017, a sixth complainant ("Complainant F") contacted Kevin O'Brien, who had recently replaced McCarthy as Director of the Office of Compliance. Complainant F disclosed that Fitzgerald had abused him at St. Teresa in the late 1960s. In a recorded interview a few days later, Complainant F—the brother of Complainant C—alleged that Fitzgerald sexually abused him on multiple occasions when he was an eight- or nine-year-old altar boy. On one occasion, Complainant F stated, he was alone with Fitzgerald in the changing room after mass, when Fitzgerald gave the boy wine and forced him to perform oral sex on Fitzgerald. The day after the interview, O'Brien relayed Complainant F's allegations to the State Police. As with the prior complaints, the State Police advised Complainant F that prosecution was foreclosed by the statute of limitations in effect at the time of the alleged abuse. In June 2018, after learning that the State Police would not be interviewing Fitzgerald, Director O'Brien arranged to interview Fitzgerald himself. This was the last time Fitzgerald was interviewed about child sexual abuse allegations against him. Once again, Fitzgerald denied the allegations, expressed that he was "astonished at this tissue of lies," and told O'Brien, in response to O'Brien's question, that he would submit to a polygraph. It does not appear that Fitzgerald was ever actually administered this polygraph.

In early July 2019, the Diocese published its List of Credibly Accused Clergy and included Fitzgerald. The same month, prompted by the release of the Diocese's list, a seventh complainant ("Complainant G") contacted the Office of Compliance, alleging that he was abused by Fitzgerald at St. Teresa in Pawtucket in the late 1950s. In a recorded interview, Complainant G alleged that Fitzgerald abused him over an eight- or nine-month period when he was 13 or 14 years old and preparing to become an altar boy. Most of the alleged abuse occurred in the basement of St. Teresa, and involved nudity, fondling, masturbation, and oral sex. Director O'Brien forwarded the allegations to the State Police the following day; the following month, the State Police spoke with Complainant G and advised him that due to the statute of limitations, prosecution was not possible.

In October 2019, an eighth complainant ("Complainant H") disclosed to Director O'Brien her allegation that Fitzgerald had abused her in 1983 at St. Mary of the Bay in Warren (where Complainant A had also reported she was abused by Fitzgerald). She reported that she was approximately 12 or 13 years old at the time and working as a part-time assistant in the parish rectory. Complainant H reported that, on several occasions in the rectory's kitchen, Fitzgerald put his hands on Complainant H, touched her breasts, and became sexually aroused. Director O'Brien relayed the

allegations to the State Police the following week, and they advised Complainant H that her allegations were barred from prosecution by a three-year statute of limitations in effect at the time.

In November 2024, the State Police contacted Complainants G and H, who both confirmed the details of their allegations. Complainant G stated that the alleged abuse is "still always in the back of [his] mind," and Complainant H expressed her hope that "speak[ing] up" would help other survivors to come forward.

**Status**

Fitzgerald died in August 2020. He is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father John H. Flanagan

| Born | Ordained | Retired | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Aug. 27, 1908 | Dec. 5, 1933 | 1970 | Mar. 7, 1973 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| Summer 1934 | Camp Yawgoog Boy Scout Camp, Hopkinton |
| 1935 – 1937 | St. Edward Church, Pawtucket |
| 1937 – 1942 | Diocese Chancery Office, Providence |
| 1942 – 1943 | Cathedral of SS. Peter & Paul, Providence |
| Feb. 1943 | St. Bernard Church, Wickford |
| 1943 – 1944 | St. Agnes Church, Providence |
| 1944 – 1946 | St. Mary Church, Providence |
| 1946 | St. Francis House, Hillsgrove |
| 1946 – 1947 | Sacred Heart Church, East Providence |
| 1947 – 1951 | *Sick Leave* |
| 1951 – 1953 | Sacred Heart Church, Pawtucket |
| 1953 – 1961 | St. Ann Church, Cranston |
| 1961 – 1962 | St. Joseph Church, Pascoag |
| 1962 – 1963 | *Via Coeli Monastery*, Jemez Springs, NM |
| 1963 – 1968 | St. Patrick Church, Cumberland |
| 1968 – 1970 | Stella Maris Home, Newport |
| 1970 | *Retired* |

## Summary

In 2016, a woman reported to the Diocese that Father John Flanagan sexually abused her for several years, beginning when she was six years old, while he was an assistant pastor at St. Patrick's in Cumberland in the 1960s. Father Flanagan was assigned to St. Patrick's in March 1963, following a 13-month stay at the Monastery of the Servants of the Paraclete, "Via Coeli," located in Jemez Springs, New Mexico. The Diocese did not produce any records documenting the reason for Flanagan's stay at Via Coeli.

This was the only known allegation of abuse involving Father Flanagan, according to the records produced by the Diocese. Father Flanagan is not included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

## The Reported Abuse and Diocesan Response

On January 13, 2016, a woman contacted the Diocese to report that Father Flanagan began sexually abusing her in 1963, when she was approximately six years

old. According to the complainant, Father Flanagan struck up a friendship with her family and would sometimes take her on car rides to run errands for her mother. The complainant reported that during these car rides, Flanagan would place the complainant's hand beneath his pants to touch his penis. The complainant reported that this conduct also occurred at other locations, including the confessional box at St. Patrick's and church grounds, and that the alleged abuse progressed to where Father Flanagan would sometimes put his hands down the complainant's pants and touch her genitals. The complainant further reported that the abuse continued several times per week until she was about 13 years old. Flanagan reportedly instructed the complainant not to tell anyone, as it was "their secret," and he would often buy the complainant gifts.

Diocesan records confirm that Flanagan served at St. Patrick Church at the time he reportedly abused the complainant. The day after receiving the complaint, Office of Compliance Director Kevin O'Brien forwarded the report to the Rhode Island State Police. State Police closed the matter because Flanagan was deceased.

In February 2016, Director O'Brien conducted a recorded interview of the complainant. It is not clear whether O'Brien took any other investigative steps to substantiate the allegations following the interview. On June 30, 2016, the Diocese rejected the complainant's demand for a civil settlement on the grounds that her claims were barred by the applicable statute of limitations. However, the Diocese offered to reimburse the complainant for counseling expenses.

The matter was presented to the Diocesan Review Board in February 2016 and again in April 2019. The Diocese did not produce any record of the Board's recommendation or determination, if any occurred.

In 2024, a detective with the Rhode Island State Police interviewed the complainant, and she confirmed her previously reported allegations. She also informed police, as she did O'Brien, that she first disclosed her alleged abuse to her husband in the 1980s. She stated that she also told her children when they became adults, and her father before he passed away. Lastly, the complainant disclosed that she never sought counseling and never submitted any such expenses to the Diocese for reimbursement.

In 2025, an investigator with the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office spoke with the complainant's daughter, who stated that her mother disclosed her alleged abuse by Flannagan to her and her siblings.

**Status**

Father Flanagan is deceased. He is not included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Deacon Laurence Gagnon

| Born | Ordained | Removed | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jul. 25, 1940 | Jun. 23, 1979 | Aug. 10, 2011 | Aug. 28, 2021 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1979 – 1990 | West View Nursing Home, West Warwick |
| 1990 – 2011 | St. Joseph Church and School, West Warwick |
| 2011 | *Faculties suspended* |

## Summary

Deacon Laurence Gagnon was convicted of sexually assaulting three of his students at St. Joseph School in West Warwick between 2006 and 2011 and was accused of sexually assaulting two other students there during the same time period. Three students (Complainants "A," "B," and "C") reported the misconduct in April 2011. During the investigation, three additional potential victims came to light (Complainant "D," "E," and "F"). After an investigation by the West Warwick Police Department, Gagnon was charged with 14 counts of second-degree child molestation for assaulting Complainants A, B, and D. He pled *nolo contendere* to three counts and the court sentenced him to 10 years in prison with one year to serve, the balance suspended with probation. He was also required to register as a Level 3 sex offender.

He is listed on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

## The Reported Abuse and Diocesan Response

On June 16, 2011, the mother of a student at St. Joseph School reported to the principal of the school that in April of that year Gagnon pulled down the pants of three 6th grade boys and pulled up one of the boy's underwear (described as a "wedgie"). The incident occurred at St. Joseph Parish while the boys were helping Gagnon move Easter plants from the church to the rectory. The principal reported the allegations to the Pastor of St. Joseph Parish. The principal met with the boys and their parents individually on June 17, 2011. Two of the three boys (Complainant A and Complainant C) confirmed the mother's report. One complainant (Complainant B) initially maintained that no such contact took place. The principal spoke with Gagnon later that day, who stated that he did not "pants" the boys. On June 17, 2011, the principal authored a letter to Director of the Diocese Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") Robert McCarthy describing the allegations. Gagnon retired from St. Joseph School and Parish the following day.

On June 20, 2011, OEC Director McCarthy met with the principal of St. Joseph School and the pastor of St. Joseph Parish regarding the April 2011 incident. The principal informed McCarthy that one of the complainant's mothers was hesitant about reporting the incident because she was concerned about the reputation of St. Joseph's. However, the principal informed her that he had to apprise the pastor at St. Joseph's and the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth, and Families ("DCYF") of the allegation due to the potential risks such conduct posed to students. McCarthy asked the pastor if he would have terminated Gagnon from the school or his deacon assignments at St. Joseph's if he knew that the incident had occurred. The pastor responded that he would not have terminated Gagnon from either position, but instead, he would have told him to "get . . . in the shadows, until [it] all played out." McCarthy told the pastor and the principal that he did not view Gagnon's acts as criminal, but rather as "poor judgement."

When the principal inquired whether he was legally obligated to call DCYF, McCarthy advised that this was not a "reportable" offense, specifying: "What sexual assault do you have here? What abuse do you have here? What neglect do you have here? You got bad judgement. Bad judgement is not a crime in this state." The pastor added that "none of the kids would say it was an abuse thing. They all said they were joking around and it was fun, it was, there's nothing. . . ," to which McCarthy responded, "But, I do think I have to talk to him. I think it's, see here's the next thing, we call 1-800-RICHILD when we have reasonable grounds to believe we have a reportable offense . . . and if what you're giving me right now is accurate, I don't think it's reached that point." The principal disagreed, stating that he did view the incident as "reportable," which is why he contacted McCarthy. McCarthy responded, "Right, and that's why I want to talk to him."

Two days after the meeting with McCarthy, an OEC memorandums states that McCarthy spoke with the principal again, who "was very concerned if he should notify DCYF at this time." According to the memorandum, McCarthy "advised him to go ahead and do so." The principal of St. Joseph School reported the incident to DCYF, which redirected him to the West Warwick Police Department. According to an email from the principal to McCarthy the same day, a patrolman visited the school and took his statement. He reportedly told the principal that he did not know if a crime had been committed, but would pass the complaint on to detectives.

Then, on June 27, while aware that the principal had already contacted law enforcement, McCarthy interviewed Gagnon. Gagnon divulged to McCarthy that he had indeed removed the boys' pants as reported, stating that he lied to the principal and the pastor. Towards the close of the interview, McCarthy asked Gagnon if he had anything else to say for the record that was important. The transcript shows the Deacon responded by saying "Not really. Except when you try to pants the kids they fall to the ground and you can't . . ." The interview concluded with a reassurance from McCarthy to Gagnon that his conduct was not criminal and that calling the police or DCYF was unnecessary. McCarthy stated,

> [B]ased on my training and experience and forty-two years in the business and having been the Detective Commander in the District Attorney's Office, I think I'm pretty confident enough to know when I see a violation of the law and not, cause I've done literally hundreds of these cases . . . and I don't see a violation of the law . . . .

There is no record that McCarthy attempted to interview the complainants or their parents. There is also no record indicating that McCarthy reported Gagnon's admission to law enforcement.

Between July 25, 2011, and August 10, 2011, West Warwick police interviewed six students, Complainants A – F, regarding Gagnon's conduct. Complainant A reported that Gagnon touched his genitals over his boxer shorts while he was on the floor in front of the altar. He also stated that the Deacon pulled his underwear up his buttocks in the uniform room. Complainant A further disclosed that Gagnon had touched him "several times" on a "regular basis" in the morning before homeroom during the second half of the school year. On the last day of school, Gagnon reportedly told Complainant A: "You can get me arrested for what I did. Please don't."

Complainant B, who had initially denied the abuse, told police that Gagnon touched his penis on multiple occasions while he was attending school and that Gagnon would frequently give Complainant B money to buy ice cream. The complainant stated he did not want to get Gagnon in trouble because he saw him as a friend.

Complainant C told police that Gagnon pulled his pants down and tickled him. Complainant C also testified to witnessing a past assault of Complainant A.

The investigation led to the discovery of another complainant who had not yet reported to law enforcement or the Diocese. During an August 5 interview with a West Warwick Police Detective, the boy ("Complainant D") stated that Gagnon touched his groin area over 20 times during the second half of his 6th grade school year. Complainant D disclosed that he and Complainant A had discussed the prospect of "telling him to stop," but neither ever confronted Gagnon. At the end of the school year, Gagnon reportedly informed this complainant that "he doesn't do [this] to all the boys and that he could go to jail."

West Warwick police interviewed another boy ("Complainant E"), who stated that Gagnon had not touched him, but, on one occasion, the deacon had his arm around his shoulders and then seemingly began to reach for his groin area, causing the boy to pull away before Gagnon made contact.

Another boy, an older graduate of St. Joseph School ("Complainant F"), told police that Gagnon had pulled his pants down several times and asked to see his penis when he was a student at the school.

West Warwick police also interviewed the principal of St. Joseph School, the pastor of St. Joseph's Parish, a church employee, four 6th grade teachers from St. Joseph's, a school employee, and two graduates of the school. The church employee who worked alongside Gagnon reported that, although she had been distraught over her observations of the deacon interacting with students, she had been fearful of filing a complaint due to his reputation at the church. She reported that she saw Gagnon touch Complainant A in the groin area on the school stairway as well as pull Complainant D into an empty homeroom class and back him into a closet positioned out of view from the hallway. On the second to last day of school, the witness caught Gagnon with Complainant D, this time touching him in the groin area while on the stairway. The witness purportedly shouted "hey," causing Gagnon to immediately exit the stairway. Although none of the teachers interviewed claimed to have witnessed any sexual assault, all four of them concurred that Gagnon acted inappropriately towards the 6th grade boys, specifically regarding his level of physical contact with particular students.

During an interview with police on August 10, 2011, after initially claiming that he had been "cleared" of any wrongdoing by the Diocese, Gagnon confessed to fondling the genitals of Complainants A, B, and D. At the conclusion of the interview, Gagnon wrote a short statement apologizing to the boys and their families. He was arrested on three counts of second-degree child molestation, and Bishop Thomas Tobin removed him from ministry the same day.

Following Gagnon's arrest, McCarthy provided his investigative file to West Warwick police and the Diocese offered to provide the services of Victim Advocate Paula Loud to the victims of the molestation.

On August 22, 2011, then-Deputy Attorney General Gerald Coyne wrote a letter to Eugene Bernardo, the attorney for the Diocese of Providence, demanding a comprehensive list of all clergy members who had been accused of committing sexual abuse against minors. Coyne also stated that a protocol must be developed and implemented to ensure that all future accusations of child abuse would be reported to law enforcement, citing the "miscommunication" between McCarthy and the police during the investigation of Gagnon.

On March 8, 2012, a Rhode Island grand jury returned an indictment against Gagnon for fourteen counts of second-degree child molestation relating to his abuse of Complainants A, B, and D. He pled *nolo contendere* to one count each of abuse on Complainants A, B, and D. On April 16, 2013, he was sentenced to ten years in prison with one year to serve and nine years suspended with probation. He was also required to register as a Level 3 sex offender.

**Status**

Gagnon died in August 2021. He is listed on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father William Gillooly

| Born | Ordained | Retired | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nov. 11, 1918 | Dec. 23, 1944 | 1981 | Sep. 2, 1989 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1944 – 1947 | St. James Church, West Warwick |
| 1947 – 1950 | St. Francis of Assisi Church, South Kingstown |
| 1950 – 1958 | St. Peter Church, Warwick |
| 1958 – 1961 | St. Charles Borromeo Church, Woonsocket |
| 1961 – 1964 | St. Patrick Church, Burrillville |
| 1964 – 1967 | St. Francis of Assisi Church, South Kingstown |
| 1967 – 1968 | St. Teresa of Avila Church, Providence |
| 1968 – 1972 | St. Agnes Church, Providence |
| 1972 | St. Patrick Church, Burrillville |
| 1972 – 1973 | St. Clare Home, Newport |
| 1973 – 1981 | St. Rita Church, Warwick |
| 1981 | *Retired* |

## Summary

The Diocese received three complaints accusing Father William Gillooly of sexually assaulting boys between the ages of 8 and 15, while he was assigned to St. Francis Church in South Kingstown and St. Rita Church in Warwick, between 1965-1978. All three complaints were posthumous. One of the complainants alleged that Gillooly sexually touched him when he was an eight-year-old boy, in 1976, while swimming naked with him in the Narrow River in Narragansett. Another complainant reported that he saw Gillooly perform oral sex on a 15-year-old boy at Father William O'Connell's (another credibly accused priest) residence in Narragansett in 1965. There is no record indicating that any Diocesan official attempted to contact this individual, and Rhode Island State Police efforts to reach him in 2024 were unsuccessful. Lastly, another complainant reported that Gillooly sexually assaulted him in 1978 at St. Rita Church, but the Diocese did not credit this complaint, it appears, because the complainant likely misidentified another priest he claimed was also involved.

Diocesan records produced to this Office indicate that Bishop Louis Gelineau forced Gillooly to retire in 1981 after confronting him with a "list of accusations," the details of which are not clear. In exchange, Gelineau agreed that Gillooly would receive full retirement benefits. There is no indication in the Diocesan records of any internal investigation or law enforcement referrals of Gillooly's alleged misconduct during his lifetime. Among the Diocesan records provided to this Office, the first specific child sexual misconduct allegation against Gillooly was raised with the

Diocese in 2004—several years after Gillooly's death—and the Diocese did not relay that allegation to law enforcement until 2011, when the Diocese received a second allegation against Gillooly. The Diocese received a third complaint in 2013 which it reported to law enforcement. There is no indication in the records provided that the three complainants were aware of each other's allegations.

Father Gillooly is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

**The Reported Abuse and Diocesan Response**

The Diocese likely suspected Father Gillooly's alleged misconduct long before it received the documented reports from the complainants. Records provided by the Diocese to this Office show that in 1981, Bishop Gelineau forced Gillooly to retire early from his position as Pastor of St. Rita Church. Gelineau wrote in a March 1981 memorandum to Auxiliary Bishop Kenneth Angell that he knew of unspecified allegations against Gillooly. "Have you had more contact with him?" Gelineau asked. "I think we should draw up list of accusations and confront Fr. Gillooly." There is no record in the documents provided to this Office of the nature of these accusations, though, in an April 6, 1981, memorandum to Auxiliary Bishop Angell, Bishop Gelineau wrote that Gillooly had identified the accusers as "a small group of complainers who are trying to get rid of him." On April 7, 1981, Gillooly informed Gelineau by letter that he would not surrender his position without a canonical trial, in order "to have these accusations heard." Gillooly ultimately retired from St. Rita's that year, and, in exchange, Bishop Gelineau agreed to provide him with full retirement benefits. There is no indication in the Diocesan records provided to this Office that the Diocese undertook any formal investigation of Gillooly's alleged misconduct or referred any of the allegations to law enforcement during Gillooly's lifetime.

Father Gillooly died on September 2, 1989.

On October 7, 2004, Complainant A reported to Director of the Diocese Education and Compliance ("OEC") Robert McCarthy that he was sexually assaulted in 1965 by Father William O'Connell and a second priest at O'Connell's residence in Narragansett. The complainant also alleged that, while at that residence, he had witnessed Father Gillooly perform oral sex on a 15-year-old boy, whom he identified during an interview with McCarthy. At the time of the report, O'Connell, Gillooly and the third priest were all deceased. There is no record indicating that any Diocesan official attempted to contact the individual whom Complainant A identified as having been assaulted by Gillooly. There is also no record indicating that any Diocese official reported Complainant A's allegations to law enforcement until 2011.

On October 13, 2011, Complainant C reported to McCarthy by letter that he was raped by two priests in November 1978 in the offices of St. Rita Church in Warwick. Complainant C did not name Gillooly when he first made the complaint. On October 19, 2011, McCarthy responded by letter and requested that Complainant C contact the Rhode Island State Police and identify the second priest. The same day, McCarthy also forwarded Complainant C's letter to Rhode Island State Police.

The Diocesan Review Board discussed the case on October 25, 2011, though there is no record of the nature of that discussion or the Board's determination or recommendation.

On October 28, 2011, Complainant C informed McCarthy by letter that he was told that the Rhode Island State Police would not take information about the allegation over the phone and that Complainant C, who was incarcerated in Florida at the time, will have to report to a State Police barracks when he was in Rhode Island. McCarthy spoke with Complainant C's mother on the same day. She informed McCarthy that the second priest was Gillooly. On October 31, 2011, McCarthy notified Rhode Island State Police by letter that the second accused priest was Gillooly. McCarthy also included in the letter some information about the 2004 accusation against Gillooly.

McCarthy interviewed Complainant C at the OEC on May 7, 2012. "During my interview," McCarthy wrote in a subsequent letter to Moderator of the Curia and Vicar General Monsignor Albert Kenney, "I found numerous inconsistencies between [Complainant C's] handwritten descriptions of the assaults, and today's oral testimony." McCarthy concluded that Complainant C's allegations against the priest he first named were "false". This was partly because the named priest was not assigned to the parish identified by the complainant in his report, as well as other factual inconsistencies. As for Complainant C's allegations against Gillooly, McCarthy said there was "insufficient evidence" to prove or disprove them. McCarthy forwarded a copy of the transcript of the interview to the Rhode Island State Police on May 9, 2012.

Complainant C informed McCarthy on May 18, 2012, that he did not want to continue the case due to his uncertainty over the identity of the other priest. He did not claim any uncertainty over the identity of Gillooly. He likewise informed State Police in September 2012 that he did not wish to pursue the complaint further.

On July 24, 2013, a retired Diocesan priest informed McCarthy that he had met with Complainant B, who alleged that Gillooly had repeatedly sexually abused him when he was a boy. On July 26, 2013, McCarthy discussed prior allegations against Gillooly over the phone with State Police. McCarthy then spoke with Complainant B by phone on July 31, 2013. Complaint B alleged that Gillooly repeatedly sexually abused him when he was in the third to fifth grade, stating to McCarthy that it occurred at Gillooly's private residence in either Narragansett or North Kingstown, on the Narrow River in or about 1976. The alleged abuse began with nude swimming and sunbathing and escalated to alleged inappropriate touching; Complainant B also alleged that Gillooly took photos of him naked. McCarthy reported these details to the State Police in a letter dated July 31, 2013. McCarthy updated the Diocesan Review Board on the case on September 10, 2013. There is no record of the Board's determination or recommendation, if any occurred.

In November 2024, a member of the Rhode Island Office of Attorney General spoke with Complainant B, who said that Gillooly used to go to his house and have coffee with his parents. He added that his entire family has been affected by these events and that Gillooly betrayed his parents' trust and faith in the Church. According to Complainant B, who lives outside Rhode Island, he was receiving counseling, but he described the process of obtaining reimbursement from the Diocese as convoluted and "almost not worth it."

In 2024, State Police also spoke with Complainant A who confirmed his prior report of abuse against Gillooly. State Police efforts to contact the individual Complainant A identified as having been assaulted by Gillooly were unsuccessful. Efforts to contact Complainant C were also unsuccessful. As noted above, there is no indication that the complainants knew of one another or were aware of each other's allegations.

**Status**

Father Gillooly is deceased. He is listed on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father Timothy Gorton

| Born | Ordained | Suspended | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Feb. 6, 1956 | Nov. 20, 1982 | May 1, 2012 | Jun. 18, 2021 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1982 – 1984 | St. Joseph Church, Cumberland |
| 1984 – 1984 | St. Joseph Church, Newport |
| 1984 – 1989 | Our Lady of Providence Preparatory Seminary High School, Providence |
| 1987 – 1989 | St. Mark Church, Cranston |
| 1989 – 1993 | St. Ann Church, Cranston |
| 1993 – 1997 | St. Mary of the Bay Church, Warren |
| 1997 – 2004 | St. Francis of Assisi Church, Warwick |
| 2004 – 2007 | St. Joseph Church, Pawtucket |
| 2007 – 2008 | *Medical Leave of Absence* |
| 2008 – 2012 | St. Agatha Church, Woonsocket |
| 2012 | *Suspended and Retired* |

## Summary

Father Timothy Gorton reportedly sexually abused a 12-year-old boy in 1983 in the rectory of St. Joseph Church in Cumberland, Rhode Island, and in Narragansett, Rhode Island. The complainant reported his abuse to Narragansett Police which, after determining that prosecution was foreclosed due to the statute of limitations, forwarded his allegations to the Diocese's Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") Director Robert McCarthy in January 2012.

The Diocesan Review Board found the allegations to be credible, and Father Gorton retired from ministry in April 2012. The Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith ("CDF") decided not to laicize Gorton and instead directed him to live a "life of prayer and penance," effectively and permanently removing him from all public ministry.[12]

Father Gorton is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

[12] A life of prayer and penance is a penalty under canon law that permanently removes a priest from all public ministry.

**The Reported Abuse and Diocesan Response**

Father Gorton reportedly sexually assaulted a 12-year-old boy on two separate occasions in 1983 while assigned to St. Joseph Church in Cumberland, Rhode Island. Although the Diocese did not produce any records documenting contemporaneous reporting to the Diocese, Gorton was transferred from St. Joseph's in Cumberland to St. Joseph's in Newport the following year.

The complainant reported his allegations to the Narragansett Police Department on January 26, 2012. According to the complainant, the first incident occurred inside St. Joseph Church and Gorton touched the complainant's back and buttocks underneath his clothing. The complainant reported that during the second incident, which occurred in Narragansett, Father Gorton asked him to "drop his pants" and said he "would like to see [his] penis" before asking the boy if he would like to masturbate, all while Gorton was, himself, exposed and touching his own penis.

Narragansett Police took a detailed statement from the complainant but determined neither incident could be prosecuted as both were time-barred due to the applicable three-year statute of limitations. Police referred the complainant to the Diocese's OEC on January 27, 2012.

OEC Director McCarthy interviewed the complainant on January 30, 2012. During the interview, the complainant informed McCarthy that he had told a friend about the abuse five years after it had occurred. The complainant also informed McCarthy that he, along with his friend and father, confronted Father Gorton on January 19, 2012, at Precious Blood Church in Woonsocket, Rhode Island, where Gorton served at the time. According to the complainant, during that confrontation, he read Father Gorton a prepared letter which described how the abuse had affected his life. The complainant stated that Gorton denied his accusations.

McCarthy interviewed Father Gorton on February 7, 2012, at Precious Blood Church. Gorton recalled the complainant confronting him in January 2012 but denied all the allegations against him. Two days later, the complainant returned to OEC for a second interview with McCarthy, where he described the interior of the rectory at St. Joseph's and agreed to participate in a polygraph test. McCarthy interviewed the complainant's father and best friend to corroborate the information provided by the complainant.

Both the complainant and Gorton completed a polygraph. The complainant's polygraph reportedly showed "no deception indicated" while Gorton's polygraph reportedly showed "deception indicated."

Bishop Thomas Tobin closed the Diocese's canonical investigation on April 10, 2012, after weighing the information gathered by McCarthy and the findings of the Diocesan Review Board, which had determined that the allegations were credible during a meeting on March 27, 2012. On April 16, 2012, Father Gorton requested retirement from active ministry due to his health, which the Bishop granted on May 1,

2012. Bishop Tobin determined that the complaint lodged against Father Gorton "does not appear to be manifestly frivolous" and sent information regarding the allegation and his *votum* (Tobin's personal determination) that Gorton be directed to a "life of prayer and penance," to the Vatican's CDF. Bishop Tobin also imposed a canonical precept suspending his faculties. The CDF agreed with Tobin's recommendation, and requested Gorton's direct, written response to Tobin's proposal. On January 9, 2014, Gorton informed the CDF that he did not accept Bishop Tobin's suggestion that he be allowed to live a life of prayer and penance. In January 2017, in response to an inquiry about Gorton's priestly status made by a reporter from *The Providence Journal*, Chancellor Timothy Reilly replied by email that "the Vatican reviews for Gorton . . . have been completed without laicization" and that Vatican officials decided not to laicize Gorton, but instead directed him to a "life of prayer and penance," effectively and permanently removing him from all public ministry. As recently as 2019, Father Gorton petitioned the Diocese and the CDF for a limited return to ministry. The Diocese never lifted Gorton's restrictions.

In 2024, the Rhode Island State Police attempted to contact the complainant without success.

**Status**

Father Gorton is deceased. He is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father Rene Guertin

| Born | Ordained | Retired | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jan. 20, 1919 | Jun. 15, 1946 | 1980 | Jan. 23, 1982 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1946 | St. Andrew Church, New Shoreham |
| 1946 – 1952 | St. Xavier Academy, Providence |
| 1946 – 1969 | St. Aloysius Home, Smithfield |
| 1952 – 1969 | La Salle Academy, Providence |
| 1969 – 1980 | Our Lady of Good Help Church, Burrillville |
| 1980 | *Retired* |

## Summary

Father Rene Guertin reportedly sexually abused two girls while assigned to St. Aloysius Home, an orphanage in Smithfield, in the 1960s, and a third girl beginning in 1970 when he was assigned to Our Lady of Good Help Church in Burrillville. The allegations included rape and second-degree sexual assault. Additionally, a complainant accused Father Guertin of physically assaulting him when he was a boy at St. Aloysius in 1950 by forcing him to strip naked and beating him on the buttocks with a stick. A fifth complainant accused Father Guertin of physically assaulting him and attempting to sexually abuse him when he was a boy at St. Aloysius in the 1950s by unsuccessfully attempting to fondle his genitals and punching him in the face and head on several occasions.

The first documented report of improper conduct by Father Guertin dates back to 1973. Diocesan records indicate that a parish trustee reported to Diocesan officials that Guertin reportedly lived with a young girl in the Our Lady of Good Help rectory in Burrillville. There is no record of any response by the Diocese to this complaint. The next documented complaint about Father Guertin surfaced in 2007, long after his death. The complainant reported that Guertin repeatedly sexually assaulted her over a period of seven years, beginning when she was 10 years old, at the Our Lady of Good Help rectory in Burrillville. Former Director of the Diocese's Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC"), Robert McCarthy, referred the complaint to law enforcement.

In 2014 and 2015, the Diocese received two more complaints alleging repeated sexual abuse by Father Guertin and physical abuse by nuns and lay counselors at the St. Aloysius Home orphanage in Smithfield. In 2022, the Diocese received a fifth complaint of physical and attempted sexual abuse by Father Guertin at the St. Aloysius Home orphanage in Smithfield in the 1950s. OEC Director Kevin O'Brien,

McCarthy's successor, reported these allegations to the State Police, but by this time Guertin was deceased.

Father Guertin is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

**The Reported Abuse and Diocesan Response**

One of the first indications that the Diocese may have been aware of Father Guertin's improper behavior towards young girls dates back to 1973. On May 22, 1973, Director of Personnel Father Bertrand Theroux wrote a memo to Bishop Louis Gelineau that a trustee of Our Lady of Good Help Parish had reported that a 14-year-old girl was living in the rectory. The records produced by the Diocese do not contain any information about what, if anything, Bishop Gelineau did in response to receiving this information.

No additional records concerning sexual misconduct by Guertin surfaced until 2007. On December 7, 2007, a complainant ("Complainant C") reported to the Director of Outreach and Prevention, Paula Loud, that she was sexually abused by Guertin at Our Lady of Good Help rectory in Burrillville from 1970 to 1977, beginning when she was 10 years old. Of note, this was Guertin's last assignment before his retirement (purportedly for health reasons) in 1980. Loud reported the allegation to OEC Director Robert McCarthy, who interviewed the complainant on December 10, 2007. According to Complainant C, she was constantly in the rectory at Our Lady of Good Help with Guertin, and she would often cook, clean, and spend the night there. She stated that on one occasion, when she was 10 or 11 years old, she fell asleep in Father Guertin's car and woke up to him touching her breasts. On another occasion, Father Guertin reportedly invited the girl into his bed where he touched her breasts and vagina and made her masturbate him. Complainant C reported that these assaults continued at a rate of once or twice per week for the next seven years. Complainant C also drank alcohol in the rectory at age 12 or 13, and on occasion would become sick from the alcohol and then sleep over. Complainant C told McCarthy that Guertin regularly recruited parish children like her to help him in the rectory. She also stated that many former residents of St. Aloysius Home also slept at the rectory when she was living there.

In a memorandum to Victim Advocate Paula Loud following his interview with Complainant C, McCarthy wrote that that Complainant C's allegations appear to corroborate the claim made by Bertrand Theroux in 1973, regarding a young girl living in the rectory at Our Lady of Good Help. McCarthy reported the allegations to the Rhode Island State Police in a letter dated December 10, 2007. The Diocesan Review Board reviewed the case on January 15, 2008, but there is no record of the Board's determination or recommendation.

Following her complaint, McCarthy encouraged Complainant C to submit her therapy bills to the Diocese for reimbursement. There are no records indicating whether Complainant C did so, except for a follow-up letter from Complainant C to McCarthy in 2008, asking whether Father Guertin had any other complainants.

In November 2024, as a part of this Investigation, the State Police contacted Complainant C, who confirmed her previous report to the Diocese and advised that she did not have anything to add to her complaint.

On November 10, 2014, a complainant ("Complainant A") reported to McCarthy by phone that staff of St. Aloysius Home had sexually, physically, and emotionally abused her and her four siblings when they were residents there from 1967 to 1976. The complainant rescheduled the interview several times before meeting with McCarthy and his successor, Kevin O'Brien, for an interview on June 18, 2015. During the interview, Complainant A described a horrific culture of violent abuse at the orphanage. Complainant A reported that Father Guertin, who served as the Chaplain at St. Aloysius, repeatedly abused Complainant A in Guertin's bedroom, where he touched her vagina and forced her to touch his penis. Complainant A reported that the abuse occurred when she was preparing to make her first Holy Communion and also reported that one of the nuns employed at St. Aloysius would lead Complainant A to Guertin's room. After the abuse, Guertin would reportedly give the complainant a piece of candy, and the nun would be waiting outside the room to take her back to her bed. The complainant described that the nun would call her "a dirty little girl" and take her candy while leading her back to her room. She also described suffering abuse at the hands of the lay counselors employed at the orphanage, including a man who reportedly threw children down a granite staircase; a man who reportedly paid female residents to have sex with him in the nuns' dormitory; and a doctor who reportedly sexually abused female residents, though Complainant A could not remember his name. Complainant A described how a nun assigned to the orphanage reportedly beat her savagely, at one point breaking her nose. Another nun reportedly beat another girl "mercilessly beyond recognition." Complainant A stated that she did not discuss the alleged abuse with anyone at the time, however, she reportedly told her sister, Complainant B, when she got older.

A few days later, on June 22, 2015, Complainant A's sister ("Complainant B") reached out to McCarthy to report that Guertin abused her as well. The same day, O'Brien "went to St. Matthew's Parish in Cranston, where the archives are held for St. Aloysius orphanage to review the files and ascertain any pertinent information regarding this case." O'Brien interviewed Complainant B two days later, on June 24, 2015. Complainant B's account mirrored Complainant A's in many respects. According to Complainant B, the abuse occurred when Complainant B was between four and seven years old. Complainant B stated that a nun brought her to Guertin's room once a week, where Guertin would masturbate and penetrate her vagina with his fingers and a plastic cross, which caused bleeding. Complainant B reported that after the abuse, Guertin told her, "now remember, if you tell, you'll never see your mother again." Guertin also reportedly abused Complainant B during a weekend trip out of state. She further described being beaten by a nun and corroborated many of the details given by Complainant A regarding the abusive environment of the orphanage.

The Diocesan Review Board reviewed the two new cases on June 23, 2015. There is no record of the Board's determination or recommendation.

O'Brien reported the allegations of Complainants A and B to the Rhode Island State Police in a letter dated July 1, 2015. A State Police detective informed the complainants that, because Guertin was deceased, no charges could be brought; both complainants declined to provide official statements.

In 2015, a fourth complainant ("Complainant D") reported to the Diocese that when he was a 10-year-old boy living at St. Aloysius Home, Father Guertin forced him to strip naked in his office and then beat him on the buttocks with a stick and reprimanded him for trying to report that he was sexually abused by older male residents at the orphanage. Guertin reportedly beat the boy four times over the course of two months in 1950. Guertin also reportedly told Complainant D that the abuse never happened. On September 11, 2015, OEC Director O'Brien reported to Rhode Island State Police by letter that Complainant D, while reporting abuse by another cleric (Father Edmond Micarelli) had reported that he was also abused by Father Guertin at St. Aloysius Orphanage in the 1950s. The State Police contacted Complainant D to inform him that Guertin was deceased so no charges could be brought.

In 2022, a fifth complainant ("Complainant E") reported to the Diocese that he was physically and sexually abused by Father Guertin when he was a young boy living at St. Aloysius Home during the 1950s. On February 24, 2022, Complainant E contacted the Office of Compliance to report his alleged abuse. On March 4, 2022, Director O'Brien interviewed Complainant E at the Office of Compliance in Cranston. During a recorded interview, Complainant E told O'Brien that when he was approximately 10 years old, Father Guertin unsuccessfully attempted to fondle his genitals on multiple occasions at St. Aloysius Home, although he was able to prevent the abuse by pushing the priest away. Complainant E also reported that Guertin punched him in the face and head on several occasions when he was between the ages of 10 and 16 and living at St. Aloysius Home orphanage. Later in life, Complainant E stated that he was diagnosed with an optical ailment in his left eye, which his optometrist suggested was consistent with being hit in the area.

According to Complainant E, nuns assigned to St. Aloysius Home observed Guertin physically assault Complainant E and other boys, although they never intervened. Complainant E also told O'Brien that he observed Guertin physically assault other boys at St. Aloysius and recalled an incident where Guertin grabbed a boy's genitals over his pajama pants one evening at a Catholic Youth Organization camp in southern Rhode Island. Complainant E initially could not recall any of the boys' names. He recalled reporting his abuse to a hotline number advertised in *The Providence Journal* after the newspaper ran a story about reports of abuse at St. Aloysius.

Complainant E shared that the reported abuse caused him to suffer substance abuse issues during his lifetime and that he sought therapy for years as a result. Complainant E told O'Brien that he had decided to report Guertin to the Diocese to ensure there was a record of his complaint, and that he hoped other complainants

would come forward. Towards the end of the interview, O'Brien asked Complainant E if he could recall the names of any other victims, and Complainant E disclosed the name of one boy whom he believed was also abused by Guertin. There is no record in the files produced by the Diocese to this Office that O'Brien attempted to contact this individual.

According to Director O'Brien's March 4, 2022, memoranda of his interview with Complainant E, the complainant "seemed to have a fairly clear recollection of the circumstances involved, more so concerning the physical abuse about which he was able to provide more detailed information." O'Brien also noted that Complainant E "did not present any reason to suggest that he was being deceptive."

On March 11, 2022, Director O'Brien reported Complainant E's allegations to the Rhode Island State Police and this Office by letter, noting that Diocesan records confirmed that Father Guertin was assigned to St. Aloysius Home during the time of the reported abuse. That same month, State Police spoke with Complainant E who stated that he was only recently able to report the abuse due to the harm Guertin had caused him. He declined to provide a formal statement. State Police informed Complainant E that Guertin was deceased so no charges could be brought. On October 25, 2022, the complaint was presented to the Diocesan Review Board, although there is no record of the Board's recommendation or determination, if any occurred, in the records provided by the Diocese to this Office.

In November 2024, Rhode Island State Police contacted Complainant C who acknowledged her prior reports and stated that she had nothing more to add to her complaint. State Police efforts to reach Complainant A were unsuccessful.

**Status**

Father Guertin is deceased. He is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father Richard Holden

| Born | Ordained | Retired | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sep. 23, 1939 | May 23, 1964 | No | Mar. 23, 1985 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1964 – 1964 | St. Mary Star of the Sea Church, Narragansett |
| 1964 – 1970 | St. Aloysius Church, Woonsocket |
| 1970 – 1971 | Sacred Heart Church, Pawtucket |
| 1971 – 1985 | St. Vincent De Paul Church, Coventry |

## Summary

Father Richard Holden reportedly sexually abused five boys during his 21 years in ministry. Holden reportedly "approached a boy in a sexual manner" in the early to mid-1960s while assigned to St. Aloysius Parish in Woonsocket and reportedly abused the other four boys from 1970 to 1982 while assigned to St. Vincent De Paul Parish in Coventry. According to records provided by the Diocese to the Rhode Island Office of the Attorney General, Diocesan officials were not notified of any of the allegations against Father Holden until after his death in 1985. Holden passed away at the age of 46 while serving as a priest at St. Vincent De Paul Parish.

Father Holden is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

## The Reported Abuse and Diocesan Response

Although there were no documented reports of sexual abuse allegations against Holden before 1997 in the documents produced to this Office by the Diocese, this review revealed some sparse documents dating back to the 1960s that indicate possible earlier complaints about him. On October 17, 1967, a parishioner wrote a letter to an unidentified recipient, imploring that he ignore the "unkind rumors" that were being spread about Holden at "St. Louis Parish" in Woonsocket (likely St. Aloysius). The parishioner wrote "Father Holden is one of the finest priests this parish has ever known. The youth of this parish need someone they can talk to without having to worry if their situation is in the right hands. Father Holden is this someone." There are no further records indicating what the "unkind rumors" entailed. However, on September 14, 1967, Chancellor Daniel Reilly wrote a letter to a priest at St. Aloysius in which he noted that Holden was originally appointed to St. Patrick's Parish in Harrisville but due to "unusual circumstances involved in the matter," the Bishop decided to leave Father Holden at St. Aloysius and appoint another priest to St. Patrick's Parish. There are no documents in the files produced to this Office explaining the "unusual circumstances involved in the matter."

There are no other documented complaints against Holden until July 22, 1997, when a man ("Complainant A") contacted the Diocese to report that Father Holden sexually assaulted him multiple times when the priest was assigned to St. Vincent De Paul Parish in Coventry. The complainant stated that the abuse took place from 1972 to 1979 while he was in high school. Complainant A named a pastor whom he believed had witnessed the abuse. There was no other description of the allegations in the records provided to this Office. The Director of the Diocese's Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC"), Robert McCarthy, was unavailable at the time, so the complainant was instructed to call Monsignor George Frappier the following day, July 23rd, 1997. There are no records indicating that the complainant spoke to Frappier, or that any member of the Diocese followed up with the complainant in 1997. Diocesan records reflect that McCarthy first learned of Complainant A's allegations in 2010 while reviewing Father Holden's personnel files as he investigated an allegation made by another complainant ("Complainant B"). There is no record of any attempt by McCarthy to speak to Complainant A after learning of the allegation in 2010 or to speak to the pastor who reportedly witnessed the abuse. While McCarthy eventually referred Complainant B's allegations to the Rhode Island State Police, he did not include Complainant A's allegation in his referral, despite receiving both at the same time. There is no record in the documents provided by the Diocese that Complainant A's allegation was ever referred to the Diocesan Review Board.

Complainant B reported that Holden sexually abused him in a letter to the OEC dated March 31, 2010. McCarthy interviewed Complainant B on May 3, 2010. Complainant B told McCarthy that when he was about 14 years old, he worked in the kitchen at St. Vincent de Paul Parish. Complainant B reported that from about 1980 to 1982, Father Holden performed oral sex on him in the St. Vincent de Paul rectory on multiple occasions. Complainant B stated that Holden would often drive through his neighborhood and "chat with children." He also noted that Father Holden appeared to take an interest in him and would let him drive his car around the neighborhood. During these times, Holden would reportedly have the complainant drive to Cumberland Farms, where Father Holden would buy a Playboy magazine while wearing civilian attire, then bring the complainant back to the rectory and perform oral sex on him while the complainant looked at the magazine. Complainant B stated that Holden would let him keep the magazines as "part of the deal." During the interview, Complainant B informed McCarthy that he suspected Father Holden also abused his older brother. McCarthy forwarded a transcript of the interview to State Police on the same day. There is no record that McCarthy attempted to contact Complainant B's brother or took any other investigative steps to substantiate Complainant B's report besides confirming that Holden was assigned to St. Vincent de Paul Parish at the time of the alleged abuse. McCarthy referred Complainant B to the Diocese's Victim Advocate, Paula Loud. The Diocesan Review Board reviewed the case on June 15, 2010, although there is no record of the Board's determination on that date, if any occurred.

On December 3, 2013, a third complainant ("Complainant C") reported to the Diocese that Father Holden "sexually approached" him and several of his friends at St.

Louis Parish in the early to mid-1960s. Complainant C did not provide any further description of the alleged misconduct. McCarthy informed State Police of the allegation on December 4, 2013. In his letter to State Police, McCarthy noted that he contacted Complainant C that same day by introducing himself and explaining his role in the OEC, and Complainant C had responded by thanking him for his email and indicating that he did not wish to pursue the matter further after learning that Father Holden was deceased. The Diocesan Review Board reviewed Complainant C's case on December 10, 2013, but there is no record of the Board's recommendation or determination, if any occurred, on that date.

An attorney representing a fourth complainant ("Complainant D") contacted the OEC on October 3, 2019, to report Complainant D's allegations of sexual abuse by Father Holden. The attorney reported that Holden sexually abused his client at St. Vincent's Church in the early 1970's when he was 16 years old but did not provide further details of the abuse. The current Director of the OEC, Kevin O'Brien, responded to the complainant's attorney on October 8, 2019, to schedule an interview regarding the allegations. Based on the absence of records, it does not appear that this complainant responded to O'Brien or that any interview took place. O'Brien referred the allegation to State Police on November 12, 2019. There are no records indicating whether the Diocesan Review Board reviewed this case.

A fifth complainant ("Complainant E") made an anonymous complaint to the OEC in early 2020 to report his allegations of abuse. Director O'Brien met with the complainant's attorney on February 4, 2020, and conducted a telephone interview of the complainant, whose identity is not revealed in the records provided to the Office. The complainant reported that Father Holden sexually abused him on one occasion, in 1979**,** when he was 16 or 17 years old. According to Complainant E, Father Holden took him to a hotel in Massachusetts and after the complainant fell asleep, he woke up to the priest performing oral sex on him. O'Brien referred the allegations to the Rhode Island State Police on February 4, 2020, and noted that Father Holden had "two additional sexual abuse complaints on file." By 2020, the Diocese in fact had four previous allegations against Holden. Because Father Holden was deceased by the time the allegations were referred to State Police, police recorded the allegations but did not investigate further.

In 2024, State Police reached out to all living, known complainants. Detectives were able to speak with Complainants B and D, who confirmed their previously reported allegations. Complainant B stated that he has struggled with alcohol abuse for most of his life because of what happened to him. He also stated that "he wished they [Diocese of Providence] would come out and admit fault . . . but they never will."

**Status**

Father Holden died in 1985 while assigned as the pastor of St. Vincent De Paul Church in Coventry. He is listed on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

## Father James Jackson

| Born | Ordained | Laicized | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jun. 3, 1955 | May 18, 1985 | Jan. 13, 2025 | No |

**Partial Assignment History**

| | |
|---|---|
| Aug. – Oct. 2021 | St. Mary Church, Providence |
| Oct. 31, 2021 | *Suspended* |
| Nov. 18, 2021 | *Resigned* |
| 2025 | *Laicized* |

**Summary**

Father James W. Jackson served at St. Mary Church in Providence from August to October 2021. Bishop Thomas Tobin granted Jackson faculties to serve in the Diocese for a six-year term, effective August 1, 2021, after the North American Provincial of the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter,[13] Jackson's Order, attested to Jackson's good moral character and stated that he was unaware of anything that would limit or disqualify Jackson from ministry or work with children.

On October 30, 2021, the Rhode Island State Police Internet Crimes Against Children ("ICAC") Task Force arrested Father Jackson on state child pornography charges. The arrest followed an investigation by the ICAC Task Force which identified an IP address assigned to the rectory at St. Mary Church in Providence in connection with a peer-to-peer file-sharing network used to share child pornography. A court-authorized search of the rectory led to the seizure of an external digital storage device and computer belonging to Father Jackson which contained over 12,000 images and 1,300 videos of child pornography. State Police charged Jackson with possession of child pornography, transfer of child pornography, and child erotica prohibited.

Bishop Tobin issued a precept the day following Father Jackson's arrest revoking his faculties and prohibiting him from residing in the church rectory or exercising public ministry. There is no indication in the files provided by the Diocese to the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office that the Diocese was aware of any misconduct by Jackson prior to this arrest.

On November 3, 2021, a federal criminal complaint charged Jackon with accessing, distributing, and processing child pornography. He was released to the

[13] The Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter is, according to its website, "a clerical Society of Apostolic Life of Pontifical Right, that is, a community of priests who do not take religious vows, but who work together for a common mission in the Catholic Church, under the authority of the Holy See."

custody of his sister in Kansas while awaiting trial but was later arrested, ordered to return to Rhode Island, and detained pretrial after members of the Kansas ICAC reportedly discovered evidence that Jackson had downloaded child pornography there.

Bishop Tobin accepted Jackson's resignation from St. Mary Church on November 18, 2021. Tobin also issued a decree initiating a preliminary canonical investigation of Jackson by Director of the Diocese Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") Kevin O'Brien the same day. Director O'Brien reportedly received information regarding the investigation and Jackson's arrest from the State Police on November 15, 2021. The next day, O'Brien traveled to St. Mary Church and interviewed the assistant pastor assigned there, as well as the office manager, about their knowledge of Jackson's computer usage and activities. O'Brien presented the case to the Diocesan Review Board on November 30, 2021, though there is no record of the Board's recommendation or determination, if any occurred, on that date.

Father Jackson pled guilty to one charge of receipt of child pornography on June 8, 2023, in federal court. U.S. District Court Judge William E. Smith sentenced him to six years in prison[14] to be followed by five years of federal supervised release.[15]

**Status**

The Diocese added Father Jackson to its List of Credibly Accused Clergy in 2022 following his arrest. The Vatican laicized Jackson on January 13, 2025. Jackson is serving his sentence in federal prison as of the date of this Report.

[14] In 2025, the court granted an assented motion to amend the judgment to reflect an agreed restitution of $99,000. *See* Docket 1:21-cr-00120-WES-PAS.
[15] *See Catholic Priest Sentenced to Federal Prison on Child Pornography Charge*, United States Attorney's Office, District of Rhode Island (December 13, 2023), https://www.justice.gov/usao-ri/pr/catholic-priest-sentenced-federal-prison-child-pornography-charge.

# Father Edward Kelley

| Born | Ordained | Retired | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mar. 21, 1942 | Jun. 8, 1968 | Jan. 31, 2013 | Sep. 26, 2022 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1968 | St. Mary Star of the Sea Church, Narragansett |
| 1968 – 1969 | St. Catherine Church, Warwick |
| 1969 | St. John the Evangelist Church, North Smithfield |
| 1969 – 1974 | St. James Church, Manville |
| 1974 – 1976 | St. Joseph Church, Pascoag |
| 1976 – 1978 | St. Matthew Church, Cranston |
| 1978 | St. Joseph Hospital, Providence |
| 1978 – 1980 | St. Margaret Church, East Providence |
| 1980 – 1985 | St. John Church, Slaterville |
| 1985 – 1986 | Our Lady of Consolation Church, Pawtucket |
| 1986 – 1992 | St. Agatha Church, Woonsocket |
| 1992 | St. Aidan Church, Cumberland |
| 1993 | United States Army Chaplain Corps |
| 2013 | *Retired* |
| 2015 | *Faculties Revoked* |

## Summary

Father Edward Kelley reportedly sexually abused three victims during his more than forty years in ministry as a Diocesan priest. Notably, the Bishops transferred Father Kelley five times between his ordination in 1968 and his two-year assignment at St. Matthew Church in Cranston from 1976-1978, when Diocesan records indicate that the Diocese first addressed his "moral problems."

In 1982, Father Kelley became the legal guardian of a teenage boy who lived with him at the rectories of St. John the Evangelist in Slaterville and St. Agatha Church in Woonsocket. The Diocese was aware of the relationship and received multiple complaints, beginning in 1987, that Kelley was sleeping in the same room or bed with the boy. Bishop Louis Gelineau instructed Kelley to separate from the boy, but the Diocese ultimately took no disciplinary action against Kelley and did not report the complaints to law enforcement. Years later, this victim reported to the Rhode Island State Police that Kelley had sexually abused him on numerous occasions. In 2021, a Rhode Island grand jury indicted Kelley on three counts of first-degree sexual assault. Father Kelley died while the case was pending.

In 1994, another complainant reported to the Diocese, and then to law enforcement, that he was sexually abused by Kelley over a six-year period, beginning in 1976 when the complainant was approximately 14 years old. This complainant reported that Kelley raped him multiple times. The Diocese did not credit this report, and the complainant did not pursue it after it was referred to the East Providence Police Department. This complainant committed suicide three years after reporting his alleged abuse.

The Rhode Island Attorney General's Office received an anonymous complaint in 2002 that Kelley sexually assaulted another child. The allegations were forwarded to the Diocese, but the complainant did not want to press the complaint, and it does not appear that any investigation took place.

Kelley's faculties were revoked in 2015 for reasons apparently unrelated to the sexual abuse allegations against him. Throughout his ministry, the Diocese was, at best, equivocal in its response to multiple allegations of sexual misconduct against Kelley.

The Diocese added Kelley to its List of Credibly Accused Clergy after his indictment in 2021.

**The Reported Abuse and Diocesan Response**

In August 1978, Kelley served as Assistant Pastor at St. Matthew Church, in Cranston, Rhode Island. Records indicate that, at that time, the Diocese Personnel Board met to discuss concerns related to Kelley. The Diocese's Director of Priests' Personnel, Father Salvatore Matano, notified Auxiliary Bishop Kenneth Angell of the Board's position in a letter dated August 26, 1978. Citing "moral problems," the Board recommended Kelley attend counseling. There is no indication in the materials produced to this Office of the "moral problems" referenced by the Personnel Board in 1978. Records produced by the Diocese show that Bishop Gelineau assigned Kelley to St. Joseph Hospital for a time and then reassigned him to St. Margaret Church in East Providence.

In 1979, while assigned to St. Margaret Church, the parents of a teenage boy asked Kelley to stop interacting with their son one-on-one and to only meet with him in public areas or with other individuals present. The documents produced by the Diocese do not indicate why the boy's parents made that request, but, on August 31, 1979, Bishop Angell spoke to Father Kelley regarding his relationship with the boy. At the time, the child was living at a temporary emergency shelter and was a ward of the state. Kelley sent a letter to Bishop Angell the following day, noting that after their conversation, he contacted the boy's parents and promised not to meet with their son alone. Bishop Angell transferred Kelley again, this time to St. John Church in Slaterville, a year later.

In approximately 1982, Kelley became the temporary guardian of a 14-year-old boy ("Complainant A"). After running away from home, the boy confided in Kelley

about his family problems and spent the night at St. John's. Kelley and the boy went to Family Court and Kelley was awarded temporary custody of the child. Thereafter, the boy lived with Kelley for several years. On April 15, 1985, Bishop Gelineau instructed Father Kelley to relinquish custody of the boy. Gelineau also recommended that Kelley receive counseling.

Father Kelley responded to Bishop Gelineau on April 19, 1985, assuring him that he would end his legal guardianship of the boy in Family Court. Kelley wrote of his intention to "maintain contact with [the boy] in an appropriate way." He also requested to begin a new assignment after August 1, to "allow the dust to settle . . . ." Bishop Gelineau also recommended Kelley get an evaluation at a Catholic treatment center known as the House of Affirmation in Whitinsville, Massachusetts. Two months later, Kelley advised Gelineau that he was scheduled to see a Providence psychiatrist.

In May 1987, Vicar for Spirituality and Evangelization, Father John Allard (whom the Diocese would include on its Credibly Accused List in 2019), investigated claims that Kelley was once again residing with Complainant A in the St. Agatha Church rectory against Bishop Gelineau's instructions. Father Allard spoke to the rectory housekeeper and another parish employee and reported his findings to Auxiliary Bishop Angell in a letter dated May 11, 1987: "When [the boy] does sleep there he sleeps in Fr. Kelley's room," and "[s]he (the housekeeper) doesn't know if anything is going on sexually, though Fr. Kelley has talked of putting [the boy] in the shower." The other employee explained Kelley's unusual behavior with children to Father Allard: "He (Kelley) has described past 'lock-ins' he has had with boy scouts where he has locked the door and had the youth strip naked to show them how to prevent hypothermia. He's had them sleep naked explaining that this is a way not to attract wild beasts."

Bishop Gelineau met with Father Kelley on May 12, 1987, to discuss Father Allard's findings. The Bishop's brief memorandum of the meeting reads: "I talked with Fr. Kelley 5/12/1987 – He denies much of what is stated here. I warned him. He seems docile."

On July 23, 1987, a St. Agatha parishioner wrote to Bishop Gelineau to inform him that the boy was still living at the rectory. The parishioner stated in the letter that they had informed Auxiliary Bishop Angell in early June that the boy was sleeping in Father Kelley's bed. According to the parishioner, Kelley reportedly expressed to the housekeeper at the time "[w]ell, I'm pretty sure I'm going to be suspended this time but I'm not going down alone. I'm going to name other priests who have kids living with [them]." Kelley was not suspended, however, and reportedly boasted, "It will take them a lot more to get me out of here." In the same letter, the parishioner informed Gelineau that "if nothing is going [to be done] about this, I feel certain that the Diocese of Providence is about to suffer another scandal like the Leach [*sic*], Ventre and O'Connell scandals."

The Vicar for Canonical Affairs, Monsignor William Varsanyi, met with the other pastor of St. Agatha's, to discuss the parishioner's complaint. Monsignor Varsanyi reported to Bishop Gelineau in a September 18, 1987, letter that the other pastor did

not consider the boy's visitations a problem. There is no indication that the Diocese reported concerns about Kelley's relationship with Complainant A to law enforcement, the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth, and Families, or the Rhode Island Family Court.

Bishop Gelineau met with Kelley again in September 1991. According to a memorandum memorializing that meeting, Kelley reportedly told Gelineau that he wanted the boy to live in the rectory with him, which Gelineau forbade.

Bishop Gelineau transferred Father Kelley to St. Aidan Church in Cumberland in 1992. The Diocese received multiple complaints about Kelley's leadership over the next few months, though none of these complaints involved sexual misconduct with minors. Bishop Gelineau called for Kelley to resign as pastor but remain in ministry. Father Kelley submitted his resignation to the Bishop in a July 4, 1992, letter that included many conditions: "My status will be listed as 'on sabbatical' and I will be allowed to exercise my functions as a priest in any of the parishes of the Diocese," Kelley wrote. "You, as Bishop of Providence, agree to do all in your power to dispel any rumors of moral impropriety which may arise as a result of this resignation."

On August 19, 1992, Bishop Gelineau granted Kelley permission to serve as a chaplain in the United States Army.

On November 28, 1994, the Diocese's Minister for Priests, Father Normand Godin, met with an adult male ("Complainant B") who reported that Kelley had sexually abused him for six years at St. Margaret Church beginning in 1976 when he was approximately 14 years old. Father Godin noted that he found the complainant "very credible." During a December 14, 1994, interview with Godin, Complainant B said that he met Kelley in 1976 at St. Margaret School when Kelley became Chaplain of his Boy Scout troop. He reported that Kelley would pinch his buttocks and talk about masturbation with him, show the complainant how to masturbate, and eventually have sex with him on multiple occasions. The complainant also described sexual assaults that occurred during Boy Scout events. For example, he recalled one instance where he woke up during a camping trip to find Father Kelley lying naked on top of him and trying to fondle him while other boys were around before he told Kelley to stop. Complainant B also named other boy scouts who regularly visited Father Kelley's Burrillville home.

The records provided by the Diocese to the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office do not document any efforts by the Diocese to contact any of the individuals identified by Complainant B as potential victims or witnesses. The records also do not indicate whether Kelley served as a Boy Scout chaplain, however, on May 29, 1973, Kelley wrote a letter to the Diocesan Personnel Board requesting that he be appointed assistant to the scout chaplain. Notably, the scout chaplain at that time was Father Edmund Micarelli, another Diocesan priest whom the Diocese would later include on its List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

It was not until about a month later, on December 23, 1994, that Director of the Diocese Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") Robert McCarthy, notified East Providence Police of these allegations. At the time, Father Kelley was reportedly out of the country for his Army chaplaincy assignment. According to McCarthy, he and an East Providence Police Detective decided not to notify Kelley of the allegations against him for fear he might not voluntarily return to the U.S. for questioning.

On December 27, 1994, Father Kelley called the Office of the Bishop from his military assignment in Cuba to request a letter of endorsement from Bishop Gelineau. Without the letter, Kelley would not be able to continue his involvement in the Military Archdiocese.

On January 20, 1995, McCarthy reportedly faxed 44 pages of material relating to his investigation of Kelley to the Archbishop of the Military Archdiocese. There is no record in the documents produced to this Office of the specific pages McCarthy sent. In the letter, McCarthy provided an outline of the allegation and stated, "[a]t this time, I must point out to you that I am a retired professional police officer who has been hired by the Diocese to investigate claims such as this. From the moment I became involved in this case, I felt something was wrong." He goes on to state, "[a]n examination of Fr. Kelley's files reveals many problems in the various parishes he had been assigned to, but none of them have involved sexual allegations . . . . At this time, no other person has come forward to accuse Fr. Kelley." McCarthy stated that he became suspicious of the complainant after the complainant's friend wrote a letter to Bishop Gelineau, presumably requesting financial compensation for the complainant, which McCarthy described as "a shake down letter and at worst an extortion letter." McCarthy wrote that Complainant B had recently stopped communicating with him or the East Providence Police Department, and while "[t]he Diocese of Providence does not know whether or not his allegations are true or not . . . when you assess credibility, it is important that you keep this in mind."

On February 6, 1995, Bishop Gelineau supplied an endorsement letter for Kelley to the U.S. Army. "With regard to the recent allegations made in connection with Father Kelley and made known to you," the Bishop wrote, "I can assure you that they have been investigated as thoroughly as possible." "Based on the results of this investigation," Gelineau continued, "I believe that these allegations are false."

In July 1995, East Providence Police informed McCarthy that Complainant B had not filed a written complaint and that they would be unable to investigate until he did so.

On January 16, 1996, McCarthy spoke to Father Kelley on the phone while Kelley was on assignment for the Military Archdiocese in Korea. Kelley informed McCarthy that he knew Complainant B but denied that he had ever sexually assaulted him or anyone else.

Complainant B was found dead in 1997. McCarthy noted in a memorandum to file that the cause of death appeared to be suicide.

On April 15, 2002, then-Chief Investigator for the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office informed McCarthy of an anonymous complaint ("Complainant C") of sexual assault against Kelley that involved oral sex in the rectory of "St. Martha" Church in East Providence. No details of the assault, including the complainant's age or the time of the abuse, were provided. In a letter to Monsignor Theroux dated April 7, 2008, summarizing several allegations against many Diocesan priests, McCarthy states that after receiving Complainant C's allegation, the Attorney General's Chief Investigator gave McCarthy's contact information to the complainant, but the complainant never contacted the Diocese. There is no record of any further investigation by the Diocese. In a 2019 letter from McCarthy's successor, OEC Director Kevin O'Brien, to State Police Detective Commander Timothy Sanzi regarding another complaint against Kelley, O'Brien referenced the complaint from Complainant C and noted that he "did not wish to cooperate or pursue the matter."

In 2006, the Diocese of Providence received an inquiry into Kelley's suitability for ministry from the Diocese of Charleston, South Carolina. The formal questionnaire asked for verification of several requirements. The Diocese of Providence Chancellor, Monsignor John Darcy, certified that Kelley was a priest in good standing, had never been suspended, had never been criminally charged, did not struggle with substance abuse, and had no conditions that might adversely affect his performance as a priest. Monsignor Darcy did *not* certify the two questions regarding whether the priest might engage in sexual behavior or act inappropriately with a minor.

Darcy wrote to the Diocese of Charleston on October 20, 2006, to clarify his position. He stated, "I am not aware of, nor does his file contain, any concerns about sexual abuse." He continued: "[a]ny allegations against Fr. Kelley were investigated thoroughly with no canonical, criminal or civil penalties resulting. However, the present climate does not permit me to sign off on two of the statements on the testimonial. Your pastoral discretion will be needed in this matter."

In a December 14, 2006, letter to Providence Bishop Thomas Tobin, Kelley noted that the Diocese of Charleston had instructed Kelley not to assist at local parishes because it was unsatisfied with the testimonial received from the Diocese of Providence.

Kelley retired on January 31, 2013. He received a Certificate of Aptitude for Priestly Ministry from the Diocese of Providence that permitted him to exercise ministry during retirement. Bishop Tobin revoked Father Kelley's faculties on March 19, 2015, however, for reasons apparently unrelated to sexual misconduct.

On September 18, 2019, Complainant A contacted the Diocese and reported that Father Kelley had sexually abused him. On October 18, 2019, OEC Director O'Brien forwarded the complaint to the Rhode Island State Police. The complainant subsequently informed police that Kelley had taken parental custody of him when he was 14 years old because his father was physically abusive. Complainant A reported multiple incidents of oral and anal rape between the years 1982 and 1986 when he was

between the ages of 14 and 18. State Police attempted to schedule an interview with the complainant but were not successful at that time.

In 2020, State Police again contacted the complainant, who provided additional details regarding the abuse. He later explained that he decided to disclose his abuse because he knew an individual who had committed suicide due to abuse by Father Kelley. A grand jury returned an indictment against Kelley on May 4, 2021, on three counts of first-degree sexual assault of Complainant A. Father Kelley entered a not guilty plea. He passed away on September 26, 2022, while the case was pending.

**Status**

The Diocese added Father Kelley to its List of Credibly Accused Clergy only after his indictment in 2021.

# Father Joseph Gerard Raymond Lacasse

| Born | Ordained | Released | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dec. 26, 1932 | Sep. 15, 1958 | 2012 | Oct. 7, 2018 |

**Known Assignment History**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1959 – 1973 | Oblate missions, Republic of the Philippines |
| 1973 – 1981 | Epheta House, Cumberland |
| 1981 | Immaculata Retreat House, Willimantic, CT |
| 1997 | *Faculties Revoked* |
| Jan. – Oct. 1997 | *Treatment*, Saint John Vianney Center, PA |
| 1997 | Oblate Foreign Missions House, Lowell, MA |
| 2012 | *Released from his vows* |

**Summary**

Father Lacasse, a member of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate religious order (known informally as the Oblates), reportedly forcibly kissed an 11-year-old child at the Oblate's retreat center located in Cumberland, Rhode Island.

**The Reported Abuse and Diocesan Response**

In September 2010, a complainant wrote a letter to the Diocese's Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") reporting that sometime between 1968 and 1970, Father Lacasse sexually assaulted her at "the Oblate home." The complainant said that she was there to participate in a "teen program," and that Father Lacasse allegedly entered her bedroom at night, locked the door, laid on top of her, pinned her to the bed, and forcibly kissed her on the mouth. Based on the complainant's date of birth, the complainant would have been between the ages of 8 and 11 years old when this incident occurred.

The day after receiving this letter, former OEC Director Robert McCarthy relayed the allegation to the Oblates order. The following day, he relayed the allegation to the Rhode Island State Police. In his letter to State Police, McCarthy noted, "Over the years, this office has had three other complaints of similar conduct involving Father Lacasse with three different women, and [the Administrative Councilor of the Oblates] has advised me of another complaint they had received, thus totaling five separate complaints."

The Diocese had previously received three other complaints alleging that Father Lacasse engaged in inappropriate sexual contact with *adult* women. The first two complaints were received in 1996. During a 1996 investigation conducted by

McCarthy, Father Lacasse admitted to engaging in sexual contact with both women but contended that the contact was consensual.

Records indicate that Director McCarthy advised one of the complainants that the Diocese had no authority to discipline or punish Father Lacasse, explaining that only Father Lacasse's religious order had the authority to punish him. Although McCarthy forwarded the results of his investigation to the Provincial for the Oblates order, noting his opinion that one complainant "was in fact very truthful and honest," Bishop Louis Gelineau did not revoke Father Lacasse's faculties until the following year, after the complainant threatened to go public with her allegations.

In January of 1997, citing both complaints, Bishop Gelineau revoked Father Lacasse's faculties for the Diocese of Providence. Notes from a February 1997 meeting between Bishop Gelineau, Coadjutor Bishop Mulvee, Director McCarthy, Diocesan attorney William Murphy, and others indicate that Father Lacasse was sent for treatment at Saint John Vianney Center in Pennsylvania and released on October 31, 1997. Soon thereafter, he began working for his religious order in Lowell, Massachusetts and was reportedly assigned strictly to administrative duties.

In 2004, the Diocese received a third complaint against Father Lacasse that he sexually assaulted an adult woman 25 years earlier during a retreat at Epheta House, a former retreat complex in Cumberland, Rhode Island, run by the Oblates. The complainant reported that Father Lacasse kissed her and pushed his penis up against her without her consent. As with the previous complaints, McCarthy interviewed the complainant and forwarded the allegations to the head of Father Lacasse's religious order. The Oblates order reportedly agreed to pay for the complainant's counseling.

There is no record that the Diocese contacted law enforcement regarding any of the complaints against Father Lacasse until receiving the fourth complaint in 2010, from the complainant accusing Father Lacasse of sexually assaulting her when she was a child between 1968 and 1970.

In 2024, State Police attempted to interview the 2010 complainant, however, she declined an interview because Father Lacasse had died and she had put the incident behind her.

**Status**

In 2012, Father Lacasse was released from his vows upon his request. However, he was granted permission to continue to live with the Oblates, which he reportedly did until his death in 2018.

Father Lacasse is not included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy or any other lists of credibly accused clergy.

# Father Michael LaMountain

| Born | Ordained | Laicized | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mar. 5, 1949 | May 31, 1975 | Feb. 11, 2005 | Aug. 25, 2010 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1975 – 1976 | St. Catherine Church, Warwick |
| 1976 – 1983 | St. Kevin Church, Warwick |
| 1983 – 1987 | St. Joseph Church, Woonsocket |
| 1987 – 1995 | St. John the Baptist Church, West Warwick |
| 1995 | *Suspended* |
| 2005 | *Laicized* |

## Summary

In January 1999, Father Michael LaMountain pled guilty to nine felony counts relating to his sexual assaults of five adolescent boys between the 1970s and early 1990s. LaMountain met these boys and committed these crimes while serving as a priest with the Diocese of Providence, where LaMountain spent his entire priestly career. LaMountain was also accused of sexually abusing at least seven other boys and young men during his lifetime, although the actual number is unknown. He was laicized in February 2005 and died in August 2010. He is listed on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

Throughout the 1990s, as news about LaMountain's conduct reached the public, the Diocese maintained that it first became aware of child sexual abuse allegations against him in March 1995, immediately before Bishop Louis Gelineau suspended his faculties. In fact, according to records produced by the Diocese, the Diocese knew at least as early as 1989 about allegations that LaMountain had engaged in sexual misconduct with minors. In addition, according to reporting by the Providence Journal and documents filed in civil litigation against the Diocese, LaMountain authored several letters of apology to his victims in 1984, while he was serving as assistant pastor of St. Joseph Church in Woonsocket (and 11 years before his suspension by the Diocese), telling them that he was receiving professional help. Although we found no definitive proof that the Diocese knew of these apology letters at the time, or that LaMountain was purportedly receiving professional help, Diocesan records show that the Diocese had warning signs about his attraction to youth early on. In a June 1976 evaluation of LaMountain's diaconate ministry at St. Catherine Church in Warwick, for example, his supervisor wrote that while he was in favor of LaMountain's ordination, "one cause of concern is [LaMountain's] relationship with youths. I feel that at times he should not be so close to them."

## The Reported Abuse and Diocesan Response

*Early Allegations*

According to the Diocesan records produced to this Office, the Diocese received the first documented allegation of child sexual misconduct against LaMountain in early February 1989. In a handwritten memo dated February 6, 1989, Auxiliary Bishop Kenneth Angell described a call he received earlier in the day from a part-time assistant at a West Warwick parish regarding a "priest who might be in trouble." The caller recounted to Angell a conversation he recently had with a parishioner who told him that, at a recent parish retreat, a teenage boy (whose name was not known) had told the parishioner's daughter that LaMountain had taken him skinny dipping and touched his genitals the previous summer. Angell relayed the allegation that same day to Diocesan lawyer William Murphy, who, according to a Diocesan memo, planned to contact a lawyer for the Rhode Island Department of Children and Families ("DCF") to report the allegation. Diocesan records do not indicate whether such a report was ever made. Angell likewise informed Bishop Gelineau about the allegations the following day. According to Angell's notes, LaMountain "acknowledge[d] he went skinny dipping but [stated] nothing happened."

On February 23, 1989, in response to these allegations, the Diocese referred LaMountain for an evaluation at "The Sexual Disorders Clinic" at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland. The one-day evaluation occurred on October 3, 1989, and a report was sent to Auxiliary Bishop Angell the following week. According to a subsequent handwritten memo by Angell, he reviewed the report's contents with Bishop Gelineau, and then met with LaMountain to do the same, focusing "especially" (Angell's words) on the recommendation that LaMountain avoid unsupervised contact with adolescent males.

There is no indication in the records provided by the Diocese to this Office that the Diocese took any further action in response to these allegations, including imposing any formal restrictions on Father LaMountain's duties as a priest. Furthermore, it is unclear whether the Diocese actually notified law enforcement or any other government agency regarding these allegations: the only references to this in the relevant records are Angell's February 1989 handwritten note that Diocesan lawyer Murphy "will" contact DCF, and a sentence in LaMountain's October 1989 evaluation from Hopkins reflecting LaMountain's belief that "his Bishop [ ] reported the incident to police and he believes the police have made a thorough investigation." There is no record of any such police investigation in the records we reviewed, nor do the available records relating to the Rhode Island State Police's later investigation of LaMountain between 1995-1997 suggest that law enforcement was previously aware of these 1989 allegations.

Two years later, in November 1991, an anonymous sender mailed Bishop Gelineau a clipping from a Newsweek article about clergy sexual abuse in Massachusetts. A handwritten note on the clipping said, "Rev. Mike Mountain is next and W. Warwick will be in headlines." Gelineau asked Auxiliary Bishop Angell to meet

with Father LaMountain on November 5. In a memorandum documenting this meeting, Angell wrote that LaMountain "denied that anything further has happened since my first intervention. He still maintains his innocence and has assured me that he has gone to some lengths to avoid being alone with teenage males."

Next, in January 1993, the Diocese received a call from an individual who reported, according to a contemporaneous handwritten memo by Monsignor Salvatore Matano, that LaMountain had engaged in a yearslong sexual relationship with a teenage boy. The caller said that while the boy was unwilling to come forward and he would not disclose the boy's name, the alleged relationship lasted from approximately 1983 to 1990 or 1991, when the boy was between 13 and 19 years old. According to a March 1993 memo by Bishop Gelineau, Gelineau met with LaMountain to go over the allegations, noting that LaMountain "realizes what a difficult situation this places him in, especially in view of the other situations of the past, as we have on file." Gelineau wrote that LaMountain denied the allegations and offered to resign, but Gelineau "told him that we should make no move of any kind on the basis of the present allegation, so long as he assures me the allegations are false." Gelineau also noted that he once again told LaMountain "to be very careful of associations with young boys." Once more, there is no indication in the records produced by the Diocese that it took any further action at the time in response to this complaint.

Later that year, on September 17, 1993, the Diocese was contacted by the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, who informed the Diocese that he had recently received a complaint that LaMountain had sexually abused a 14-year-old boy ("Complainant A") at Most Precious Blood Parish in Baltimore, in 1973, while LaMountain was a seminarian at the nearby St. Mary Seminary. According to notes prepared by Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") Director Robert McCarthy summarizing the conversation, Complainant A reported that LaMountain repeatedly fondled him in the basement of the rectory of Most Precious Blood. Complainant A also alleged that LaMountain brought him to Rhode Island, where LaMountain went "skinny dipping" with the boy and abused him there as well. Complainant A had reported his allegations to the Baltimore Police Department around the same time that he disclosed them to the Archdiocese of Baltimore. On September 19, Monsignor Salvatore Matano wrote that he had spoken with Father Normand Godin, "making him aware of previous concerns as noted in Father LaMountain's file," and noted that McCarthy had contacted the Baltimore Police Department.

Even though the Diocese was aware that there were active criminal investigations by the Baltimore Police Department and local prosecutors into Complainant A's allegations, Bishop Gelineau decided to allow LaMountain to remain at his parish and continue with his current duties. On September 21, Monsignor Matano spoke by phone with Bishop Gelineau and memorialized their conversation in a handwritten memo. According to Matano, Bishop Gelineau told him that, "we should save [LaMountain's] reputation if we can; 'cannot just bounce him out.'" McCarthy met the same day with Monsignor George Frappier and Diocesan lawyer William Murphy, and, according to Monsignor Matano's memo, their recommendation to Matano was "for Fr. LaMountain to remain in current duties and

keep in contact with Fr. Godin and [McCarthy]. To have no contact with juveniles at this time."

LaMountain met with Monsignors Matano and Evans, and McCarthy, on September 23. According to Matano's contemporaneous memo from that meeting, Matano said to LaMountain:

> After careful and serious review of this situation by Msgr. Frappier, Father Godin, Attorney Murphy and Mr. McCarthy, as well as the consideration of Msgr. Evans, and with the approval of Bishop Gelineau . . . you will be allowed to return to the parish to assume your duties. However, be certain that the investigation is continuing because the matter is not resolved . . . . I remind you of the Bishop's instruction to you when he met with you on March 10, 1993: "be very careful of associations with young boys." Also, no young boys should work or be in the rectory (Father said there were "none"). *You should be prepared to absent yourself from the parish in the unfortunate event that the matter becomes public.* I hope most sincerely that you have been honest with us and also that you regard our approach as fair. You have maintained your innocence and we have tried to respect your responses to the allegations made (emphasis added).

Less than a month later, on October 21, 1993, a Baltimore Police detective called McCarthy and informed him that Complainant A's allegations would not be prosecuted because of "exceptional clearance" to successfully trying the case—specifically, (1) the 20-year delay between the alleged incident and the report; (2) no physical evidence; and (3) the lack of corroborating witnesses or other complainants. Notably, the Baltimore authorities did not say that they viewed Complainant A as not credible. Regardless, this appears to have been the end of the matter for the Diocese: once again, nothing in LaMountain's files indicates the Diocese took any further steps to restrict his ministry or limit his interactions with adolescents. It does not appear that the Diocese (or the Maryland authorities) informed Rhode Island law enforcement of the possibility that LaMountain abused Complainant A in Rhode Island at the time. Ultimately McCarthy did, as he put it, "volunteer some information" about Complainant A to Rhode Island State Police in late August 1995, after the State Police had already begun a criminal investigation into other allegations of abuse against LaMountain.

Early the following year, 1994, LaMountain went on sabbatical. From February to April 1994, LaMountain attended sabbatical studies at the Institute for Continuing Theological Education in Rome.

*Suspension, Indictment, and Conviction*

On March 3, 1995, Bishop Gelineau spoke with an individual, Complainant B, who reported that LaMountain sexually abused him from 1984-1991, when Complainant B was between 13 and 20 years old. Complainant B told Bishop Gelineau

that he had already spoken with the State Police because they had contacted him in connection with an ongoing investigation of LaMountain for sexually assaulting Complainant C – an acquaintance of Complainant B.

Having learned that there were two separate allegations of sexual abuse against LaMountain, and that the State Police were involved, Bishop Gelineau now acted swiftly. In contrast with the Diocese's previous responses to allegations against LaMountain in 1989, 1991, and 1993, on the same day that he met with Complainant B, Gelineau placed LaMountain on leave from his assignment as pastor of St. John the Baptist Church in West Warwick and suspended his faculties pending a Diocesan investigation.

On March 5, McCarthy interviewed Complainant B, who described LaMountain's years-long sexual abuse of him. The alleged abuse occurred at both LaMountain's cottage at Spring Lake and later at the rectory of St. John the Baptist in West Warwick and involved both fondling and oral sex. At the end of the interview, McCarthy offered to arrange counseling for Complainant B and discussed Complainant B's legal options with him. The next day, Diocesan lawyer Murphy informed the State Police by letter about the complaint, and McCarthy was in steady phone contact with the State Police by March 10. Likewise, by March 10, the Diocese had procured a defense attorney for LaMountain.

Having now learned of Complainant B and C's allegations, McCarthy reexamined the Baltimore allegations from two years earlier. McCarthy wrote a memo to Bishop Gelineau in which he noted the various similarities between the three complaints, including LaMountain reportedly skinny dipping with the victims before sexually assaulting them. McCarthy also noted in this memo that "misconduct allegations span [LaMountain's] entire priestly life from seminary to present."

On Sunday, March 19, 1995, Bishop Gelineau addressed LaMountain's congregation at St. John the Baptist. According to the text of his speech, Gelineau explained in very general terms the basis for LaMountain's suspension—a man's allegation that "several years ago there had been serious misconduct by Fr. LaMountain toward him." Gelineau reminded parishioners that it was "too early to judge," before telling them that he shared their love and appreciation for LaMountain, and asking them to pray that "Father Mike" receives the "same strength" that Jesus bore when carrying the Cross to his crucifixion. Gelineau then devoted two lines to LaMountain's accusers: "We pray also for all those who are hurt by this. If the allegations are true that there are victims of misconduct, our hearts and prayers go out to them and everything possible will be done to heal their hurt."

In an interview with the Associated Press a few days after his address to parishioners at St. John the Baptist, Bishop Gelineau stated, "I never foresaw anything like this happening."

Within days, the Diocese received yet another complaint against LaMountain. On March 30, a man ("Complainant D") called the Chancery Office and reported that

LaMountain had sexually abused him starting in the mid-1960s, when he was about 12 to 14 years old and LaMountain was approximately 16 to 18 years old and in seminary. In an April 3, 1995, interview with McCarthy, Complainant D recounted an incident when the two went swimming before retreating to LaMountain's Spring Lake cottage, where, Complainant D stated, LaMountain forcibly raped him, using physical violence to do so. McCarthy told Complainant D that this likely qualified as first-degree sexual assault, which had no statute of limitations, and asked him whether he wanted to speak with the police. Complainant D replied, "not right now." McCarthy then summarized the allegations in a memo to Bishop Gelineau, remarking that he found Complainant D to be "very credible and truthful," and observing that "if [the] allegations are true, this will be the first known case involving physical violence that we have involving a member of the clergy." Soon after this interview, the Diocese began paying Complainant D's therapy costs.

Despite the severity of Complainant D's allegations, and the fact that the Diocese was already in steady contact with the Rhode Island State Police about LaMountain, it does not appear that the Diocese notified State Police (or another law enforcement agency) about Complainant D's allegations. Two years later, in April 1997, Complainant D spoke publicly at a press conference held by survivors of clergy sexual abuse and complained that over two years had elapsed since his disclosure to the Diocese, but LaMountain had not yet been tried. McCarthy, in an internal memo responding to these comments, wrote, "[i]t is important to point out at the time of the interview. . . I requested that I contact the police regarding his allegations. [Complainant D] requested at the time that this not be done, but that if he felt at a later occasion he was able to talk to the police, then he would in fact do that."

The Diocese continued to hear from additional complainants directly and indirectly through the spring and summer of 1995. In early April, the Diocese received a complaint that LaMountain had abused a 14-year-old boy at St. Kevin Parish in Warwick ("Complainant E"). It does not appear from the records produced by the Diocese that McCarthy ever connected with Complainant E or referred his allegations to State Police either.

Likewise, in early July 1995, the Diocese was contacted by its insurer to advise that two additional individuals, Complainant C (whom the Diocese already knew of through Complainant B) and another man ("Complainant F"), had likewise filed civil complaints alleging abuse by LaMountain. Complainant C reported that LaMountain had molested him over a five-year period that began in 1983 or 1984, when he was approximately 14, both in Rhode Island and elsewhere. Complainant F alleged that LaMountain first molested him when he was 13 years old and an altar boy at St. John the Baptist Church in West Warwick. According to Complainant F, LaMountain enticed him with cigarettes and alcohol to keep him coming back to the priest.

On July 19, 1995, a State Police detective sent a letter to McCarthy, formally notifying the Diocese of its criminal investigation into LaMountain's alleged sexual misconduct. In addition to requesting documents concerning "any previous investigations or allegations" against LaMountain, the detective sought documents

concerning the altar boy service of seven named individuals. While the Diocese was already aware of four of these individuals—Complainants B, C, E, and F—three new names appeared, those of three brothers ("Complainants G, H, and I"). Unbeknownst to the Diocese, Complainant G had been interviewed by the State Police months earlier. He reported that in the summer of 1981 or 1982, when he was approximately 10 years old, and his brothers were 11 and 12, LaMountain repeatedly sexually assaulted all of them at his Spring Lake Cottage in Burrillville.

In September 1995, State Police informed the Diocese that while its investigation of LaMountain would continue, they had already obtained enough evidence to present the case to a grand jury. By December, Complainants C, F, and G filed lawsuits against LaMountain and the Diocese in Rhode Island Superior Court. Later that month, Bishop Gelineau accepted LaMountain's official resignation as pastor of St. John the Baptist.

The Rhode Island State Police and the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office continued to investigate LaMountain throughout the following year. In August 1996, while interviewing a complainant as part of a separate Diocesan investigation into Father Peter Scagnelli, Director McCarthy learned of yet another individual ("Complainant J"), who had reportedly been sexually abused by LaMountain during the 1970s. Again, there is no indication that the Diocese contacted Complainant J or relayed these allegations to State Police. By September 1996, Diocesan records show, Bishop Gelineau and other Diocesan leaders began to discuss LaMountain's laicization. According to Director McCarthy's memo, Bishop Gelineau told Father LaMountain that "he should be considering laicization as he will never function again as a Priest in the Diocese." But, as discussed further below, LaMountain did not apply for laicization until 2003 and the Bishop did not take any steps to initiate a canonical proceeding.

On October 20, 1997, a grand jury indicted LaMountain on two counts of first-degree sexual assault, six counts of second-degree sexual assault, and one count of second-degree child molestation. These charges related to LaMountain's abuse of Complainants C, E, F, G, and H. LaMountain was released on bail, and pretrial proceedings in the case lasted through 1998. The Diocese remained engaged in LaMountain's criminal case during this time. For example, in June 1998, Director McCarthy met with both LaMountain's defense attorney, who was paid by the Diocese, and an Assistant Attorney General to discuss the case. McCarthy memorialized the meetings in internal memos. According to McCarthy, the assistant attorney general told McCarthy that the sentencing guidelines for first degree sexual assault was 20-30 years prison and the Office would be asking for jailtime for LaMountain. In response, McCarthy suggested that LaMountain be given a minimal jail sentence, paroled in ten months, and released to "RECON," a "treatment center" for clergy located in Dittmer, Missouri.

On January 29, 1999, LaMountain pled guilty to all nine criminal charges. In exchange, as part of a negotiated plea deal that was approved by his victims, LaMountain was sentenced to a 12-year-suspended sentence with probation on each

of the nine counts, to run concurrently; he was also required to register as a sex offender, undergo counseling, and write apology letters to his victims, several of whom were present in the courtroom and addressed LaMountain before sentencing. In a press release issued that day, Bishop Mulvee said, "I cannot express adequately the deep sorrow I feel for the victims and their families."

*Post-Conviction, Laicization, and Subsequent Allegations*

Remarkably, even after Father LaMountain was sentenced, the Diocese continued to publicly maintain that it first became aware of sexual misconduct allegations against LaMountain in 1995. Bishop Mulvee, in the same press release issued the day of LaMountain's guilty plea, said that "[c]harges of past misconduct by Fr. LaMountain came to light in March of 1995, when a report came directly to Bishop Gelineau . . . [who] immediately placed Fr. LaMountain on an indefinite leave of absence." The Diocese took this position even more forcefully in May 2002. At that time, a Providence Journal reporter asked the Diocese, in connection with a forthcoming article about LaMountain, whether "the Diocese ever received a complaint about him, and whether any investigations were done – even if they were found not to be credible or unsubstantiated." The Diocese's communications director responded that, "[t]he first complaint about Fr. LaMountain came directly to Bishop Gelineau on March 3, 1995. . . There were no previous complaints that we know of against LaMountain." And asked whether LaMountain was ever "sent for treatment," the Diocese replied that there was "no indication of [LaMountain] having received counseling prior to" his 1999 criminal conviction. As set forth above, these responses were untrue and incomplete as the Diocese was aware of allegations as early as 1989, 1991 and 1993. Bishop Tobin ultimately acknowledged in civil discovery responses in 2008 that Diocesan personnel had received these allegations. The Diocese was also aware that LaMountain was sent for an evaluation, if not treatment, at Johns Hopkins in 1989.

The Diocese continued to financially support Father LaMountain for over six years following his criminal conviction, affording him a living stipend and benefits through the Clergy Special Assignment fund. In September 2003, Diocesan personnel, including Bishop Mulvee, met with LaMountain to discuss his canonical status as a Diocesan priest in light of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, which was published the previous year. They advised LaMountain that he could either seek voluntary laicization or a canonical trial and forced removal from the clerical state. LaMountain formally requested laicization from Pope John Paul II in October 2003.

In an accompanying letter from Bishop Mulvee to Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (future Pope Benedict XVI), Mulvee requested that LaMountain be laicized as soon as possible. Notably, Mulvee wrote that the allegations that precipitated LaMountain's suspension and conviction came to light in March 1995, and that the Diocese suspended LaMountain at that time "[g]iven the credibility of [Complainant B] . . . *as well as other corroborating evidence*"— seemingly a tacit reference to the previous

complaints the Diocese had received about LaMountain. Indeed, in the *acta*[16] submitted by the Diocese to the Vatican as part of LaMountain's laicization, the Diocese included the Baltimore allegations from 1993. Bishop Mulvee's letter to Cardinal Ratzinger closed: "The scandal and public notoriety of this and other cases of sexual abuse by clerics in the Diocese of Providence has already caused inestimable damage. Over ten years of incessant adverse media attention and public scrutiny resulting from these tragic and scandalous misdeed[s] have seriously jeopardized our ability to carry out effectively the pastoral mission of the Church."

The Vatican officially granted LaMountain's laicization request on February 11, 2005. The Diocese ceased compensating LaMountain in April of that year and terminated his benefits in September.

In mid-August 2010, a man ("Complainant K") contacted the Diocese through counsel to report that LaMountain had abused him as a child in the early 1980s, when LaMountain was assigned to St. Kevin Parish in Warwick. McCarthy interviewed Complainant K at his attorney's office in mid-September. During the interview, Complainant K reported that when he was between 9-11 years old and training to become an altar boy, LaMountain repeatedly abused him in both the church and rectory at St. Kevin's. The alleged abuse included anal rape, and LaMountain reportedly threatened the boy that he would be kidnapped and go to hell if he told anyone. The day of the interview, McCarthy summarized Complainant K's allegations in a letter to the State Police, adding that LaMountain had passed away from leukemia on August 25, 2010. Citing LaMountain's death, the State Police closed the investigation by mid-September.

Approximately five years later, in October 2015, a man ("Complainant L") contacted the OEC to report that LaMountain had abused him as a child. OEC Director Kevin O'Brien, who had recently replaced McCarthy, interviewed Complainant L. During the interview, Complainant L stated that he met LaMountain at St. Catherine's in Warwick in the 1970s; he was between 8-10 years old and training to become an altar boy, and LaMountain was an assistant to the pastor of the church as he was still a seminarian and training to become a priest. On one occasion, Complainant L said, LaMountain drove him to a McDonald's parking lot where he performed oral sex on Complainant L. Complainant L said that shortly after the incident he disclosed it to a Sister at St. Catherine's, who reportedly consoled him and apologized, but never reported the abuse. O'Brien notified State Police of Complainant L's allegations the week after the interview.

A few days after his interview of Complainant L, Director O'Brien also interviewed the priest who was head pastor of St. Catherine's at the time of the allegations. Remarkably, this was the same priest who, nearly four decades earlier, in 1976, had written the first documented warning about LaMountain, expressing

[16] A document setting forth the various allegations against a priest.

concern over then-deacon LaMountain's "relationship with youths." The pastor wrote in 1976, "I feel that at times he [LaMountain] should not be so close to them." The priest told O'Brien that he recalled Complainant L, remembered that he would have had frequent contact with LaMountain, but had no recollection of an allegation by Complainant L against LaMountain.

In November 2024, an investigator from the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office contacted Complainants K and L, who verified their complaints. Complainant K also told the investigator that the sexual abuse has had lasting effects on his personal life and that he wants the Diocese to "take care of them." Complainant L explained that he has attempted suicide multiple times because of the trauma he has endured and told the investigator that the Church knew about the abuse yet continued to send LaMountain to different parishes where he abused more children, noting "nothing was ever done."

**Status**

LaMountain died on August 25, 2010. The Diocese included LaMountain on its List of Credibly Accused Clergy. With 12 known victims, LaMountain is one of the most infamous child molesters in Rhode Island history.

# Father Norman Leboeuf

| Born | Ordained | Removed | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Aug. 8, 1910 | May 22, 1937 | N/A | Mar. 30, 1983 |

**Partial Assignment History**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1941 | Sacred Heart Church, Pawtucket |
| 1941 – 1957 | Our Lady of Providence Seminary, Warwick |
| 1957 | St. Jude Church, Lincoln |
| 1957 – 1964 | St. Michael Church, Providence |
| 1964 – 1968 | St. Agnes Church, Providence |
| 1968 – 1980 | St. Edward Church, Pawtucket |

**Summary**

Father Norman Leboeuf reportedly sexually abused a 14- to 15-year-old boy in 1965 or 1966 while serving at St. Agnes Parish in Providence. The complainant first contacted Director of the Diocese Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") Kevin O'Brien to report his allegations in November 2018. O'Brien interviewed the complainant in January 2019. During the in-person interview, the complainant reported that in the spring of 1965 or 1966, when he was 14 or 15 years old, he served as an altar server for a wedding that Leboeuf attended. At the end of the reception, a friend drove both him and Leboeuf home, and during the ride Father Leboeuf reportedly fondled the complainant's groin area despite his attempts to stop him. After the complainant was dropped off, Leboeuf reportedly called him at home and asked him to return to St. Agnes Rectory so that he could apologize in person. According to the complainant, he reluctantly complied, influenced by Leboeuf's stature and authority as a priest. Once there, Father Leboeuf reportedly attempted to kiss the complainant and touch his genitals, but the complainant was able to escape and had no further contact with Leboeuf. During the interview, the complainant told O'Brien that he disclosed the incident to a close friend almost immediately after it happened.

Days after the interview, the complainant emailed O'Brien the contact information of this friend and said he would be willing to corroborate the complainant's account. O'Brien notified Rhode Island State Police of the allegations by letter on January 22, 2019. The case was presented to the Diocesan Review Board on February 5, 2019. There is no record of the Board's determination or recommendation on that date, if any occurred. The next day, O'Brien emailed the complainant with an offer to coordinate therapy services. State Police closed its investigation in March 2019 because Leboeuf was deceased.

The complainant expressed dismay when, in 2019, the Diocese released its List of Credibly Accused Clergy and Leboeuf was not included. In a 2019 article published in *The Providence Journal*, the complainant wondered "is there an insinuation because there is an omission that my report was less than credible? I identified a witness to the incident and I seriously doubt if [Director O'Brien] ever followed up and tried to find that person." Diocesan records do not reflect a record of any outreach to the witness the complainant identified.

In 2024, Rhode Island State Police contacted the complainant. The complainant confirmed the allegations and that he disclosed the abuse to a close friend after it happened. State Police spoke with the complainant's friend who confirmed that the complainant had told him sometime in their early teenage years that after coming back from a church event, Father Leboeuf touched him in the back of a car, though he did not recall the complainant going into detail about where he was touched or for how long. He also recalled a second incident where Father Leboeuf tried to hug and kiss the complainant but was unsure when that occurred.

The State Police also spoke with the person who reportedly drove the car when the reported abuse occurred. That individual recalled the wedding preceding the incident and stated that he would often drive Father Leboeuf around to parties. He did not recall the complainant being in the car after the wedding, denied seeing any inappropriate touching of the complainant by Leboeuf, nor did he recognize the complainant's picture when the above-mentioned article about these allegations was published in *The Providence Journal* in 2019, but he did recall the complainant's name.

**Status**

Father Leboeuf is deceased. The Diocese did not include Leboeuf on its List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father Paul Henry Leech

| Born | Ordained | Suspended | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mar. 10, 1950 | Sep. 26, 1980 | Jul. 9, 1984 | No |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1979 – 1980 | St. Philip Church, Greenville |
| 1980 – 1983 | St. Joseph Church, Woonsocket |
| 1983 – 1984 | St. Jude Church, Lincoln |
| 1984 | *Suspended on leave* |

## Summary

Father Paul Henry Leech's priestly career was short lived. He was suspended from ministry in 1984, a mere four years after his ordination, after admitting to sexually assaulting four children. In 1985, Leech pled *nolo contendere* to molesting those four children between 1979 and 1984. Since that date, two additional complainants reported that Leech sexually abused them.

Father Leech reportedly admitted the abuse to the parents of four of his victims in early 1984, prompting a referral from the Rhode Island Department of Children and Families ("DCF") to the Rhode Island State Police. The Diocese suspended Leech from his duties at St. Jude Church in Lincoln and, in July 1984, he was criminally charged in an eight-count information in Providence County Superior Court. The Diocese placed Leech on leave of absence at that time. In August 1985, just before his trial was scheduled to begin, Father Leech pled *nolo contendere* to eight felony counts including second-degree sexual assault, third-degree sexual assault, abominable and detestable crimes against nature, and simple assault. He was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment, with three years to serve at the Adult Correctional Institutions ("ACI") and the balance suspended with probation.

The Diocese continued to financially support Father Leech following his conviction. In 1991, Leech wrote a letter to Bishop Louis Gelineau, requesting instructions for how he could petition for laicization, though he was never laicized. He is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

## The Reported Abuse

Father Leech began abusing two brothers ("Complainant A" and "Complainant B") at some point in 1982. Leech first met the boys after their father died, when he paid visits to the grieving family. Complainant A was approximately 14 years old, and Complainant B was about 10 years old when Leech began abusing them. According

to Complainant A, Leech sexually abused him between 20-30 times at the family home and the rectory of St. Jude Church in Lincoln. The abuse started by Leech rubbing the complainant's back and stomach and escalated to Leech fondling the child's genitals and oral sex. According to Complainant B, Leech sexually abused him about 30 times at the family's home and in the rectories of St. Joseph Church in Woonsocket and St. Jude's in Lincoln. The abuse consisted of Leech rubbing the child's stomach and then progressed to Leech fondling his genitals. Complainant B stated that Father Leech would talk to the complainant about his recently deceased father while molesting him.

Father Leech began sexually abusing another boy ("Complainant C") in 1983. Complainant C was approximately 14 years old at the time, and Leech was a close friend of his parents. The abuse first occurred at Complainant C's home, and later at St. Joseph Church in Woonsocket and St. Jude Church in Lincoln. Leech touched the boy's genitalia and performed oral sex on him on approximately 15-20 occasions.

In early 1984, Father Leech abused a 16-year-old boy ("Complainant D"). Leech drove Complainant D to the rectory at St. Jude's, where he gave Complainant D alcohol, touched his leg, and then attempted to touch Complainant D's genitals.

Complainant E came forward in 2014 and reported that Leech abused him twice in 1979, when he was about 15 years old, while Leech was working at St. Philip Church in Greenville. On one occasion Leech reportedly fondled the boy in the bathroom of St. Philip's, and on a second occasion Leech reportedly forced the boy to perform oral sex on him. Complainant E reported that he suspected his younger brother was Leech's "intended target."

In 2020, an attorney representing yet another complainant ("Complainant F") contacted the Diocese. He reported that Leech abused Complainant F in the summer of 1984, while he was a student at St. Jude Church in Lincoln, by fondling his genitalia and grinding his penis against the complainant's body.

**Diocesan Response**

In early 1984, Leech reportedly admitted to the parents of Complainants A, B, C, and D that he had been sexually abusing their children. The Chief Investigator of the Rhode Island Department of Children and Families brought the abuse to the attention of the Rhode Island State Police on May 7, 1984. The preceding Friday, May 4, 1984, the Diocese appears to have coordinated Leech's "temporary emergency placement" at the House of Affirmation, a known treatment center in Massachusetts. Leech was subsequently arrested by the State Police and charged with three counts of second-degree sexual assault, two counts of third-degree sexual assault, two counts of abominable and detestable crimes against nature, and one count of simple assault, for his abuse of Complainants A, B, C, and D. The Diocese placed Leech on a leave of absence in May 1984, and on July 9, 1984, it suspended his priestly duties.

The Diocese remained in contact with and supported Leech both during and after his criminal case. A June 1984 memo from Auxiliary Bishop Kenneth Angell authorized the payment of $300 per month to Leech from the "Special Clergy Assistance Fund." By March 1985, while his criminal case was pending, Leech was still residing at the House of Affirmation treatment center, which the Diocese paid for via the "General Fund" and the "Clergy Benefits Fund." In a March 1985 letter from Father Leech to Bishop Angell, Leech wrote, "[w]hen we talked on the phone you mentioned the topic of financial help 'to get me started.'" A Diocesan memo around the same time "regarding costs accumulated to date" for Leech includes $2,500 for "legal services."

When Leech was sentenced to prison in October 1985, the Diocese commented that it would continue to support Leech, yet "after careful and prayerful consideration, it has been determined that [Leech] will not continue to serve as a priest in the Diocese of Providence." Leech said during sentencing that he too was the victim of sexual abuse as a child. Bishop Angell visited Leech at the ACI and, in October 1986, he wrote a letter to the Parole Board advocating for Leech's release "as soon as possible," noting that Leech "will not function as a priest in the near future."

The Diocese continued to financially support Leech through 1987 and 1988, paying his tuition at Monroe Community College in Rochester, New York and later at St. John Fisher College's Business School.

In April 2014, Complainant E contacted the Diocese to report that Leech had abused him once between 1979 and 1980. Four days later, Robert McCarthy, Director of the Diocese Office of Education and Compliance, alerted senior Diocesan officials, and the following day he forwarded the allegation to the Rhode Island State Police. The investigation was closed after the State Police determined that prosecution was barred by the statute of limitations. Complainant E spoke to McCarthy again in June 2014 and stated that Leech had sexually assaulted him on not one, but two occasions. He reported that in 1979, Leech forced him to perform oral sex on Leech for several minutes. The State Police investigated and determined that at the time of the reported assault, the statute of limitations would have been three years, again barring prosecution. The complainant added that he was initially embarrassed to disclose this second assault. This Office did not receive records detailing any further investigation by the Diocese. In 2024, State Police attempted to contact Complainant E without success.

In July 2020, Complainant F contacted the Diocese through counsel to report that Father Leech had abused him around 1984 at St. Jude Church in Lincoln. The Diocese forwarded the letter to State Police, who interviewed Complainant F. This investigation was also closed on statute of limitations grounds in December 2020.

In 2024, and again in 2025, this Office wrote to Father Leech notifying him of the allegations summarized here and invited him to speak with the State Police. Leech acknowledged receipt of the letters but declined this Office's invitation.

**Status**

Father Leech is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father Roland Lepire

| Born | Ordained | Penal Dismissal | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Feb. 18, 1949 | Aug. 23, 1975 | Oct. 1, 2004 | Feb. 26, 2025 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1974 – 1975 | St. James Church, Manville |
| 1975 – 1979 | St. Aloysius Church, Woonsocket |
| 1979 | St. Mary Church, Cranston |
| Summer 1980 | "*Sick Leave*," Brothers of Jesus Crucified, Providence |
| 1980 – 1986 | St. Matthew Church, Central Falls |
| 1986 – 1991 | St. Leo the Great Church, Pawtucket |
| 1991 – 1996 | St. Vincent de Paul Church, Coventry |
| 1996 – 2004 | *Suspended on leave* |
| 2004 | *Dismissed from the clerical state* |

## Summary

Father Roland Lepire is accused of sexually abusing at least six boys between the ages of 8 and 14 years old from 1975 to 1980, at parish assignments in Woonsocket, Cranston, and Central Falls. Lepire's complainants reported that the priest touched their genitals while wrestling and tickling them, and one said that Father Lepire forced oral sex on him. The mother of another one of the boys claimed that she reported her son's allegation of abuse to the Woonsocket Police Department. Soon after, she said, a detective contacted her to relay an offer from Bishop Gelineau to remove Lepire from St. Aloysius and "handle the situation" in exchange for her refraining from taking "any legal action." Diocesan records and other information developed during this Investigation confirm that in February 1979, in response to the mother's complaint, Bishop Gelineau transferred Lepire from St. Aloysius to St. Mary's—where Lepire's abuse continued.

In February 1996, after one of Lepire's victims from St. Mary's in Cranston disclosed his abuse to the State Police and then filed a lawsuit, the Diocese placed Lepire on administrative leave and suspended his priestly faculties—but it did not initiate canonical proceedings for his laicization until yet another victim reported his abuse by Lepire, and insisted that the Diocese commence those proceedings, in 2002. Lepire was ultimately dismissed from the priesthood in 2004, having admitted to abusing several young boys.

Father Lepire is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

**The Reported Abuse and Diocesan Response**

Father Lepire reportedly sexually abused two young boys in the late 1970s while assigned to St. Aloysius Parish in Woonsocket, Rhode Island.

Complainant A, who first spoke with the State Police regarding his abuse in 1996 and then filed a lawsuit in 1999, alleged that between 1977 and 1979, when he was between 8 and 10 years old and living in Woonsocket, Father Lepire repeatedly fondled him and exposed himself to the boy in the rectory of St. Aloysius. Complainant A said that the abuse began when Lepire offered him haircuts in the rectory basement; afterwards, Lepire reportedly wrestled and tickled the boy and touched his genitals. On other occasions, Complainant A reported, Lepire brought the boy to his bedroom in the rectory and fondled the boy and exposed himself there. Complainant A identified to the State Police another individual, Complainant C, whom he believed had also been abused by Lepire at St. Aloysius. The Diocese ultimately settled Complainant A's lawsuit for a six-figure sum as part of a mass settlement of abuse claims in late 2002.

According to an affidavit submitted by Complainant C's mother in a lawsuit filed by Complainant B in 1996 against Lepire, Bishop Gelineau, and others (discussed below), around 1978, while residing in Woonsocket, Complainant C came home from church one day and told his mother that Lepire had put his hands down the boy's pants. Complainant C's mother stated in her affidavit that she brought her son to the police station for questioning, was told by the police that they believed her son, and they would be in touch. A few days later, according to the affidavit, an unidentified Woonsocket police detective arrived at her home to deliver a message from Bishop Gelineau seeking her permission "to handle this situation." According to the affidavit, Bishop Gelineau proposed to remove Father Lepire from the parish and give him necessary counseling in exchange for the mother's promise not to press charges. To spare her son a trial, she said, she signed the document, and within a few weeks Lepire had been transferred to St. Mary Church in Cranston.

We found no such document among the records produced by the Diocese to this Office—nor any other contemporaneous reference to the mother's complaint about her son's abuse. In an affidavit related to Complainant B's 1996 lawsuit, an officer in charge of the juvenile bureau of the Woonsocket Police Department in 1978 and 1979 stated that she never received a complaint concerning Lepire. Bishop Gelineau also testified in Complainant B's lawsuit that he did not have any communications with the Woonsocket Police Department about Lepire. But in interrogatory answers in lawsuits filed by Complaint B and Complainant F in 2003 (also discussed below), Bishop Gelineau recalled receiving a phone call from the pastor of St. Aloysius in the late 1970s, while Lepire was serving as assistant pastor there. The pastor, according to Bishop Gelineau, told Gelineau that *he* had been contacted by Woonsocket Police in response to complaints from parents that Lepire had been engaging in wrestling and inappropriate physical activity around the rectory, which Gelineau understood to be "horseplay" and nothing "of a sexual nature." The pastor reported that the police had recommended that the Diocese transfer

Lepire to another assignment. Bishop Gelineau said that he "concurred with their suggested action" of transferring Lepire.

Among Lepire's records produced by the Diocese to this Office is a confidential memorandum authored by Bishop Angell on February 6, 1979, which reads: "For confidential reasons, Fr. Roland Lepire now at St. Aloysius, Woon must be transferred at once. He should not be reassigned in the Woonsocket area."

In 1996, Lepire himself confirmed what the "confidential reasons" were for his transfer from St. Aloysius. According to a treatment evaluation that Lepire received that year, he admitted that in approximately 1979, he fondled a boy's genitals. As a result, he recounted, the boy's parents filed a police report, but "[n]o charges were filed with the understanding that [he] would continue in therapy and that he would be transferred out of that particular parish . . . the Bishop was understanding and transferred him into a new parish with four other priests in a rectory situation." Furthermore, in 2025, Complainant C likewise confirmed to the State Police as part of this Investigation that his allegations against Lepire were true; he also said that he recalled accompanying his mother to the Woonsocket Police Department, after which Lepire was transferred. He added that he later retained counsel and received a monetary settlement.

According to the Diocesan records, on February 26, 1979, Auxiliary Bishop Angell wrote to Lepire, who at the time was still living in the rectory of St. Aloysius, to inform him of his reassignment to St. Mary Church in Cranston, beginning in early March. While there, Lepire reportedly sexually abused at least two additional young boys, Complainants B and D.

Complainant B, who first disclosed his abuse to the State Police in 1995, and subsequently filed a lawsuit in 1996, told the State Police that he met Lepire while working at St. Mary Rectory and serving as an altar boy at the church. He stated that on several occasions in the rectory, and then in the church itself, Lepire "tickled" him in a manner that quickly escalated to Lepire unbuttoning the boy's pants and fondling his genitals. Complainant B explained that Lepire used force to restrain and abuse him and that twice Lepire put his mouth on the boy's penis. He reported that the abuse occurred once or twice a week over a period of several months.

Complainant D, who first reported his abuse in a letter to Bishop Robert Mulvee in March 2002, alleged that in 1978 or 1979, when he was 11 or 12 years old, Lepire sexually abused him while he was waiting for a youth Catholic education class to begin. Specifically, Complainant D alleged that Lepire asked him to erase the classroom blackboard, but then Lepire picked him up, put him on his lap, and reached down into his pants.

According to a May 1980 memorandum to Bishop Angell and the Diocesan Personnel Board, Bishop Gelineau wrote that he had removed Lepire from St. Mary's, explaining: "It appears that any parish involvement and ministry for him places too much pressure and results in depression bordering on illness. At this time a parish

assignment for Roland is not possible." Instead, Bishop Gelineau directed Lepire to temporarily reside at the "Brothers of Jesus Crucified at St. Maria's Home" in Providence, while taking summer courses at Providence College. As for a future assignment, Bishop Gelineau stated, remarkably: "It appears that it would be possible for [Lepire] to take a teaching position in a high school."

In discovery responses as part of Complainant F's 2003 lawsuit, Bishop Gelineau said that he did not recall receiving any complaints of sexual misconduct about Lepire while he was at St. Mary's, nor did he recall the circumstances of Lepire's removal there. But just as Father Lepire had clarified in the 1996 evaluation the actual reason for his removal from St. Aloysius, he likewise explained the basis for his removal from St. Mary's—namely his continued sexual abuse of children there:

> Father states that the Bishop was understanding and transferred him into a new parish assignment with four other priests in a rectory situation. However, within eight months of being in the new assignment, Father Lepire reports that he touched four, twelve-year-old boys, one time each over the period of one month . . . Father states he did not understand his own behavior; consequently, he approached the Bishop and admitted his wrongdoing. He states that the Bishop removed him from the parish and for the next four months he worked as a chaplain for a community of Brothers and took classes at Providence College.

Next, according to the Diocesan records, in September 1980, Bishop Gelineau reassigned Lepire as assistant pastor at St. Matthew Parish in Central Falls. There, Lepire reportedly sexually abused two more boys, Complainant E and Complainant F.

Complainant E, who first disclosed to the Central Falls Police Department in 2006, reported that a priest matching Lepire's physical description abused him when he was 14 years old and a student at St. Matthew & Notre Dame Consolidated School in 1979 or 1980. He alleged that he went onto the parish grounds while playing outside and was called into the parish by one of the priests, who began to tickle and hold him and then groped the boy's genitals over his clothing. Complainant E said he broke free but went back after realizing he had left his coat; when he did, he saw the priest with his pants down and his hands over his own genitals. When reporting the incident to the police in 1996, Complainant E provided a photograph that contained a partial image of the person he identified as his abuser. The Diocese, using the photograph, the physical description of the priest, and the fact that Lepire was assigned to St. Matthew Parish as an assistant pastor beginning in September 1980, concluded that the accused priest was Lepire. The police forwarded the complaint to Director McCarthy and ultimately concluded that Complainant E's complaint was not prosecutable due to the statute of limitations.

Complainant F, who sued Lepire and the Diocese in 2003, alleged that he was sexually abused by Lepire at St. Matthew's in Central Falls in 1980, while serving there as an altar boy. His lawyer characterized the abuse as a "brutal sexual assault," and

Complainant F, who spoke with State Police as part of this Investigation in 2024, confirmed his allegation of a first-degree sexual assault. The Diocese ultimately settled Complainant F's claims in 2008 for a six-figure sum.

Lepire remained in active ministry for over 15 years following the reported incident, at St. Matthew's and then at St. Leo the Great in Pawtucket (1986-1991) and St. Vincent de Paul in Coventry (1991-1996).

In June 1995, while Lepire was serving at St. Vincent de Paul, Complainant B reported his abuse by Lepire at St. Mary's to the Rhode Island State Police. In August 1995, Robert McCarthy, Director of the Diocese Office of Education and Compliance, promised the State Police that Diocese officials would not contact Lepire until the criminal investigation was concluded. The State Police ultimately closed its investigation into Complainant B's allegations due to the complainant's purported lack of cooperation.

In February 1996, Complainant B sued Lepire, the Diocese of Providence, Bishops Gelineau and Angell, and St. Mary Church. The Diocese released a statement on February 8, 1996, acknowledging that it had become aware of Complainant B's allegation in 1995 but had allowed Lepire to remain in ministry because it claimed that the complainant's credibility was questionable and there were no other complaints against him. This latter statement is plainly contradicted by what the Diocesan records reflect regarding the Diocese's knowledge of previous complaints against Lepire in Woonsocket and Cranston. The Diocese ultimately settled Complainant B's case in 2002 for over $300,000.

Bishop Gelineau placed Lepire on administrative leave on February 9, 1996, explaining in a letter that, "[g]iven the nature of the publicity that has arisen as a result of the accusations made against you, I am pleased that you concur with the wisdom of taking administrative leave from your parish assignment." Gelineau instructed Lepire not to perform mass in public or administer the sacraments, while also advising that he would continue to receive his usual compensation and health insurance. According to the Diocesan records, Lepire never again served as a priest.

In May 1996, Bishop Gelineau directed Lepire to undergo a psychiatric assessment. That July, Lepire traveled to the Anodos Center at St. John Vianney Hospital in Downingtown, Pennsylvania—a facility used by the Catholic Church to evaluate priests accused of child sexual abuse. As already noted, the Anodos Center records include admissions of abuse by Lepire and include references to the Bishop's awareness of, and response to, Lepire's alleged abuse at St. Aloysius in Woonsocket and St. Mary's in Cranston.

Lepire formally resigned as the pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Parish on January 4, 1997, having already been on administrative leave with suspended faculties for nearly a year.

In the summer of 1997, Father Pierre Plante informed Bishop Gelineau's successor, Bishop Robert Mulvee, that a St. Benedict parish trustee was concerned that Father Lepire was living in St. Benedict Rectory. Plante himself also expressed concern that Lepire was not being supervised or receiving counseling. It is not clear from the records produced by the Diocese what, if anything, Bishop Mulvee did in response to Father Plante's concerns. However, a financial memorandum dated September 12, 1997, indicated that Lepire was no longer living at St. Benedict Rectory.

In March 2002, Complainant D reported his allegations of abuse to Bishop Mulvee and requested that the Diocese begin a canonical review of Father Lepire's behavior. McCarthy forwarded the allegation to the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office and interviewed Complainant D in April. The Office later advised Complainant D that prosecution was foreclosed by the statute of limitations. In August 2002, Complainant D submitted a canonical complaint about the reported abuse by Lepire and requested that the Diocese forward the document to the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith ("CDF") on his behalf. On January 22, 2003, the CDF authorized Bishop Mulvee to initiate a penal process against Lepire.

Bishop Mulvee reportedly met with Lepire in September 2003 and convinced him to request voluntary laicization. Lepire admitted responsibility for the allegations against him in a September 2003 letter to the Pope, and Bishop Mulvee noted in a subsequent letter to the CDF that Lepire "admitted that he had inappropriately touched several twelve-year-old boys since his ordination."

Bishop Mulvee and Chancellor John Darcy reportedly met with Lepire on October 1, 2004, to inform him that the CDF responded with a rescript for a penal dismissal rather than for laicization, but Lepire retained "the authority to administer the Sacrament of Reconciliation in emergency situations." During the meeting, Lepire made another admission and then, in Darcy's words, "surprisingly spoke of two other similar incidents." There is no record in the documents produced to this Office that any Diocese official reported these additional admissions to law enforcement.

In 2020 and 2024, as part of this Investigation, State Police attempted to contact Lepire's known victims. Detectives were able to contact Complainants A and F who confirmed their prior reports of abuse. Detectives were unable to reach Complainants B, D and E. In 2025, State Police spoke with Complainant C, who confirmed his prior allegations against Lepire. He recalled accompanying his mother to the Woonsocket Police Department to report his allegations and that Lepire was moved immediately thereafter. He stated that he later retained a lawyer to sue the Diocese and received a $25,000 settlement.

In November 2024, this Office sent Lepire a notification of the allegations against him described in this summary. We did not receive a response from him prior to his death in February 2025.

**Status**

Father Lepire is deceased. The Diocese included Lepire on its List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father Alfred Lonardo

| Born | Ordained | Retirement | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Feb. 4, 1937 | Jun. 8, 1963 | Feb. 4, 2007 | Jul. 9, 2022 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1963 | St. Francis Church, Wakefield |
| 1963 – 1973 | St. Teresa of Avila Church, Providence |
| 1973 – 1975 | St. Mary Church, Cranston |
| 1975 – 1977 | Adult Correctional Institutions, Cranston |
| 1977 – 1986 | Holy Cross Church, Providence |
| 1986 – 2002 | St. Mary Church, Cranston |
| 2002 | *Sabbatical*, North American College, Rome, Italy |
| 2003 | St. Augustine Church, Providence |
| 2007 | *Retired* |

## Summary

In early 2022, a complainant reported to the Rhode Island State Police and the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office that between 1994 and 1996, starting when he was 15 years old, he was sexually abused by the pastor and assistant pastor of St. Mary Church in Cranston, Father Alfred Lonardo and Father Daniel Azzarone. Following an investigation, this Office determined that the case was not prosecutable as a first-degree sexual assault due to insufficient evidence of force or coercion and because second-degree sexual assault charges were foreclosed by the applicable statute of limitations.

Father Lonardo is not included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

## Background

In November 2001, Father Daniel Azzarone[17] was arrested and later pled *nolo contendere* to two counts of first-degree sexual assault, admitting that he coerced two 16-year-old altar boys to have sex with him inside St. Mary Rectory. For the entire period that Azzarone was assistant pastor at St. Mary Church, from 1999 until his 2001 arrest, Father Lonardo served as pastor and Azzarone's supervisor there, and he lived with Azzarone in the parish rectory. According to Diocesan records, in 1993, Bishop Louis Gelineau had warned Lonardo to be "very vigilant" in his supervision of Azzarone due to a recent allegation that Azzarone had sexually abused a boy. In an interview

[17] Father Daniel Azzarone is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

with Cranston Police shortly after Azzarone's arrest, Lonardo acknowledged Gelineau's warning, but he denied any knowledge of Azzarone's crimes, explaining that he spent much of his time at his house on Jamestown, and that Father Azzarone occupied the rectory's third floor bedroom, which had a separate staircase, so Lonardo would not have seen who was visiting him. While Father Lonardo admitted that he was a vodka drinker (specifically "Stoli Vodka," he told the police), he denied an allegation by one of Azzarone's victims that he had provided alcohol to minors.

In April 2002, Azzarone was indicted on several counts of first- and second-degree sexual assault.[18] A month later, Bishop Robert Mulvee received an anonymous letter that stated it was from a St. Mary's parishioner who wished to deliver an "account of wrongdoing" at the church. Mulvee's office directed the letter to Auxiliary Bishop Robert McManus. The letter alleged, among other things, that Lonardo had witnessed Azzarone's parties at the rectory and knew of Azzarone's crimes there, and suggested that Lonardo himself had engaged in child sexual misconduct, both alongside Azzarone and on his own. The letter claimed that an anonymous 15-year-old altar boy, who had already spoken with the Cranston Police, "has been in the presence of Fr. Lonardo during sexual encounters with altar boys. The boy has been on limo rides to various places with both Fr. Lonardo and Fr. Azzarone where liquor, drugs and sex have been involved." It also alleged that witnesses had observed Lonardo hosting "young men" overnight at his rectory apartment and repeated the fact that Gelineau knew of previous allegations against Azzarone and had warned Lonardo to keep an eye on him. It appears that the Diocese ignored this letter. An unattributed, handwritten note at the bottom, dated May 7, 2002, states, "we do not take into consideration anonymous letters." There is no other reference to the letter in the Diocesan records produced to this Office, and no indication that the Diocese relayed the allegations to law enforcement.

Less than two weeks later, however, Bishop Mulvee accepted Father Lonardo's resignation as pastor of St. Mary's, effective at the end of June 2002, and assigned Lonardo to a year of sabbatical studies. There is no indication in the Diocesan records produced to this Office of the specific basis for Lonardo's resignation, or that he actually requested a sabbatical. In August 2002, Bishop Mulvee submitted a favorable recommendation on Lonardo's behalf to the North American College ("NAC") Institute for Continuing Theological Education at the Vatican, in Rome. Mulvee wrote of Father Lonardo that he was not aware of any "personal problems that would be of concern," but noted "that this sabbatical is coming in the wake of a very stressful situation in his most recent pastoral assignment."

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[18] Father Azzarone ultimately pled *nolo contendere* to two counts of first-degree sexual assault. He was sentenced on September 6, 2005, to ten years in prison, with three years to serve, seven years suspended with probation, and ordered to register as a Level III Sex Offender. Azzarone was laicized on June 12, 2009. He is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy. For more information about Azzarone, refer to his profile in Appendix A of this Report.

Father Lonardo left for Rome in mid-August 2002 but was back in the United States by the start of 2003 following an allegation of misconduct there involving alcohol and an adult male seminarian in November 2002. The seminarian reported to his spiritual director and the College's Rector that he had encountered Lonardo on the stairs near the sacristy entrance of the main chapel and, according to the victim, Lonardo touched the victim in the groin area without the victim's consent. The Rector wrote a letter to Bishop Mulvee that month informing him of the incident. According to the letter, when confronted about the incident by the NAC Rector and the Spiritual Director, Lonardo initially claimed he had no memory due to intoxication but later recalled meeting the seminarian on the stairs. He did not recall whether he had touched the seminarian inappropriately. The seminarian purportedly did not wish for the incident to be made public and therefore did not file a report with law enforcement. He instead requested that Lonardo seek professional help.

The Diocese arranged treatment for Lonardo that spring and conditioned any future parish assignment on his participation. Lonardo agreed, and by late spring he had returned to Diocesan ministry. In May 2003, Bishop Mulvee made Lonardo administrator pro tem of St. Brigid Church in Johnston, and that June assigned him as assistant pastor of St. Augustine Church, in Providence, effective July 1, 2003.

Lonardo remained there until his retirement in February 2007.

**2022 Complaint and Criminal Investigation**

In his early 2022 written statement provided to law enforcement, the complainant explained that as a boy he worked at St. Mary Rectory after school and considered Father Lonardo a mentor. He recounted that one evening in July 1994, following the fireworks for St. Mary's feast, Lonardo invited the complainant back to the rectory before driving him home. There, the complainant alleged, Lonardo served the boy an alcoholic beverage, "Stoli Vodka," before attempting to kiss him and fondle him. Lonardo then reportedly unbuttoned the complainant's pants and attempted to perform oral sex on him. Lonardo continued to fondle him on the drive home, the complainant said, and told him not to tell anyone, which the boy did not, because he felt helpless and afraid. The next week, the complainant needed to tell someone about the incident, so he called Father Azzarone, who invited him up to the rectory's third floor apartment where he lived. As they began to talk, the complainant recounted in his statement, Azzarone likewise offered him an alcoholic beverage (the complainant recalled feeling like he had been drugged), and began to massage him, which escalated to Azzarone removing the boy's shorts and performing oral sex on him.

The complainant alleged that over the next few years, Fathers Lonardo and Azzarone took him and other altar boys out and provided them with food and alcohol, though only Azzarone continued to sexually abuse him. He recalled one evening when Lonardo and Azzarone took him and "another boy" in a limousine to Boston, where they went out to dinner and drank excessively. The complainant alleged that Father Azzarone followed him into the restaurant bathroom and groped him in the

stall. In addition, the complainant separately recalled visiting Lonardo's home in Jamestown and going to dinner at a restaurant there.

In a 2012 interview with Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") Director Robert McCarthy, a close friend of a complainant who had alleged abuse by another Diocesan priest, Father Barry Meehan, commented on his experience at St. Mary Church after Lonardo became the pastor:

> After Fr. Lapati left and Fr. Lonardo became pastor, it was a game changer. Everybody was everywhere. No one questioned why there was someone in anybody's room. And no one questioned, "Why are these kids down here, three kids are upstairs and one kid is down here, one kid is upstairs and three kids are down here? What's going on here?" And then of course, it got even worse once Azzarone came because it was a free for all, an absolute free for all.

Upon receiving the complainant's statement, the Rhode Island State Police commenced an investigation. State Police detectives interviewed Father Lonardo at his Jamestown residence in April 2022, just three months before he died in July. Lonardo said he recalled the complainant, and confirmed his claim that they had tea together, but denied his allegations, and said he would be willing to submit to a polygraph regarding his involvement in any sexual misconduct with men or boys at St. Mary Church. Lonardo also said he could not recall going to dinner with any of the boys he knew at St. Mary's, and denied ever giving them alcohol. Father Lonardo also recalled working alongside Azzarone, and recalled his arrest, but said he never witnessed or heard about Azzarone doing anything inappropriate with children at St. Mary's.

The State Police also interviewed Azzarone, who said he did not observe Lonardo do anything inappropriate with children at St. Mary's. He admitted that he and Lonardo did routinely take boys out to dinner—most of them being about 17 years of age—and that Lonardo drank "extensively," vodka being his spirit of choice. Further, Azzarone remembered the complainant and acknowledged that it was "possible" that he had engaged in oral sex with him, but insisted that if it did occur it was consensual. Azzarone also recalled the dinner trip to Boston with Lonardo that the complainant described in his statement, even remembering the name of the fourth person who had joined them, adding that that person was in his twenties at the time of the trip. Whereas the complainant recalled that Azzarone had followed him into the men's room at the restaurant, Azzarone told the detectives that it was Lonardo who went to the men's room and the complainant who followed him. He also said that the limousine dropped off the four of them at St. Mary Rectory that night, but he did not remember anything further.

In addition, the State Police located and interviewed the individual whom Azzarone identified as accompanying them on the Boston trip. This witness likewise recalled the dinner trip to Boston with Azzarone, Lonardo, and the complainant, but said it occurred in 1999 or 2000 and happened when he was in his 20s. He added that

he is approximately two years older than the complainant, suggesting that the complainant may have been in his late teens or early twenties on that occasion.

The Rhode Island Attorney General's Office ultimately declined to prosecute the complainant's allegations against Lonardo and Azzarone due to insufficient evidence that either priest employed "force or coercion" when engaging in oral sex with the complainant when he was approximately 15 years old or older. The applicable statute of limitations had also run on any second-degree sexual assault allegations.

**Status**

Father Lonardo continued to reside in Jamestown until his death in July 2022. He is not included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father Philip Magaldi

| Born | Ordained | Suspended | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Apr. 4, 1936 | Dec. 18, 1960 | May 18, 2001 | Aug. 12, 2008 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1961 – 1961 | St. Alexander Church, Warren |
| 1961 – 1965 | Our Lady of Grace Church, Johnston |
| 1965 – 1968 | Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church, Providence |
| 1968 – 1969 | Our Lady of Grace Church, Johnston |
| 1968 – 1969 | North American College, Rome, Italy |
| 1969 – 1972 | Assistant Chancellor, Providence |
| 1969 – 1976 | St. Matthew Church, Cranston |
| 1976 – 1988 | St. Anthony Church, North Providence |
| 1988 – 1989 | *Sabbatical*, San Antonio, TX |
| 1989 – 1990 | St. Augustin Church, Newport |
| 1990 – 1992 | St. Mary Church, Henrietta, TX |
| 1992 – 1993 | *Imprisoned* (embezzlement conviction) |
| 1993 – 1998 | St. John the Apostle Church, North Richland Hills, TX |
| 1998 | *Suspended on leave* |
| 1999 | *Temporary Retirement* |
| 2000 – 2001 | Unknown church, Keller, TX |
| 2001 | *Suspended on leave* |
| 2005 | *Faculties removed* |

## Summary

Father Philip Magaldi reportedly sexually abused nine boys during his 38-year ministry. The allegations against Magaldi reveal a pattern of targeting at-risk youth, grooming them through lavish spending and gifts, and threatening retaliation if they reported the abuse. Most of the reported sexual abuse against Magaldi took place while he was assigned to St. Anthony Church in North Providence and Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Providence.

In 1992, Father Magaldi was convicted of embezzling $120,000 from St. Anthony Church in North Providence. Magaldi was sentenced to two years in prison, which was later reduced to eight months in a halfway house as part of a work release program. Bishop Louis Gelineau transferred Magaldi to the Diocese of Fort Worth in 1993 and he was incardinated there in 1995.

According to the records produced by the Diocese to the Rhode Island Office of the Attorney General, the Diocese received its first accusation of sexual abuse

against Father Magaldi in 1998, when a complainant brought a civil suit against Magaldi, the Diocese of Fort Worth, and the Diocese of Providence. The lawsuit was dismissed due to the complainant's death. In 1999, the Bishop of Fort Worth temporarily removed Magaldi from active ministry after identifying "glaring similarities" between a recent accusation in Texas and a Rhode Island complainant's allegations. He returned to ministry in Texas in 2000, but was permanently removed by the Bishop of Fort Worth in 2001.

Father Magaldi died in 2008. He is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

**The Reported Abuse**

Ordained on December 18, 1960, Father Magaldi began his ministry at Our Lady of Grace Church in Johnston in 1961. Four years later, Bishop Russell McVinney transferred Magaldi to Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Providence, where he reportedly sexually abused his first two known victims.

Father Magaldi reportedly abused an altar server ("Complainant A") between 1965-1968. The complainant sent an email to the Director of the Diocese's Office of Outreach and Prevention, Paula Loud, in 2012. He did not indicate his age, or exactly what occurred, but implied that Magaldi abused him at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church. Complainant A also reported that two other boys had "similar experiences."

During his time at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, Father Magaldi also reportedly abused a seven-year-old boy ("Complainant B"). The documents provided by the Diocese to this Office do not contain any description of the alleged abuse, though the complainant reported that Magaldi abused him over a period of several years. Complainant B reported his abuse to Office of Compliance Director Kevin O'Brien in 2017.

Bishop McVinney transferred Father Magaldi from Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church to Our Lady of Grace Church in Johnston in 1968. He remained at Our Lady of Grace for one year before the Bishop transferred him to St. Matthew's Church in Cranston in 1969, for reasons not disclosed in Diocesan records. Magaldi worked at St. Matthew's for seven years, before the Bishop transferred him to St. Anthony Church in North Providence.

While at St. Matthew's, Magaldi reportedly abused a 15-year-old boy ("Complainant D") for ten years, beginning in 1973. In 2002, Complainant D reported to the Diocese that he first met Magaldi while walking in the Boston Commons when he was 15 years old. He claimed Magaldi first identified himself to Complainant D under a different name and as a Rhode Island schoolteacher. Complainant D reportedly learned Magaldi's identity in or about 1977, when they were in an accident with another vehicle. In exchanging insurance information with the other party, Complainant D reportedly heard Magaldi identify himself as Philip Magaldi, a Catholic priest.

Complainant D reported that Father Magaldi performed oral sex on him during their second encounter, at the Park Plaza Hotel in Boston, Massachusetts; he alleged that he was subsequently sexually assaulted by Magaldi on numerous occasions until he was about twenty-five years old. On one occasion, Magaldi reportedly requested that the complainant administer an enema to the priest, but he refused. Complainant D reported that he cut off contact with Magaldi in 1984 out of fear that Magaldi would physically harm him.[19]

While assigned to St. Anthony in North Providence, Magaldi reportedly abused a 14-year-old boy ("Complainant C") from the late 1970s through the 1980s. Complainant C first reported his abuse to the Diocese in 1998, as further recounted below. At that time, he was the first victim to bring a complaint against Magaldi. According to Complainant C, he first met Father Magaldi in Worcester, Massachusetts, as he walked his damaged bicycle along the road. Magaldi stopped his vehicle and offered Complainant C a ride home. Magaldi dropped off the damaged bike and then reportedly took Complainant C to a Holiday Inn near Kelley Square. Complainant C reported that, once inside the hotel room, Magaldi raped him, forcibly gave the complainant an enema, and received an enema (as well as administered one on himself). Complainant C also claimed that Father Magaldi threatened that if he disclosed the abuse to anyone, the boy would "be taken away from [his] family [and] . . . for eternity [he'd] burn in hell."

Complainant C stated that Magaldi abused him for several years and that Magaldi paid him after each instance, with around $300 for the first encounter and then declining to $50 as years passed. Complainant C reported that Magaldi would usually meet him at the same hotel in Worcester, Massachusetts, but that they also had sexual encounters in Magaldi's vehicle. According to the complainant, most of the sexual assaults involved enemas, which Magaldi called "cleansing with holy water."

Father Magaldi reportedly sexually assaulted another boy ("Complainant E") from 1977 through 1985, beginning when the boy was 11 years old. Complainant E reported that he suffered "hundreds" of sexual assaults by Magaldi. As a minor, Complainant E volunteered as an altar server at St. Anthony Church and later worked in the church as a sextant. Magaldi reportedly groomed the victim with lavish dining, luxury hotel stays, alcohol, cash payments, and gifting him a then-new 1979 Pontiac Firebird.

In the first reported incident, Magaldi attempted to shower naked with Complainant E in the St. Anthony rectory and told him afterwards that he had a medical condition that required him to use an enema, and he needed the

[19] It should be noted that this Office previously found Complainant D to be unreliable in connection with Magaldi's prosecution for perjury and obstruction of justice in 1985. Based on this Office's determination at the time, the case against Magaldi was dismissed on the eve of trial in 1987.

complainant's help in administering it. Subsequent reported assaults occurred in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and New York, and included oral and anal rape, forcing Complainant E to administer enemas on Magaldi, as well as coercing Complainant E into administering an enema on himself. Once Complainant E told Magaldi to leave him alone, Magaldi reportedly told the youth's father that he suspected Complainant E of stealing church funds totaling $300. As a result, Complainant E was fired from his role as the parish sextant. Complainant E identified Complainant G, referenced below, as another likely victim of Magaldi. Complainant E disclosed his abuse to the Moderator of the Curia and Vicar General, Monsignor Paul Theroux, in 2007.

Father Magaldi reportedly sexually assaulted a nine-year-old boy ("Complainant F") from 1983 to 1984 while still assigned to St. Anthony Church. The complainant recalled three instances of sexual assault by Magaldi. The first and third assaults reportedly occurred when Magaldi drove the boy to Wanskuck Park in Providence. Once parked by a wall in the park, Magaldi unzipped Complainant F's pants, grabbed his genitals, and performed oral sex on him. The second reported assault happened in the St. Anthony rectory in the presence of Complainant G and another child, when Magaldi reportedly removed Complainant F's pants and performed oral sex on him. Complainant F reported his allegations to former Office of Education and Compliance Director Robert McCarthy in 2008.

Father Magaldi reportedly abused yet another boy ("Complainant G") of an unknown age for several years from the mid-to-late 1980s. Complainant G was a member of St. Anthony Church and knew Complainant E, who alleged that after he refused Magaldi's advances, Magaldi turned his affections to Complainant G. According to Complainant G, the abuse began with touching the victim's genital area and progressed to at least 15 instances of oral sex. He also claimed to see a naked boy with Magaldi in the St. Anthony rectory on at least one occasion. Father Magaldi reportedly purchased multiple expensive gifts for Complainant G, including a Corvette.

In 1988, the Diocese discovered that Father Magaldi embezzled possibly more than $400,000 from St. Anthony's Parish funds, partly from collections taken during evening Mass. In response, Bishop Gelineau sent Magaldi on a sabbatical to San Antonio, Texas. Magaldi was recalled to Providence in 1990 after he was charged with embezzlement. According to Attorney General records, during the investigation, law enforcement interviewed Complainant G who reported the abuse in an interview in 1992. It is not clear what happened following this disclosure and we did not locate any records indicating the Diocese was aware of Complainant G's disclosure at the time. Magaldi was ultimately convicted of embezzling more than $120,000 in 1992 and sentenced to two years in prison. He ended up serving eight months in a halfway house and was released in January 1993.

In written correspondence with Bishop Joseph Delaney of Fort Worth in December 1989, Bishop Gelineau summarized a telephone conversation between the two bishops where they agreed to Magaldi's transfer and a three-year trial period in

Fort Worth. With Bishop Delaney's approval, Magaldi was incardinated in the Diocese of Fort Worth in 1995.

Father Magaldi reportedly sexually assaulted an 18- or 19-year-old college student ("Complainant H") from 1995 to 1997, while assigned to St. John the Apostle Catholic Church in North Richland Hills, Texas. Complainant H reported that he first met Magaldi during confession in the summer of 1995. Magaldi reportedly took the victim to expensive restaurants and his apartment complex's pool where he provided the complainant with alcohol and grabbed the complainant's buttocks. Like other complainants, Magaldi reportedly pressured Complainant H into administering multiple enemas for which he paid the complainant $25 each time. According to records released by the Diocese of Fort Worth, Complainant H stopped communicating with Magaldi following an incident in Boston where Magaldi reportedly forcibly kissed the complainant on the lips.

A 19-year-old man ("Complainant I") accused Magaldi of sexual assault in 2007. At the time of the complaint, Complainant I was incarcerated in Texas. He alleged "severe rape against him by Father Magaldi" to Texas law enforcement. The records produced by the Diocese to this Office do not contain any additional information regarding Complainant I's allegations.

**Diocesan Response**

The first recorded complaint against Father Magaldi was received by the Diocese of Forth Worth in 1997 by Complainant H, then a 21-year-old attending college in Boston. Complainant H called and met with Bishop Delaney of Fort Worth to discuss his allegations against Magaldi. On January 17, 1997, the Diocese of Fort Worth's investigation into Complainant H's sexual allegations against Magaldi found Magaldi "guilty of sexual exploitation in the summer of 1995."

However, the Diocese of Forth Worth did not remove Father Magaldi from active ministry at St. John the Apostle, nor did it inform the Diocese of Providence of the allegations or its findings at the time. Instead, according to Diocese of Fort Worth documents released to the public pursuant to a court order, Magaldi was placed under a probationary period of one year with a future evaluation to be conducted by the Bishop to determine his ministry. The probationary period included increased supervision and orders not to contact youth, including altar servers. Complainant H's allegations against Magaldi were made public in 2006, following a court-ordered release of the Diocese of Fort Worth's secret archive files regarding accused priests.

According to records produced by the Diocese of Providence, it received its first complaint against Magaldi on November 2, 1998. Complainant C contacted then-Chancellor Robert Evans and informed him that Magaldi molested him in the 1970s and 1980s. Evans notified former OEC Director McCarthy, who interviewed Complainant C on November 29, 1998. At the time of the accusation, Magaldi was serving in the Fort Worth's Diocese under Bishop Delaney. On December 4, 1998, Bishop Mulvee notified Bishop Delaney of Complainant C's allegation. On December

11, Bishop Delaney received Complainant C's case file from Director McCarthy. In phone conversations with McCarthy on December 18th and 19th, Bishop Delaney reportedly noted "a lot of parallels" between the claims made by Complainant C in Rhode Island and Complainant H in Texas.

On December 19, following a meeting of a subcommittee of the Diocese of Fort Worth's Sexual Misconduct Board, Bishop Delaney and Father Robert Wilson confronted Magaldi with Complainant C's accusation. Bishop Delaney informed Magaldi that, in a phone conversation, McCarthy said "he would stake everything, his whole reputation that [Complainant C] is telling the truth." Bishop Delaney and Father Wilson stressed the similarities between Complainant C's and H's accounts. Concurring with McCarthy's opinion, Bishop Delaney expressed his worry about this allegation being published in the local paper, the *Dallas Morning News*. Bishop Delaney directed Magaldi to travel to Rhode Island for an investigation by McCarthy, submit to a polygraph, be placed on administrative leave, and go to the Saint Luke Institute, a Catholic treatment center, for an evaluation. Father Magaldi reportedly denied Bishop Delaney's accusation, stating "the devil was definitely at work."

On December 30, 1998, McCarthy interviewed Father Magaldi in Rhode Island concerning Complainant C's accusation. Magaldi denied all wrongdoing throughout the interview, opining that Complainant C was conspiring against him. Magaldi also stated Bishop Gelineau previously sent him to a treatment center run by the Catholic Congregation of the Servants of the Paraclete in New Mexico for an evaluation following the St. Anthony embezzlement in the spring of 1988 or 1989. Magaldi told McCarthy the group cleared him but that the place was for undesirables, including "child molesters." The Diocese did not produce any records of Magaldi's treatment in New Mexico to this Office.

During his interview of Magaldi, McCarthy also asked him about Complainant H. According to the interview transcript produced by the Diocese, Magaldi admitted to asking Complainant H to administer enemas, and to paying him to do so. Magaldi was also questioned about reportedly kissing the same complainant on the lips in Boston in December 1998. Magaldi told McCarthy he kissed the Complainant on the cheek, that it was not sexual, and that it was his tendency because he was "Italian."

On January 2, 1999, Father Magaldi took a polygraph examination coordinated by the Diocese of Providence. The questions pertained to Magaldi's alleged sexual abuse of Complainant C. The polygraph examiner determined that Magaldi's answers denying abuse were truthful. Upon reviewing the results, however, another polygraph examiner detected deception in all three answers - implying the accusations against Magaldi were credible. Due to the conflicting conclusions drawn from his first polygraph, Magaldi took a second polygraph administered on February 21, 1999. The second polygrapher detected deception in all three of Magaldi's answers denying abuse.

On April 3, 1999, Complainant C took a polygraph regarding his complaint against Magaldi. Both the administering and reviewing polygraph examiners

determined the complainant's answers to be truthful. Upon Complainant C's threat to sue, Bishop Delaney removed Magaldi from active ministry and forced his retirement in April 1999. The Bishop assured Magaldi in a subsequent conversation "that [Magaldi] would receive adequate support from the Diocese, in a way yet to be worked out."

At no time between the initial report by Complainant C in November 1998 and the culmination of the Diocesan investigation in April 1999, did McCarthy refer Complainant C's allegations to law enforcement. Given the nature of the allegations and the age of the Complainant at the time of the alleged abuse, it is likely that some of the conduct would have been prosecutable had he done so. Complainant C filed a civil suit in federal court against the Diocese of Fort Worth, the Diocese of Providence, and Magaldi in July 1999. The civil suit was dismissed in October 2000, after Complainant C died from a drug overdose.

In the fall of 2000, following several pleas from Magaldi, Bishop Delaney returned the priest to active ministry as a supply priest at a parish in Texas. In the subsequent months, Bishop Delaney reportedly received several complaints of "improper touches of boys" by Magaldi and removed him from active ministry again in the spring of 2001. In response to Magaldi's lobbying the Vatican to return him to active ministry, Bishop Delaney sent a letter to the Vatican's Secretary of the Congregation for the Clergy on May 18, 2001. In this letter, Bishop Delaney told the Secretary that he "cannot in conscience entrust to [Magaldi] public ministry in the Church . . . he has proved he cannot be trusted in his dealings with young boys." Furthermore, he wrote, he must do whatever is necessary to ensure "that Father Magaldi does not exercise public ministry in the future." In October 2001, Bishop Delaney received a parish volunteer's report that Magaldi was "in chat rooms looking for minors" and had "pedophilic material" on his personal computer. The Vatican denied Magaldi's appeals to return to active ministry in November 2001 and in 2002.

In April 2002, a second complainant came forward to report abuse by Magaldi to the Diocese of Providence. Complainant D submitted a two-page letter to Diocesan attorney William Murphy accusing Magaldi of over a decade of sexual abuse from 1973 to 1984. McCarthy interviewed Complainant D in May 2002. At the complainant's request, the Diocese began funding Complainant D's therapy in July 2002. Records show that Diocesan funding for the complainant's therapy was conditioned upon the complainant authorizing the Diocese to access a diagnosis and prognosis report from the treatment provider. There is no record that the Diocese forwarded Complainant D's allegations to law enforcement at the time.

Complainant D reached out to the Diocese again in May 2008, writing a letter to Bishop Thomas Tobin in which he sought financial compensation for pain and suffering caused by the abuse. It does not appear that the Diocese reported Complainant D's accusations to law enforcement this time either. Following Magaldi's death on August 12, 2008, the Diocese contacted Complainant D. On August 25, 2008, Diocesan attorney James T. Murphy informed Complainant D that

the Diocese's Review Board denied his June 2008 request for a settlement, but that the Diocese would continue to fund his counseling if needed.

In July 2005, Bishop Kevin Vann succeeded Bishop Delaney as the Bishop of the Diocese of Fort Worth. On August 10, 2006, Bishop Vann formally removed Magaldi's faculties to celebrate Mass and hear confessions under the *Essential Norms* of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. Bishop Vann also forbade Magaldi from identifying himself as a priest and wearing the Roman collar.

The Diocese of Providence received another allegation of sexual abuse against Magaldi in December 2007. Complainant E, a former member of St. Anthony Church, telephoned Monsignor Theroux and informed him that Magaldi sexually abused him from 1977 to 1985. Theroux informed McCarthy, who in turn notified Bishop Tobin the same day. McCarthy interviewed Complainant E on December 11, 2007. Viewing the accusations as credible, McCarthy notified the Rhode Island State Police on December 11, 2007, according to Diocesan records. The State Police did not have a record of this referral.

McCarthy also wrote a letter to Bishop Vann on December 7, 2007, informing him of Complainant E's allegations. The Diocese of Forth Worth informed McCarthy that Bishop Vann had begun formal proceedings with the Vatican to remove Magaldi from the clerical state. Additionally, McCarthy learned of an ongoing criminal investigation into alleged sexual abuse against Magaldi by the North Richland Hills Police Department in Texas. The investigation originated from Complainant I's allegations. There are limited references to Complainant I in the records provided by the Diocese to this Office. In a March 2008 letter to McCarthy, Bishop Vann "empirically state[d] for the record that [he] ha[d] no intention of ever restoring [Magldi's] faculties."

In February 2008, the Diocese of Fort Worth notified the Diocese of Providence that Magaldi was HIV-positive. The Diocese of Providence released a public statement concerning Magaldi's HIV-positive status on February 14, 2008. Director McCarthy and Paula Loud also contacted Complainants D, E and G in the Spring of 2008 to inform them of Magaldi's medical condition.

Following news coverage of Magaldi's medical condition, the Diocese of Providence received its sixth complaint on February 19, 2008. Complainant F reported at least three instances of sexual assault by Magaldi to Director McCarthy. McCarthy notified Bishop Tobin and the Diocese of Fort Worth of Complainant F's accusation within 24 hours and interviewed Complainant F on February 25, 2008. The Diocese did not produce a copy of the interview transcript to this Office, despite multiple references to the 23-page document in the files pertaining to Father Magaldi. On the same day as the interview, according to Diocesan records, McCarthy notified the State Police of Complainant F's accusation. Again, the State Police could not find any record of this referral.

Father Magaldi died in August 2008.

On March 5, 2012, the Diocese of Providence received another report of sexual abuse by Magaldi. Following news coverage of clergy sexual abuse in Ireland, Complainant A contacted Paula Loud and informed her that he had been abused as an altar server at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Providence between 1965 and 1968. The Diocese attempted to follow up with Complainant A but, after receiving no response, it notified the State Police of the accusation on March 12, 2012. Records provided by the Diocese show no further communication between Complainant A and the Diocese, though an OEC memorandum states that McCarthy confirmed that Magaldi served at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church from 1965 to 1968. A Review Board agenda dated March 27, 2012, lists Complainant A's allegation under "New Cases (Lt. Bob McCarthy)," but there is no record of the Review Board's discussion or determination, if any occurred, in the files produced to this Office by the Diocese. State Police closed the case in 2012 as Magaldi was deceased.

The Diocese of Providence received yet another allegation against Father Magaldi on January 13, 2017. Complainant B reported that Magaldi abused him at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church over an extended period beginning when he was seven years old, in around 1965, and that another priest assaulted him when he was 12. OEC Director Kevin O'Brien, McCarthy's successor, scheduled an interview for January 17, 2017, but the complainant cancelled.

Director O'Brien attempted to schedule other interviews with Complainant B without success. On March 8, 2017, Complainant B's attorney informed O'Brien that his client was seeking a monetary settlement and would not grant an interview until that matter was resolved. Later that day, two months after the complainant's initial report, O'Brien notified the State Police of the complainant's accusation against Magaldi. State Police closed the case after attempting to contact the complainant's attorney several times without a response. Beyond a memo stating that Complainant B's case was presented to the Diocese's Review Board, there are no other references to this complainant in records produced by the Diocese to this Office. Complainant B passed away in 2024.

On September 30, 2019, Complainant E filed a lawsuit against Bishop Gelineau, Bishop Tobin, and others, in Rhode Island Superior Court. The case was dismissed on procedural grounds, and the Rhode Island Supreme Court affirmed the dismissal on appeal.

In November 2024, an investigator from the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office attempted to contact Magaldi's known, living victims. The investigator spoke with Complainant E, who verified his complaint of abuse by Magaldi. He also indicated that the abuse had lasting effects on his personal life, and he had been in counseling for years. He told the investigator that he remains angry and continues to struggle with the effects of his abuse to this day. The investigator was unable to reach the other complainants.

**Status**

Father Magaldi is deceased. He is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father Thomas Dente Kofi Manu

| Born | Ordained | Restricted | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Unknown | Jul. 15, 1973 | Nov. 7, 2007 | 2023 |

**Partial Assignment History**

1980 – 2007 Summer Assignments, Prudence Island and St. Mary Church, Bristol

**Summary**

Father Thomas Manu was an extern priest who regularly worked a summer assignment at St. Mary Church in Bristol, from about 1980 to 2007. While assigned to St. Mary's, Manu lived in the rectory and officiated Mass on Prudence Island.

In the summer of 1980, Father Manu reportedly sexually abused a 13-year-old girl by groping and kissing her in a parish rectory. The complainant reported that Manu also sexually abused her on a couple of occasions in the summer of 1982 and raped her in the summer of 1984 when she was 17. The complainant disclosed her abuse to her parents in 2004, and they reported the abuse to the Diocese in 2005. Director of the Diocese Office of Education and Compliance Robert McCarthy interviewed the complainant and her parents and determined that the complaint was credible. McCarthy then reported the allegations to the Rhode Island State Police, which eventually suspended the investigation due to the complainant's unwillingness to proceed.

Records indicate that once McCarthy learned that the complainant was unwilling to move forward with a criminal investigation, he advised Monsignor Paul Theroux, Moderator of the Curia, that the Diocese should inform Father Manu of the allegations against him, obtain his statement, and inform his superior of same. However, there is no record in the files provided by the Diocese to the Office of the Rhode Island Attorney General that any of these steps were taken. During McCarthy's investigation of the complaint in 2005, the Diocese permitted Father Manu to remain at St. Mary's and he was allowed to return in 2006 and 2007, when complainant's father called the Diocese to complain. Thereafter, he was not invited back.

The Diocese did not include Father Manu on its List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

**The Reported Abuse**

The Diocese first learned of the allegations of abuse against Father Manu when the complainant and her parents reported to the Diocese in the Spring of 2005.

According to the complainant, she got to know Manu when he was a visiting (extern) priest at St. Mary's Parish in Bristol in the 1980s. Manu was reportedly friendly with complainant's family, and he was regularly invited to their home near St. Mary's rectory. According to the complainant, in 1980, one day after a tennis lesson with Manu, Manu groped and kissed her in the rectory.

Two years later, when the complainant was 15, Manu was again at St. Mary's for the summer months and his advances reportedly continued. The complainant alleged that, the first time, Manu began kissing and groping her underneath her shirt and down her pants; he told her that all the priests in Africa "have women," even the bishop, and that he wanted her to live with him in Africa, and that they had a special bond. Manu then reportedly laid on top of the complainant, exposed himself, and forced her to touch him. The complainant said that when she returned to the rectory the following week, Father Manu kissed and fondled her and forced her to perform oral sex on him. When he was done, Manu told the complainant that no one would believe her if she told anyone.

According to the complainant, when she got back to her house her parents noticed that she was quite upset, and she told them that she "did not like" the priest. When asked why, she told them that he tried to kiss and hug her and that he touched her inappropriately. According to the complainant, she was too embarrassed to reveal what else had taken place.

Over the next two years, the complainant said, she and Manu exchanged letters in which Father Manu urged her to come to Africa and told her that he wasn't finished with her and wanted to pick up where he left off when he returned to the United States. The complainant later told Director McCarthy that she threw these letters out.

The complainant reported that, in the summer of 1984, when she was 17 years old, Manu returned to St. Mary's again and raped her in his bedroom in the rectory. Before raping her, Manu reportedly told her that her father did not believe her, that she had no credibility, that no one could help her, and that they were going to take their relationship to the next level.

**Diocesan Response**

In December 2004, during an argument with her father, the complainant told her parents that Manu had sexually assaulted her, though she did not disclose the details of every incident. On April 3, 2005, the complainant's parents reported the allegation to the pastor of St. Mary's Church in Bristol. Two days later, the pastor reported the allegation to Director McCarthy, who reviewed records that confirmed that Bishop Gelineau granted Manu faculties to serve at the parish. The pastor informed McCarthy that Father Manu had returned to the parish every summer to assist there for the last 28 years.

In April 2005, McCarthy interviewed the complainant's parents; they reported that they did not contact the authorities about their daughter's earlier disclosures

because they did not initially believe her. The complainant's father told McCarthy that he confronted Father Manu around the summer of 1980 and Father Manu apologized to him. He further stated Father Manu apologized to his daughter in his presence later that summer but claimed that she had misunderstood him.

McCarthy interviewed the complainant the following month. The complainant told McCarthy that she had previously told a friend, a sister, and her parents about her abuse, but did not go into all the details with anyone. On July 14, 2005, McCarthy interviewed the childhood friend of the complainant who reported that when the complainant was a teenager, the complainant disclosed to her that Manu had sexually molested her at a parish on multiple occasions.

Five days later, McCarthy referred the allegation to the Rhode Island State Police. McCarthy also informed State Police that Manu was living at St. Mary's rectory in Bristol and officiating Masses on Prudence Island. McCarthy then forwarded the contents of his investigation, including interview transcripts, to State Police, noting that "based upon my training and experience, there is a violation of Rhode Island General Laws."

In June 2005, while McCarthy's investigation was still underway, the pastor of St. Mary's called McCarthy to inquire whether Father Manu would be assigned to the parish again that summer. McCarthy replied that the issue would be discussed at a meeting at the Chancery at the end of June. There is no record indicating that McCarthy ever informed the pastor of the meeting's outcome. Manu arrived at the parish on July 1, 2005.

Throughout 2005, McCarthy updated Bishop Mulvee, Monsignor Theroux, and the Diocesan Review Board on the status of the complaint. State Police scheduled an interview with the complainant for August 2005, but she declined to appear. In October 2005, after leaving numerous messages for the complainant and not receiving any response, State Police closed the investigation.

There is no indication in the files provided by the Diocese that any Diocesan official spoke with Manu about the allegations or alerted Manu's bishop of the allegations at this point, even after the criminal investigation concluded. There is also no record that the Diocese suspended Father Manu following receipt of these allegations or that it notified Manu's home diocese in Ghana.

In October 2007, the complainant's father contacted Director McCarthy to express "extreme displeasure" at Father Manu's assignment at St. Mary's Parish in Bristol the previous summer. McCarthy wrote Monsignor Theroux about the complainant's father's complaint. In his letter, McCarthy noted his view that the complainant was "quite credible." In November 2007, the Review Board unanimously agreed that Manu should not return to the United States. In a letter dated November 7, 2007, McCarthy informed the complainant's father of the Board's decision and stated that Monsignor John Darcy would send a letter to Manu. There is no copy of such a letter in the files produced to this Office.

State Police interviewed the complainant in 2022, who confirmed the information she provided in 2005 but stated that she was still not interested in lodging a formal complaint.

**Status**

Father Manu is believed to have died in 2023. He is not included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father Robert Marcantonio

| Born | Ordained | Suspended | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nov. 30, 1943 | Jun. 24, 1967 | Aug. 17, 1989 | Oct. 20, 1999 |

**Assignment History**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1967 – 1967 | Sacred Heart Church, West Warwick |
| 1967 – 1968 | St. Mary Church, Cranston |
| 1968 – 1969 | Sacred Heart Church, West Warwick |
| 1969 – 1970 | St. Mary Church, Cranston |
| 1970 – 1975 | St. Cecilia Church & Iowa State University, Ames, IA |
| 1975 – 1979 | Stonehill College, Easton, MA |
| 1975 – 1989 | St. John Vianney Church, Cumberland (weekend assistant) |
| 1979 – 1989 | Rhode Island College, Providence |
| 1989 – 1989 | Bryant College, Smithfield |
| 1989 – 1992 | *Suspended on leave*, Providence |
| 1992 – 1999 | *Suspended on leave*, AZ |

**Summary**

Father Robert Marcantonio had served as a Diocesan priest for less than three years, and was just 27 years old, when the Diocese received the first documented allegations of child sexual misconduct against him, relating to his abuse of "ten to fifteen" different boys. After being deemed "incurable" by two Diocesan-hired psychiatrists, Marcantonio left Rhode Island for Iowa in late 1970 to receive "treatment" by a priest and psychiatrist acquaintance of his who, within ten months, deemed Marcantonio effectively cured. While in Iowa, Marcantonio obtained a doctorate in psychology, and in 1975, the Diocese, under Bishop Gelineau—who had been made aware of the circumstances of Marcantonio's prior departure by Marcantonio himself—"re-hired" Marcantonio, first as a part-time pastor at St. John Vianney in Cumberland, and later to work on the campuses of several Rhode Island colleges and universities.

Beginning in 1989 and through the next two decades, Marcantonio and the Diocese were sued numerous times by victims alleging that Marcantonio had sexually abused them at the beginning of his career, while at St. Mary's in Cranston; at parishes in Iowa, while Marcantonio was there for "treatment"; and at St. John Vianney in Cumberland, upon Marcantonio's return to Rhode Island. According to the Diocesan records provided to this Office, the Diocese paid approximately $2.7 million to settle those claims. *There is no indication in the records produced to the Rhode Island Office of the Attorney General that the Diocese ever referred a child sexual*

*misconduct allegation against Marcantonio to law enforcement while Marcantonio was still alive.*

Marcantonio died of a heart attack in Arizona in October 1999. His name was included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy when it was released in 2019.

**The Reported Abuse and Diocesan Response**

The first documented report of child sexual abuse by Marcantonio to the Diocese dates to May 1970. The mother of two sons who were altar boys at St. Mary's in Cranston wrote to Monsignor Daniel P. Reilly that they and other children at the church "have been exposed to [] many unhealthy, unfortunate experiences":

> This involves a priest in our parish. I am led to believe this has been going on for some time, possibly a year or more . . . [I] am fully aware that this individual is emotionally ill, unstable, and a threat to our children. Recently I met with other mothers whose sons have also been victims, I find these boys have been chased – threatened, taken to father's room in the rectory and abused. Our acting pastor has been informed of the situation, however I fear the action is too slow. Immediate steps must be taken, as someone in this state becomes frustrated when denied the pleasures he has enjoyed in the past. The boys themselves have showed signs of tension as a result of his advances . . . There is much more to tell however I would rather discuss personally with you than with it all down.

In a subsequent handwritten statement in Marcantonio's files, the same woman wrote:

> I, the undersigned, wish to call the attention of the diocesan authorities to a very unfortunate situation that is existing in our parish, St. Mary's Cranston concerning Father Robert Marcantonio. In talking with other parents and upon questioning my son and theirs, we find the boys have admitted to being approached on numerous occasions by Father Marcantonio and to being threatened to perform abnormal sexual acts. My son [Complainant A] has literally been taken to father's room and been sexually abused within the last 2 weeks.

And in a separate handwritten and undated letter addressed to Bishop Russell McVinney, the father of the boys wrote:

> An incident has happened in this parish, which to us is very serious . . . We finally got involved and took the matter up with Monsignor Reilly who said we have to have a written and signed statement to attest to the facts. [The mother of the boys] took the time off from a busy schedule of taking care of [many] children and did what she had to do and went to visit Monsignor Reilly – personally I was assured the matter will be taken care of immediately. Too much precious time has lapsed and nothing

seems to have been done. Nothing short of relocating this person will satisfy me.

A month later, in late June 1970, Monsignor Reilly received a mental health evaluation of Marcantonio by a Rhode Island-based psychiatrist. The evaluation referred to allegations of "homosexual" relationships with as many as "ten to fifteen" boys between 12 and 14 years old. The evaluation recommended giving Marcantonio "another chance" in "another parish" where he "could control himself and presumably participate in growth and maturity process."

There is no record in the documents provided by the Diocese to this Office of the Diocese attempting to identify these boys, further investigate this information, or refer any of these allegations to law enforcement. Bishop McVinney did repeatedly suggest to Marcantonio during the summer of 1970 to voluntarily seek laicization, but Marcantonio refused. In a July 1970 letter from Marcantonio to McVinney, Marcantonio wrote:

> After spending the past week . . . in prayerful consideration of your excellency's recommendation . . . I feel that I cannot bring myself to request laicization. While some of the actions of my moral life have indeed been contrary to the character of the priesthood . . . I cannot bring myself to ask that this life to which I aspired and made a commitment for life be taken from me . . . I know I have failed to control human weakness to the extent that I should have, but I am confident with the help of God through my priesthood and with the paternal direction of older priests and the professional help of a doctor that this crisis can be overcome.

In response, Bishop McVinney wrote:

> I am still convinced that [laicization] is the proper thing to do . . . As I said in our conversation, I could not in good conscience assign you to priestly work in this diocese. My decision has been arrived at after much thought and prayer . . . I give you my advise [sic] as your spiritual father. I hope that you will take it.

It is not clear from the Diocesan records precisely when Marcantonio stopped serving as a priest at St. Mary's. By early August 1970, though, the Diocese had given Marcantonio permission to temporarily reside at the rectory of Christ the King in Kingston. In late August 1970, Marcantonio wrote back to Bishop McVinney asking for a chance "to try and complete medical therapy before I made the final decision to seek laicization," noting that he had "begun treatment at the Masalin Institute in Massachusetts." He also proposed studying at Catholic University in Washington, which "will take me out of the area and put me in a different situation."

Within a month, Marcantonio ended up not in Washington, but in Ames, Iowa, on the campus of Iowa State University, as a result of the advocacy of a psychiatrist

friend of his, who was also an ordained priest. In an early September 1970 letter to Bishop McVinney, that psychiatrist opined:

> Marcantonio's problem is amenable to intensive psychotherapy . . . and from my conversation[s] with him . . . it is my clinical judgment that he is sufficiently well-motivated to accomplish successfully a course of investigative and intensive psychotherapy . . . I propose that Fr. Marcantonio come to Ames, enroll at Iowa State University (in whatever psychological courses attract him) and enter into a psychotherapeutic relationship with me. The Archbishop will give him Faculties . . . [h]e can exercise his priesthood to the extent that he wants to at the Newman Center. You may raise your eyebrows at his working with students. Keep it in mind that one cannot be treated in a vacuum and further, that one's being in therapy introduces a factor that has not been present in earlier assignments . . . Archbishop Byrne readily expressed his willingness to share with you his experience with a priest who had the same problem as Fr. Marcantonio, and with whom I have had a successful therapeutic engagement. That priest is now teaching in a high school in this Archdiocese . . . I appreciate that the scandalous behavior of Fr. Marcantonio is the most burdensome form of deviant behavior in a priest that a Bishop must bear. But you must know, better than I, that this burden is simply Our Lord's invitation to imitate Him more perfectly by consorting with sinners, in this case, a sinful priest. . . .

Bishop McVinney wrote the psychiatrist-priest back a week later: "I just talked to Bishop Byrne and explained to him my position in this matter. Father Marcantonio has been treated by two local psychiatrists, one a priest, both of whom expressed the judgment that he is incurable. On this basis I cannot in good conscience sponsor him. If, however, you would like to help him as a friend . . . I would be very grateful[.]"

In a late September letter that Marcantonio wrote from Iowa to Monsignor Reilly, he explained that he was already living and working with students there. Marcantonio stated that the Archbishop of Dubuque agreed to give Marcantonio temporary faculties to serve as a priest. Marcantonio also asked that he remain "listed in the next [Diocese of Providence] directory. This would help to keep my reputation from being further ruined." Reilly wrote back the following month confirming that the Diocese would keep Marcantonio in its directory, and that Marcantonio would continue receiving Diocesan benefits and compensation while in Iowa.

As part of the Iowa arrangement, Marcantonio's friend and psychiatrist provided Bishop McVinney with periodic updates. According to a December 1970 update, Marcantonio reported "absolutely no difficulty—and I include here the matter of temptation—with reference to the young men with whom he lives."

In April 1971, Marcantonio wrote to Bishop McVinney requesting permission to continue his studies at Iowa State University, where he was pursuing a master's degree in psychology, as well as to ask for a temporary assignment in Rhode Island as a

Diocesan priest for the summer. Monsignor Reilly wrote back granting Marcantonio permission to continue his studies, but adding that the Bishop "feels that it would be better for you to continue your work in Ames, Iowa, during the summer months." In June 1971 – only ten months after "treatment" began – the priest-psychiatrist wrote to Bishop McVinney that he and Marcantonio had "successfully accomplished our therapeutic goal." Marcantonio would continue to reside in Iowa for "follow-up sessions" and to continue his studies. Archbishop James Byrne had also extended Marcantonio's temporary faculties for the Archdiocese of Dubuque for another year, until June 1972.

McVinney replied to the priest psychiatrist that while he "[a]ssume[d] that [Marcantonio] would like to return to Providence some time, [] at the moment it seems to me that because of the scandal that was somewhat widespread he would be better off working elsewhere. Since he seems to be well adjusted to Iowa, perhaps Archbishop Byrne would be willing to keep him there. We want this man to live a good priestly life in the best and most favorable surroundings." In another August 1971 letter from Bishop McVinney to Archbishop Byrne, McVinney said that Marcantonio's "case has been a rather serious one here, so much so that I hesitate to have Father Marcantonio return to do priestly work in this diocese. We must by all means avoid scandal . . . . A renewal of your faculties might make it possible for him to become acclimated in Iowa and wish to remain there for his priestly work. This is my fond hope."

Bishop McVinney died in August 1971 and was succeeded in January 1972 by Bishop Louis Gelineau. In a lengthy February 1972 letter to Gelineau, Marcantonio explained his "situation," admitting to Gelineau that he had left the Diocese in September 1970 "due to unfortunate actions on my own part," but adding that his "condition" had since been "successfully" treated through therapy. In his February 1972 letter to Gelineau, Marcantonio also sought permission to remain in Iowa for two more years to obtain his doctorate in psychology, which Gelineau approved.

By the summer and fall of 1973, Marcantonio began corresponding with Father Bertrand Theroux, of the Diocesan Personnel Office, regarding the possibility of returning to Rhode Island. In December 1973, Theroux interviewed Marcantonio regarding future employment and wrote in his notes from the interview that Marcantonio was particularly interested in serving on a college campus. He added that Marcantonio "was directed to contact Fr. George Frappier to see if as a counseling psychologist he couldn't be of use to the Diocesan Catholic Social Services."

In a June 1975 letter to Theroux, Marcantonio wrote that he accepted a position as Director of Counseling Services at Stonehill College. Marcantonio added in his letter to Theroux that Stonehill had already agreed that it was okay for Marcantonio to "do some weekend work in Rhode Island," and that he was "looking forward to being closer to the Diocese." There is no indication in the Diocesan records provided to this Office that the Diocese intervened to inform Stonehill of Marcantonio's past.

The Diocese swiftly took Marcantonio up on his offer: in August 1975, Bishop Gelineau wrote to Marcantonio asking him to serve as a weekend assistant at St. John Vianney Church in Cumberland, retaining the faculties of the Diocese of Providence. This capped a staggering "turnaround" for Marcantonio: almost exactly five years earlier, he had fled the Diocese for Iowa to seek intensive psychological treatment after having been accused of sexually abusing numerous boys. Now, with Bishop Gelineau's approval, Marcantonio returned to the Diocese, highly credentialed as a licensed doctor in psychology, and employed at a local college and another Rhode Island parish. In reality, Marcantonio was hardly cured: individuals would later come forward alleging that Marcantonio had sexually abused them while he was in Iowa; while he was working at Stonehill; and while he served as a parish priest at St. John Vianney.

Meanwhile, in May 1977, Marcantonio became licensed as a psychologist in Rhode Island, while continuing to serve as head of counseling at Stonehill. Marcantonio officially moved back to Rhode Island full time two years later, in May 1979, when Bishop Gelineau appointed him as head of Campus Ministry at Rhode Island College ("RIC"). The following year, the Diocese gave Marcantonio official permission to join the United States Naval Reserve as a chaplain.

In September 1981, the Diocese received the first of many additional sexual misconduct allegations against Father Marcantonio. According to Diocesan records, two teen complainants reportedly claimed that Marcantonio had "propositioned" them, including an offer to take one of them swimming. Marcantonio denied the allegations in a memo to Bishops Gelineau and Angell on September 21, 1981: "In the past two weeks, it has come to my attention through Bishop Angell that allegations have been made that I tried to proposition two teenage members of the Rhode Island College Sunday Community. I have also been told that it appears that I am guilty, and that I will be transferred in the immediate future." In Marcantonio's eight-page "defense," he argued to the bishops that both accusers were troubled, came from troubled families, and were lying. "The Bishops know of difficult moments in my life eleven years ago," he added. "There have been no bad reports about me since then, according to Bishop Angell and to my own knowledge." As he did eleven years earlier, Marcantonio again suggested to the bishops a series of "proposals," given the "delicate situation." These included allowing Marcantonio to complete the school year at RIC; that any transfer be made according to "normal procedures"; that he would inform the campus community "that I am considering alternative positions"; "[t]hat the reprimand I received for inappropriate remarks, as well as any record of these complaints, if such be necessary, be construed as sufficient action on the part of the Diocese"; he be given "a more formal and regular spiritual director"; and, if the bishops still intended to transfer him immediately, he insisted on having a hearing with witnesses and expressed an intention to file a grievance with the Priests' Grievance Committee."

The only other document relating to these allegations among the Diocesan records provided to this Office is a handwritten note from Bishop Gelineau to Bishop Angell, dated October 2, 1981, stating: "In view of all circumstances I believe we should put [Marcantonio] on warning that he will most likely be moved at the end of term –

next June." For reasons that are unclear, the Diocese ultimately decided against transferring Marcantonio; he remained at Rhode Island College for the rest of the 1980s, apparently without any restrictions. There is also no record that the Diocese tried to independently contact the two teenage boys who had accused Marcantonio of "propositioning" them, nor is there any record that the Diocese referred the matter to law enforcement.

Around July 1989, the Diocese was contacted by a plaintiff's lawyer in Texas representing a young man, Complainant B, who alleged that between 1973 and 1975, he was repeatedly raped by Marcantonio while serving as an altar boy at an Ames, Iowa parish. Complainant B was 13 when the alleged abuse began. Marcantonio reportedly took him swimming before bringing him back to his apartment, where he had sex with the boy. Complainant B reported that similar episodes occurred at least 20 times, until 1975. On August 15, 1989, the Diocese contacted the Sexual Disorders Clinic at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, requesting that Marcantonio undergo an evaluation, explaining that "recent allegations suggest that after 1972 but before Fr. Marcantonio returned to Providence from Iowa there was a sexual involvement with a young teenage boy." In the application, the Diocese wrote that the reason for Marcantonio's request was "to confirm 1972 advice from treating psychiatrist that all psychological problems have been resolved." Diocesan records confirm that the Diocese had received an evaluation from the Sexual Disorders Clinic concerning Marcantonio by January 1990, but the report itself is not included the Diocesan files produced to this Office.

Two days after the Diocese's initial outreach to Johns Hopkins, on August 17, 1989, Bishop Gelineau wrote to Marcantonio, officially granting him "permission" to "pursue personal sabbatical studies at the University of Rhode Island, Kingston . . . effective immediately." The Diocese would later state that upon receiving the news of Complainant B's allegations, Bishop Gelineau "immediately . . . placed Marcantonio on a leave of absence and suspended his authority to act as a priest." That same day, the Diocese assured Marcantonio that he would continue receiving his monthly compensation, living expenses, and benefits. It does not appear that Marcantonio publicly served as a Catholic priest ever again.

In December 1989, Complainant B sued Marcantonio in Texas state court; he also named as defendants Bishop Gelineau and certain entities and individuals affiliated with the Archdiocese of Dubuque, Iowa, under theories of vicarious liability and negligent supervision. The case was removed to Texas federal court and quickly dismissed in April 1990 on jurisdictional grounds. Complainant B soon refiled his lawsuit in federal court in Iowa in July 1990, and the case was reported on by the Providence Journal on July 13, 1990. Complainant B attached to his complaint an August 15, 1988, letter he received from Marcantonio in which Marcantonio offered to pay him "$100 per month, for 20 months, to cover some of the cost of your therapy."

In response, on July 20, 1990, Bishop Gelineau published a "pastoral letter" about the case in *The Providence Visitor*. In the letter, Gelineau stated that "[i]t is not my intention to comment on the substance of the lawsuit, but I do want you to know

that I had no knowledge of Father Marcantonio's activities in Iowa during his stay there. Indeed I was not even your Bishop when Father Marcantonio moved to the State. It is difficult for me to understand how in such circumstances I could be named as one of the defendants." He also told readers that the Diocese had recently implemented written "detailed policy procedures for immediate action when sexual abuse is suspected or discovered on the part of any employee or representative of the Diocese."

Complainant B filed a second lawsuit in Iowa federal court in September 1991, naming additional Diocesan defendants. According to *The Providence Journal,* "[t]he suit was refiled to take advantage of a change in Iowa's statute of limitations." The Diocese quickly settled its cases with Complainant B a month later for $347,000, and the matters were dismissed in April 1992.

The same month, Bishop Gelineau recommended the Diocese push for Marcantonio to seek laicization. Gelineau mailed Marcantonio a draft laicization petition and expressed his wish that Marcantonio would complete it "very soon." Marcantonio, who was residing in Providence at the time, wrote back expressing reluctance to go along with laicization because of the personal and financial uncertainties that cutting ties with the Church would entail.

In June 1992, Diocesan lawyer William T. Murphy was contacted by the Diocese's insurer, advising that a new claim had been filed against Marcantonio and the Diocese by Complainant B's brother, Complainant C. Soon after, the same lawyer representing Complainant C also asserted a demand on behalf of another individual, Complainant D. Both complainants alleged, like Complainant B, that Marcantonio had repeatedly sexually abused them as boys at St. Cecilia Church in Iowa during the early-to-mid 1970s; specifically, Complainant C reported "oral and anal sexual relations, masturbation, and observation of pornographic material" while he was a minor between 1971 and 1974, and Complainant D alleged approximately 12 instances of oral sex, including being instructed to view pornographic material on some of those occasions, from 1972 to 1974 while he was an altar server and a minor. The Diocese settled both matters by the end of November 1992, with Complainant C receiving $390,000, and Complainant D receiving $100,000.

By December 1992, Diocesan lawyer Murphy had begun corresponding with attorneys representing three brothers who alleged that they too had been sexually abused by Father Marcantonio while they were boys. Complainants E, F, and G reported that Marcantonio had repeatedly abused all three of them during the time period of 1975 until 1986, while Marcantonio was a priest at St. John Vianney Church in Cumberland. Complainant E alleged that Marcantonio abused him from 1974 to 1980 when he was between the ages 14 and 19; Complainant F alleged that Marcantonio abused him from 1975 to 1982 when he was ages 12 through 19; and Complainant G alleged that Marcantonio abused him from 1981 to 1986 when he was approximately 14 to 19 years old. They claimed that the abuse involved forced oral sex, pornographic material and paraphernalia, and anal sex in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Ontario, Canada. There is no indication that law enforcement was notified of these allegations.

Murphy engaged in unsuccessful settlement discussions with the brothers' lawyers during the next year. Ultimately, these complainants filed two lawsuits against Marcantonio and members of the Diocesan hierarchy in late 1993: Complainant F sued in state court, while Complainants E and G filed in federal court. While Complainant F's state case would later settle, the federal court case brought by Complainants E and G would ultimately be dismissed in March 1998 on statute of limitations grounds.

In December 2024, an investigator from the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office contacted Complainant F, who confirmed his prior report of abuse and told the investigator that he felt his lawsuit had positive results because it had brought light to needed changes within the Church. He further stated that although he has been able to compartmentalize the abuse, he still struggles with it every day.

In response to media coverage regarding the filing of these lawsuits, in early December 1993, the Diocesan Resource Development Department circulated a memorandum to Diocesan leadership. The memo stated (in pertinent part) that "Bishop Gelineau only learned of charges against Marcantonio in 1989, when a former Iowa altar boy surfaced molestation charges against the priest, who had studied in Iowa in the early '70s. Immediately upon hearing the news, Bishop Gelineau placed Marcantonio, who was at that time assigned to Rhode Island College, on a leave of absence and suspended his authority to act as a priest." This memo did not address the allegations against Marcantonio from the early 1970s, which were well-known to Diocesan leadership, including Bishop Gelineau.

Between late 1993 and 1995, plaintiffs filed several additional state court lawsuits alleging that Marcantonio had abused them over two decades earlier at St. Mary's in Cranston. Complainant H sued in November 1993, alleging repeated sexual abuse by Marcantonio when he was about 13 years old, between 1967 and 1968. Complainant I sued in December 1993, alleging that Marcantonio repeatedly sexually abused him at St. Mary's in 1967, when he was approximately 10 years old. Complainant J also sued in December 1993, alleging that Marcantonio repeatedly sexually abused him at St. Mary's in 1967 and 1968, when he was approximately 12 years old and in the seventh grade. Complainant K sued in March 1994, alleging that between 1967 and 1969, starting when he was an 11-year-old altar boy at St. Mary's, Marcantonio sexually assaulted him on two or three occasions inside the parish rectory. And around May 1995, Complainant L likewise sued, alleging that between 1967 and 1970, when he was 12 to 15 years old, he was repeatedly molested by Marcantonio at St. Mary's. There is no indication in the Diocesan records produced to this Office that the Diocese had dealt internally with any of these allegations prior to the filing of these lawsuits; nor is there any indication within those files that law enforcement ever became involved in these matters. The Diocese would ultimately settle all these matters, as well as Complainant F's state lawsuit, in the fall of 2002, with each plaintiff receiving over $300,000, for a total of nearly two million dollars.

As the Diocese continued to deal with the legal fallout from Marcantonio's career-long trail of child sexual abuse allegations, and as additional complainants came forward, Marcantonio adopted his familiar strategy of heading west. This time,

though, he would not return. In an August 1992 letter to Bishop Gelineau, Marcantonio explained that he had "finally" obtained employment, "teaching psychology and business (and possibly religion and philosophy) at a small state institution in the west, and I have to leave immediately . . . I want to move away without reporters chasing me . . . I need to establish a new life with some peace." It is again unclear whether or to what extent the Diocese had a hand in helping Marcantonio secure or maintain his employment. And once more, there is no indication in the Diocesan records that the Diocese informed Marcantonio's new employer that Marcantonio had been the subject of multiple allegations of child sexual misconduct.

By late 1993, Marcantonio moved to Arizona. He never agreed to laicization. In June 1999, Marcantonio wrote to Bishop Mulvee, thanking him for the "monthly subsidy"—he continued to receive a salary from the Clergy Special Assignment Fund for the rest of his life—and indicating that he had recently experienced health troubles. Marcantonio died of a heart attack later that year.

The Diocese continued to receive additional allegations against Marcantonio after his death. In November 2002, an attorney representing Complainant M contacted the Diocese to allege that Marcantonio had repeatedly abused Complainant M when he was a student at St. Mary's in Cranston. According to an April 2008 letter by Director of the Diocese Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") Robert McCarthy, upon being contacted by Complainant M's lawyer, the Diocese contacted Rhode Island State Police. Complainant M died in 2005, but his family continued to pursue his claim against the Diocese, ultimately settling the matter in mediation in 2008 for $126,000.

In March 2003, a lawyer representing Complainant N contacted the Diocese to assert a claim that Complainant N had allegedly been abused by both Marcantonio and another Diocesan priest. While the precise details of Complainant N's allegations against Marcantonio are not clear from the Diocesan records in this Office's possession, the Diocese agreed to settle the matter in 2004 for a sum of $100,000. There is no indication that law enforcement was notified of this allegation.

In June 2003, the Diocese received an email from Complainant O, alleging that he too had been abused by Marcantonio when he was a third-grade boy at St. Mary's in Cranston in the 1960s. After a sporadic and protracted back and forth between Complainant O and OEC Director McCarthy, McCarthy interviewed Complainant O in June 2011. Complainant O reiterated his allegations during an April 2014 interview with State Police, explaining that when he was 10 or 11 years old, he had been caught with pornographic pictures in his pockets at school and sent to the cafeteria for a sex education class taught by Marcantonio and another priest. When the other priest left the cafeteria, Marcantonio reportedly exposed his penis, made the complainant show his own penis, and then they touched each other's penises. According to Complainant O, nuns caught them and yelled at Father Marcantonio, but that nothing else was done. Complainant O also confirmed to State Police that he had notified OEC Director McCarthy and given a recorded statement, but opined that McCarthy was "not receptive." Complainant O advised that the abuse incident had caused him mental

issues since it occurred. Records indicate that by June 2014, the Diocese had paid over $10,000 toward Complainant O's therapy costs.

In June 2004, Complainant P contacted the Diocese to allege that Marcantonio had repeatedly sexually abused him when he was between eight and fourteen years old, during the period of 1976 to 1983, at St. John Vianney in Cumberland. The same month, the Diocese paid Complainant P $25,000 as part of a settlement and release agreement. There is no indication that the Diocese ever relayed Complainant P's allegations to law enforcement.

Around August 2008, lawyers for the Diocese were in communication with an attorney representing Complainant Q, who alleged that when he was in elementary school, he was sexually abused by Marcantonio in the parish rectory of St. Mary's in Cranston. Complainant Q reported that Marcantonio got him into a room alone, removed the complainant's clothes, and anally raped him. Diocesan investigator McCarthy relayed the allegations to Rhode Island State Police by letter in early September 2008. It appears the matter went to arbitration that same month, but the outcome is not clear from the Diocesan records provided to this Office.

In November 2024, an investigator with the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office contacted Complainant Q, who confirmed his allegation that Marcantonio abused him on one occasion when he was around 8 or 9 years old. He told the investigator that the abuse affected his marriage, he "ended up getting divorced because of it," and that he has been "scarred for life." The complainant also expressed his anger, adding that he felt the Diocese tried to "sweep [his abuse] under the carpet" and that the Diocese "did him no justice."

**Status**

The Diocese included Father Marcantonio on its List of Credibly Accused Clergy. He was accused of sexually abusing at least 17 boys.

# Father Joseph McCra

| Born | Ordained | Suspended | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sep. 25, 1905 | Jul. 10, 1921 | No | May 14, 1964 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1932 – 1937 | Christ the King Church, West Warwick |
| 1937 – 1948 | St. John Church, Warren |
| 1948 – 1949 | St. Lawrence Church, North Providence |
| 1949 – 1951 | Our Lady of Good Help Church, Burrillville |
| 1951 – 1952 | Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Providence |
| 1952 – 1953 | St. Joseph Church, Woonsocket |
| 1953 – 1955 | Our Lady of Consolation Church, Pawtucket |
| 1956 | *Suspended on leave*, Queen of the Clergy Villa, West Greenwich |
| 1956 – 1958 | *Suspended on leave*, Stella Maris Home for Convalescents, Newport |
| 1958 – 1961 | Brothers of the Sacred Heart, Burrillville |
| 1961 | *Suspended on leave*, Fraternite Sacerdotale, Montreal, Canada |
| 1961 – 1964 | St. Ann Church, Woonsocket |

## Summary

Between 1951 and 1964, Father Joseph McCra reportedly sexually abused at least two boys and attempted to molest others. According to Diocesan records provided to this Office, Bishop Russell Joseph McVinney—who served as head of the Diocese for nearly a quarter of a century, from 1948 until 1971—was fully aware of the child sexual abuse allegations against McCra, yet repeatedly reassigned McCra to positions within the Diocese where he continued to have access to, and reportedly abused, children.

The Diocese did not include Father McCra on its List of Credibly Accused Clergy until early 2023, following outreach by this Office.

## Allegations and Diocesan Response

In September 1951, a sexton working at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Providence swore in an affidavit that, in May of that year, he witnessed McCra—then the assistant pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes—wrestle altar boys to the floor and put his hand inside their pants, "making motions inside the boys' trousers with his hands till the boys broke away."

The Diocesan records received by this Office do not clarify what, if any, actions the Diocese took in response to these allegations. What is clear is that McCra remained at Our Lady of Lourdes (and in contact with minors) at least through mid-1952. In July 1952, Bishop McVinney received another letter, this one from an assistant at Our Lady of Lourdes, stating that "[n]o doubt Your Excellency is quite aware of this unpleasant situation. However, should some unfortunate incident come to light in the future, I would not relish the thought that possibly I failed in my duty toward Your Excellency, by not making known the unpriestly behavior of the Rev. George [*sic*] McCra." The author explained that "a certain boy, by the name of [redacted], I believe, has been here almost every Sunday since my arrival. He comes in around two thirty in the afternoon and Father leaves with him in his car around three thirty or four. I was told he was not to see this boy any more. Unfortunately, Father is away on vacation in Canada with this same lad." The letter closed with an offer to provide Bishop McVinney further details and observations the author made of Father McCra.

By mid-November 1952, the Diocese had placed McCra on a temporary leave of absence at a rest home for priests. Less than a month later, Bishop McVinney assigned McCra to St. Joseph Church in Woonsocket. Only eight months later, in August 1953, Bishop McVinney received a letter from the pastor of St. Joseph's asking the Bishop to remove McCra from St. Joseph's because "he does not seem at present in a condition to exercise a fruitful ministry." The letter did not mention or allude to any inappropriate contact with minors.

In November 1953, Bishop McVinney reassigned Father McCra to Our Lady of Consolation Church in Pawtucket. McVinney warned McCra, "if I receive any more complaints about your conduct, I shall have to be forced to remove you from the roll of those available for priestly service in the diocese."

While at Our Lady of Consolation in Pawtucket, Father McCra reportedly sexually abused at least two more boys. In a December 1955 affidavit, Complainant A alleged that McCra brought him and another boy to McCra's summer home in Pascoag in mid-October 1954 and served them alcohol. Complainant A wrote that the boys returned there with Father McCra in December 1954, where McCra again served them alcohol before trying to use his hands to touch the boys and engage in "immoral conduct." According to Complainant A, he returned to Father McCra's summer home another time that same month, and McCra again served the boy "potent liquor" and engaged in "immoral conduct," this time also asking the boy to "use immoral conduct on him." "After that," the boy wrote, McCra "brought down some of his friends and served liquor to them and also to [the other boy] and I [sic]."

A second complainant, Complainant B, who was approximately 13 at the time, likewise reported in a December 1955 affidavit that on a January morning in 1955, McCra took him to his Pascoag vacation home, under the auspices that the two would clean the house. There, the complainant wrote, McCra served him "hard liquor in the form of a high ball" before McCra began "touching the sexual part of my body but I did not let it go further." Later in the day, Complainant B said, an unnamed friend of McCra's came over, drank alcohol, and "tried to touch me a lot but I pushed him away."

The boy recounted how McCra repeatedly tried serving him more alcohol through the rest of the day and evening, and that McCra repeatedly rebuffed his requests to go home (he wrote that he "wasn't feeling very good from all this"), responding by offering more liquor and telling him it was "still early." When he finally reached home at approximately 11:30 p.m. that night, Complainant B wrote, he immediately told his parents, "and they went to see their parish priest." Complainant B's affidavit is also signed by his father. There is no indication in the records produced to this Office of what the Diocese did to investigate these reports, nor does it appear that these reports were forwarded to law enforcement at the time.

Father McCra's faculties were suspended by early 1956. A Chancery file from January 1956 documenting McCra's suspension notes:

> When the [Bishop] was informed by sworn depositions of the shameful and heinous crimes committed by him with several children (or boys), on December 9, 1955, he deprived him of his office without any hope of exercising sacred ministry in the Diocese of Providence in the future. The [Bishop] ordered him to continue his spiritual exercise, but he neglected this and took up residence with a friend . . .

In an early March 1956 letter from McCra to Bishop McVinney, written from "Queen of the Clergy Villa" in Escoheag (West Greenwich), McCra sought details about the allegations against him, and asked McVinney to reinstate his faculties. In a written reply that month, Bishop McVinney agreed, permitting Father McCra to say mass again and to "assist with work in any parishes that might need your service over the week-ends. When I have an opportunity I shall stop to talk with you and try to make further disposition of your case." The next month (April), Bishop McVinney reassigned McCra as chaplain to Stella Maris Home for Convalescents in Newport.

In November 1957, Father McCra wrote to Bishop McVinney from Newport requesting a new assignment, "having done penance and atonement for two years" and "as a gift for my silver jubilee of ordination to the holy priesthood." Once again, McVinney granted McCra's request, assigning him in February 1958 to the Novitiate of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart in Harrisville (Burrillville), Rhode Island.

By March 1961, Father McCra was suspended again in response to sexual abuse allegations, though the records provided by the Diocese to this Office do not specify the particular allegations against him. According to a March 1961 letter from McCra to Bishop McVinney, Father McCra had moved to a priests' home in Montreal, Canada. McCra wrote that he was under a "severe nervous tension" and was "very sorry for what I have done . . . please give me a last chance. I am here at the 'Fraternite Sacerdotale' to be straightened out. I told them the truth, immoral touches, a human weakness once in a while. They will correct me within shortly." McCra pleaded with McVinney to remove his suspension—and once again, Bishop McVinney acceded to McCra's request. Six months later, in September 1961, the Bishop assigned McCra as an assistant pastor at St. Ann Church in Woonsocket, with no apparent restrictions.

Father McCra remained at St. Ann's until his death in May 1964. His final letter to Bishop McVinney in February of that year—pleading with McVinney to grant him the "great favor" of appointing him pastor of St. Ann's—concluded with a French phrase, "*a tout péché miséricorde*," meaning "there is mercy for every sin."

**Status**

The Diocese failed to include Father McCra on its List of Credibly Accused Clergy until early 2023, after a representative of this Office contacted the Diocese in response to a recently-disclosed document containing handwritten references to McCra having been "accused in 1951 of molesting boys at his villa at a lake in Pascoag – relieved of duties." The Diocese subsequently provided McCra's files, which provided the basis for this summary.

# Father Robert McIntyre

| Born | Ordained | Retired | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| May 22, 1937 | Jun. 30, 1963 | Mar. 30, 1994 | Jun. 23, 2020 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1963 – 1967 | St. Teresa of the Child Jesus Church, Pawtucket |
| 1967 | Christian Brother Novitiate, Narragansett |
| 1967 – 1971 | St. Brendan Church, East Providence |
| 1971 – 1994 | St. Aloysius Home, Smithfield |
| 1994 | *Suspended then Retired* |

## Summary

Father Robert McIntyre was assigned to St. Aloysius Home, a Diocesan orphanage in Smithfield, in 1971, became its director in 1978, and remained in that position until St. Aloysius's closure in 1994. St. Aloysius was a residential foster-care and treatment facility for abused and neglected children in the state's custody. Around the time of the closure of St. Aloysius, and after revelations of widespread sexual abuse at the orphanage became public, the Diocese received complaints specifically naming McIntyre as one of the abusers. From 1993 to 2021, the Diocese received a dozen complaints of sexual abuse by McIntyre.

The reported abuse included fondling genitals, oral sex, anal penetration, possession of child pornography, and forcing children at St. Aloysius to sexually abuse each other. One complainant reported that the abuse occurred weekly and that some of the instances of abuse involved other men, including others employed by the orphanage.

Father McIntyre retired from active ministry shortly after the closure of St. Aloysius and the Bishop revoked his faculties. He is included on the Diocese of Providence's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

## The Reported Abuse and Diocesan Response

In 1993, a man who was previously a resident of St. Aloysius home, reported to Diocesan attorney William Murphy that he had overhead three boys talk about being abused by McIntyre. The man provided the first and last name of one of the boys, and the first names of the other two boys. On October 5, 1993, Diocesan attorney William Murphy and Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") Director Robert McCarthy met with the reporter and his therapist to conduct an interview. The man reported that while he was living at St. Aloysius, two St. Aloysius staff members molested him, and he overheard three boys talking about how "Father Mac" molested them. The

therapist vouched for the man's credibility with McCarthy. Nevertheless, it does not appear that McCarthy investigated the information the man provided or interviewed any of the potential victims. The complaint was ultimately labelled unsubstantiated in an undated OEC case list compiled by McCarthy.

In September 1993, Complainant A reported to the Department of Children, Youth, and Families ("DCYF") that Father McIntyre and a DCYF employee sexually abused him when he was about 15 years old and living at St. Aloysius in 1987. DCYF notified the Diocese of the complaint shortly after receiving it. There is no further description of the abuse. DCYF forwarded Complainant A's complaint to the State Police a few days after receipt, and the complainant was interviewed by State Police later that month (September 1993). There is no evidence of any further investigation by the Diocese. It appears McCarthy did not check with State Police about the status of this complaint for another five years, until September 1998, when he was informed by State Police that Complainant A told State Police he was "dropping the case." According to an OEC memo, State Police added that they had interviewed several other subjects and "none of them said that they had been sexually abused," and that McIntyre was never interviewed about this complaint because there was "now no complainant in the matter." However, in an interview in 2020 with State Police, another former resident of St. Aloysius noted that he witnessed Complainant A being sexually assaulted by a staff member.

By January 1994, following public outcry regarding a litany of sexual abuse allegations at the orphanage, St. Aloysius had permanently closed. On January 5, 1994, Co-Chancellor Robert Evans wrote to Bishop Gelineau to inquire where McIntyre should be placed next. "I understand Your Excellency may have concerns," Evans wrote, "in view of allegations of sexual misconduct at St. Aloysius Home, about the suitability of Father to work in the area of youth at this time." Chancellor Evans suggested that the Bishop consult Monsignor Frappier, Diocesan investigator McCarthy, and Diocesan attorney William Murphy, "to determine Father's standing in this area." Gelineau acknowledged the suggestion in a note and instructed Chancellor Evans to make the consultations and report back. There is no record of the results of these consultations, including any further discussion about McIntyre's suitability to work with children.

On March 30, 1994, Bishop Gelineau wrote McIntyre to confirm a phone call the two had a few days earlier. According to Gelineau's letter, McIntyre had expressed frustration "about the manner in which the diocese handled the affairs at St. Aloysius Home," and told Gelineau that he was "resigning from the active ministry and will not practice as a priest in the future." The letter further noted that McIntyre had accepted a position in a human services agency in New Bedford, Massachusetts. There is no indication in the Diocesan records provided to this Office that any Diocesan official took the step of alerting McIntyre's new employer about the two known allegations of sexual abuse that had been made against McIntyre while working as a Diocesan priest.

In 1996, a victim ("Complainant B") sued the State, the Diocese, and McIntyre, among other defendants, for sexual abuse he reportedly suffered at St. Aloysius, including abuse perpetrated by McIntyre. A jury trial began in Providence Superior Court in July 1999. Following the trial, the jury found McIntyre, the Diocese and the State not liable.

In 2003, another victim ("Complainant C") wrote to the Diocese seeking a monetary settlement for sexual abuse he suffered in the 1980s by an unidentified priest at St. Aloysius home, as well as by other St. Aloysius staff whom he could not identify. McCarthy interviewed the complainant a few months later. Complainant C had a criminal history and was incarcerated at the time. According to McCarthy's records, he was told by members of the Detective Unit at the ACI, as well as the Detective Commander of the Major Crimes Unit of the State Police, that the complainant "ha[d] absolutely no credibility whatsoever." There is no record of any further investigation by McCarthy following his interview with Complainant C in 2003. In 2008 and 2010, Complainant C again contacted McCarthy and Bishop Tobin to inquire about the status of his complaint. Bishop Tobin responded to Complainant C's letter in 2008 and offered his apologies and sympathy, while noting that unless Complainant C agreed to allow Tobin to use the OEC staff and the Diocese's Review Board to investigate his allegation, he would not be able to "consider" Complainant C's request for compensation. In June 2010, McCarthy informed Complainant C that the Review Board had determined that his allegation was unsubstantiated, and a settlement was not warranted, because his report lacked specifics about the perpetrator priest. In July 2010, Complainant C wrote to McCarthy and identified McIntyre as the priest who reportedly abused him, as well as the name of a counselor to whom he had disclosed his allegations. McCarthy forwarded the complainant's file to the State Police for further investigation. We found no records of further follow-up by the Diocese, nor did the State Police have a record of this referral.

In August 2007, a victim ("Complainant D") contacted the OEC to report that Father McIntyre sexually abused him at St. Aloysius in approximately 1986, when he was 13 years old. McCarthy interviewed the complainant and sent a letter to the State Police with the details of the allegations the following month, noting that the complainant had requested that the State Police be notified of his complaint. Diocesan records indicate that McCarthy presented the case to the Diocese's Review Board on September 6, 2007, but there is no record of the Board's determination on that date. In his interview with McCarthy, Complainant D alleged that McIntyre initiated the abuse by asking him about puberty, before McIntyre pulled down his pants and touched his genitals. According to Complainant D, McIntyre threatened him, saying that "if you don't cooperate here, you're not going to go home to your mother, we'll find you a new family." Diocesan records indicate that the State Police reached out to McCarthy regarding Complainant D's allegations on August 6, 2008, and McCarthy sent the State Police a copy of the complainant's interview transcript the following day. For reasons that are not clear, State Police did not interview the complainant until October 2010. The case was then closed as the alleged sexual assault occurred outside the statute of limitations.

On October 18, 2019, OEC Director Kevin O'Brien (McCarthy's successor) notified the State Police that an individual ("Complainant E") had recently contacted the Diocese to report that McIntyre sexually abused him between 1968 and 1975, when he was a ward of the state at St. Aloysius Home. There is no further description of the alleged abuse. O'Brien attempted to interview the complainant several times, but the complainant rescheduled the interview or failed to appear. The State Police eventually closed the investigation a few months later after being unable to contact the complainant.

On February 4, 2020, O'Brien referred another complaint ("Complainant F") to the State Police. Complainant F reported that Father McIntyre sexually abused him at St. Aloysius in the early 1980s and that the abuse lasted several years. During an interview with O'Brien with the complainant's attorney present, the complainant stated that the abuse began when he was nine years old after the complainant confronted McIntyre about abusing his five-year-old brother. The complainant reported that he was an altar server at the orphanage and the sexual assaults involved fondling, masturbation, and oral and anal sex. McIntyre reportedly told him to keep the abuse between the two of them or "more things [would] happen to my brother." The complainant told O'Brien that the abuse stopped when he was 13 years old after he told his case worker and DCYF removed him and his brother to other group homes. Complainant F also alleged physical and sexual abuse by other staff members at St. Aloysius.

Due to the COVID-19 emergency, the State Police's investigation was delayed, and they were never able to contact the complainant. In the interim, McIntyre died on June 23, 2020.

On February 18, 2020, the OEC received two additional complaints alleging sexual abuse by Father McIntyre at St. Aloysius. One individual ("Complainant G") reported that during the 1980s, when the complainant was approximately 10 years old, McIntyre raped him and took nude photographs of him. The Diocese reported the allegations to State Police and this Office via letter in July 2020. State Police contacted Complainant G's attorney in 2020 to inquire whether his client wished to provide a statement, but never heard from Complainant G.

In 2020, a man ("Complainant H") reported multiple instances of sexual abuse at St. Aloysius during the late 1970s to early 1980s to OEC Director O'Brien. He stated that he was abused by St. Aloysius staff members starting when he first came to St. Aloysius at eight years old. Within approximately one year, the complainant was introduced to McIntyre, who started sexually abusing him in group settings with other boys. The abuse reportedly continued until the complainant was approximately 11 years old and consisted of masturbation, oral sex, forcing the complainant to view pornography, and forcing the complainant and other young boys to sexually abuse each other while McIntyre filmed the abuse and took Polaroid photographs. Complainant H also reported that he had been abused by a female staff member who crawled into his bed and forced him to engage in sexual acts.

Despite receiving Complainant G's and Complainant H's allegations in February, Director O'Brien did not notify the State Police of their existence until June 30, 2020, eight days after McIntyre's death. State Police interviewed Complainant H in August 2020, as well as an outcry witness and another potential victim identified by Complainant H. The outcry witness confirmed that he knew the complainant and that he had seen a female staff member on Complainant H's bed. He also told State Police that he himself was sexually assaulted by staff members at St. Aloysius (though not by McIntyre), but the State Police detective was "unable to corroborate any of the specific instances that [Complainant H] had described." Both investigations were ultimately closed due to McIntyre's death.

In March 2020, this Office learned of another allegation of sexual abuse against McIntyre, which it referred to the State Police. The complainant ("Complainant I") claimed that McIntyre sexually abused him starting when he was nine years old until he was approximately 16 years old, by performing oral sex on him and digitally penetrating him. Complainant I also stated that McIntyre possessed child pornography at his residence, as well as photographs of juvenile boys in diapers. State Police executed a search warrant at McIntyre's residence on May 29, 2020. While no child pornography was located during the search, police reportedly found hundreds of photographs of pre-pubescent boys wearing diapers on McIntyre's computer and related search history on his computer. The investigation was ultimately closed when McIntyre passed away that June.

Following McIntyre's death, the Diocese received complaints alleging sexual abuse by McIntyre at St. Aloysius from two additional victims ("Complainant J" and "Complainant K") in December 2020 and July 2021. Complainant J reported that he was sexually abused by a "Reverend Robert," as well as other St. Aloysius staff, during the 1980s. Complainant K reported that McIntyre sexually assaulted him in 1979. The records produced did not include additional details for either complaint. Both allegations were forwarded to the State Police, but the criminal investigations were closed due to McIntyre's death. State Police attempted to contact Complainant J's attorney in 2021 and 2023 but did not receive a response, and efforts to contact Complainant K in 2021 were unsuccessful. It does not appear that either allegation was referred to the Diocese's Review Board.

State Police attempted to contact all of McIntyre's other living complainants in 2024 without success (the man who reported overhearing boys talking about being abused by McIntyre committed suicide, and Complainant A may have also committed suicide, in the mid-2000s).

**Status**

After leaving the priesthood in 1994, Father McIntyre worked at the Center for Health and Human Servies in New Bedford. Three years later, he became the Director of Residential Services for YOU, Inc. in Worcester, where he was responsible for 10 residential sites for at-risk children and youth. He retired in 2000, at which time he began part-time work at the DaVinci Center, a social services agency for all ages, on

Charles Street in Providence. The records produced do not indicate whether the Diocese informed any of his employers of the sexual abuse allegations brought against him.

The Diocese included Father McIntyre on its List of Credibly Accused Clergy when it was published in 2019. After the List's publication, McIntyre left Rhode Island and relocated to Florida until his death in 2020.

# Father Barry Meehan

| Born | Ordained | Laicized | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jul. 21, 1949 | Jun. 10, 1978 | May 7, 2015 | Dec. 8, 2016 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1978 – 1980 | SS. Peter & Paul Church, West Warwick |
| 1980 – 1991 | St. Mary Church, Cranston |
| 1991 – 1996 | St. Augustine Church, Providence |
| 1996 – 2002 | St. John the Baptist Church, West Warwick |
| 2000 – 2002 | St. James Church, West Warwick |
| 2002 – 2013 | St. Timothy Church, Warwick |
| 2013 | *Suspended on leave* |
| 2015 | *Laicized* |

## Summary

Father Barry Meehan reportedly sexually abused at least four boys and one young man between 1983 and the mid-2000s. The complainants worked at his parishes as assistants or altar boys. According to the complainants, Father Meehan's abuse began with the priest removing or reaching inside their pants and touching or rubbing their genitals and/or groin areas, often in Meehan's rectory bedroom. Father Meehan also reportedly groomed his targets with gifts, vacations, and promises of employment.

The Diocese received the first complaint about an inappropriate relationship between Meehan and a teenage boy in September 1998 and a second, similar complaint in 2002. Despite these complaints, Meehan remained in ministry. In 2006, a third complainant reported to the Diocese that Meehan abused him. The Diocese's Review Board found this victim's allegation unsubstantiated, reportedly due to the complainant's lack of cooperation at the time, and the Diocese took no disciplinary action against Father Meehan until two more complainants reported sexual abuse to the Diocese in December 2012. Bishop Thomas Tobin suspended Meehan in January 2013 and referred complaints against him to the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith ("CDF") later that year. Following the Diocese's referral of the two complaints that it received in late 2012 to Rhode Island State Police, Father Meehan was indicted for first-degree sexual assault.

In March 2015, the Vatican dismissed Father Meehan from the clerical state. He died in 2016 while awaiting trial. Meehan is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

**The Reported Abuse**

Father Meehan reportedly abused the first complainant ("Complainant A") in September 1983 while assigned as Assistant Pastor of St. Mary's Church in Cranston. According to Complainant A, he was 15 years old when Meehan started abusing him at St. Mary's rectory. Complainant A recounted more than 25 instances of abuse, beginning with Meehan removing his pants and touching his penis. Complainant A told the Diocese that the pastor of St. Mary's at the time was aware of Complainant A's presence in the rectory and had instructed Meehan not to allow boys on the second floor of the rectory. Complainant A reported the abuse to the Diocese in 2006.

Father Meehan reportedly began abusing the second complainant ("Complainant B") in 1986 and groomed him for years by giving him jewelry and designer clothes. According to Complainant B, shortly after his 16th birthday, Meehan brought the boy to his rectory bedroom and rubbed the boy's penis. Complainant B alleged that Meehan abused him in this fashion on hundreds of occasions over several years and the assaults escalated to include masturbation and oral sex. Complainant B disclosed the abuse to Diocesan officials in 2012. As described below, Father Meehan was eventually indicted on first-degree sexual assault charges pertaining to Complainant B.

Father Meehan also reportedly abused another boy ("Complainant C") at this time. According to Complainant C, he first met Meehan when he was approximately 10 years old. Complainant C reported that Meehan began grooming him at age 14 and bought him expensive dinners and other gifts. In 1988, when Complainant C was approximately 18 years old, Meehan brought the young man to his rectory bedroom to watch television. Complainant C reported that there were several other people, including housekeepers, in the rectory when Meehan pulled the young man across his lap, opened the man's pants, and began "rubbing" him. Meehan reportedly continued to have sexual contact with Complainant C until the early 1990s. Complainant C told the Diocese that he joined Meehan on personal trips to other states and countries during which Father Meehan reportedly sexually assaulted him, including forced oral and anal sex. Complainant C reported his allegations to Diocese officials in 2012. As described below, Father Meehan was eventually indicted on first-degree sexual assault charges pertaining to Complainant C.

Father Meehan reportedly sexually abused a 14-year-old boy ("Complainant D") in the St. Timothy rectory in the mid-2000s. Complainant D stated that Meehan brought Complainant D to the priest's rectory bedroom, where he would motion for him to sit or lie next to him and then "rub" the complainant's genitals over his clothing before trying to slide his hand under the complainant's pants to attempt to reach his genitals. He reported that Meehan would pull in the complainant for hugs and touched his inner thigh and his buttocks and would kiss his neck and forehead. Complainant D alleged that Meehan abused him in this manner hundreds of times over the course of four to five years. Complainant D reported the abuse to Church officials in 2013.

Another man ("Complainant E") came forward in September 2020 to report to the Diocese through his attorneys that Meehan sexually abused him from approximately 1980 through 1988, when he was between the ages of 13 through 21, at St. Mary's in Cranston where Meehan was assigned. On March 2, 2021, Director O'Brien interviewed Complainant E on a video conference call. At the request of Complainant E's attorneys, the interview was not recorded. According to O'Brien's memoranda of that interview, Complainant E reported that he met Meehan after becoming an altar server at St. Mary's Church in Cranston. According to Complainant E, Meehan and another priest, Father Roland Lepire,[20] would frequently invite Complainant E and other altar boys into the rectory to play chess, where Meehan and Lepire reportedly touched them in an inappropriate manner. Complainant E reported that Meehan initially engaged in what O'Brien characterized as "grooming techniques" by showering him with gifts, affection, and attention, before progressing to touching him inappropriately, engaging in mutual masturbation, and performing oral sex on the complainant. Complainant E added that he was abused over a hundred times, and that the abuse only stopped once he moved away. In interviews with State Police in 2013, Complainants B and C recalled that Complainant E was an altar server with them at St. Mary's.

Complainant E advised Director O'Brien that there were no eyewitnesses to his reported abuse by Meehan. However, he provided O'Brien with the names of two other individuals whom he believed were also abused by Meehan, although he could only recall one of these individuals' full names. According to O'Brien's memorandum of the interview, O'Brien suspected this individual to be Complainant B, who had previously reported his abuse by Meehan to the Diocese and law enforcement. The other individual named by Complainant E had been interviewed by former OEC Director McCarthy in December 2012 and, although he did not report any sexual abuse by Meehan, informed McCarthy that Complainant A had disclosed to him that Meehan sexually abused him, and corroborated Meehan's inappropriate relationship with the young boy at St. John the Baptist Church in the 1990s.

Complainant E told Director O'Brien that he did not disclose the abuse to anyone until shortly after the clergy sexual abuse crisis came to light in 2002, when he told his brother. He also stated that he had confided in therapists over the years. Complainant E advised that he suffered long-term emotional, mental and physical health issues because of the abuse and wished to file a report to assist him with the healing process and to be financially compensated.

On March 5, 2021, O'Brien forwarded Complainant E's allegations to the Rhode Island State Police and the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office, noting that Diocesan records confirm that Meehan served at St. Mary's during the time of the reported abuse. On April 13, 2021, the case was presented to the Diocesan Review Board, but the records produced by the Diocese do not contain the Board's

[20] Father Roland Lepire is included on the Diocese of Providence's List of Credibly Accused Clergy. For more information about Father Lepire, see his summary in Appendix A.

recommendation or determination. On December 3, 2024, Complainant E's attorney emailed OEC Director O'Brien seeking the results of the Diocese's investigation into his client's complaint, noting that his client had been interviewed by the Diocese over two and half years earlier, and wondering whether the Diocese found Complainant E's allegations credible. In January 2025, Director O'Brien replied by email to Complainant E's counsel noting:

> Based on my review of your client's file from March 2021, my investigation revealed that although I was unable to interview Barry Meehan, due to his death in 2016, the facts and circumstances provided by [Complainant E] were consistent with those provided by others alleging abuse by Meehan which resulted in his 2014 arrest and Meehan being placed on the Diocese of Providence list of credibly accused published on July 1st 2019.

**Diocesan Response**

The Diocese assigned Father Meehan to St. John the Baptist Church in West Warwick in January 1996. On September 18, 1998, a St. John parishioner reported to the Diocese's Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") Director Robert McCarthy that Meehan might be having an inappropriate relationship with a 15-year-old boy. The parishioner explained that the boy was at the rectory every day and that she had seen him near the bedrooms on the second floor. She claimed she had confronted Meehan and informed the priest that she was watching out for the children and that he seemed distressed during the confrontation. She provided McCarthy with the names of three boys who were frequently in the rectory. She said that one of the boys would not speak about what occurred between him and Meehan. McCarthy wrote in an OEC memorandum of the meeting to the file that the parishioner was "quite concerned," but that she "did not specifically point out anything that was either immoral or unlawful." McCarthy added that "based upon the activity that had taken place in that Parish when Father LaMountain[21] was the Pastor, both she and others . . . are quite concerned about what was transpiring between the Pastor and this fifteen[-]year[-]old boy." There is no record indicating that Meehan was made aware of this complaint, nor does it appear that McCarthy or any Diocese official spoke with the boys involved or their families. An undated, unauthored timeline provided by the Diocese to this Office in December 2025 generally references these allegations and adds "Victim #1 did not come forward."

[21] Father Michael LaMountain was indicted in 1997 on two counts of first-degree sexual assault, six counts of second-degree sexual assault, and one count of second-degree child molestation. He pled guilty in 1999 to all nine charges. For more information about Father LaMountain, see his summary in Appendix A.

In a 2012 interview with a friend of Complainants B and C to whom Complainant B had reportedly disclosed his abuse years prior, McCarthy asked him if he knew the aforementioned 15-year-old boy. According to McCarthy's memorandum of the interview "there was a noticeable physical reaction." The friend stated that the boy was "involved" with Father Meehan and that on one occasion, he noticed a look on the boy's face that he had never seen before and "was the same look that he saw on [Complainant B's] face six years ago, when [the complainant] told him that he was sexually assaulted by Father Meehan." The friend also told McCarthy that he knew Complainant A and that Father Meehan used to buy him things.

Bishop Robert Mulvee transferred Father Meehan to St. Timothy Church in Warwick in 2002, but the Diocese continued to receive complaints about Meehan's relationships with children. On August 1, 2002, a nun from the St. Timothy community reported concerns to Bishop Mulvee over Meehan's close relationships with minors to Chancellor John Darcy. The nun explained that she had received reports that boys hung around the rectory constantly and frequently attended dinners with Meehan. Some had been given credit cards, and he reportedly lent one of the boys a car. Darcy wrote in a confidential memorandum of the meeting that the nun made "absolutely NO suggestions of physical and/or sexual improprieties at any time" but she wanted "to ease her conscience of this information that had been shared with her" by, among others, an unnamed former priest.

In the same memorandum, Darcy recorded a summary of his August 2, 2002 meeting with Father Meehan during which the priest denied lending a car or giving out credit cards. Meehan explained to Darcy that his contact with the boys stemmed from the parish's work needs but he reportedly admitted that they "may have become dependent on each other." Yet again, there is no record indicating anyone from the Diocese followed up with these boys or their families, and there is no indication that Chancellor Darcy or Bishop Mulvee informed McCarthy of the nun's report.

Although the Diocese was alerted to concerns about Father Meehan's suspected grooming behavior in 1998 and 2002, it apparently did not receive a specific complaint of sexual abuse until 2006. On December 18, 2006, Complainant A reported to the Moderator of the Curia, Monsignor Paul Theroux, that Father Meehan sexually abused him. According to Diocesan records, the complainant also met with Dr. Michael Hansen at the Office of Education and Compliance on that date. Theroux forwarded the complaint to OEC Director Robert McCarthy, who scheduled an interview with the complainant. Complainant A reportedly did not attend the interview and did not communicate with McCarthy at that time.

McCarthy interviewed Father Meehan regarding Complainant A's accusations on March 12, 2007. Over the course of the interview, McCarthy expressed doubts about the complainant's credibility, explaining that the same person had sued another priest for sexual abuse in the 1990s and had "lied" during a deposition. Meehan denied ever sexually abusing Complainant A and joined McCarthy in criticizing the complainant, noting that the complainant enjoyed "the high life" and was likely

making the accusation for money. Two days later, the Diocese's Review Board voted unanimously that the allegation was unsubstantiated. An undated, unauthored timeline produced by the Diocese to this Office in December 2025 reflects that on March 14, 2007, the "Bishop's Advisory Board ruled that Barry Meehan should remain until [Complainant A] cooperates." The timeline also contained a notation that Diocesan counsel forwarded a 1999 deposition of Complainant A to the Attorney General's Office on December 20, 2006, two days after the Diocese received Complainant A's allegations. We could not confirm this assertion, however, as we found no other record of this referral either in the files produced by the Diocese or in this Office's or State Police's files. There is no record of any Rhode Island State Police report about these allegations until 2012.

On June 4, 2010, Bishop Tobin received an anonymous letter from a St. Timothy parishioner urging the Bishop to remove Meehan from the parish. "Fr. Meehan has no respect for his parishioners," the letter read, "and just does not care about any of them except for the boys who are always seen coming and going at the rectory." Bishop Tobin received another anonymous letter on June 21 of the same year: "Please remove him [Meehan] immediately," the second letter read, "and please, please for the sake of those many, many boys who have been seen coming and going from the rectory get him away from them and the potential scandal that could bring down St. Timothy's."

Auxiliary Bishop Robert Evans met with Father Meehan on July 2, 2010, to discuss the anonymous complaints. Meehan explained that the boys in question were "either seminarians or young people who clean the church on Saturdays."

Bishop Tobin received a third anonymous complaint from a St. Timothy parishioner on June 21, 2011. "It might be good for you to have someone in the parish parking lot around 10:00 AM every Saturday to see the parade of 'boys' going in to work in the parish," the letter read. The complainant went on to describe Meehan's obsession with his seminarians as "very disturbing." "I'm only telling you things I pretty much have seen firsthand," the letter concluded. "There are other things I've heard but they are hearsay. Such as, the 'boys' have permission to freely move around the rectory, including the pastor's room."

On July 26, 2012, Complainant A contacted the Diocese and again reported his sexual abuse by Meehan. McCarthy referred Complainant A's allegations of sexual abuse, first reported to McCarthy in 2006, to the Rhode Island State Police around July or August 2012, according to Diocesan records. The State Police closed the investigation in October 2012, after Complainant A did not respond to their outreach.

On December 4, 2012, Complainant B wrote a letter to Bishop Tobin disclosing that Father Meehan sexually abused him. Complainant B expressed that it was his goal to have Meehan removed from priesthood and ensure that there would be no more victims. McCarthy interviewed Complainant B on December 7, 2012, and he recounted the abuse as summarized above.

Complainant C met with McCarthy for an interview on December 10, 2012, and spoke with a Massachusetts State Police trooper regarding Complainant C's allegations that same day. Also on the same day, Bishop Tobin opened an official canonical investigation into the complaints of Complainants B and C. Diocesan records reflect that the Rhode Island State Police responded to the Office of Education and Compliance and collected McCarthy's file on Complainant B's and C's allegations two days later, on December 12, 2012. On December 26, 2012, Complainants B and C took separate polygraph examinations at McCarthy's request. The polygraph reports indicated that the complainants' allegations were truthful. In early January 2013, McCarthy forwarded this information to the Rhode Island State Police.

McCarthy interviewed Father Meehan on January 7, 2013. During the interview, McCarthy revealed to Meehan the identities of Complainants B and C and reported the details of their allegations. Meehan denied abusing either complainant. McCarthy then told Meehan that both complainants had taken polygraph tests and that neither of their test results had indicated deception. McCarthy asked Meehan whether he would take a polygraph. Father Meehan agreed during the interview but later declined.

On January 8, 2013, Bishop Tobin accepted Meehan's resignation from St. Timothy Church and suspended Meehan's priestly faculties. According to an undated, unauthored timeline produced by the Diocese to this Office in December 2025, the Diocese accepted Meehan's resignation on January 14, 2013, "based on credible allegations." On the same day, McCarthy reported the details of his interview with Meehan to the State Police, including the allegations of Complainants B and C, and advised that the present investigation was a continuation of his 2007 investigation. On January 13, 2013, the Diocese released a statement that Meehan had resigned and that the Diocese had placed him on administrative leave "as a result of a credible allegation of sexual misconduct that allegedly took place more than 25 years ago."

A former St. Mary's parishioner and altar server wrote a letter to Bishop Tobin the day after *The Providence Journal* published a story about Meehan's resignation. The author wrote in defense of Meehan and that he "never saw any inappropriate contact," but also noted that Father Meehan was "very friendly" with Complainant E when he was a boy and that Complainants A and E were "around him all the time." He also wrote that Meehan had acted as a "surrogate father" to Complainant A and his brothers.

On January 24, 2013, a parishioner of St. John the Baptist in West Warwick called McCarthy and told him about three young boys who, according to the parishioner, received gifts and undue attention from Meehan when he was pastor of St. John. One of the boys identified by this parishioner, it turns out, was the same young person identified by another St. John's parishioner 15 years earlier, in 1998. That parishioner, as recounted above, warned McCarthy that she was concerned about Meehan's relationship with the boy, but her concerns were dismissed at the time. In a letter to State Police reporting the substance of the call, McCarthy noted that "[t]he activity described by this individual . . . mirrors the same pattern of behavior that Father

Meehan exhibited while at St. Mary's Parish in Cranston, as reported by [Complainants B and C]."

On November 20, 2014, the State Police arrested Father Meehan and charged him with five counts of first-degree sexual assault of Complainants B and C. The charged conduct included oral and anal penetration. The Providence County Grand Jury returned an indictment against him on November 19, 2014.

Bishop Tobin forwarded the results of McCarthy's investigation of Meehan to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on June 13, 2013. Neither the *acta* (the collection of documents and testimonies relating to the allegations), nor the Bishop's *votum* (authoritative opinion on the matter), mention Complainant A's allegations, or the reports by parishioners and nuns regarding Meehan's concerning behavior in 1998, 2002, 2010, or 2011. According to the *acta*, the Diocese's first notice of Meehan's abusive behavior was on December 4, 2012. In the Bishop's *votum,* Tobin wrote, "I do not believe Father Meehan to be a danger to young people. However, due to the nature of the allegations, I deem Father Meehan unsuitable for any future ministry with children or youth. I believe that Father Meehan's future effectiveness as a parish priest has been severely undermined by these allegations."

Complainant D reported to McCarthy on July 18, 2013, that Meehan sexually abused him in the mid-2000s, when Complainant D was approximately 14 years old. McCarthy interviewed Complainant D (along with the Moderator of the Curia and Vicar General, Monsignor Albert Kenney) and forwarded his complaint to the State Police on July 24, 2013. State Police interviewed Complainant D on August 13, 2013, in McCarthy's office, and then closed the criminal investigation as the reported misconduct fell outside the applicable statute of limitations. McCarthy noted in an August 2013 letter to Monsignor Kenney that Complainant D's "testimony was consistent on each and every occasion which added, in my view, to his credibility." In October 2013, Complainant D provided McCarthy with information about other altar boys who served with him and others whom he believed may have been victimized by Meehan. According to Diocesan records, McCarthy forwarded this information to the State Police.

The CDF replied to Bishop Tobin on September 7, 2013. It informed him that Complainants B and C were not considered minors under canon law, because they were 16 years or older at the time of their abuse, and "[t]herefore, any abuse which may have occurred would not be considered a canonical delict."

On September 9, 2013, Bishop Tobin informed the Secretary of the CDF of the newly received complaint from Complainant D. Tobin included a revised *votum* and documentation indicating that Complainant D was a minor under canon law at the time of reported abuse. The Bishop advised that he was encouraging Meehan to seek laicization voluntarily but also requested that the CDF dismiss Meehan should Meehan refuse the voluntary process.

Meehan had been living in the Regina Cleri Residence for Senior Priests at St. Joseph Church in Providence since his suspension in January 2013. On September 13, 2013, Chancellor Timothy Reilly wrote to Meehan to inform him that he was to vacate the Regina Cleri Residence on the Review Board's recommendation. "As you consider relocation options," Reilly wrote to Meehan, "please remember that you are not permitted to reside in any rectory, parish housing, Church-owned building, or on any ecclesiastical property—in any diocese."

On March 20, 2014, Chancellor Reilly advised Father Meehan that the CDF had recommended that Meehan apply for voluntary laicization. Reilly noted that the alternative penal process would be long, unpredictable and would require that the accusers be interviewed by priest-judges. Vicar General Albert Kenney, who was also present at this meeting, noted that "a penal process could open the floodgates for a potential 'field day' for SNAP (Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests) and other victim-rights groups, and that the negative publicity would be overwhelming."

Father Meehan declined the CDF's recommendation of voluntary laicization.

On March 28, 2015, the CDF authorized Bishop Tobin "to impose the permanent penalty of dismissal from the clerical state on the Rev. Barry M. Meehan." According to Diocesan records provided to this Office in December 2025, Bishop Tobin met with Meehan on May 7, 2015, to advise him that he was laicized and could no longer function as a priest. Meehan appealed his dismissal in a May 23, 2015 letter to the CDF, arguing that the determination against him relied too heavily on the allegations of Complainants B and C and ignored inconsistencies in Complainant D's testimony. On September 1, 2015, the CDF wrote to Bishop Tobin that it was still willing to allow Meehan a voluntary dispensation from the priesthood.

In October 2015, Complainant B wrote to Vicar General Kenney to note that the Holy Name Parish bulletin had published Mass intentions for Meehan three times in the previous two years, which to his knowledge appeared to be more times than for the victims of sexual abuse by priests in the Diocese.

The CDF rejected Father Meehan's appeal of his involuntary dismissal from the priesthood on December 18, 2015. Meehan appealed the rejection to another Vatican entity: the Vatican's College for the Examination of Recourse in Matters of *Delicta Reservata*. On October 19, 2016, the College agreed to forward Meehan's appeal and his accompanying petition for voluntary laicization to the Pope.

Meehan passed away on December 8, 2016, about a month before his criminal trial was scheduled to begin and while his petition for laicization and appeal were still pending before the Pope.

Director O'Brien interviewed Complainant E on March 2, 2021, in the presence of his attorneys, and then referred Complainant E's allegations to the State Police and this Office on March 5, 2021. The State Police tried to contact Complainant E through his attorney multiple times in 2021 and 2023 but received no response.

In November 2024, State Police spoke with Complainants B and C, who both confirmed their reported abuse. Complainant B stated that it has greatly impacted his life and described the polygraph administered at the Diocese's behest "the day after Christmas" as traumatic. Complainant C also noted that his abuse had a profound impact on his life. He found "it was easier to work with [the State Police]" than the Diocese and that the State Police detectives were "more compassionate than the Diocese." Complainant C felt that the Diocese "went through the motions and downplayed, did damage control, and PR control rather than worrying about the impact on individuals."

The State Police also contacted Complainant D in November 2024; he too confirmed the accuracy of his initial report to State Police in 2013. He did not wish to provide a statement but noted that "[t]he Diocese did respond to [his] needs." State Police attempted to contact Complainant A but could not reach him.

**Status**

Father Meehan is deceased. The Diocese included him on its List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father Richard Meglio

| Born | Ordained | Suspended | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nov. 6, 1941 | Feb. 12, 1972 | Apr. 22, 1988 | No |

**Assignment History**[22]

| | |
|---|---|
| 1971 | St. Bernard Church, North Kingstown |
| 1971 – 1972 | St. Mary Church, Cranston |
| 1972 – 1973 | St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Church, Pawtucket |
| 1973 – 1980 | Our Lady of Grace Church, Johnston |
| 1980 – 1982 | Sacred Heart Church, West Warwick |
| 1983 – 1988 | St. Mark Church, Cranston |
| 1988 | *Suspended on leave* |

**Summary**

Father Richard Meglio was accused of sexually abusing three boys while in active ministry in the Diocese of Providence. Meglio's first victim reported his alleged sexual abuse to the Diocese in July 1994. He reported that he was abused in or about 1972, when he was 12 years old and a patient at Butler Hospital. This complainant reported that further abuse occurred at Our Lady of Grace Parish in Johnston. A second victim reported his allegations of sexual abuse by Meglio to the Diocese in March 2000. The alleged assaults took place in 1977, when the complainant was approximately 16 years old. A third victim reported being abused by Meglio hundreds of times, at multiple locations, including St. Mark's Parish in Cranston, from 1983 to 1986, when he was 13-16 years old. The third complainant reported his allegations of abuse in January 2009. In 1988, after allegations of misconduct unrelated to child sexual misconduct came to light, the Diocese granted Meglio's request for a leave of absence and revoked his faculties.

To date, Father Meglio is still on leave of absence from the Diocese. This Office sent a letter to Father Meglio offering him an opportunity to respond to the allegations summarized here, but Father Meglio did not respond as of the date of this Report. He is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

[22] Before becoming an ordained priest, Meglio worked as a teacher and social arts coordinator at Roger Williams Junior High School in Providence from 1966 to 1968.

**The Reported Abuse**

Father Meglio reportedly abused his first victim ("Complainant A") while he was assigned to Our Lady of Grace Church in Johnston. According to Complainant A, the first incident took place in 1972 after he was admitted as a patient to Butler Hospital, when he was 12 years old. A September 1993 memorandum written by Monsignor Salvatore Matano indicates that a pastor had recently met with Complainant A's father and that, according to the pastor, Complainant A's father asked to regard their conversation as "confidential." It is unclear what was discussed, but other portions of the memorandum pertain to Meglio's alleged abuse of Complainant A.

Complainant A sued the Diocese in 1994. According to the complaint, Complainant A's family sought a priest to give "care and comfort and spiritual guidance to [the boy] during his illness" and the pastor assigned Meglio to provide such assistance. Meglio reportedly continuously and regularly took the boy from Butler Hospital to the church and rectory and sexually abused him by "offensively touching" his body. The complaint also alleged that another pastor at Our Lady of Grace in Johnston knew about the abuse but did not inform anybody or take any action to prevent it, and that Bishop Louis Gelineau and Auxiliary Bishop Kenneth Angell knew Father Meglio "had a habit to make sexual advances on young boys under the pretext of his duties as a priest." The complaint alleged that, despite having knowledge of these incidents, the Diocese took no action. Complainant A's medical records from 1992 to 1994, presumably produced in connection with the litigation, also contained references to his reported sexual abuse by a member of the clergy at age 12.

Although the Diocese did not produce any records documenting that it knew or suspected Meglio of sexual misconduct involving Complainant A prior to Complainant A's lawsuit, as discussed below, our review identified documents suggesting that the Diocese was generally aware of concerns about Meglio's behavior at the time of the alleged abuse. As noted below, these concerns prompted the Diocese to reassign Meglio from Our Lady of Grace in Johnston to Sacred Heart Church in West Warwick in 1980, a year after Meglio's alleged abuse of Complainant A.

Complainant B reported to the Diocese in 2000 that Father Meglio abused him in 1977, while he was assigned to Our Lady of Grace in Johnston. According to Complainant B, when he was 16 years old, and homeless, Father Meglio had oral sex with him on at least two occasions in exchange for an onyx ring from Italy. This complainant also reported to the Diocese that Father William Tanguay, whom the Diocese included on its Credibly Accused List in 2019, likewise solicited him for oral sex in exchange for money. During a March 29, 2000 interview, Complainant B told Robert McCarthy, Director of the Diocese Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") that Father Meglio invited him into his car while he was walking on a street near Prospect Park in Providence. Complainant B told McCarthy that Meglio promised that he would buy him jewelry during Meglio's next trip to Italy. Meglio then drove the boy to Our Lady of Grace Parish, where he reportedly performed oral sex on Complainant

B. During the interview with McCarthy, Complainant B stated that there was at least one other person present in the rectory at that time, though it is not clear who that person was or where in the rectory they were. Complainant B also stated that, on a separate occasion in 1977, Meglio picked him up in his Corvette and brought him to a beach house in southern Rhode Island, where Meglio again performed oral sex on him.

Father Meglio reportedly abused a third boy, Complainant C, "hundreds of times" between 1983 and 1986 while assigned to St. Mark's Church in Cranston. Complainant C told Director McCarthy in 2009, that Meglio began abusing him when he was 13 years old. According to Complainant C, the first incident took place on a CYO trip in 1983, when Meglio performed oral sex on Complainant C while he was sleeping. Complainant C told McCarthy that Meglio continued to abuse him in this fashion on a regular basis, at Meglio's beach house in Snug Harbor. Complainant C recalled at least 20 to 30 episodes of abuse at this location alone, spanning over the course of about a year, including some instances in which Meglio sexually assaulted him (oral sex) while his parents were sleeping in a separate room. Complainant C also alleged that he was abused numerous times in the rectory of St. Mark's Church in Cranston. Complainant C told McCarthy that Meglio frequently called him out of school to assist with funeral services and would then perform oral sex on him once the funeral attendees had left. Complainant C told McCarthy that Meglio would refer to giving Complainant C oral sex as a "cocktail," stating, "I need a little cocktail before I go." Another incident of similar abuse reportedly took place at a movie theatre in Cranston where Meglio performed oral sex on Complainant C during a movie showing. Complainant C also alleged that he would buy marijuana for Meglio, and they would smoke marijuana and drink crème de menthe with other teenage boys.

**Diocesan Response**

On July 2, 1979, Auxiliary Bishop Angell wrote to Bishop Gelineau to advise him that the pastor of Our Lady of Grace parish—the same pastor whom Complainant A had claimed was aware of Father Meglio's abuse—wished to have Meglio reassigned. He noted that "the [Personnel] Board has no significant knowledge regarding Father Meglio thus they are not about to offer any reasons why he should be reassigned" but that the pastor claims that Meglio "completes his work but is out every night of the week." Angell also relayed his "personal concerns" that Father Meglio "projects an image of worldliness" with gold jewelry and drove an "expensive sports car" that he thought was a Corvette. In 1980, the Diocese transferred Meglio to Sacred Heart Parish in West Warwick, to serve as the Assistant Pastor to Father B. Samuel Turillo (whom the Diocese would later include on its Credibly Accused List in 2019). This document appears to corroborate the claim by Complainant A that a priest at Our Lady of Grace had at least some knowledge or suspicion of Meglio's misconduct.

In 1983, Bishop Gelineau sent Father Meglio to a program at Via Coeli, a well-known treatment facility in Jemez Springs, New Mexico, where the Diocese sent other priests suspected of child sexual misconduct over the years. Notably, in an undated note found in Father Meglio's file, Auxiliary Bishop Angell wrote to Bishop Gelineau

that he spoke with a representative from Via Coeli to inquire whether he thought the program would be suitable for Father Meglio and for Father Joseph D'Angelo, another priest who was later accused of sexually abusing altar boys.[23] Apparently, Bishop Angell was assured that the program would serve the priests well. In a letter to the Director of Via Coeli explaining why he was sending Meglio there, Bishop Gelineau wrote that Meglio had an "excessively worldly" lifestyle that bothered his parishioners. Bishop Gelineau also described other suspected misconduct, but there were no references to child sexual abuse. The Diocese's Credibly Accused List accounts for Meglio's assignment during this period as "Continuing Education & Spirituality, Diocese of Providence, Providence."

Upon his return from New Mexico in December 1983, Bishop Gelineau assigned Meglio to St. Mark Church in Cranston. In May 1986, Meglio wrote to the Diocese's Personnel Board to apply for the position of pastor of St. Robert Bellarmine Church in Johnston. Meglio noted that because of his "abilities in the areas of teaching . . . and of ministry to the youth in which I have been successfully working [for] over fourteen years," among other things, he felt he was ready to take on the administration of the parish.

Meglio was not assigned to St. Robert Bellarmine Parish and remained at St. Mark Church until 1988. From 1987 to 1988, Meglio resided at St. Mark's with Father Timothy Gorton, whom the Diocese would also include on its Credibly Accused List in 2019. On April 6, 1988, Father Roger Belhumeur, another priest who was later accused of child sexual misconduct and included on the Diocese's 2019 Credibly Accused List, called Father Matano to inform him that a male teenager who worked at the St. Mark rectory told him that Meglio had "physically approached" him and invited him to his beach house. The call was memorialized in a note from Matano to Bishop Gelineau. A different note in the file indicated that the pastor had previously informed Bishop Gelineau that Meglio made advances on the complainant. It should be noted that, in 2025, when the Rhode Island State Police reached out to the individual named in the note, he denied that any inappropriate behavior took place between him and Father Meglio (or any other priest).

Father Matano's note to Bishop Gelineau in 1988 also referenced other problematic behavior by Meglio, including financial irregularities, that were discovered by a parish housekeeper and did not involve child sexual misconduct. Following this report, Bishop Gelineau granted Meglio's request for a leave of absence in April 1988. Gelineau informed Meglio that "during this leave of absence you do not enjoy the faculties of the Diocese of Providence."

In a handwritten letter from Monsignor Matano to Bishop Gelineau dated April 21, 1988, Matano relayed that he spoke with a parishioner of St. Mark's, who expressed concerns about rumors circulating regarding Father Meglio's "sudden departure,"

[23] Father D'Angelo is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

among other things. The parishioner recommended that Matano "make some statement indicating that [Father Meglio's] reassignment has been made for the good of all parties concerned . . . ." The parishioner told Matano that this statement would satisfy parishioners, who "do not want a scandal." The next day, Bishop Gelineau sent a letter to the pastor at St. Mark Church asking him to read a statement at all Masses "so that the people clearly understand that Father Meglio is no longer assigned to Saint Mark's Parish." The statement noted that Meglio had been granted a leave of absence "for personal and pastoral reasons," and was no longer assigned to the parish. It also stated that the "ministerial change has been made with genuine concern for Father Meglio" and that "[w]e are grateful for Father's service to this parish and pray that the Lord will guide and remain close to him in the days ahead."

Contemporaneous records in the files provided by the Diocese to this Office indicate that the Diocese suspected Meglio stole approximately $80,000 from St. Mark Church. Documents suggest that Bishop Gelineau confronted Meglio about the alleged theft, and that Meglio admitted to it, but there is no record of the Diocese reporting the suspected theft to law enforcement at the time. A May 1988 memorandum from Monsignor Matano to Bishop Gelineau recounts his conversation with the church's Finance Committee Chairman, who was concerned about rumors circulating at the parish, in which he told the Chairman that "the matter was being dealt with legally with a sincere desire to avoid any scandal; nothing has been swept under the carpet but confronted in the best way possible with concern and respect for those involved."

In June 1994, Complainant A filed a civil suit against Father Meglio, Bishop Gelineau, Bishop Angell, Church of Our Lady of Grace, Butler Hospital, and others. On July 8, 1994, OEC Director McCarthy received a letter and a copy of the complaint. McCarthy promptly notified Monsignor George L. Frappier and Father Norman J. Godin about the complaint and noted that he had no prior knowledge of the identity of this complainant or the allegations. Complainant A reportedly suffered from mental health issues, which he attributed to his childhood sexual abuse. He died of a drug overdose in 1997. The Diocese settled the case with Complainant A's estate for $500,000 in 2003. In an April 2008 letter from McCarthy to the Moderator of the Curia, Monsignor Paul Theroux, McCarthy noted that "[t]his case was a civil case that I did not investigate as Father Meglio was out of ministry at the time of my arrival."

In March of 2000, Complainant B reported his allegations of sexual misconduct to McCarthy. McCarthy interviewed Complainant B on March 29, 2000, who described the rectory "in great detail," which according to McCarthy "checked out." In a memorandum dated about a month later, Monsignor Theroux responded to an inquiry from McCarthy about Meglio's status by informing him that Meglio had been granted a leave of absence "from priestly service in the diocese on April 22, 1988" and that he "has not had faculties to perform ministry nor do we have any indication that he has functioned as a priest since that time." An OEC memorandum states that in April 2000, McCarthy learned from Monsignor Robert Evans that Meglio had been on administrative leave for many years. A May 2000 agenda of the Tuesday Group (or

Conclave) includes a reference to Complainant B's allegations against a "Father Richard" at Our Lady of Grace Church in Johnston, and his claim that the priest drove a 1976 black Corvette and wore lots of jewelry. The agenda notes that Meglio was assigned to the church at the time and, consistent with Bishop Angell's 1979 note, previously drove a black Corvette and "was known to wear extensive amounts of jewelry." McCarthy claimed in the 2008 letter to Theroux referenced above that he notified the Rhode Island State Police Major Crimes Unit of these allegations and made the transcript of his interview with Complainant B available to the State Police, but there is no confirmation in the available records produced to this Office or in State Police records that McCarthy in fact forwarded this complaint to the State Police at the time. There is also no indication in the records produced by the Diocese that McCarthy interviewed Father Meglio or any other witness about these allegations.

In August of 2003, Father Meglio, while still without faculties, presented himself as a Roman Catholic Priest from the Diocese of Providence at the Holy Spirit Ecumenical Catholic Church ("ECC") in Florida. A priest of the ECC wrote to the Diocese inquiring about Meglio's canonical status. In a letter dated March 1, 2004, Vicar General and Chancellor John J. Darcy responded that Meglio had been granted a leave of absence by the Diocese of Providence in 1988 and had not, to their knowledge, functioned as a priest since that time. Chancellor Darcy also apprised the ECC priest that Meglio had been a defendant in a civil suit alleging sexual assault, which resolved with a monetary settlement. Monsignor Darcy, in response to another request of information from the ECC, provided the same information in an August 2004 letter.

On May 2, 2005, Monsignor Paul Theroux informed the Diocese's Review Board that he had received another email from the ECC stating that Meglio was performing ministerial services at their church. Theroux told the Board that he would contact the ECC to advise them that the Diocese revoked Meglio's faculties in 1988. Documents indicate that during a conversation on May 3, 2005, Monsignor Theroux reminded the ECC priest that the Diocese had previously sent the ECC a letter about Meglio's leave of absence and status as a defendant in a civil suit alleging sexual assault. The files also indicate that Theroux told the priest that he was personally aware of two "very credible allegations" against Meglio that resulted in cash settlements.

On January 8, 2009, Complainant C reached out to the OEC to report that Father Meglio sexually abused him in the 1980s. Director McCarthy interviewed Complainant C by phone a few days later. During the interview, Complainant C described the location, frequency, and nature of the abuse, and informed McCarthy that he had decided to come forward after a cellmate at the Adult Correctional Institutions ("ACI") told him that he was molested by a priest and encouraged him to go to the Providence Center. Complainant C said he started attending the Providence Center and was walking by the Chancery one day when he entered and decided to call the number on a "Promise to protect, pledge, and heal" flyer.

Following the interview, in accordance with the complainant's request, McCarthy forwarded the complaint and the interview transcript to the State Police.

McCarthy also informed St. Mary's of Cranston of the allegations. This was the first allegation that the Diocese received regarding Meglio that was reported to the State Police. In the letter forwarding Complainant C's allegation, McCarthy did not include any information regarding the previously reported allegations of Complainants A and B, and noted that Complainant C had a history of substance abuse and alcoholism as well as "a minor [criminal] record."

On October 15, 2010, Complainant C told the State Police that he wished to go forward with the complaint against Father Meglio. In a letter and email addressed to McCarthy dated December 1, 2010, the State Police requested "any and all files regarding Richard L. Meglio . . . that the Diocese of Providence has on record pertaining to sexual assault allegations." Records indicate that McCarthy assembled a binder with complainant interviews, letters of correspondence, memos, and other documents related to all three complaints, for the State Police.

After repeated unsuccessful attempts by detectives to obtain a statement from Complainant C, the case was closed in 2011. In 2020, Complainant C retained counsel who wrote to the Diocese about Complainant C's allegations against Meglio. The Diocese again forwarded this complaint to the State Police, who scheduled a formal interview with Complainant C and his counsel. When Complainant C again failed to appear for the interview, the State Police and Complainant C's counsel agreed to a well-being check, at which time the State Police discovered that Complainant C had died from a suspected drug overdose two days earlier.

On February 10, 2014, in response to a report that Father Meglio had vested and celebrated a mass at St. Peter the Apostle Catholic Church in Trinity, FL, Father Timothy D. Reilly (then-Chancellor) sent Meglio a letter reminding him that his priestly faculties had been revoked at the time of his leave of absence, stating, "[i]n 1988, your priestly faculties were revoked in light of a credible allegation, and you were permitted to celebrate Mass only privately. Since those restrictions have <u>not</u> been lifted by competent ecclesiastical authority, they remain in effect." The letter also stated that the Diocese of Providence recommended that the Diocese of St. Petersburg notify all local clergy of Father Meglio's inability to publicly function, or represent himself as, a priest. The Diocese of St. Petersburg sent Father Reilly a copy of an advisory that it sent to local pastors regarding Father Meglio, which stated that he "was accused of molesting a boy while serving in a parish within the Diocese of Providence" and "[h]is ministerial faculties were terminated."

In 2025, State Police contacted Complainant B, who confirmed the accuracy of his report to Director McCarthy but did not wish to provide a further statement about the abuse because the complainant was in a "good place" after struggling with substance abuse for many years. Complainant B recalled thinking that Director McCarthy was a police officer who worked for the Diocese and that he was "nice."

This Office sent Father Meglio a letter in 2024 offering him an opportunity to respond to the allegations summarized above. We have not received a response as of the date of this Report.

**Status**

Father Meglio remains suspended on leave of absence. He is listed on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father Adrien Menard

| Born | Ordained | Retired | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sep. 4, 1922 | Jun. 15, 1946 | N/A | Feb. 1, 1976 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1946 – 1947 | St. Peter Church, Warwick |
| 1947 | Sacred Heart Church, Central Falls |
| 1947 – 1948 | St. Lawrence Church, North Providence |
| 1948 – 1949 | St. Theresa of the Child Jesus Church, Burrillville |
| 1949 – 1960 | Sacred Heart Church, Central Falls |
| 1949 – 1960 | Notre Dame High School, Central Falls |
| 1949 – 1960 | Sacred Heart Academy, Central Falls |
| 1960 – 1971 | St. Joseph Church, Woonsocket |
| 1971 – 1976 | St. Joan of Arc Church, Cumberland |

## Summary

Father Adrien Menard was accused of sexually abusing three or more children during his 30 years in ministry. The allegations concerned abuse of two young teenage boys at Sacred Heart Church in Central Falls and Saint Joseph Church in Woonsocket in the 1950s and 1960s. In 2002, a woman reported to the Diocese that in the early 1970s, Menard had sexually molested both her and her brother when they were children at St. Joan of Arc Church in Cumberland. All the complaints against Menard were brought to the Diocese long after he had died.

The Diocese included Father Menard on its List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

## The Reported Abuse

Father Menard reportedly sexually abused a 13-year-old boy ("Complainant A") on three occasions in 1953 while he was assigned to Sacred Heart Church in Central Falls. The boy was a student at Sacred Heart Academy and Notre Dame High School in Central Falls. Menard allegedly masturbated the boy on two occasions in a Sacred Heart Rectory bedroom. On a third occasion, Menard reportedly masturbated the boy in the gymnasium of Notre Dame High School. Complainant A did not disclose his abuse to the Diocese until 2011.

In 1960, Bishop Russell McVinney transferred Father Menard from Sacred Heart Church in Central Falls to Saint Joseph Church in Woonsocket. While at St. Joseph, Menard reportedly sexually abused a male student ("Complainant B") from 1962 to 1965 beginning when the boy was in sixth grade. Complainant B reported that Menard first assaulted him after he had discussed masturbation with him during

confession. Complainant B described how Menard invited him into the St. Joseph rectory, ostensibly to show him how to clean his penis, at which point Menard fondled him. Following that incident, Menard reportedly grabbed Complainant B's penis frequently when they drove together. Complainant B recounted that Menard hosted a group of boys at a cottage on Lake Pascoag in Burrillville during the summer of 1963, where he reportedly devised a game in which the boys would determine sleeping arrangements by drawing cards from a deck. Father Menard reportedly rigged the deck so that he and Complainant B would always sleep together. Later, Father Menard joined the boy and his family on a trip to California, where they slept together every night and Menard reportedly molested him.

In 1971, the same year Bishop McVinney transferred Father Menard to St. Joan of Arc Church in Cumberland, Menard reportedly held down and raped a nine- or ten-year-old girl ("Complainant C"). Complainant C could not recall where the sexual assault took place when she reported to Robert McCarthy, Director of the Diocese Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC"), in 2002, but she stated that she recalled seeing a crucifix on the wall and a closet containing priestly robes. Complainant C also reported that Father Menard sexually abused her older brother, ("Complainant D") around the same time. There is no further description of Complainant D's reported abuse.

**Disclosures and Diocesan Response**

On March 20, 2002, the Chancellor of the Diocese of St. Petersburg notified Monsignor Theroux of the Diocese of Providence that the St. Petersburg Diocese had received a complaint from Complainant C, who reported that Father Menard sexually abused her and her brother as children. On August 5, 2002, Theroux referred the allegation to McCarthy. In her letter to the Diocese of St. Petersburg, Complainant C stated that she had struggled with suicidal ideation and maintaining her faith in Catholicism. She also stated that she knew another person who was abused by Menard, and that this person had attempted suicide several times.

McCarthy interviewed Complainant C by telephone on August 13, 2002. During the interview, Complainant C recounted what she could remember of the assault and stated that her brother had told her five years earlier that Menard sexually assaulted him. Complainant C also informed McCarthy of another woman, a friend of her brother's, whom she suspected may also have been abused by Menard. During the interview, McCarthy advised Complainant C that he needed more corroboration before finding her allegation credible because Father Menard had no prior complaints on file. McCarthy questioned why Complainant C could not explain how she, as a 9-year-old girl, ended up alone with Menard at the time of the reported assault. He also remarked that, in his experience, it was unusual for a priest to abuse both boys and girls and that sexual predators were either heterosexual or homosexual but not bisexual, although he "has had cases where we've had people of both genders molested." Complainant C offered to take a polygraph to prove she was not lying but McCarthy stated that a polygraph test would not be effective because "a lie detector test . . . will be looking for deception, and if people really believe this happened there

would be no deception . . . . See there is no deception cause [sic] you really believe this happened." Regarding Complainant C's requests for financial support for treatment and compensation for pain and suffering, McCarthy stated that while he would ensure that Bishop Robert Mulvee was aware of her requests, he was unsure whether her request would be accommodated because of the generality of her complaint. It does not appear that the Diocese provided any financial compensation or reimbursement to Complainant C.

McCarthy spoke with Complainant C's brother, Complainant D, by phone on September 19, 2002. Despite repeated requests by Complainant C to not inform Complainant D of her identity or her allegations against Menard, McCarthy disclosed all her information to Complainant D during their phone call. Complainant D informed McCarthy that he did not want to speak about his personal experiences but stated that kids were constantly being moved in and out of St. Joan of Arc Church and compared St. Joan to a "whorehouse." There is no record of any further investigation of these allegations by McCarthy in the files provided by the Diocese to this Office, and it does not appear that McCarthy attempted to contact the other woman identified by Complainant C.

On December 19, 2011, Complainant A wrote a letter to Bishop Thomas Tobin in which he reported sexual abuse by Menard in the 1950s. On December 23, 2011, Vicar General Albert Kenney gave McCarthy the letter and McCarthy referred the allegations to the Rhode Island State Police on December 27, 2011. In his letter to the State Police, McCarthy alluded to Complainant C's allegations by stating there were, "several other complaints filed in 2002," but he did not include details of those allegations in his letter, nor did he identify Complainant C or her brother by name. The State Police closed their investigation after informing the complainant that it was not possible to proceed because Menard was deceased. McCarthy presented Complainant A's allegations to the Diocese's Review Board on February 14, 2012. There is no record of the Board's determination on that date.

Complainant B reported that Menard sexually abused him in the 1960s to McCarthy's successor, OEC Director Kevin O'Brien, on April 17, 2019. Director O'Brien and Victim Assistance Coordinator Dr. Michael Hansen interviewed Complainant B on May 9, 2019. Complainant B also provided O'Brien with a written statement detailing the alleged abuse. He explained that he had previously disclosed his victimization by Menard to his mother but that she accused him of lying. Complainant B also told O'Brien and Hansen that he had previously disclosed his alleged abuse to Father Roger Belhumeur[24] (the same priest in whom one of Father Meglio's victims reportedly confided) several years after it occurred, and Father Belhumeur reportedly said, "it's an unfortunate thing," but did not tell the complainant to report it.

O'Brien referred Complainant B's allegations to the Rhode Island State Police on May 10, 2019. Documents show that O'Brien updated the Diocese Review Board

[24] Father Belhumeur is also included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

about Menard on October 15, 2019, but it is not clear which allegation or allegations O'Brien presented to the Board for review.

In November 2024, the State Police contacted Complainant A, who verified his complaint of abuse by Menard, and told the detective that he had "gotten rid of [his] nemesis through counseling" and left Catholicism due to his abuse. State Police efforts to locate and contact Complainants B, C, and D were unsuccessful.

**Status**

Father Menard died on February 1, 1976. He is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father Edmond Micarelli

| Born | Ordained | Suspended | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jan. 29, 1923 | May 23, 1959 | Apr. 17, 1990 | Jul. 20, 2019 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1959 | St. Mary Church, Richmond |
| 1959 – 1973 | Camp Yawgoog, Hopkinton |
| 1959 | Cathedral of SS. Peter & Paul, Providence |
| 1959 | St. Ann Church, Cranston |
| 1959 – 1960 | Christian Brothers Center, Narragansett |
| 1960 – 1966 | Newman Center, University of Rhode Island, South Kingstown |
| 1964 – 1966 | Christ the King Church, South Kingstown |
| 1966 – 1967 | Sacred Heart Church, West Warwick |
| 1967 – 1969 | St. Ann Church, Providence |
| 1967 – 1973 | Diocesan Chaplaincy for Scouting, Providence |
| 1969 – 1972 | St. Ann Church, Cranston |
| 1972 – 1973 | SS. Peter and Paul Church, West Warwick |
| 1978 | Regional Scout Chaplain, Boy Scouts of America |
| 1973 – 1988 | St. Alexander Church, Warren |
| 1989 | *Retired* |
| 1990 | *Suspended on leave* |

## Summary

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, while serving as a chaplain for the Boy Scouts at Camp Yawgoog in Hopkinton, Father Edmond Micarelli reportedly sexually abused at least 12 children ages 8-15, as well as an 18-year-old young man. Additionally, Micarelli reportedly sexually abused at least four other children at other locations in Rhode Island and Massachusetts. The complainants reported that he forced them to perform sex acts on him, fondled them, masturbated them, and raped them, and that he forced them to perform sex acts on each other while he watched.

According to the records provided by the Diocese to the Rhode Island Office of Attorney General, the Diocese received the first complaint about Father Micarelli in January 1988, when a man reported to Father Francis Santilli[25] that he was sexually abused by Micarelli in 1973. Santilli referred the complaint to Auxiliary Bishop Kenneth Angell in September 1988, and, in Santilli's words, "shortly thereafter, less than two

[25] Three complainants later accused Father Francis Santilli of child sexual abuse, and the Diocese added him to its List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

weeks, Father Micarelli was yanked from Saint Alexander's Church," his parish assignment at that time. Micarelli officially retired in January 1989 and moved to Florida. Bishop Louis Gelineau suspended Micarelli in April 1990, after the Diocese received a second complaint of sexual abuse against him and forbade him from exercising priestly faculties in Florida.

The Diocese received several more complaints against Father Micarelli over the next decade and, in 2002, the Diocese settled multiple claims with Micarelli's victims for over two million dollars. In 2003, Micarelli requested voluntary laicization at Bishop Robert Mulvee's suggestion, but the Vatican denied the request.

According to the records produced by the Diocese to this Office, the Diocese did not refer any of the allegations against Micarelli to law enforcement until 2008, when Director of the Diocese Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") Robert McCarthy referred one complainant's allegations to the State Police. The State Police did not investigate as the reported allegations fell outside the applicable criminal statute of limitations. Between 2009 and 2015, the Diocese referred three additional allegations to the State Police, though those investigations were also closed on statute of limitations grounds.

The Diocese included Father Micarelli on its List of Credibly Accused Clergy. He died the same month the Diocese published its List.

In 2024, the Rhode Island State Police attempted to contact all of Father Micarelli's living complainants. Detectives spoke with Complainants G and O, whose statements are included below.

**The Reported Abuse**

In 1959, Father Micarelli met an 18-year-old man ("Complainant A") when he was living and working at the St. Dominic Savio Center in South Kingstown. According to Complainant A, Micarelli made sexual advances at him and invited him to spend a weekend at his cabin at Camp Yawgoog. During the night, Micarelli reportedly touched the man's genitals while he was sleeping and later demanded anal sex. Complainant A reported that Micarelli coerced him to have sex with him over the next several years and would buy things for Complainant A, who was homeless and did not have any family, in exchange for sexual favors. Although this was the earliest instance of documented abuse by Micarelli, Complainant A was one of the last of Micarelli's victims to report his abuse to the Diocese – first notifying the Diocese of it in 2015.

Father Micarelli reportedly sexually abused Complainant B multiple times in the 1960s at Camp Yawgoog. The State Police followed up with this complainant in 2024, and he requested that details concerning his complaint be excluded from this report.

Complainant C reported to Diocesan officials in 1990 that Father Micarelli raped him when he was a 14-year-old camp counselor at Camp Yawgoog, beginning in 1963.

Micarelli also reportedly sexually abused Complainant C's 13-year-old brother ("Complainant D") by touching the boy's genitals while he slept. According to Complainant C, Micarelli raped and sexually abused him for several years, until Complainant C started bringing other boys to Micarelli so he could sexually abuse them. Micarelli reportedly bragged to Complainant C that he "had sex with every kid he knew."

A lawsuit filed against the Diocese in 1993 (discussed below) detailed Father Micarelli's abuse of several additional victims at Camp Yawgoog and other locations throughout the state in the 1960s and 1970s. According to the pleadings, Micarelli sexually abused a 15-year-old boy ("Complainant E") from 1964 to 1965 at Micarelli's Camp Yawgoog cabin, his apartment at the University of Rhode Island, and at various motels during overnight trips. Complainant E reported that Micarelli masturbated him and performed oral sex on him. According to the pleadings, Micarelli also sexually assaulted a boy of unspecified age ("Complainant F") in the winter of 1968 by fondling the boy's genitals at the Camp Yawgoog cabin.

Complainant G reported that Father Micarelli sexually abused him from 1970 to 1974, beginning when he was about 14 years old, at the Camp Yawgoog cabin, the St. Alexander Rectory, and the boy's parents' Narragansett summer cottage. Father Micarelli reportedly fondled the boy, performed oral sex on him, anally raped him, and forced him to masturbate Micarelli. In 2024, the State Police contacted Complainant G, who confirmed his account of abuse at the hands of Micarelli and told the detective that the abuse "destroyed his life," and that he is "still in therapy and always will be." He also told the detective, "I'm a survivor."

In 1971, Father Micarelli picked up a 12-year-old boy ("Complainant H") who was hitchhiking on Route 2 during the day. Complainant H later reported to OEC Director Robert McCarthy that he knew Micarelli was a priest, which made him feel safe to get in his car. Complainant H recounted that Micarelli brought the boy to his Camp Yawgoog cabin, where he gave him beer and raped him while he was incapacitated from the alcohol. Later that summer, Complainant C reportedly met Complainant H through Micarelli. Complainant H reported that Complainant C raped Complainant H in Complainant C's home. Complainant C later admitted to this sexual assault in an interview with the Rhode Island State Police, as described below.

Complainant I was a 13-year-old altar server at St. Alexander Church when Father Micarelli reportedly began abusing him. The alleged abuse lasted from around 1972 to 1974. According to Complainant I, Micarelli fondled him approximately 20 times in the St. Alexander rectory when the boy was changing out of his vestments. Complainant I stated that Micarelli also fondled him and raped him at Micarelli's Camp Yawgoog cabin.

Complainant J reported that Father Micarelli sexually abused him at Camp Yawgoog beginning in 1973, when he was about 15 years old. During the summer, Micarelli invited Complainant J and another boy to his cabin, where they shared his bed. Complainant J reported that Micarelli sexually assaulted him and raped him

during the night, and that the abuse continued for several years while Complainant J was in high school and college. According to Complainant J, Micarelli told him "about his sexual relationships with 'dozens of young men' over the years."

In 1973, Father Micarelli reportedly sexually abused an 8-year-old family member ("Complainant K") at a cabin at Camp Yawgoog, raping him while a 19-year-old man restrained the boy. There is no record of the location of the assault. Complainant K's father reported this abuse to law enforcement in 1983, but by that time the statute of limitations had expired. This was the first documented complaint against Father Micarelli.

Father Micarelli reportedly raped a boy of unspecified age ("Complainant L") from 1974 to 1976 on multiple occasions at the Camp Yawgoog cabin and the St. Alexander Rectory. Micarelli reportedly fondled the boy's buttocks and genitals, and performed oral sex on the complainant, while two other unnamed individuals were present. An attorney representing Complainant L, along with several other complainants, notified the Diocese of his client's allegations in writing in 1993.

Complainant M reported that Father Micarelli sexually abused him around 1974 at the Camp Yawgoog cabin, the St. Alexander Rectory , and a motel in the Cape Cod area of Massachusetts. Complainant M reported that Micarelli raped him, gave him and another boy marijuana and alcohol, and then forced them to engage in oral sex with each other while Micarelli watched.

Diocesan records produced to this Office indicate two additional reports of sexual assaults by Father Micarelli in 1974 or 1975. Micarelli reportedly forced Complainant N to engage in masturbation at the St. Alexander Rectory and touched a 13-year-old boy's penis (Complainant O) at Micarelli's Camp Yawgoog cabin. State Police detectives spoke to Complainant O in 2024, who confirmed his previously reported allegations.

Complainant P reported that Father Micarelli sexually abused him when he was an altar server in 1974 following a funeral at St. Mary of the Bay Parish in Warren. Micarelli offered Complainant P a ride to school after the service, and he reportedly masturbated in front of Complainant P and groped him before dropping him off at school.

Father Micarelli reportedly sexually abused a 14-year-old boy ("Complainant Q") in 1975. Records indicate that the alleged abuse involved mutual masturbation and oral sex.

**Diocesan Response**

Despite reports of repeated and ongoing abuse by Father Micarelli against at least 15 boys and one young man over a 15-year period, the Diocese produced no records indicating that any Diocesan official or employee suspected or became aware of Micarelli's reported conduct at the time. Remarkably, the Diocese produced no

records indicating that any disclosures about Micarelli were made to it, by the complainants or by any other person, during the 1960s or 1970s—despite the fact that between 1959, the earliest-known year of abuse, coinciding with Micarelli's date of ordination, and 1974, the latest-known year of abuse, Micarelli was transferred to twelve different parishes, and much of the reported abuse took place at a Boy Scouts summer camp where, presumably, other adults worked.

The earliest disclosure of which this Office is aware dates to 1983, when Complainant K's father filed a police report against Micarelli. During a 1993 civil suit filed by Complainant K against the Diocese, his attorney produced a letter purportedly written by Complainant K's father regarding this abuse. The letter, written on March 17, 1983, states: "Due to severe psychological injuries my son is suffering, it is only now that the truth is to be known. My son and I desire to have Edmond Micarelli cruelly prosecuted." Another plaintiff's attorney also alleged that, in 1983, "[t]he State Police performed an investigation, which included speaking with Church officials. The Attorney General's Office declined to prosecute Father Micarelli because it determined that the statute of limitations had expired. Despite that fact the Diocese officials were notified of Fr. Micarelli's sexual abuse of a minor child, the Diocese did not take any action against Fr. Micarelli and he continued to act in his capacity as a priest at St. Alexander's Church for another five years."

The earliest documented disclosure directly to the Diocese occurred on January 21, 1988. At that time, Complainant J met with Associate Director of Vocations Father Francis Santilli to report that Micarelli had raped him at the Camp Yawgoog cabin in 1973, when he was 15 years old. Complainant J informed Santilli that Father Micarelli spoke to him "about his sexual relationships with 'dozens of young men' over the years." Santilli reported the allegation of sexual abuse to Auxiliary Bishop Angell by letter on September 28, 1988. Bishop Gelineau accepted Micarelli's retirement as Pastor Emeritus of St. Alexander Church in Providence on November 22, 1988, citing "degenerative arthritis," though Santilli later informed McCarthy that "Father Micarelli was yanked from Saint Alexander's Church" because of Santilli's referral to the Auxiliary Bishop. There is no indication in the records provided by the Diocese to this Office that any Diocesan official ever referred Complainant J's allegation to law enforcement. Micarelli retired with a retirement salary and health care benefits.

On March 20, 1990, Complainant C met with Bishop Angell and Monsignor Salvatore Matano to report that Father Micarelli had sexually abused him in 1963 when he was 14 years old. In notes from the meeting, Matano described how the boy came to know the priest through the Camp and was then abused:

> [Complainant C's] father died. Around this time, 1963-1964, aged 15-16 (maybe 14-15) he alleges the association began. [Complainant C] worked at Camp Yawgoog '63-64 and Father Micarelli was the Catholic Chaplain. Father Micarelli, according to [Complainant C], befriended him; Father Micarelli was like a father and a big brother. [Complainant C] says that after his meeting with Father Micarelli, Father would take him to his summer camp. [Complainant C] alleges that either the first winter or the

> second winter after their meeting Father Micarelli sodomized him in his sleep and had made advances toward him. [Complainant C] went with Father Micarelli less frequently after this incident but continued to be friendly with Father Micarelli and his family . . . . According to [Complainant C], Father would befriend trouble[d] kids and become friendly with their families and "actually have sex with the kids in their homes."

According to Matano's notes, Complainant C wanted the matter to remain confidential but acknowledged that Bishop Gelineau, Diocesan legal counsel, and Father Micarelli could be consulted. Complainant C's brother, Complainant D, met with Bishop Angell and Monsignor Matano on April 6, 1990, and reported that he, too, was sexually abused by Micarelli.

Micarelli had been living in Florida since his 1989 "retirement." He traveled to Rhode Island to meet with Bishop Gelineau on April 12, 1990. During the meeting, Micarelli stated that he knew the brothers, Complainants C and D, but had never sexually abused them. A memorandum of the meeting reads, in its original form, "Father knows how serious this is. He knows it looks very bad for him, especially in light of two other times we had to speak to him about probable pedophilia." Bishop Gelineau then edited the document, crossed out "probable pedophilia," and changed it to the phrase, "charges which he denied." Notably, the Diocese produced only one documented complaint prior to the complaints by Complainants C and D – not two. Nor did the Diocese produce any other records documenting suspicions of pedophilia prior to this time.

Bishop Gelineau officially revoked Micarelli's faculties on April 17, 1990. "In order to protect the Diocese," Gelineau wrote in his letter to Micarelli, "and the Bishops from any legal action that might be taken by persons making allegations about your activity with them, or from any other allegations that might be made in the future, it is necessary for me to withdraw your faculties for any public ministry." In June 1990, Bishop Angell warned the Diocese of Palm Beach, where Micarelli was living, that Micarelli was suspended, and that "the reason for the suspension was the three unproven allegations that he had abused three male minors." In July 1990, Angell informed Complainant C that Gelineau had "taken away his (Micarelli's) priesthood and that there was nothing further which we could do." There is no record indicating that any Diocesan official ever reported Complainant C or D's allegations to law enforcement.

In February 1992, an attorney contacted the Diocese and stated that his firm was representing an unspecified number of complainants against Micarelli. In addition to financial assistance for therapy costs, the complainants sought to have Micarelli laicized, reported to Florida law enforcement, and investigated by an independent committee.

In February 1993, Father Micarelli called Monsignor Matano to state that all of the allegations against him were false, and that he desired financial assistance to hire

an attorney. Matano informed Micarelli that the Diocese would assist him financially, "until at least the lawsuit commences at which time a further determination would be made."

On March 1, 1993, another lawyer informed Diocesan attorney William Murphy that he represented Complainant K. The attorney gave Murphy a copy of the letter referenced above, which described Complainant K's father's report of his son's sexual abuse by Micarelli to the Providence Police in 1983.

Another attorney wrote the Diocese in August 1993 to notify them that he was representing Complainants B, C, D, E, F, G, I, L, M, and N. His letter included a brief description of each of his client's allegations, which supplied details used to describe those complainants' allegations in this summary. As previously noted, this attorney also referenced the 1983 law enforcement investigations of Micarelli. He wrote, "Despite that fact the Diocese officials were notified of Fr. Micarelli's sexual abuse of a minor child, the Diocese did not take any action against Fr. Micarelli and he continued to act in his capacity as a priest at St. Alexander's Church for another five years."

On August 11, 1993, William Murphy inquired of Providence Police by letter whether they had received Complainant K's father's letter in 1983, and whether they had referred the allegation to another law enforcement agency or the Diocese. There is no record of any response by Providence Police, nor any document memorializing any conversation regarding the letter.

On January 7, 1994, McCarthy reported in a memorandum addressed to Bishop Thomas Tobin that Complainant Q had also reported that he was sexually abused by Micarelli as a minor. Curiously, though Bishop Tobin is listed as the recipient of this memorandum in 1994, he did not become Bishop of Providence until 2005. In 1994, Tobin was Auxiliary Bishop of Pittsburgh. There are no documents explaining why McCarthy would have authored a memorandum to Bishop Tobin eleven years before he was Bishop of Providence. This discrepancy raises the possibility that the face sheet was created at a later date and then backdated.

In July 1996, Complainant J contacted McCarthy to report that he had disclosed his abuse to Father Santilli in 1988 and was now trying to contact the attorney representing Father Micarelli's other victims. McCarthy inquired of Santilli whether Complainant J's account of the 1988 report was accurate. Santilli informed McCarthy that it was and that he had informed the Bishop in September 1988.

On April 9, 2002, the Chief Investigator of the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office told McCarthy that Complainant E had reported to the Office that he was sexually abused by Micarelli. The case could not be prosecuted due to the statute of limitations.

On October 3, 2003, Father Micarelli authored a letter to the Pope and requested laicization, without admitting to the allegations against him. On October 28, 2003, Bishop Mulvee authored a letter to the Vatican in support of the laicization

request. "Given the number of publicly known, credible accusations of sexual abuse of children by Fr. Micarelli since his ordination," the Bishop wrote, "it is my firm conviction that, for the good of the Church, his request should be granted as soon as possible." Mulvee also stated that the Diocese had already settled several cases against Micarelli for over $2 million and that "recently further accusations have surfaced with the very real threat of renewed public media attention." In the *Acta* (the collection of documents and testimonies relating to the allegations) the Bishop sent to the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith ("CDF"), the Diocese noted the allegations of Complainants B, C, D, E, F, G, I, J, K, and N, and recorded the allegation of Complainant Q as the first denunciation in 1994, even though the Diocese had received the first documented complaint against Micarelli in 1988, and possibly as early as 1983.

In June 2005, Chancellor John Darcy informed Father Micarelli that the CDF had denied his laicization request:

> After careful study of the facts, the Congregation decided that it is not opportune to present your request for a dispensation from priestly obligations to the Holy Father. Given . . . your age and your living quietly in Florida and celebrating Mass in private, the decision was made that you are allowed to live the rest of your life as a priest. Nevertheless, the Congregation has restricted your ministry to the celebration of Mass in private. Finally, the Congregation has imposed the penance of offering one Mass per week in reparation for the sins committed against minors by clerics. There are no other comments offered by the Congregation.

On July 29, 2008, Paula Loud of the Diocese's Office of Outreach and Prevention received a call from the Diocese of Arlington reporting that they had received a report of abuse from Complainant O. McCarthy interviewed Complainant O on January 8, 2009. McCarthy informed the Rhode Island State Police of the allegations on January 9, 2009. There is no record of any investigation by the State Police at that time, as the allegations were outside of the criminal statute of limitations. And in 2024, a detective from the State Police spoke with Complainant O, who confirmed his prior allegations of abuse by Micarelli.

In August 2009, Complainant P reported to McCarthy that he was abused in 1974. McCarthy interviewed Complainant P on August 27, 2009. McCarthy reported the allegations by letter to the State Police on the same day. The State Police then contacted Complainant P, who stated that he did not want to pursue criminal charges against Micarelli.

On June 3, 2010, an attorney representing Complainant H contacted Loud to inform her that his client was looking for counseling support from the Diocese. McCarthy interviewed Complainant H on June 11, 2010, and forwarded the details to the State Police on June 14, 2010. On August 6, 2010, a State Police detective interviewed Micarelli at his home; he denied the allegations. Several days later, the State Police interviewed Complainant C, who informed the State Police that he had

also been sexually assaulted by Micarelli and had brought Micarelli other boys so he could abuse them as well. Complainant C also admitted to restraining and raping Complainant H, confirming the details of Complainant H's allegations. Complainant C also reported that he and his brother created a hotline in the late 1980s/early 1990s for individuals to come forward with accusations against Father Micarelli. Complainant C stated that approximately 25 individuals came forward with accusations and were referred to the State Police to provide statements. Records from the State Police indicate that in December 1993, Complainants C and D reported that Micarelli sexually assaulted them. The investigation was closed. After speaking to Complainant C in 2010, the State Police warned Miami-Dade County law enforcement of the allegations against Micarelli, and then, after consulting with the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office, closed the investigation on the grounds that "prior to 1979 there was no Rhode Island general laws covering the alleged sexual acts (oral sex/sodomy)[.]" As a result, the only possible charge was simple assault, a misdemeanor, and the statute of limitations had already lapsed.

In September 2015, Complainant A reported to the OEC that Micarelli sexually abused him beginning in 1959. OEC Director Kevin O'Brien forwarded the allegations to the Rhode Island State Police on September 11, 2015. Later that month, Complainant A informed the State Police that he was aware that no charges could be brought against Micarelli due to statute of limitations issues. State Police then closed the investigation in October 2015. Records show the matter on a Diocese Review Board agenda dated September 29, 2015, though there is no record of the Board's discussion or determination, if any occurred, on that date.

**Status**

Father Micarelli is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy. He died the same month the Diocese released its List.

# Father William O'Connell

| Born | Ordained | Suspended | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Apr. 10, 1922 | Jun. 3, 1950 | Apr. 26, 1988 | May 12, 1996 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1950 | St. Andrew Church, New Shoreham |
| 1950 – 1952 | St. Francis Church, South Kingstown |
| 1952 – 1953 | St. Brendan Church, East Providence |
| 1953 | St. Michael Church, Smithfield |
| 1953 – 1958 | U.S. Navy Chaplain Corps |
| 1958 – 1961 | SS. Peter and Paul Church, West Warwick |
| 1961 – 1966 | St. Mary Church, Providence |
| 1966 – 1967 | St. Joseph Church, Central Falls |
| 1967 | Sacred Heart Church, Pawtucket |
| 1967 – 1972 | Holy Ghost Church, Tiverton |
| 1972 – 1985 | St. Mary Church, Bristol |
| 1985 | *Resigned* |
| 1988 | *Suspended on leave* |

## Summary

Father William O'Connell was accused of sexually abusing at least 23 boys from 1950 to 1985. The victims ranged in age from nine to sixteen. Most of O'Connell's victims reported that O'Connell abused them by pressuring them to sleep in his bed and providing them alcohol either at the St. Mary Rectory in Bristol or at O'Connell's residence in South Kingstown. On at least three occasions, O'Connell abused his victims together with other priests, including a priest from New Jersey.

Although we could not find any records in the files produced by the Diocese documenting that concerns about O'Connell were brought to the Bishop or other Diocesan officials prior to 1978, at least one victim alleged in civil litigation that his father raised such concerns in 1970 and that O'Connell was transferred from Holy Ghost Church in Tiverton to St. Mary Church in Bristol shortly thereafter. Given the number of victims and the number of times O'Connell was transferred during his tenure, we question Bishop Louis Gelineau's assertion in depositions in civil litigation in the late 1980s that the Diocese was unaware of O'Connell's reputation prior to the late 1970s.

A priest at St. Mary Church in Bristol raised concerns about O'Connell in a November 1978 letter to Bishop Gelineau and Auxiliary Bishop Kenneth Angell. In the

letter, he described a "scandal of little boys" consisting of O'Connell bringing boys on overnight trips. Bishop Gelineau considered the report "unconvincing," while Angell instructed the priest to gather more evidence. In June 1984, a second priest at St. Mary Church in Bristol advised Angell of his concerns about O'Connell. Again, Angell instructed the reporting priest to gather evidence.

In February 1985, two complainants reported to South Kingstown Police that Father O'Connell had sexually abused them at his South Kingstown residence. South Kingstown Police arrested O'Connell that same month. Shortly thereafter, four more complainants came forward. O'Connell was ultimately indicted twice in 1985, on a total of 26 counts, in connection with abuse of three victims in South Kingstown and Bristol. Meanwhile, Bishop Gelineau accepted O'Connell's resignation and placed him on an indefinite leave of absence.

In June 1986, Father O'Connell pled *nolo contendere* in both cases to a total of 12 counts of second-degree sexual assault, 10 counts of soliciting, two counts of exploiting minors, and two counts of contributing to the delinquency of minors. He was sentenced to five years in prison, of which all but one were suspended, after which he was ordered to return to the Saint Luke Institute in Maryland for treatment. Records indicate that Bishop Gelineau formally suspended O'Connell in April 1988. However, it does not appear that the Diocese took any steps to seek laicization of O'Connell. The Diocese continued to financially support O'Connell until 1994.

In July 1994, Father O'Connell was arrested in Lower Township, New Jersey, where he had been supplementing his income from the Diocese with freelance photography work at local parishes and Catholic schools. He was charged with 20 counts related to child sexual abuse after parents complained that O'Connell was behaving inappropriately with their children. In addition, New Jersey police found thousands of photographs of naked boys inside O'Connell's New Jersey home. O'Connell was charged with multiple counts of obscenity, child endangerment, sexual contact, and sexual assault in New Jersey; he pled guilty and was sentenced to 10 years at a New Jersey treatment center.

Father O'Connell died in 1996. The Diocese received 12 additional complaints of sexual abuse against O'Connell after his death. O'Connell is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

**A Chronology of the Abuse and Early Warning Signs**

*1950s to Early 1960s*

Father O'Connell reportedly sexually abused a 13-year-old boy ("Complainant A") beginning in 1950. Complainant A reported that he met O'Connell when he was assigned to St. Francis Church in South Kingstown. When Complainant A was 13 years old, O'Connell invited him to sleep in the St. Francis Rectory. O'Connell reportedly slept in the same bed with him, rubbed his erect penis against him, and touched Complainant A's genitals. Complainant A reported that O'Connell also sexually

assaulted him countless more times at various other locations. Complainant A first reported his sexual abuse to Diocesan Victim Advocate Dr. Michael Hansen and Director of the Diocese Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") Robert McCarthy in 2005, after O'Connell had died.

O'Connell reportedly sexually abused a 15-year-old boy ("Complainant B") beginning in the late 1950s and continuing through the early 1960s while he was assigned to Saints Peter & Paul Church in West Warwick and St. Mary Parish in Providence. Complainant B's attorney reported his abuse allegations to Diocesan attorneys in 2008. According to the report, during the first incident, O'Connell brought Complainant B to Providence where he and a second priest sexually assaulted him in the presence of other boys after the entire group drank alcohol. The reported abuse consisted of fondling the complainant's genitals. Complainant B reportedly suffered from severe mental health issues. Documents show that he participated in an arbitration process with the Diocese in August 2008 and the mediator awarded him a sum of $50,000.

Father O'Connell reportedly sexually abused another boy ("Complainant C") in 1959, when he was about 12 years old and a student at the Saints Peter and Paul School in West Warwick. O'Connell was assigned to the school's associated parish at the time. On one occasion, O'Connell reportedly brought Complainant C to Massachusetts for an overnight trip with other children. Complainant C reported that O'Connell fondled him during the trip and on other occasions, in his vehicle, at his home, and at Saints Peter and Paul Church. An attorney for Complainant C reported his abuse allegations to the Diocese in 2003, and alleged that Complainant C was severely emotionally scarred due to the abuse. There is no indication that the Diocese referred the allegation to law enforcement. Complainant C participated in the "high low" arbitration program with the Diocese and received $50,000.

Father O'Connell reportedly sexually abused a boy of an unspecified age ("Complainant E") from 1963 to 1965 at a pool in Cranston where he took a group of boys to swim on several occasions. O'Connell reportedly touched the boy's genitals in the shower area and encouraged the boys to swim naked. An attorney representing Complainant E contacted OEC Director Kevin O'Brien in March 2020 to report his client's abuse by Father O'Connell, noting that the victim wished to remain anonymous. O'Brien reported Complainant E's allegation to the Rhode Island State Police on June 30, 2020.

*1960s – 1980s: O'Connell's Residence in South Kingstown*

From 1963 to 1985, O'Connell reportedly sexually abused eight boys ages 9 to 16 ("Complainant D," "Complainant F," "Complainant G," "Complainant H," "Complainant M," "Complainant O," "Complainant Q," "Complainant R") at his personal residence in South Kingstown.

In 1985, Complainant D reported to the South Kingstown Police Department that O'Connell sexually abused him in 1963, when he was 13 years old. According to

Complainant D, he first met Father O'Connell in Family Court, where O'Connell approached his parents and offered counseling services. Complainant D told the detectives that O'Connell brought Complainant D to his South Kingstown residence, where they drank beer and played cards. According to Complainant D, O'Connell brought Complainant D to a nearby house where a priest named "Gillooly" lived.[26] The priests reportedly showed the boy a book of photographs of naked boys and O'Connell touched the boy's genitals while masturbating himself. In 2002, Complainant D wrote Bishop Robert Mulvee directly regarding his abuse by O'Connell. Complainant D received a $50,000 settlement from the Diocese in 2004.

Father O'Connell reportedly sexually abused Complainant F when he was a minor from 1965 to 1972. In 1993, Complainant F filed a lawsuit (discussed below) in which he alleged that a priest of the Diocese of Camden in New Jersey, Father Joseph F. McGarvey (who was later included by the Diocese of Camden on its list of clergy "who have been credibly accused of sexual abuse of minors"), transported him and two other boys from New Jersey to Rhode Island when they were children. There, according to Complainant F, the New Jersey priest and O'Connell sexually abused them. He reported that O'Connell also abused the boys in New Jersey around the same time.

Complainant G reported that Father O'Connell sexually assaulted him several times in 1965, when he was 15 years old. Complainant G also claimed that another Diocesan priest sexually abused him at O'Connell's South Kingstown residence. Complainant G reported his abuse to OEC Director Robert McCarthy in 2004 and received a settlement of $25,000 from the Diocese in 2005.

Complainant H reported that Father O'Connell molested him twice from 1967 to 1970. Complainant H was an altar server at Holy Ghost Church in Tiverton while O'Connell was assigned to that parish. According to Complainant H, when he was nine years old, O'Connell invited him to his South Kingstown residence, where they slept in the same bed. O'Connell allegedly touched the boy's penis during the night. O'Connell allegedly repeated this conduct a second time at the South Kingstown residence. Complainant H reported this abuse to the South Kingstown Police in 1985.

On April 9, 2005, an attorney representing Complainant M wrote to Diocesan Attorney William Murphy to report O'Connell's alleged abuse of his client. According to the letter, Father O'Connell sexually abused him from 1973 to 1975, beginning when he was 15 years old. Complainant M reportedly worked at St. Mary Parish in Bristol at the time. O'Connell allegedly masturbated Complainant M at the rectory, at his South Kingstown residence, and on his boat and took nude photographs of him.

O'Connell reportedly sexually abused Complainant O in 1979. Complainant O reported in a witness statement to police in February 1985 that when he was 13 years old, O'Connell touched his penis while they were sleeping together at O'Connell's

[26] Father William Gillooly is included on the Diocese's Credibly Accused List.

South Kingstown residence. The Rhode Island Office of the Attorney General turned the statement over to O'Connell's defense attorney, who then provided it to Diocesan Attorney William Murphy in 1986.

Father O'Connell reportedly sexually assaulted Complainant Q and Complainant R in 1984, when they were 15 and 16 years old respectively, by touching their penises and taking photos of them in bathing suits at the South Kingstown residence. The complainants reported their assaults to South Kingstown Police and O'Connell was indicted for second degree sexual assault of the complainants in 1985. O'Connell later pled *nolo contendere* to sexually abusing Complainant R in 1986 (see below). In 1994, Complainant Q filed a lawsuit against O'Connell and Diocesan officials, which settled for $900,000 in 2002. In 2024, Complainant Q confirmed his previously reported allegations to the Rhode Island State Police. As discussed extensively below, Complainant R and his mother sued the Diocese in 1988, ultimately settling the case for over $2 million.

*Late 1960s to Early 1970s - Holy Ghost Church, Tiverton*

Father O'Connell reportedly sexually abused three boys ages 9 to 13 ("Complainant I," "Complainant J," and "Complainant U") from 1968 to 1970 in the rectory of Holy Ghost Parish in Tiverton.

On May 28, 2008, Complainant I reported to OEC Director McCarthy that Father O'Connell and another priest sexually abused him in 1968 when he was nine or ten years old. McCarthy reported Complainant I's allegations to the Rhode Island State Police on June 2, 2008.

In 1985, Complainant J reported to South Kingstown Police Department that Father O'Connell sexually abused him in 1970, when he was 13 or 14 years old. Complainant J reported that O'Connell invited him to the Holy Ghost Rectory for a weekend and they drank alcohol together. According to Complainant J, he fell asleep in a chair and O'Connell unzipped his pants and touched his penis while he was sleeping. On a later occasion, O'Connell reportedly slept at Complainant J's house following the boy's graduation party. Complainant J said that O'Connell attempted to sleep with him, but he moved to the living room couch. Complainant J reportedly told his parents about this incident the next day and his father then went to speak to a priest at the Holy Ghost Rectory about it. "I don't know what was said there," Complainant J stated, "but my father had stated that he wouldn't press charges but didn't want Fr. O'Connell near me or my brother again." According to Complainant J, O'Connell was transferred to a different parish shortly thereafter. There is no documentation in the records produced by the Diocese to this Office of the complaint brought by Complainant J's father in or about 1972, but it is uncontroverted that O'Connell was indeed transferred to St. Mary Church in Bristol in June 1972.

Complainant U reported that Father O'Connell sexually abused him while he was a parishioner at Holy Ghost Church. According to this complainant, when he was 13 years old, he attended a Catholic Youth Organization ski trip. Rather than take the

bus home, O'Connell drove him back in his own vehicle and brought him back to the Holy Ghost Rectory. Complainant U reported that O'Connell gave him alcohol and masturbated on the living room couch in front of the complainant. Complainant U disclosed this during an interview with Director McCarthy in December 2009. McCarthy reported the allegation to the Rhode Island State Police shortly thereafter, but as O'Connell was deceased no investigation took place. In December 2024, Complainant U confirmed the allegations in an interview with an investigator from the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office. He recalled that he reported his abuse to the Diocese when he was in his 50s and confirmed that he met with a retired Massachusetts State Trooper who was handling allegations of abuse by members of the Diocese. He told the investigator that he had not heard from the Diocese since that time, and that he wanted an apology but never received one.

*1970s – St. Mary Church in Bristol*

From 1971 to 1979, O'Connell reportedly sexually abused five boys ages 12 to 17 ("Complainant K," "Complainant L," "Complainant N," "Complainant S," and "Complainant V") in the St. Mary Rectory in Bristol. As noted above, O'Connell was transferred to St. Mary's not long after the parents of Complainant J complained to the parish priest of Holy Ghost Parish in Tiverton about O'Connell's conduct with their son.

O'Connell reportedly sexually abused Complainant K from 1971 to 1974, by masturbating him and forcing him to perform oral sex on the priest. In October 1993, an attorney representing Complainant K reported Complainant K's allegations of sexual abuse by Father O'Connell to an attorney representing the Diocese. In 2024, Complainant K told an investigator from the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office that he was approximately 9-11 years old when O'Connell sexually assaulted him at a "summer cottage" in the Narrow River area of Narragansett. The priest sexually assaulted him during the day and then asked him to call home to see if he could spend the night, but his father did not allow it. He did not report his abuse directly to the Diocese or law enforcement and stated that he sought therapy after seeing a news report about O'Connell when he was 26 or 27 years old. Diocesan records indicate that Complainant K received a settlement from the Diocese of over $340,000 in 2002.

Complainant V sued Father O'Connell, Bishop Gelineau, and the Roman Catholic Bishop corporation in 1993. According to a "score sheet" submitted to the court by the complainant's attorney in April 2002, Complainant V became involved in the juvenile justice system as a boy; after escaping from the training school around the age of 14 or 15, a Family Court judge who was friendly with Father O'Connell placed Complainant V in O'Connell's custody. Complainant V alleged that O'Connell told him to sleep in bed with him at the rectory on the first night, and he woke up to find O'Connell's hands on his penis, causing the complainant to ejaculate. He claimed that he left for his mother's residence the following day and refused to live at the rectory, though he continued to work there for several days as required by the Family Court. Complainant V reportedly spent time in prison and suffered from substance abuse

and other mental health issues. Diocesan records indicate that the Diocese settled his suit in 2002 for over $220,000.

In 1997, Complainant L sued the Diocese alleging that Father O'Connell sexually abused him from 1971 to 1977, beginning when Complainant L was a teenage altar server. According to Complainant L's deposition, during the first incident, O'Connell invited him to sleep in the St. Mary Rectory following completion of some housework in his bedroom. O'Connell encouraged Complainant L to put on small nylon underwear. Complainant L stated that O'Connell then pressured him to sleep next to O'Connell and, during the night, O'Connell touched his genitals and rubbed his erect penis on the complainant's buttocks.

On November 2, 1978, a priest at St. Mary Parish wrote a letter to Bishop Louis Gelineau and Auxiliary Bishop Kenneth Angell detailing several complaints against O'Connell, related mostly to parish administration and finance. In one section of the letter, however, he noted a "scandal of little boys," stating:

> 1. Perhaps pure fantasy relationships, but he takes little boys alone with him for days off and overnights.
>
> 2. Steady stream of boys in the house, always orphans or 'in trouble' boys. They are treated royally for a while and then he ignores them. The last one here was given the silent treatment and had the food locked up on him. (He had no place to go so he bought his own food from his government check.)
>
> 3. This was mentioned to me as 'the biggest problem' by the Episcopal Rector here and as an 'embarrassment' by [redacted], after one week here. It is a joke among people in the [t]own, both adults (who will not let their sons stay here) and high school boys who fear him (I can give names, if wanted)[.]

There is no record of a response by either Bishop Gelineau or Auxiliary Bishop Angell to this letter. We found no documentation from this time referencing the apparently widespread awareness that O'Connell's interaction with boys was concerning to clergy and parishioners. As noted in the next section, although Bishop Gelineau and Auxiliary Bishop Angell received the priest's letter, they did nothing to investigate the allegations, and they did not report them to law enforcement or to the Rhode Island Department of Children and Families ("DCF"). In deposition testimony a decade later, Bishop Gelineau claimed that he did not credit the priest's concerns (or the concerns of yet another fellow priest, discussed below) because there was no specific evidence provided. Bishop Gelineau later claimed in a deposition that he spoke with Father O'Connell about the accusation, but he refused to provide any information regarding the content of his conversation with Father O'Connell, citing the confidentiality of the "internal forum." O'Connell remained where he was and continued to abuse other children.

Father O'Connell sexually abused Complainant N on six occasions in 1979, when the boy was 14 years old by stroking the boy's penis. The repeated assaults occurred in the rectory of St. Mary's. Complainant N reported to South Kingstown Police in 1985 that during the sexual assault, O'Connell restrained him, "[v]ery forcibly, by pinning me to a position where I could not get out." O'Connell pled *nolo contendere* to sexually assaulting Complainant N in 1986. An attorney for Complainant N again reported his abuse to the Diocese in 2003 and sought compensation for his abuse. Complainant N received $50,000 following arbitration in 2005.

Complainant P and Complainant S also alleged sexual abuse by Father O'Connell at the St. Mary Rectory in the early 1980s. An attorney for Complainant P wrote to Bishop Gelineau in 1988 to report Complainant P's allegations of abuse by O'Connell. According to the letter, Complainant P was 12 years old when O'Connell gave him alcohol, took photos of him in his underwear, and engaged in other sexual acts. In the letter, the attorney stated that Complainant P had reported the abuse at the time to a priest of Mount Carmel Church in Bristol, but that priest "apparently did not believe him." Complainant P also reported that a priest told him and another boy "later on" that he was, "aware of what was going on with Father O'Connell, that Father O'Connell was 'crazy' and that he was going to do something about it" but O'Connell "still was not removed from his post." The attorney concluded the letter by stating that his client wanted to settle the matter privately without making a public case.

Another individual, Complainant S, called the Bishop's office and spoke with Monsignor Paul Theroux in February 2002 to report that he was receiving treatment at a mental health facility and he was having "flashbacks" of being "raped and molested" by Father O'Connell in Bristol, where he grew up, when he was approximately 8 or 9 years old. Complainant S also contacted Director McCarthy two days later to report his abuse at the hands of O'Connell and to request financial assistance for counseling. A few days later, a psychiatrist who was treating Complainant S called McCarthy and informed him that Complainant S was too unstable to participate in an interview. Records indicate that Complainant S reached out to McCarthy again in March 2002 and advised "that he was still unable to discuss Father O'Connell at this time." On March 1, 2002, McCarthy forwarded Complainant S's allegations to Bishop Robert Mulvee and an attorney for the Diocese.

Complainant S contacted the Diocese again in 2023 about his allegations. The Diocese referred the allegation to the Rhode Island State Police, who contacted the complainant in July 2023. He reported that he was an altar boy at St. Mary Church in Bristol from ages eight to 14 and that his parents fought a lot, causing him to spend a substantial amount of time at the church. He advised that in 2002, he began "regression therapy" through which he began recovering fragmented memories of being sexually abused. Complainant S told the State Police that he and an attorney friend met with an attorney for the Diocese and a Monsignor. He recalled the Monsignor aggressively questioning him and Diocesan counsel accusing him of lying, which further traumatized him. He claimed that the Diocese offered him a "$100,000 settlement," which he declined. Diocesan records reflect that on November 18, 2002, McCarthy received a one-page letter from a Diocesan attorney entitled "[Complainant

S] vs. Roman Catholic Bishop of Providence" and referencing a file number, however, the content of this letter was redacted as privileged.

In 1984, a second priest at St. Mary Parish in Bristol told Auxiliary Bishop Angell that he suspected Father O'Connell of improper conduct with young boys. According to a 1988 deposition, he told Angell in 1984 that, on one occasion, a woman had called the rectory to complain that O'Connell had taken her sons to McDonald's late at night without her permission. On another occasion, this priest saw O'Connell and a young boy come down from the upstairs rectory bedrooms together, both attired in nylon bikini bottoms. This priest testified that, on June 22, 1984, he met with Angell and told the Auxiliary Bishop, "[w]e have another Lincoln incident," a reference to the charges of child sexual abuse then pending against Father Henry Leech. According to this priest, Angell instructed him to gather evidence of O'Connell's criminal behavior. But again, Bishop Gelineau took no action until O'Connell's arrest and prosecution in 1985.

**Criminal Prosecution and O'Connell's Suspension**

According to public reports, in November 1984, an anonymous letter arrived at the Department of Children and Families ("DCF") headquarters alerting DCF that Father O'Connell may have been involved in the sexual assault of young boys. With it were reportedly about 15 photographs that the writer said belonged to O'Connell, depicting several young boys in underwear, all apparently under 18. O'Connell was identified in some of the photographs. DCF notified local law enforcement and both agencies began investigating.

On February 13, 1985, Complainant R went to the South Kingstown Police Headquarters with his mother and a Youth Service Bureau counselor to report that Father O'Connell had taken photographs of the complainant in bikini-style briefs. The next day, South Kingstown Police received a call from a DCF investigator, who told them that Complainant R had had disclosed to the investigator that O'Connell sexually assaulted him on numerous occasions. Complainant R, his mother, and the DCF investigator provided statements to South Kingstown Police on February 14, 1985. Complainant R reported that O'Connell had molested him at his summer cottage and at the rectory in Bristol the previous summer, and that he also witnessed O'Connell molesting his friend, Complainant Q. He further reported that O'Connell had photos of nude and partially nude boys, restraints, and a guest book at the cottage that visiting boys would sign. Complainant Q provided a statement to South Kingstown Police on February 15, 1985, and reported that O'Connell had taken his photograph wearing bikini shorts and touched his penis while sitting on the bed watching television.

On the same day, Complainant N went to the Bristol Police Department to report that O'Connell had sexually assaulted him and taken nude photographs of him in a rectory in Bristol. Complainant N told police that he worked for O'Connell since he was eight years old, and when he turned 15, O'Connell touched his penis. He also told police that he found photographs of nude boys in envelopes with boys' names on them in O'Connell's bedroom in Bristol and in secret locations at his cottage in South

Kingstown, with dates on the envelopes going back to 1965. On the same day, a DCF investigator provided Bristol Police detectives with the anonymous note and photographs referenced above. The note listed the names of some of O'Connell's victims, including Complainant N's name.

Following these disclosures, on February 15, 1985, the Bristol police obtained an arrest warrant for O'Connell and a search warrant for the St. Mary Rectory. The South Kingstown police obtained a search warrant for O'Connell's cottage in South Kingstown. Among other items, police discovered photographs of nude boys in the rectory, and restraints and a guest book at the cottage. In the weeks following his arrest, Complainants D, J, N, and O came forward and gave statements to police in which they recounted their sexual abuse by O'Connell.

On February 19, 1985, Father O'Connell tendered his resignation to Bishop Gelineau, writing: "Due to the pending criminal charges and the resulting publicity, I think it best that I resign as Pastor of St. Mary's Parish, Bristol, effective immediately." Bishop Gelineau accepted O'Connell's resignation the same day, writing back, "I assign you to an indefinite leave of absence and assure you that during this time you will continue to receive full medical benefits and a yearly stipend of $5,500. Please be assured that you are remembered in my prayers." In the ensuing weeks, several parishioners wrote to Gelineau to state that their community had warned the Bishop about O'Connell. "I am not surprised because for years many at St. Mary's have wondered and whispered over the very issues that are now public," one parishioner wrote. "You are, no doubt, no more surprised than I am; for years we have tried to tell you our suspicions." She added "Those children, as well as the rest of the community at St. Mary's, have been victimized, too, by a system that refused to acknowledge the possibility of wrongdoing."

In March 1985, Auxiliary Bishop Kenneth Angell held a Deanery meeting during which he advised priests to consult with him when they had problems. "[I]if you personally are in any trouble," he stated, "whether it be pedophilia or any deviant behavior, please come in and talk to me... I will keep your confidence. I promise you that. I will tell no one without your approval."

Later that month, Father O'Connell was charged in a 24-count indictment for the sexual abuse of Complainants R and N that occurred in Bristol between 1982 and 1984; the charges included 10 counts of second-degree sexual assault on a minor, two counts of exploitation of a minor, and related misdemeanor charges. In May 1985, Father O'Connell was again charged by criminal complaint with two counts of second-degree sexual assault of Complainants Q and R that occurred in South Kingstown between June 1983 and November 1984. The statute of limitations had run on the allegations brought by the other complainants, foreclosing criminal charges for that reported conduct.

In September 1985, the President of the Saint Luke Institute in Maryland informed Bishop Gelineau by letter that the Institute would evaluate and treat O'Connell if necessary. "[T]he evaluation and treatment," he wrote, "may be helpful in

establishing important mitigating circumstances related to the criminal charges so that Fr. O'Connell may be better able to defend himself if it comes to a criminal trial in the future." Saint Luke Institute discharged O'Connell in May 1986 so he could "face the legal charges against him." At the time, the treating therapist noted that treatment was not complete, and that O'Connell should return after his sentencing for further treatment.

Later, in June 1986, Father O'Connell pled *nolo contendere* to charges in both criminal cases. He was sentenced to five years in prison, with one year to serve, followed by four years of a suspended sentence with probation. As a condition of his probation, O'Connell was ordered to undergo additional counseling at Saint Luke Institute. Following the sentencing, Gelineau made a statement that "[t]he Diocese will continue to be of any possible help to him. It is understood, however, that he will not function further as a priest."

Throughout 1987 and 1988, the Diocese communicated with the Saint Luke Institute regarding Father O'Connell's treatment, diagnosis, residence, and continued therapy. In December 1987, Angell approved a monthly payment of $630 to O'Connell for rent assistance, while noting that O'Connell's medical bills and counseling costs would still be paid out of the Clergy Medical Benefits Fund.

On April 26, 1988, Gelineau informed Archbishop of Washington James Hickey by letter that Father O'Connell was living in the Archdiocese of Washington. The Bishop informed Archbishop Hickey that O'Connell had been convicted on several counts of sexual assault on minor boys, that he was suspended and instructed not to present himself as a priest, and that the Diocese of Providence was supplying him with a pension, medical benefits and rent money.

The Diocese produced multiple drafts of a decree from Bishop Gelineau, with some earlier versions dated February 1988, and a later version dated April 22, 1988, that state O'Connell was suspended from all priestly functions, and specifically, was not allowed to celebrate Mass publicly or privately, dress as a priest, present himself as a priest, or use the titles "Reverend" or "Father." The decree also included a section with six questions titled "Questions to be asked of Father O'Connell:"

1. In view of your treatment at Saint Luke's Institute and the evaluation submitted by Saint Luke's which we have discussed, as well as the events which lead to your admission to Saint Luke's, do you acknowledge and admit any wrongdoing on your part? If yes, explain. If no, explain.
2. Because of the negative effects created by the criminal charges against you and the resulting civil disposition of those charges, do you understand and acknowledge that it would not be possible for you to continue to function as a priest in the Diocese of Providence?
3. Do you wish to remain a priest living elsewhere, in a structured, supervised religious environment?

4. If yes to no. 3: Will you then accept permanent residence at a religious house/institution?
5. If no to no. 4: Will you then willingly petition for laicization with the understanding that the Diocese will continue to honor earlier financial agreements?
6. If no to no. 5: Because of your own unwillingness to seek laicization and in view of the seriousness of your situation, namely, pleading no contest to 26 counts of sexual contact with adolescent boys, severe scandal given by public knowledge of the above through press and media, and the threat of a multi-million dollar lawsuit, and the evaluation of Saint Luke's Institute, the Bishop could and might petition the Holy See for your laicization even without your consent. Is this clear and understood by you?

A handwritten note in the file indicate that these questions were "not formally used but informally discussed by Bishop Angell with Fr. O'Connell." The Diocese did not produce any records documenting the results of the Bishop's discussion with O'Connell and it does not appear that this letter was ever sent. Nor is there a record in the files provided by the Diocese to this Office documenting that the Diocese formally suspended O'Connell or initiated canonical proceedings to dismiss him from the clerical state.

In 1997, Bishop Gelineau stated in a deposition in response to a lawsuit brought by Complainant L, that after Father O'Connell's arrest, Gelineau suspended him "from his ability to function as a priest licitly." Gelineau continued,

> However, he remained a cleric of the Diocese of Providence until his death; and as bishop of the Diocese, I remained under an obligation to provide him maintenance in accord with the Canon Law. Additionally, I was concerned about the state of his soul. Father O'Connell was a beneficiary of the retirement fund established for priests, and maintenance was provided until his death through the payment of his pension.

**1986-1997: Civil Litigation and a Second Criminal Prosecution**

In 1986, Complainant R and his mother filed a lawsuit against O'Connell, Bishop Gelineau, and several Diocese officials. The two priests from St. Mary referenced above were deposed regarding their knowledge of the abuse and warnings to Bishop Gelineau.

At his deposition in April 1988, the first priest testified that he reported his concerns about O'Connell's relationships with young boys to Auxiliary Bishop Angell in 1978. Angell had subsequently instructed him to put his complaint in writing, following which he produced the letter with the section titled "Scandal of little boys."

After testifying about the November 2, 1978 letter, the priest stated that he had spoken to Diocesan Attorney William Murphy about a year before the deposition, and that Murphy, "said that if these letters were revealed it would be disastrous for the Bishops, disastrous for the Diocese and very disastrous for me." He testified that Murphy's warning felt like a threat.

In May 1989, Gelineau testified in his answers to an interrogatory that, "[s]ince 1972, there have been no complaints about criminal sexual contact... between priests and males under age eighteen. There are no known records of such complaints from 1965 to 1972." Gelineau also testified that, "[t]he only oral and written communications relating to Father O'Connell's alleged criminal sexual conduct ... with males under the age of 18 are the documents generated by this lawsuit," and that, *"[t]he Diocese, not being a person or a thing with the power or authority to transfer a priest, does not and never has transferred a priest. Since 1972, no priest has been transferred from one parish to another on account of complaints that he had engaged in criminal sexual conduct... with a male under the age of eighteen*." (emphasis supplied) In a subsequent deposition in June 1989, Gelineau testified that he had read the November 2, 1978 letter, but never discussed it with the personnel board, and did not remember discussing it with Angell. He also testified that he met with O'Connell in December 1978, but objected to providing any information regarding their conversation, citing that his response could be protected because it dealt with matters of "internal forum" and "the administration of the church."

Bishop Gelineau further testified that he found the November 2, 1978 letter unconvincing because no one had reported allegations against Father O'Connell before, and he had personally visited the St. Mary Rectory several times without incident. Gelineau stated that he felt the priest who wrote the letter was speculating, and that he likely didn't believe it himself since it was in the middle of the letter, "after fifteen or twenty other problems that he described that are of relative innocence compared to this, which would be a very serious problem." Bishop Gelineau also testified that Angell had informed him in 1984 that the second priest had reported concerns about O'Connell's relationships with young boys, and that Angell had requested that he provide evidence. "He told [this priest] that, that we could not go on a simple rumor or anything that didn't have any foundation."

In a deposition taken November 1, 1989, Angell testified that the first priest had conveyed rumors of Father O'Connell's inappropriate relationships with boys to Angell in 1978, but Angell never questioned O'Connell about his relationships with boys. Angell also testified that the second priest had reported to him, "a wonderment about the boys, the number of boys that were working at the rectory." Later in November 1989, the Bishop was dismissed from Complainant R's lawsuit. According to the court's ruling, "the Bishop, as the corporation sole never had the power to appoint, discipline, and assign priests, nor could it ever be assigned these powers by the General Assembly. Accordingly, as a matter of law, summary judgment must be granted." This conclusion is bewildering in the face of mountain of evidence, both with respect to O'Connell, and in the case of other priests whose files were reviewed over the course of this Investigation, which clearly demonstrate that the Diocese had

full control over the assignment of priests, whether to grant the priest faculties, whether to require the priest to go to treatment, and whether to financially support the priest.

The Diocese settled Complainant R's lawsuit in 1990 for just over $2 million. The settlement also included a confidentiality provision, prohibiting the parties from disclosing to anyone the terms of the settlement or the facts giving rise to the lawsuit, except for the plaintiff for counseling purposes.

In June 1993, Complainant F and two other New Jersey residents filed a lawsuit against Father O'Connell and Diocesan officials in federal court alleging that Father Joseph F. McGarvey of the Diocese of Camden and O'Connell had transported them to Rhode Island and sexually abused them in Rhode Island when they were children. The parties ultimately settled the lawsuit later that year for an undisclosed amount.

In July 1994, Father O'Connell was arrested in Lower Township, New Jersey, and charged with 13 counts of obscenity, two counts of child endangerment, four counts of sexual contact, and one count of sexual assault. Another priest, Father Thomas Kohler of Bensalem, Pennsylvania, was also arrested and charged with one count of obscenity, "for his active participation with O'Connell." In February 1995, O'Connell was sentenced by a New Jersey court to serve 10 years in a New Jersey treatment facility after pleading guilty.

Following Father O'Connell's arrest in New Jersey, a representative from the Diocese implied that officials were unaware of O'Connell's location after he served one year in a work-release program for his Rhode Island convictions. A Diocesan spokesperson told the media that O'Connell "sort of disappeared into the woods" and that Bishop Gelineau "couldn't force the priest to constantly inform the diocese of his whereabouts."

An internal memorandum to "Diocesan Leadership," however, noted that the Diocese continued to deposit pension payments directly into O'Connell's account in a Rhode Island bank, and while "Bishop Gelineau had no personal knowledge of where William O'Connell was residing," the Diocese acknowledged that,

> [I]t is possible that others in the Diocese may have known of his present address, so we are looking at ways to tighten our policies in this regarding as best we can. It is certainly our present policy to notify local Church authorities when we know of the whereabouts of a known offender. However, the Church cannot force a former priest to report his whereabouts, unless he is willing to do so. It is possible, for example, that Survivor Connections . . . through its extensive networking had better information about Fr. O'Connell's whereabouts than we did.

It is not clear why this memorandum referred to Father O'Connell as a "former priest" since, although his faculties were formally suspended in 1988, he had not been laicized. In November 1994, the Diocese stopped subsidizing O'Connell's rent.

The Diocese faced additional lawsuits and demands for compensation as a result of Father O'Connell's avalanche of abuse. In March 1994, Complainant Q filed a lawsuit against O'Connell and Diocesan officials and in October 1994, a complainant filed an anonymous lawsuit against O'Connell and Diocesan officials. In 1997, Complainant L sued the Diocese and named O'Connell as a defendant, alleging sexual abuse that occurred in the late 1970s. The case settled in 2003 for over $330,000.

O'Connell died in prison on May 12, 1996. On May 23, 1996, Bishop Gelineau authored a letter to O'Connell's surviving family offering condolences. "We are also asking our priests to offer Masses for Father Bill, as we ourselves will do," he wrote. "Life presents its difficulties for everyone. Certainly, Father Bill experienced those. . . . I know that Father Bill intended and strove to cooperate with God's grace."

**Additional Reports: 2002 to the Present**

From 2002 to 2009, 11 of O'Connell's victims – complainants S, D, T, C, N, C, G, M, A, I and B – contacted the Diocese, either directly or through their attorneys to report their abuse and seek compensation and/or financial support for counseling. Records show that a man ("Complainant W") received a settlement of $32,500 from the Diocese following arbitration in 2005 regarding allegations of abuse by Father O'Connell, but there were no records produced to this Office with the details of those allegations. An attorney for another complainant who wished to remain anonymous, Complainant E, contacted the Diocese in 2020 to report his client's allegations. These reports are discussed above. One report not previously discussed concerned an allegation of abuse brought by a priest who claimed that he was victimized by O'Connell. On April 9, 2002, the Chief Investigator for the Rhode Island Attorney General reportedly informed McCarthy in person that the priest ("Complainant T") "advised that several years ago he had been sexually assaulted by Father William O'Connell."

In 2024, members of the Rhode Island State Police attempted to contact all of O'Connell's known, living complainants. State Police were able to speak with three complainants, Complainants K, Q, and U, all of whom reiterated their earlier accounts of abuse.

**Status**

Father O'Connell resigned from ministry in 1985. He continued to receive financial support from the Diocese until his conviction in New Jersey in 1994. He died two years later. The Diocese included O'Connell on its List of Credibly Accused Clergy. With 23 known victims, Father O'Connell was one of the worst serial child abusers in Rhode Island history.

# Father John Francis O'Neil

| Born | Ordained | Retired | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| May 25, 1911 | May 22, 1937 | 1977 | Sep. 10, 1978 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1937 | Diocesan Chancery, Providence |
| 1937 – 1944 | Cathedral of SS. Peter & Paul, Providence and *Sick leave* |
| 1944 – 1950 | St. Mary Church, Pawtucket |
| 1950 | *Sick Leave*, Via Coeli, Jemez Springs, NM |
| 1951 – 1952 | Cathedral of SS. Peter & Paul, Providence |
| 1952 | *Sick leave*, Queen of the Clergy Villa, Escoheag |
| 1952 – 1953 | St. Lawrence Church, North Providence |
| 1953 – 1954 | St. Mark Church, Cranston |
| 1954 – 1957 | St. Rose Church, Warwick |
| 1957 | Queen of the Clergy Villa, Escoheag |
| 1957 – 1959 | St. Anna Church, Cranston |
| 1959 | St. Thomas Church, Providence |
| 1961 - 1964 | *Suspended on leave*, "Out of Diocese" |
| 1965 | *Faculties Reinstated,* Chaplain, Carmelite Monastery, Barrington |

## Summary

Father John F. O'Neil reportedly touched an 11-or 12-year-old girl inappropriately in the summer of 1959 or 1960 in the girl's home while conducting a parish census for St. Thomas Parish in Providence. The girl was a parishioner at St. Thomas and a student at St. Thomas School at the time.

The Diocese does not include Father O'Neil on its List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

## The Reported Abuse and Diocesan Response

According to records provided by the Diocese to the Rhode Island Office of the Attorney General, on March 20, 2002, an employee at Roger Williams Hospital called Robert McCarthy, Director of the Diocese Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC"), to report that a woman who wished to remain anonymous had told him that she was sexually abused by a priest whose name she could not fully recall at the time and who the reporting party misidentified to McCarthy. McCarthy attempted to call the complainant in April 2002 but was unable to reach her. In July 2003, the complainant called McCarthy to schedule an interview and stated that she was assaulted by "Father

James O'Neil," not the priest who was identified by the reporting party. According to McCarthy's memorandum of that conversation, he advised her that "perhaps a mistake had been made during all of the flurry of calls because of the recent activity with the Diocese of Boston and the names may have been confused."

During a phone call with Director McCarthy in July 2003, the complainant named Father John O'Neil as her alleged abuser. During a recorded interview that same month, the complainant informed McCarthy of the details of the assault and again named her alleged abuser as Father John O'Neil. According to the complainant, O'Neil visited her home one day in the summer of 1959 or 1960 to conduct a parish census. While there, he asked to see any religious items she had in her room. After the complainant led the priest into her bedroom, Father O'Neil reportedly stood behind her and touched her in the pelvic area. She became startled and left the room, at which point O'Neil reportedly told her not to tell anyone what had happened and left.

The complainant reported that the incident impacted her emotionally and that she feared being alone, felt an inordinate amount of guilt, and had been in therapy for years. According to McCarthy's notes from the interview, he found the complainant to be a very "compassionate and open person."

McCarthy later confirmed that Father O'Neil had been assigned to St. Thomas Parish at that time. McCarthy's internal memoranda reflect that he contacted the complainant in 2003 to "advise her of the current status of the Diocesan Policy regarding deceased clerics; unless there was pending litigation there would be no indication in the files as her complaint against Father O'Neil was filed well after his death." There is no record in the files produced by the Diocese to this Office indicating that any Diocesan official ever referred the allegation to law enforcement, though Father O'Neil had died in 1978.

Although the Diocese did not produce any records from the 1950s or 1960s that indicate any concerns about sexual misconduct, the records produced contain references to "spiritual impairments" and the need to send Father O'Neil away to avoid "serious scandal." It does not appear that these issues related to sexual misconduct based on the records produced by the Diocese. Father O'Neil was sent to Via Coeli Monastery in 1950 and later that year was recalled for a "trial" assignment at Queen of the Clergy Villa in Escoheag, Rhode Island, until 1952. In 1957, O'Neil was again sent to Queen of the Clergy Villa for "spiritual rejuvenation or at least rehabilitation" after Bishop Russell McVinney ordered O'Neil to leave his assignment at St. Rose Parish "to obviate any serious scandal."

Diocesan records further indicate that there was another episode that led to Father O'Neil's suspension in 1961, though it is, again, unclear what this episode involved. In 1962, Monsignor William Murray, the Chancellor of the Diocese, wrote to the Vicar General of the Diocese of Joliet, Illinois, that, due to O'Neil's suspension in 1961, O'Neil did not enjoy faculties in the Diocese of Providence. Later that year, Bishop McVinney authorized O'Neil to accept an assignment at St. Ann's Church in Cadillac, Michigan, in the Diocese of Grand Rapids. Despite letters from Bishop McVinney that

O'Neil "should never be restored to priestly work here [in the Diocese of Providence] because of the possibility of scandal," Bishop McVinney nevertheless reinstated him in the Diocese of Providence in 1965. Upon reinstatement, Father O'Neil was given permission to say mass privately at St. Joseph Hospital and was permitted to return to his duties as Chaplain to the sisters at the Carmelite Convent in Barrington, Rhode Island.

The Diocesan Review Board reviewed this case on April 2, 2019. Records from that date reference the 2002 complaint of abuse against Father O'Neil and note that there was "no law enforcement notification on file" for this allegation. There is no record of the Board's recommendation or determination, if any occurred, on that date.

In 2024, a detective with the Rhode Island State Police contacted the complainant. She confirmed the information she previously provided to the Diocese about O'Neil and informed the detective that she told a best friend about the abuse in 2002 while watching a news report about sexual abuse by priests. She then told her husband. She also stated that she received financial compensation from the Diocese shortly after reporting her abuse and she was satisfied with the way Director McCarthy handled her report.

**Status**

Father O'Neil died on September 10, 1978. He is not included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father William O'Neill

| Born | Ordained | Laicized | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sep. 16, 1941 | Jun. 8, 1968 | Oct. 7, 1972 | May 3, 2000 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1968 | St. Mary Church, Charlestown |
| 1968 – 1969 | Immaculate Conception Church, Cranston |
| 1969 – 1971 | Blessed Sacrament Church, Providence |
| 1971 | *Suspended on leave* |
| 1972 | *Laicized* |

## Summary

Father William O'Neill was accused of sexually abusing two minors, a boy and a girl, in the late 1960s and early 1970s. He admitted to sexually abusing the girl but denied abusing the boy. The complainants first disclosed their abuse to the Diocese in 1994 and 1995. The Diocese never referred the accusations against Father O'Neill to law enforcement. The Diocese placed Father O'Neill on leave in 1971, and he was voluntarily laicized for unknown reasons in 1972.

Father O'Neill is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

## The Reported Abuse and Diocesan Response

On November 1, 1994, the pastor of Blessed Sacrament Parish received a call from a man who reported that an acquaintance of his ("Complainant A") had told him earlier that day that Father O'Neill sexually abused him in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The Blessed Sacrament pastor informed Director of the Diocese Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") Robert McCarthy of the complaint. McCarthy interviewed the man, who reported that Complainant A told him that he was 10 years old when Father O'Neill, who was assigned to Blessed Sacrament Parish in Providence at the time, abused him. The reporting party also told McCarthy that Complainant A claimed that O'Neill abused a girl in the late 1960s. There are no further details of this allegation in the records provided to the Rhode Island Office of the Attorney General. There is no record indicating that any Diocese official attempted to contact Complainant A or O'Neill at the time.

The Diocese received a second report of abuse by O'Neill in 1995. A man reported to Bishop Louis Gelineau on March 29, 1995, that the man's sister ("Complainant B") was sexually abused by Father O'Neill during a camping trip in

Maine in the late 1960s, when she was between nine and 12 years old. The man alleged that O'Neill slept in the same camp as the girl, placed his erect penis between her legs, and ejaculated. O'Neill was assigned to Immaculate Conception Parish in Cranston at the time of the alleged incident.

At the time of this report, O'Neill was working at St. Jude Parish in Lincoln as a music director. He was no longer an ordained priest, having been granted voluntary laicization in 1972. There is no record in the files produced by the Diocese explaining why O'Neill was laicized. In a memorandum dated April 4, 1995, Bishop Gelineau relayed the complaint to Director McCarthy and Monsignor George Frappier and wrote, "Problem now: He is working at St. Jude's. Has access to children."

Director McCarthy met with Complainant B's brother on May 1, 1995. He informed McCarthy that Complainant B would not speak with McCarthy at that time. He also stated that he and his mother had confronted O'Neill "several years ago," and had a tape-recording of the exchange, which he played for McCarthy. According to McCarthy's notes, the recording was difficult to hear, but it appeared to capture a person, whom the brother identified as O'Neill, admitting to the abuse. The man also stated that Complainant B had received a letter from O'Neill in which he admitted to the assault; he told McCarthy he would try to acquire a copy of the letter for McCarthy. It does not appear that this letter was ever produced as it is not included in the records provided by the Diocese.

McCarthy did not interview O'Neill regarding the reports of abuse until August 26, 1996, almost a year later. O'Neill denied sexually abusing Complainant A. O'Neill admitted, however, going on a camping trip with Complainant B and that "an incident did occur late at night, it was unintentional," and "I remember being between her legs when it occurred." O'Neill also stated, "I know I have had failures in the past," though it is unclear to what other past failures he was referring. He admitted that he wrote Complainant B a letter of apology following the assault but denied making specific admissions in the letter. In the same meeting, O'Neill informed McCarthy that the pastor of St. Jude Parish in Lincoln, where O'Neill was employed, had arranged for O'Neill to be evaluated by a physician and required O'Neill to obey "a no closed-door policy" when working with juveniles.

Despite O'Neill's admission, McCarthy did not refer Complainant B's report of child sexual abuse to law enforcement at the time.

McCarthy met with the pastor of St. Jude Parish on November 1, 1996. During the meeting, McCarthy explained that "Mr. O'Neill had denied culpability in Case Number 94-0071 and that he had submitted sufficient facts to warrant a guilty finding in Case Number 95-0102." The pastor explained that he had forbidden O'Neill to be alone with minors and that he was not aware of the allegations made by Complainant A and Complainant B, but he was aware of an incident O'Neill had reported to him that involved "two young girls at an agency in Cranston." According to McCarthy's memorandum of the meeting, "[t]he incident involved a slapping incident across the

buttocks of the two girls." It does not appear that McCarthy investigated this report or referred it to law enforcement.

On November 12, 1996, McCarthy met with O'Neill again and advised him that "it was Bishop Gelineau's decision that Mr. O'Neill would remain at Saint Jude's under the same existing conditions as laid down by [the pastor]."

On October 14, 1997, McCarthy met with the new pastor of St. Jude. This pastor informed McCarthy that he felt uncomfortable with O'Neill because he recently found him alone in the church with a girl and he "had his hands on her face." The pastor told McCarthy that "[his predecessor] had alluded to some type of sexual conditions with Mr. O'Neill but did not get into it." McCarthy then allowed the pastor to review his case files of the two prior complaints. There is no record of any further response by the Diocese to this incident.

O'Neill died on May 3, 2000. In a memorandum dated July 11, 2000, McCarthy noted that an advisory group of Diocese officials he referred to as the "Tuesday Group" had discussed "whether or not we should keep these records [of the two cases] because of the death of William J. O'Neill." There is no record indicating whether any documents were destroyed following this discussion.

**Status**

Father O'Neill is deceased. He is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father John Powers

| Born | Ordained | Retired | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sep. 27, 1925 | Jun. 12, 1952 | N/A | Oct. 19, 2010 |

**Partial Assignment History**

1960 – 1965 St. Pius V Church, Providence

**Summary**

Father John Powers was a priest of the Dominican Order who reportedly sexually abused two boys ("Complainant A" and "Complainant B") in the early 1960s while assigned to St. Pius V Church in Providence. In July 1995, the Diocese was informed of Complainant A's allegations by an attorney representing the Dominican Order. By that time, it appears that the Dominican Order had been aware of the allegations for about a decade. There is no record of any Diocesan investigation into these allegations, and it does not appear that the Diocese notified law enforcement of the complaint for another 13 years, until June 2008, in connection with the Diocese's report of Complainant B's allegations. Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") Director Robert McCarthy later told the Rhode Island State Police that the Dominican Order had "civilly adjudicated" the matter with Complainant A, though the records provided by the Diocese to the Office of the Attorney General offer no further details about that outcome.

In June 2008, Complainant B contacted the Diocese directly to report that he was abused by Powers when he was a boy at St. Pius V. Director McCarthy referred the matter to the Dominican Order, which reached a monetary settlement with Complainant B the following month. After the Dominican Order solicited McCarthy's assistance, McCarthy notified the Rhode Island State Police of Complainant B's allegations, adding (without any further detail) that the Diocese had become aware of a separate allegation against Father Powers in 1995.

Powers is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

**The Reported Abuse and Diocesan Response**

In July 1995, an attorney representing the Dominican Order wrote to Diocesan attorney William Murphy regarding a report by Complainant A that Powers sexually abused him at St. Pius V Church in Providence between 1962-1964. The letter indicated that Complainant A first notified the Dominican Order of the alleged abuse in the mid-1980s, but that the matter was kept confidential until one of Complainant A's family members informed a priest assigned to St. Pius V of the reported abuse in

January 1993. There is no record of the details of Complainant A's allegations in the Diocesan records produced to this Office. Nor is there any record that clarifies the reason for the delay between when these allegations were first raised with the Dominican Order in the 1980s, the 1993 report to the Order, and the 1995 report by the Order to the Diocese. The lawyer for the Dominican Order told Murphy that Powers was serving as a chaplain and counsel for the elderly in the Archdiocese of New Orleans in the Southern Dominican Province, and that the Provincial there was aware of the allegations.

Attorney Murphy forwarded the letter to OEC Director Robert McCarthy and, on August 1, 1995, McCarthy formally opened an OEC case. Curiously, McCarthy's face sheet for this case is addressed to Bishop Thomas Tobin and Dr. Michael Hansen (among other Diocesan personnel), yet neither Tobin nor Hansen were affiliated with the Diocese of Providence at the time. This discrepancy raises the possibility that the face sheet was created at a later date and then backdated. Also on August 1, the referral was discussed at a meeting of the "Tuesday group," consisting of McCarthy, Murphy, and other senior Diocesan personnel. There is no record of any Diocesan investigation or contact with Complainant A or with Powers regarding these allegations at the time.

On June 20, 2008, Diocesan Victim Advocate Paula Loud informed McCarthy that she had received a complaint from Complainant B. Complainant B had recently told the pastor of St. Pius V that Father Powers had sexually assaulted him there on one occasion when he was 14 or 15 years old, in 1962 or 1963. He reported "that Fr. Powers asked him to help rearrange some chairs and when he went into the room there were no chairs to rearrange and that Fr. Powers 'fondled him'."

McCarthy confirmed that Powers had been assigned to St. Pius V at the time of the reported abuse. On June 23, 2008, McCarthy formally notified the Provincial of the Dominican Order of the allegations. The next day, McCarthy updated the Bishop and the Review Board about the matter. McCarthy spoke several more times during this period with other representatives of the Dominican Order, who told McCarthy that the Order was aware of at least two other sexual assault allegations against Powers (though there is no indication that these occurred in Rhode Island or that the Diocese was previously aware of them), and that Powers by this time was living in a nursing home in Louisiana.

On June 25, 2008, an attorney representing the Dominican Order asked McCarthy for the Diocese's assistance relaying the allegations to local law enforcement, which McCarthy did by letter to the Rhode Island State Police the following day. "I also write," McCarthy told State Police, "to advise you that this office has also had another complaint involving Fr. Powers which was adjudicated civilly with the Dominican Fathers back in the mid 1990's." In early August 2008, a Dominican Order representative informed the Diocese by letter that it had reached a monetary settlement with Complainant B, which included a confidential release and indemnification agreement.

By the time the State Police received the referral with Complainant B's complaint, the reported conduct was well outside the applicable statute of limitations.

**Status**

Father Powers died on October 19, 2010. He is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy. Powers is also named on the credibly accused lists of the Dominican Order's Province of St. Joseph, and the Dioceses of Fall River, Massachusetts; Raleigh, North Carolina; and Columbus, Ohio.

# Father Hugh Rafferty

| Born | Ordained | Laicized | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mar. 21, 1933 | Jun. 4, 1964 | Dec. 23, 1976 | Jan. 11, 2001 |

**Partial Assignment History**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1964 – 1966 | St. Matthew Church, Cranston |
| 1966 – 1967 | St. Leo the Great Church, Pawtucket |
| 1976 | *Laicized* |

**Summary**

In the 1960s, while assigned to St. Matthew Church in Cranston, Father Hugh Rafferty reportedly sexually abused a 13-year-old female parishioner. The woman first reported her abuse to the Diocese in 1995, while Rafferty was still living, but there is no indication that the Diocese confronted Father Rafferty about the complaint or referred it to law enforcement at that time. The Diocese reported the allegation to law enforcement in 2016, after the complainant reported her abuse to the Diocese a second time. By that time, however, Rafferty had been dead for 15 years.

Father Rafferty successfully sought laicization in 1976. The Diocese included Father Rafferty on its List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

**The Reported Abuse and Diocesan Response**

Concerns about Father Rafferty surfaced early in his short-lived career as a Catholic priest. Rafferty requested laicization in 1976 due to his stated inability to adhere to the vow of celibacy. In a September 1976 letter to Bishop Louis Gelineau, Bishop of Norwich (and former Chancellor of the Providence Diocese) Daniel Reilly characterized Rafferty's inappropriate interactions with women as a "deep-seated psychological problem" that "appeared after about a year in the ministry" (i.e., during his tenure at St. Matthew in Cranston). Reilly recounted how he had spoken with a woman whom Rafferty had reportedly harassed early in his priestly career. "For his sake he was transferred to another part of the diocese," Reilly wrote. "Within a few months the same problem surfaced - preying on women with emotional and psychological problems." Rafferty received about a month of treatment in 1967 at a Catholic facility called Our Lady of the Snow (Via Coeli) in Nevis, Minnesota. He then served in New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Ireland, but could never remain in the same diocese because, as Reilly stated, "[t]he same problem – with its ensuing scandal – always arose." Rafferty was finally assigned to Reilly's diocese, Norwich, where, "[i]n six weeks the same trouble occurred." The records produced by the

Diocese to the Rhode Island Office of the Attorney General did not provide additional details regarding the specifics of his misconduct or the identity of any complainants. Pope Paul VI granted Rafferty's request for laicization in 1976.

On November 20, 1995, the pastor of St. Gregory the Great Church in Warwick informed Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") Director Robert McCarthy that he had received a letter from a woman reporting abuse by Rafferty in the mid-1960s, when she was approximately 13 years old. The woman wrote that Rafferty molested and raped her in his bedroom of the church rectory.

The Diocese did very little to respond to these allegations: while McCarthy notified Bishop Gelineau in a contemporaneous memo, it does not appear that the Diocese attempted to contact Rafferty or law enforcement. A memorandum dated November 29, 1995, indicates that McCarthy planned to call the complainant, but it is not clear when or if that call occurred. An undated OEC case list indicates that in November 1995, the complainant did not wish to pursue the matter "after being advised of Rafferty's current status." Rafferty died six years later.

In 2016, the same woman reported her abuse to the Diocese again, this time to McCarthy's successor, OEC Director Kevin O'Brien. She reported that the abuse began in 1963 while Father Rafferty was assigned to St. Matthew Church in Cranston. In reviewing McCarthy's 1995 case, O'Brien noted that the file "did not contain any information regarding a disposition or results." O'Brien also noted that the complainant informed him that she had never been contacted regarding the status of her complaint. The Diocesan Review Board reviewed the case on November 29, 2016, but there is no record of the Board's recommendation or determination on that date, if any occurred. O'Brien notified the Rhode Island State Police of the allegation by letter on November 30, 2016.

In 2024, State Police attempted to contact the woman regarding her previously reported allegations but was unable to reach her.

**Status**

Rafferty is deceased. The Diocese includes him on its List of Credibly Accused Clergy. The Diocese of Rockville Centre also includes Rafferty on its List of Accused Clergy.

# Father William Raiche

| Born | Ordained | Retired | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jun. 20, 1908 | Jun. 12, 1932 | Jul. 8, 1978 | Mar. 26, 1983 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1932 – 1935 | Our Lady of Consolation Church, Pawtucket |
| 1935 – 1958 | Holy Family Church, Woonsocket |
| 1958 – 1978 | Our Lady of Victories Church, Woonsocket |
| 1978 | *Retired* |

## Summary

Father William Raiche reportedly sexually abused at least five girls, 5-12 years old, from about 1967 until the early 1980s. All five complainants reported their abuse to the Diocese long after Father Raiche's death in 1983. The Diocese referred only two of these allegations to law enforcement, in 2020 and 2025, respectively.

Father Raiche is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

## The Reported Abuse

A woman ("Complainant A") reported to the Diocese that, in August 1967, when she was nine years old, Father Raiche sexually assaulted her on an Italian ocean liner during a transatlantic voyage from New York to Genoa, Italy. She reported that Father Raiche brought her to his cabin where he kissed and fondled her. After the voyage, Raiche wrote her inappropriately affectionate letters.

Another complainant ("Complainant B") reported that, in 1968, when she was about five years old, Father Raiche took nude photographs of her. According to Complainant B, Raiche also sexually abused other young girls around the same time.

In a January 1969 letter to Bishop McVinney, Father Raiche asked to remain assigned to Our Lady of Victories Church in Woonsocket, where he was "so happy," rather than be transferred to another parish when the pastor there retired. This appeal seems to have worked, as he remained at Our Lady of Victories until he retired in 1978.

Interestingly, the records produced by the Diocese to the Rhode Island Office of the Attorney General show that the Diocese paid a psychiatrist for an evaluation of Raiche in 1970. It is unclear from the documents produced by the Diocese what prompted this referral, but then-Chancellor Reilly noted in a letter to the doctor that

it was "reassuring to know that we can count on your professional confidence in these difficult situations. We shall follow your advice with reference to this case."

A third complainant ("Complainant C") reported that Father Raiche sexually assaulted her in 1978 when she was 10 years old. The incident reportedly took place in the basement of Holy Family Parish in Woonsocket on a Sunday morning while she was babysitting a group of younger children. Complainant C reported that Father Raiche placed her on his lap and kissed her while touching her groin area.

In the early 1980s, Father Raiche reportedly sexually abused yet another girl ("Complainant D") at a family member's home in Rehoboth, Massachusetts. Complainant D, who was under 12 years old at the time of the alleged abuse, reported that Raiche touched her vagina and forced her to touch his penis.

In 1997, a man ("Complainant E") reported to the Diocese that Father Raiche molested several of his female friends "several years ago." There are no further details of these allegations in the files produced by the Diocese to this Office.

A woman ("Complainant F") reported that Father Raiche sexually abused her on one occasion in 1968 when she was six years old at Our Lady of Victories Parish in Woonsocket. She reported that while in the church rectory, and in the presence of three other children, including her younger brother, the priest sat her on his lap, kissed her, and fondled her pelvic area while she tried to push his hand away.

**Diocesan Response**

The Diocese received the first documented report of abuse by Father Raiche long after his death in 1983. On November 3, 1995, a woman reported to the Robert McCarthy, Director of the Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC"), that her daughter, Complainant D, had been sexually abused by Raiche in the early 1980s. McCarthy interviewed Complainant D on November 9, 1995. During the interview, McCarthy provided Complainant D with "a list of approved therapists" for her consideration when deciding whether she would accept financial support from the Diocese for therapy. It does not appear that McCarthy or any other Diocese official ever referred this allegation to law enforcement, though Father Raiche was deceased and Complainant D stated that she would like to keep her disclosure "as quiet as possible." There are no records indicating whether the Diocese reimbursed Complainant D for her therapy costs.

On November 12, 1997, Complainant E reported to Chancellor Robert Plante that some of his female friends had been "molested" by Raiche "several years ago." Plante gave Complainant E McCarthy's phone number. There is no record of Complainant E following up with McCarthy, or of McCarthy attempting to reach out to him. The files produced to this Office did not identify the potential victims.

In 1998, while reporting her abuse at the hands of another priest, Complainant B reported that Father Raiche "had sexually assaulted some juveniles, and that this

took place approximately thirty years ago." Complainant B later stated that Father Raiche had also taken nude photographs of her when she was five years old. McCarthy informed Complainant B "that I was unaware of whether or not this Cleric was still alive or a member of the Diocese at this time, as I had never heard of him, but I would make inquiries and get back to her." Records indicate that Complainant B had also reported abuse by another priest and was actively seeking help from the Diocese to cover therapy expenses and compensation for her abuse. Complainant B and the Diocese engaged in extensive negotiations over several years until she signed a general release and settled with the Diocese for $50,000 on January 20, 2005.

On April 2, 2002, Complainant A reported to Bishop Robert Mulvee by letter that Father Raiche sexually abused her in 1967. Complainant A provided Bishop Mulvee with copies of two inappropriately affectionate letters that Father Raiche sent her following the alleged abuse. On April 8, 2002, Mulvee responded to Complainant A by letter and stated that the Diocese had not received complaints against Father Raiche when he was alive, but that they had received another allegation (Complainant E's) in 1997. Bishop Mulvee did not inform Complainant A of Complainant D or B's allegations.

On April 11, 2002, Director McCarthy called Complainant A after reviewing her letter to Bishop Mulvee and advised her of the Bishop's policy regarding provision of counseling reimbursement for complainants. On November 4, 2002, McCarthy instructed Complainant A's therapist to contact Diocesan attorney William Murphy for therapy payments.

On January 8, 2020, McCarthy's successor, OEC Director Kevin O'Brien, reported to the Rhode Island State Police via letter that he had recently met with Complainant C regarding her allegation that Father Raiche sexually abused her in 1978. O'Brien also told State Police that the Diocese had previously received three other complaints against Raiche, though he did not provide any details of those complaints. Based on the Diocesan records provided by the Diocese to this Office, there were in fact four, not three, previous complaints against Raiche at the time of O'Brien's letter. The Rhode Island State Police made a record of the allegation and closed the investigation because Raiche was deceased.

In 2024, the State Police attempted to contact Raiche's living, known victims. Detectives could not reach any of the complainants.

In July 2025, Complainant F and her attorney met with OEC Director O'Brien to disclose her abuse by Father Raiche. O'Brien referred the allegation to the State Police and this Office via letter dated July 14, 2025. State Police efforts to contact Complainant F through counsel were unsuccessful.

**Status**

Father Raiche died in 1983. He is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father Paul F. Reynolds

| Born | Ordained | Retired | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Feb. 22, 1939 | Jun. 6, 1965 | Nov. 2007 | Oct. 30, 2017 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1965 – 1969 | Blessed Sacrament Church, Providence |
| 1969 – 1982 | St. Lawrence Church, North Providence |
| 1982 – 1992 | St. Martha Church, East Providence |
| 1992 – 2007 | St. Mary Church, West Warwick |
| Feb. – Nov. 2007 | *Medical leave of absence* |
| Nov. 2007 | *Retired* as Pastor Emeritus, St. Mary Church, West Warwick |

## Summary

In late 2020, the Diocese's Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") learned through its outside counsel that two men sued the Diocese alleging that they were sexually abused as children by Diocesan priest Paul F. Reynolds at St. Lawrence Parish in North Providence around 1977 or 1978. In January 2021, an attorney for the Diocese mailed letters to the complainants' lawyers inviting them to discuss their allegations with the OEC, but it does not appear that the Diocese received any reply. OEC Director Kevin O'Brien notified the Rhode Island State Police and the Rhode Island Office of Attorney General of the allegations in mid-February 2021. Both civil cases were stayed in early 2021, pending the outcome of the Rhode Island Supreme Court's decision in *Houllahan et al. v. Gelineau*, which ultimately upheld a Superior Court judge's dismissal of plaintiffs' claims against hierarchical Diocesan defendants on statute of limitations grounds. The Reynolds complainants' complaints were ultimately dismissed in December 2023 for the same reason. There is no indication that the Diocese took any further steps to investigate the allegations.

As part of this Office's investigation, the State Police contacted the complainants' lawyer in early 2024 to discuss their allegations. In early 2025, both complainants agreed to provide formal statements to State Police detectives.

Complainant A and his attorney met with detectives at State Police headquarters in late January 2025. Complainant A alleged that when he was approximately nine years old and an altar boy at St. Lawrence Parish in North Providence, in the summer of 1974, he was helping Reynolds prepare for a festival at the parish. Complainant A said that he got tired and entered the parish and was joined by Reynolds. He reported that he fell asleep in a pew and awoke to Reynolds's penis touching his lips. Complainant A recalled yelling, running out of the church, and hiding in the woods until dark before returning home. When he arrived home, he

recounted, his mother was on the phone with Reynolds. Reynolds asked to speak with Complainant A and told him not to tell anyone what happened. Complainant A did not disclose the incident to anyone until 2013. He named two other individuals whom he believed were also abused by Reynolds, including Complainants B and C, and a third individual whose name he declined to provide.

Complainant B, joined by his lawyer, also spoke with a State Police detective in January 2025. He said he was abused by Reynolds when he was approximately eight or nine years old, around 1976 or 1977, while serving as an altar boy at St. Lawrence Parish. Complainant B said that Reynolds was close with his family and that Reynolds would constantly physically touch and grab Complainant B, but tried to make it appear playful so it did not arouse the suspicion of Complainant B's family. Complainant B alleged that Reynolds inappropriately touched and groped him numerous times and recounted two particular incidents. On one occasion, Complainant B said, Reynolds forced Complainant B to perform oral sex on him in the church; he added that the incident lasted approximately five to ten minutes and at the end Reynolds told him not to tell anyone. On another occasion, Complainant B alleged Reynolds abused him in an area of the parish where priests and altar servers changed for Mass. Reynolds blocked the exit, he said, pulled Complainant B close to him, pulled down his pants, and tried getting Complainant B to touch his exposed penis. Complainant B was able to escape without doing so, he said. Complainant B told the detectives that he never disclosed the incidents until he learned of the disclosure of his friend, Complainant A; he then disclosed his own abuse to both his sister and Complainant A around 2017.

Complainant C, joined by his lawyer, also spoke with State Police detectives in March 2025. Complainant C said that Reynolds was close with his family and that Reynolds was always "touchy feely." He said he was assaulted by Reynolds when he was approximately 10 years old, around the summer of 1975, while serving as an altar boy at St. Lawrence Parish. Complainant C said that after Mass one day, Reynolds asked him to sit on his lap and began "snuggling" and "tickling" him and then reached down and tried to unzip his pants. Complainant C recalled that he pushed Reynolds' hand away, but Reynolds persisted in pulling his pants and underwear down. Complainant C could not recall whether Reynolds' hands touched his genitals but stated that Reynolds' hands touched his skin. Complainant C reported that he was able to fend off Reynolds from further assaulting him. Complainant C told his parents later that day and his father went to St. Lawrence Parish and informed Reverend James Lamb that Reynolds had molested his son. According to Complainant C, his father told him that there was "an agreement" where Reynolds had to leave the church. When Complainant C was younger, Reynolds reportedly sent him a card admitting that he knew he had a problem and was going to seek counseling and leave the church. Complainant C stated that he ripped up the card and threw it away.

According to Complainant C, he reported the incident to a Diocesan priest when he was in his thirties but denied speaking with anyone from the OEC. Complainant C also disclosed the incident to his first girlfriend and, later in life, to his wife. Complainant C stated that although he and his brother, Complainant A, retained

an attorney, he never filed a civil or criminal complaint against Reynolds or the Diocese, and never received a monetary settlement from the Diocese. Complainant C also disclosed a similar incident involving another visiting priest at St. Lawrence Church, whom he identified as "Father Eugene." State Police later identified "Father Eugene" as Eugene Corbesero, who was a visiting religious order priest at St. Lawrence parish between approximately 1976 and 1978 when Complainant C reported he was abused there.[27] Complainant C told the State Police that he never disclosed this incident to anyone until recently, when he told his brother, Complainant A.

The Diocese did not produce any records documenting any other complaints against Reynolds. It is not clear whether the Diocese presented these complaints to the Diocese's Review Board and whether the Board or the OEC reached any determination regarding their credibility.

**Status**

Father Reynolds retired in November 2007 and died in October 2017. He is not included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

[27] For a summary of the allegations against Father Corbesero, see his summary at Appendix A.

# Father Joseph Rocha

| Born | Ordained | Left Order | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Apr. 16, 1940 | Jun. 9, 1966 | Jan. 29, 1988 | Apr. 13, 2009 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1966 – 1967 | Dominican Monastery, Syracuse, NY |
| 1967 – 1970 | St. Stephen's College, Dover, MA |
| 1970 – 1971 | East Tennessee State Catholic Center, Johnson City, TN |
| 1971 – 1977 | St. Pius V Church, Providence |
| 1977 | Pastoral Counsellor, Diocesan Tribunal |
| 1977 – 1982 | Bishop Hendricken High School, Warwick |
| 1980 – 1983 | Judge, Diocesan Marriage Tribunal |
| 1982 | St. Raymond Church, Providence (residence) |
| 1983 – 1986 | St. Raymond Church, Providence |
| 1986 | *Left Diocese of Providence* |
| 1988 | *Left Dominican Order* |

## Summary

Father Joseph Rocha was a religious order priest of the Dominican Province of St. Joseph assigned to parishes in the Diocese of Providence for nearly 15 years. In 1986, Rocha left the Diocese after unsuccessfully seeking to become incardinated as a Diocesan priest and his order granted him a period of "exclaustration," or period away from the religious community, in 1986. Documents show that Rocha decided not to return to the Dominican Order in 1988. In 2001, Father Rocha pled guilty to sexually assaulting a 21-year-old mentally disabled man at an assisted living facility in North Providence where he was working in 1999. He received a suspended sentence of 10 years in prison with 10 years of probation, along with a no contact order and was ordered to register as a sex offender.

In 2012, a man reported to the Diocese that Father Rocha sexually assaulted him three times during the summer of 1982, when he was eight or nine years old. And in 2019, an attorney contacted the Diocese to report that Rocha sexually assaulted his client when he was a minor, in 1981 or 1982, while Rocha was assigned to Bishop Hendricken High School.

Father Rocha is listed on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy. Of note, the Diocese does not list Rocha's assignment at Bishop Hendricken on his assignment history.

**The Reported Abuse and Diocesan Response**

In a cryptic January 3, 1986, letter to the Provincial of the Dominican Province of St. Joseph, Bishop Louis Gelineau explained that Rocha would be replaced on the Diocesan Marriage Tribunal and suggested that they meet personally about "another aspect" of Rocha's replacement worth discussion. Gelineau noted that Rocha's "health is not good" and that "it may even be symptomatic of deeper problems, the nature of which I have not gone into." He added that "[i]t could be that the priests living with him have noticed something also." The Provincial responded via letter that he would appreciate the opportunity to meet with Bishop Gelineau about Father Rocha when he was next in Providence, though it is unclear if the meeting took place and, if so, what they discussed.

It is also unclear exactly what animated Bishop Gelineau's concerns about Rocha, but complainants would later come forward to report that Father Rocha sexually abused them as children in the early 1980s.

On July 18, 2012, a man ("Complainant A") contacted the Diocese of Providence to report that Father Rocha sexually abused him three times during the summer of 1982, when the complainant was eight or nine years old. During an interview with Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") Director Robert McCarthy later that month, the complainant stated that the first incident occurred on a camping trip to New Hampshire where Father Rocha and the complainant shared a bed, and at some point in the night Rocha pressed his pelvis into the complainant's buttocks while telling him to remain quiet. Complainant A reported that Rocha assaulted the complainant a second time on a separate trip to a summer home in Cape Cod. Complainant A said Rocha woke him up, told him to be quiet and pressed up against the complainant's backside and touched his genitals. Complainant A recounted a third incident at Father Rocha's office at Bishop Hendricken High School in Warwick when the priest placed his penis in the complainant's mouth.

McCarthy forwarded Complainant A's 2012 allegations to the Rhode Island State Police two days after he received them, but the State Police closed the case because Rocha was deceased. In November 2024, the State Police contacted Complainant A, who verified his complaint of abuse by Father Rocha. He explained that he attended therapy for several years and "is not the scared little kid that shut his eyes" any longer.

The attorney for Complainant B contacted McCarthy's successor, OEC Director Kevin O'Brien, in late April 2019 to report his client's allegations that Rocha sexually abused him in 1981 or 1982. O'Brien forwarded the complaint to the State Police on May 13, 2019. The complainant's counsel declined the Diocese's request to interview their client. The State Police advised the complainant's lawyer that a criminal complaint could not be pursued because Rocha was deceased. A Diocesan Review Board agenda dated October 15, 2019, lists this attorney inquiry, but there is no further record of the Board's discussion or determination, if any occurred.

In 2025, State Police efforts to contact Complainant B were unsuccessful. There is no record of the complainant's age or the specific details of his allegations in the files provided by the Diocese to the Rhode Island Office of the Attorney General.

**Status**

Rocha is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy. The Dominican Province of St. Joseph also included Rocha on its list of "Friars with an Allegation that was Established after their Death or Departure from the Province."

# Deacon Edward Sadowski

| Born | Ordained | Suspended | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Aug. 23, 1942 | Jun. 18, 1977 | Jul. 30, 2001 | No |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1977 – 1980 | SS. John & Paul Church, Coventry |
| 1980 – 1984 | St. Joseph Church, Hope Valley |
| 1981 – 1983 | Shady Acres Rest Home, Coventry |
| 1983 – 1985 | *Leave of Absence* |
| 1985 – 1991 | Nursing Home Ministry, Coventry |
| 1991 – 2001 | St. Vincent de Paul Church, Coventry |
| 2001 | *Suspended on leave* |

## Summary

Deacon Edward Sadowski was ordained in 1977 and served in several parishes and other assignments within the Diocese throughout his career. In July 2001, Sadowski was arrested in Massachusetts following a sting operation where he communicated with a person whom he believed to be a 14-year-old girl in an online chatroom; the girl was actually an undercover Massachusetts State Trooper. He pled guilty to attempted statutory rape and multiple child pornography charges, and in January 2002, he was sentenced to two years in prison and five years of probation.

Sadowski was subsequently charged in Rhode Island with fourteen counts of possession of child pornography. In May 2002, he pled *nolo contendere* and was sentenced to five years imprisonment, with two years to serve and three years suspended.

In December 2009, Sadowski was arrested again in Rhode Island for possession of child pornography and for being a fugitive from justice in Virginia. As in 2001, Sadowski attempted to meet an underage girl with whom he communicated on the internet and again the girl turned out to be an undercover officer. In 2010, he was charged with 54 counts of transmission of child pornography and indecent solicitation of a minor in Virginia. He was sentenced to 17 years in prison in Virgina for these crimes. In September 2022, he pled *nolo contendere* to one count of child pornography in Rhode Island. Sadowski was sentenced to five years, all of which were suspended with probation.

Deacon Sadwoski is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

**Arrests and Diocesan Response**

On July 26, 2001, Diocesan attorney William Murphy informed Office of Education and Compliance Director Robert McCarthy that Deacon Sadowski had been arrested in Massachusetts. McCarthy relayed this information to Bishop Robert Mulvee and other Diocesan officials and the following day, McCarthy learned that Sadowski was arrested at a motel where he tried to meet a 14-year-old girl he met online for a "sexual rendezvous." In reality, the 14-year-old girl was an undercover Massachusetts State Trooper who met Sadowski two weeks prior in an online chatroom called "Little Girl Sex Chat." Troopers reportedly found Sadowski at the motel with Viagra, a vibrator, three condoms, and a digital camera, and he reportedly admitted that he intended to have sex with the girl.

On July 30, 2001, Monsignor Jacques Plante, Diocesan Chancellor and Director of the Deacon Program, informed McCarthy that Sadowski had been relieved of his duties as a deacon until his case was adjudicated.

Immediately after Sadowski's Massachusetts arrest in July 2001, the Rhode Island State Police obtained a warrant to search Sadowski's home and seized laptops, hard drives, discs, scanners, videotapes, recorders, and a camera. Ninety-three pornographic images were obtained and viewed by the Director of the Child Protection Program at Hasbro Children's Hospital, who determined that 14 of the images depicted children under the age of 18. In October 2001, the State Police arrested Sadowski and charged him with possession of child pornography.

On January 25, 2002, Deacon Sadowski pled guilty to attempted statutory rape and multiple child pornography charges in Middlesex Superior Court in Massachusetts. He was sentenced to two years in prison and five years' probation after his release, during which he could not be alone with any child under the age of 14.

On May 3, 2002, Sadowski pled *nolo contendere* in the Rhode Island case. He was sentenced to five years in prison, with two years to serve (concurrent with the Massachusetts sentence) and three years suspended.

In December 2002, the Coordinator of Deacons for the Diocese of Providence mailed Sadowski a letter in prison informing him that he was currently on an "indefinite leave of absence," but for the long term, his status would "be determined by the incorporation of the 'Dallas Charter' policies and procedures for priests and deacons within the Diocese." Deacon Sadowski wrote back, maintaining his innocence and telling others to "believe none of what they hear . . . and very little of what they see."

In December 2009, Sadowski was arrested again in Rhode Island and charged with possession of child pornography after attempting to meet an underage girl whom he had met on the internet. This time, the undercover officer was from Stafford County, Virginia, where Sadowski was considered a fugitive from justice. Virginia

authorities, who had traced Sadowski to Rhode Island and contacted the Rhode Island State Police for help in identifying him, charged Sadowski with 54 counts of transmission of child pornography and indecent solicitation of a minor. Sadowski was ultimately sentenced to 17 years in prison in Virgina for these crimes.

After this arrest, the Rhode Island State Police also charged Sadowski with possession of child pornography and one count of indecent solicitation of a child.

In June 2010, the Director of the Diocese's Diaconate Office informed McCarthy that "they wanted to laicize [Sadowski]." McCarthy conferred with the State Police and confirmed Sadowski's criminal history and his pending charges in Rhode Island and Virginia. There is no further information in the records provided by the Diocese to the Rhode Island Office of the Attorney General regarding Sadowski's proposed laicization, though documents indicate that Sadowski was suspended indefinitely.

Deacon Sadowski was released from incarceration in Virginia in March 2022. He returned to Rhode Island where, in September 2022, he pled *nolo contendere* to one count of child pornography in Kent County Superior Court. Sadowski was sentenced to five years, all of which were suspended with probation.

**Status**

Deacon Sadowski is currently a registered sex offender in Rhode Island. He is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father Alfred Santagata

| Born | Ordained | Removed | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Aug. 25, 1914 | Unknown | No | Aug. 18, 1967 |

**Partial Assignment History**

1954 – 1964 St. Mary Church, Cranston

**Summary**

Father Alfred Santagata reportedly sexually abused two children in the 1960s, while serving as a Diocesan priest.

The Diocese first learned of allegations against Father Santagata in March 1995, when Office of Education and Compliance Director Robert McCarthy received a nine-page handwritten letter from a woman ("Complainant A"). In the letter, Complainant A – who by that time was living out of state and practicing as a clinical psychologist – wrote that she grew up in a family that attended a Diocesan parish in Rhode Island. She reported that she was repeatedly sexually abused there over a course of years by the parish priest, Father Santagata, and the parish's music minister. Complainant A alleged that both men would grope her and say explicit things to her. A few days after receiving the letter, McCarthy spoke with Complainant A by phone, and she confirmed her allegations and said she finally had the resolve to tell someone in authority about them. In an internal memorandum following their conversation, McCarthy wrote that both Father Santagata and the parish musician were dead, and therefore "[n]o further action is needed in this case." There is no indication in the records provided by the Diocese to the Rhode Island Office of the Attorney General that McCarthy took any further steps to investigate Complainant A's allegations. Complainant A passed away in 2022.

In March 2024, the Diocese was contacted by an attorney representing an adult female ("Complainant B"), who likewise alleged that she was abused by Father Santagata at the same parish mentioned by Complainant A, between 1961 and 1963, when she was between 12 and 14 years old. The Diocese promptly relayed the allegation to both the Rhode Island State Police and the Office of Attorney General. The State Police spoke with Complainant B's lawyer and invited Complainant B to meet with them to discuss her allegations. As of the time of this Report, Complainant B has not contacted the State Police.

**Status**

Father Santagata died in August 1967. He is not listed on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father Francis Santilli

| Born | Ordained | Suspended | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Aug. 1, 1953 | Jun. 27, 1980 | Feb. 3, 2022 | No |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1979 – 1980 | Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Providence (Deacon) |
| 1980 | St. Joseph Hospital, Providence |
| 1980 – 1984 | St. Charles Borromeo Church, Woonsocket |
| 1984 – 1988 | St. Pius X Church, Westerly |
| 1987 – 1991 | Diocesan Office for Vocations, Providence |
| 1988 – 1991 | St. Vincent House of Formation, Providence |
| 1988 – 1999 | St. Raphael Academy, Pawtucket |
| 1991 – 2004 | St. Cecilia Church, Pawtucket |
| 2004 – 2010 | St. Paul Church, Cranston |
| 2006 | *Sabbatical*, North American College, Rome, Italy |
| 2009 – 2012 | Diocesan Review Board |
| 2011 – 2014 | Council of Priests |
| 2011 – 2016 | College of Consultors |
| 2010 – 2022 | St. Philip Church and School, Smithfield |
| 2022 | *Suspended on leave* |

## Summary

Father Francis Santilli reportedly sexually abused at least three altar boys, ages seven to 12, in the early 1980s at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Providence and St. Charles Borromeo Church in Woonsocket. Santilli reportedly abused the boys by placing them on his lap and tickling them, touching their genitals over and under their clothing, and/or pressing his genitals against them. The Diocese received the first report alleging sexual abuse by Santilli in 2012, a second report in 2014, and a third in 2021. Each time, the Diocese referred the abuse allegations to the Rhode Island State Police who could not pursue criminal charges because the reported conduct occurred outside the applicable statute of limitations.

Despite the multiple allegations, Father Santilli remained in ministry until 2022 when the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office contacted the Diocese as part of this Investigation to inquire about its response to the allegations and Father Santilli's status as an active priest at St. Philip School and Church in Smithfield. Bishop Thomas Tobin subsequently removed Santilli from ministry and the Diocese added him to its List of Credibly Accused Clergy in 2022. The Bishop referred Father Santilli to the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith ("DDF") in 2022. To date, there is no indication that Santilli has been laicized or dismissed from the clerical state.

This Office sent Father Santilli a letter in 2024 offering him an opportunity to interview with Rhode Island State Police and respond to the allegations summarized here. To date, this Office has received no response.

**The Reported Abuse and Diocesan Response**

The first documented complaint of sexual abuse by Santilli to the Diocese was made in 2012. On April 13, 2012, a man ("Complainant A") sent an email to the Diocesan Human Resources Office in which he reported that he and his brother were sexually abused by a priest at St. Charles Borromeo Church in Woonsocket in the early 1980s and that the priest was still in ministry. He also noted that he "live[s] with pain every day of my life, a gross embarrassment that I just can't get rid of." Robert McCarthy, the Director of the Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") at the time, contacted Complainant A by email and phone later that day. Complainant A told McCarthy that the priest in question was Father Santilli. McCarthy also contacted the Office of the Auxiliary Bishop to determine who was assigned to St. Charles Church in Woonsocket from 1979 to 1982 and whether he was still in ministry. An OEC memorandum indicates that McCarthy notified the Vicar General, Monsignor Albert Kenney, about the case on April 15, 2012.

On the morning of April 16, 2012, McCarthy received an email from the Chancery with the priests assigned to St. Charles from 1979 to 1984, including Father Santilli beginning in 1981. McCarthy interviewed Complainant A at the complainant's home that afternoon. The complainant's wife was also reportedly present during the interview, and informed McCarthy that Complainant A told her of the abuse a year earlier. During the interview, the complainant reported that Father Santilli sexually abused him roughly 30 times around 1981, when he was 12 years old and an altar server, while Santilli was assigned to St. Charles Borromeo Church in Woonsocket. Santilli reportedly placed Complainant A on his lap while sitting in the sacristy of the church, tickled him, and pressed his genitals against Complainant A. This reportedly escalated to Santilli grabbing his penis over and under his clothes on approximately 15 occasions. According to Complainant A, Father Santilli would "pay" him a few dollars from the church collection basket. Complainant A also told McCarthy that his brother told him when they were teenagers that he was sexually abused by Santilli as well, but that he was not familiar with the details of his brother's abuse, and that his brother suffered from mental illness and would be unable to interview with McCarthy. Complainant A noted that, according to his mother, his brother had told her that Santilli abused Complainant A, but she did not believe him.

In an April 17, 2012, letter to the Rhode Island State Police, McCarthy memorialized a conversation with the State Police regarding the details of the allegations. He also offered to provide any materials in the file or any other assistance needed. McCarthy gave copies of the interview transcript to Monsignor Kenney, Auxiliary Robert Bishop Evans, and Bishop Thomas Tobin. On April 19, 2012, McCarthy visited St. Charles to examine parish records. According to his memorandum of the search, he was unable to find Complainant A or his brother in the church's baptism or first communion records, though he spoke to an elderly parishioner who recalled that

she knew an individual with the same name as Complainant A's father but was unsure if it was same individual. The same memorandum states that McCarthy drove to Complainant A's residence unannounced to try to meet with him and clarify some issues, but no one answered the doorbell. McCarthy also sent a copy of Complainant A's interview transcript to State Police on April 19, 2012.

On May 9, 2012, Rhode Island State Police closed its investigation of Complainant A's allegations against Santilli due to the applicable statute of limitations and the complainant's failure to respond to State Police's attempts to contact him. In a May 17, 2012, email from McCarthy to Monsignor Kenney, Victim Assistance Coordinator Paula Loud, and a Diocesan attorney, he stated that he planned to send a letter to Complainant A and if he received no response, he would attempt to interview his father and brother. In a letter to the complainant dated May 18, 2012, McCarthy stated that he had made multiple attempts by telephone and email to contact him and to schedule a polygraph examination "in an attempt to help support your allegation . . . " without success. McCarthy noted that Complainant A had informed him in April that he was undergoing serious family issues, however, despite that, he also stated that "because of your lack of cooperation there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove your complaint at this time," and if he did not hear from Complainant A "within a short period of time following this letter, I will be forced to take other measures in an attempt to bring this matter to some final resolution." In June 2012, McCarthy updated the Diocese's Review Board and Bishop Tobin on the status of the case but there was no record of the Board's recommendation or determination in the files produced by the Diocese to this Office.

In March 2014, the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests ("SNAP") held a news conference outside the Diocese's offices demanding Father Santilli's removal from ministry in response to the 2012 letter sent from McCarthy to the State Police, which a television station had published in partially redacted form. In response, the Diocese posted a statement on its website that Complainant A's 2012 allegation concerning Santilli had been "carefully investigated by the Diocesan Review Board. As a result of this thorough review, the allegation was deemed to lack any credibility. Father Santilli is an exemplary pastor and continues to enjoy the total confidence and support of the Diocese of Providence." There is no record in the documents produced to this Office of the Review Board's determination or conclusion as to Complainant A's complaint at the time the Diocese released this statement. In fact, it appears that Santilli was not even interviewed about Complainant A's allegation until the summer of 2014, after a second child sexual abuse complaint against Santilli emerged.

On March 25, 2014, a man named Dennis Laprade[28] called the OEC to report that he was sexually abused "by the priest who was on TV" the day before, whom he identified as Santilli. He alleged the abuse occurred in or about 1980, in the rectory of Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Providence. McCarthy interviewed Laprade on March 28, 2014. According to Laprade, the abuse occurred before Santilli's ordination, while

[28] Dennis Laprade authorized this Office to publish his name.

Santilli was assigned to the church as a deacon and Laprade was serving as an altar boy. On one occasion when Laprade went to see Santilli to complete a Cub Scout badge assignment, Santilli reportedly placed Laprade, who was about 10 years old at the time, on his lap while sitting in the rectory, then tickled him and grabbed his penis over his clothes. Laprade recalled returning to the rectory another time and Santilli wanting him to sit on his lap, but Laprade left and did not remember returning after that. McCarthy told Laprade that the Diocese had a prior complaint about Santilli that "[d]idn't go anywhere because of insufficient evidence." Laprade told McCarthy that there was "no doubt in [his] mind" that the person who assaulted him was Father Santilli.

On April 1, 2014, McCarthy referred the allegation to Rhode Island State Police by letter and advised that "[t]his MO is very similar to what's described by [Complainant A][.]" In another letter addressed to the State Police from the same date, McCarthy explained that "in an effort to substantiate the allegations of Mr. Laprade, who claims that Father Santilli had black hair and a moustache in 1980 during the time of the assaults" at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, "[a] further review of the files confirms that [Santilli] served as a Deaconate at Our Lady of Lourdes from 1979 to 1980" and that a review of the Diocesan Directory from 1981 "shows a photograph of Rev. Francis C. Santilli wearing glasses and a black moustache." McCarthy enclosed the photograph with the letter.

On April 21, 2014, State Police called McCarthy about the Laprade complaint and left him a message informing him that they tried to reach Laprade four or five times without success, that the statute of limitations had expired, and that McCarthy should let them know if he wanted them to speak with Father Santilli. Because the conduct reported by Laprade constituted a second-degree sexual assault, prosecution was foreclosed by the three-year statute of limitations. On April 30, 2014, Rhode Island State Police informed Laprade they could not proceed.

On April 29, 2014, Victim Assistance Coordinator Loud called Laprade and offered to speak with him about providing victim assistance.

On May 14, 2014, McCarthy emailed Complainant A to try and reestablish contact with him. McCarthy told the complainant, "You were going through a host of other issues regarding home and work and dropped the complaint at that time." He received no response. Future attempts by the Diocese to contact Complainant A were likewise unsuccessful.

On the same day, McCarthy also interviewed Laprade's mother. During the interview, she confirmed that her son participated in Cub Scouts and she recalled a period when her son was unwilling to visit the rectory, and that he told her, "I don't like the way [Santilli] touches me," although he did not expressly disclose sexual abuse at that time. She recalled expressing skepticism about the severity of his complaint, and noted that as a parent, she "trusted in priests . . . trusted in policemen, and . . . trusted in nuns; they did no wrong." For years, Laprade had reportedly said that he hated "Father Frank" and that "the truth will come out someday." She also noted that

her son had had some problems with his cell phone and she had had trouble reaching him for a time (possibly explaining why the State Police had difficulty reaching him). Laprade's mother added that when her son saw the Channel 10 program on Santilli, he said "I always told you the truth was gonna come out some day."

McCarthy interviewed Laprade a second time on May 14, 2014, which an OEC document describes as "consistent with his previous version of the story." Laprade reiterated that he had "no doubt in [his] mind" that the abuse happened. During the second interview, McCarthy informed him of Complainant A's allegations, which he described as "similar," although he did not reveal Complainant A's identity. Indeed, there is no indication in the records received by this Office that Laprade and Complainant A knew each other. McCarthy explained that if Santilli denied the allegation, "it's a he said-he said" because "there are no witnesses, this took place 34 years ago, and there's no physical evidence," and so he would ask Santilli to take a polygraph test. Laprade then agreed to take a polygraph examination at McCarthy's suggestion. They agreed on a date, but on the day of the examination, Laprade declined to undergo the test, stating that he had been advised against it and that Laprade, in McCarthy's words, "didn't like the way this was going." McCarthy explained that the purpose of the polygraph was to "build up his credibility to confront Father Santilli." According to McCarthy, Laprade said that the State Police had advised him that they were going to talk to Father Santilli and not to take the polygraph. McCarthy then reportedly called State Police, who told him that they did not tell Laprade that they planned to interview Santilli and did not advise him not to take the polygraph. In a letter to Monsignor Kenney, McCarthy opined that the "point that I am trying to make has to do with the credibility of the complainant in this matter, as to whether or not the statements that he has made have any credibility, and that what he has stated can be relied on."

During the second interview, Laprade also disclosed that he served as an altar boy with two other boys, Scott Ross[29] and Ross's brother, and he wondered if they, too, had been abused. There is no record that McCarthy attempted to contact these individuals in 2014 as part of his investigation, informed the State Police of Laprade's disclosure of possible additional victims, or sent a transcript of the second interview to law enforcement.

An OEC memorandum states that McCarthy met with Bishop Tobin and the Review Board on May 20, 2014, and that they "discussed the case in detail." There is no record of the substance of these discussions in the files produced by the Diocese to this Office.

On May 29, 2014, Laprade emailed the OEC saying that he still wanted to "go forward," but he was concerned "when [McCarthy] said that I need to take the lie detector test to make me credible. I am not seeking anything but to have justice done. I understand it will probably be Canon Law and I need to trust everyone helping

[29] Scott Ross authorized this Office to publish his name.

me and they are not just protecting the the [sic] accused." He advised OEC that he would be in touch the following week. McCarthy responded that he would be out of state until June 9, 2014, and that "[i]n building a case that is 34 years old, without any witnesses and/or physical evidence, you use any legal and moral means available to find the truth . . . . I am an unbiased investigator who [does] not favor either party. I'm going to let the chips fall where they may."

In a letter to McCarthy dated June 2, 2014, the Rhode Island State Police informed him that "[b]ecause the statute of limitations has expired, the Rhode Island State Police is unable to pursue [Laprade's] case criminally and will therefore close this investigation." An OEC memorandum states that on the same date, McCarthy met with Dr. Michael Hansen, Paula Loud, and a Diocesan attorney, to discuss the allegations against Santilli, but there is no record of the details of this meeting in the files produced to this Office.

On June 9, 2014, McCarthy emailed Laprade and said he would like to speak with him about his case. Laprade responded via email that he would call McCarthy later that week, but it appears that he did not.

Director McCarthy interviewed Father Santilli on June 16, 2014. Santilli informed McCarthy during the interview that he knew Complainant A, his brother, and Laprade, but denied tickling or any other inappropriate contact with any of them. Regarding Laprade's allegation, the following colloquy occurred during the interview:

McCarthy: I asked [Laprade] if this could have been accidental while tickling, touch your groin? He stated, "Absolutely deliberate." He said, "As a matter of fact, it hurt."

In his transcript, on page 9 of it, he alleges that Father Santilli stated that he would like to tickle him, asked him if he was ticklish and that tickling went further where his hands moved to his private area. You're saying it never took place.

It's not audible, but you're shaking your head no. So for the record, you're saying that you deny that.

Santilli: No.

McCarthy: Didn't happen.

Santilli: He's ten?

McCarthy: He was ten.

Santilli: Ten, no.

Later in the interview, he denied touching Laprade at all. McCarthy and Santilli also discussed a meeting a few weeks prior between Santilli, Bishop Tobin, and Monsignor Kenney, regarding the allegations. There is no record of this meeting in the documents produced to this Office. According to an OEC memorandum, the interview lasted approximately three hours, of which only one hour and twenty minutes was recorded and transcribed.

An OEC memorandum indicates that on July 1, 2014, the Diocesan Review Board "unanimously agreed that none of the complaints have been sustained, and there was no moral certitude to establish guilt on Father Santilli at this time." Records show that the Diocese attested to Santilli's suitability for public ministry in letters to the Diocese of Norwich several times between 2013 and 2017, and in 2019 and 2020.

After the Diocese failed to include Father Santilli on its List of Credibly Accused Clergy in 2019, Laprade immediately emailed the Diocese. He wrote, "You made me feel cheap and small . . . . You still have the priest I accused running a parish with a school, which makes me sick. This is not a true and full list." According to Laprade, he only discovered that the Review Board determined his allegation was unsubstantiated after the Diocese made public statements about his complaint in 2022.

In December 2021, a woman reported to Dr. Michael Hansen, Director of the Office of Outreach and Prevention for the Diocese, that Father Santilli sexually abused her two brothers in the early 1980s. She also reported the abuse to this Office and the Rhode Island State Police. These brothers were Scott and David Ross, the individuals Laprade had mentioned as possible victims in his 2014 interview with OEC. On February 1, 2022, Scott Ross completed a telephone interview with the State Police and recounted the details of his and his brother's alleged abuse.

Ross told the State Police that Santilli sexually abused him and his brother in 1980 at Our Lady of Lourdes Church. Ross was between the ages of seven and nine at the time of the reported abuse. According to Ross, the incidents occurred in the sacristy and the rectory basement, as well as on a stairwell in the church. He told the State Police that Santilli placed him on his lap, kissed his neck, rubbed his genitals over and under his clothing, made him touch Santilli's penis over his clothing, and made grinding motions into Ross's buttocks with his penis while Ross was on his lap. Ross reported he was assaulted by Santilli at least 10 times, and that Santilli told him that he would get in trouble if he told anyone and that his parents would not believe him. Ross also stated that his older brother David disclosed to him that Santilli abused him in a similar manner while serving as an altar boy at Our Lady of Lourdes. David committed suicide in 1997. Although Ross knew Laprade, there is no indication in the materials provided by the Diocese to this Office that he knew Complainant A.

On February 3, 2022, the Diocese released a statement explaining that Bishop Tobin placed Father Santilli on administrative leave and accepted Santilli's resignation as pastor of Saint Philip Church. Also on that day, Bishop Tobin added Santilli to the

Priest Special Assignment Fund, authorizing the Diocese to pay Santilli the salary equivalent of a retired priest.

Ross spoke with McCarthy's successor, OEC Director Kevin O'Brien, on February 22, 2022. O'Brien told Ross that the Diocese had received other allegations about Santilli and referred to Ross's allegation as Santilli's "third strike, so to speak." But O'Brien did not reveal that the Diocese had previously been made aware that Santilli may have sexually abused Ross and his brother during Laprade's second interview nearly a decade earlier, in 2014.

During the interview, while Ross described sexual abuse by both Father Santilli and another church employee when he was approximately 12 years old, O'Brien asked him, "[a]nd at any point did you ever tell them, 'Hey, knock it off' or indicate to them that they stop it?" Ross indicated that he felt panic and fear but "didn't have the vocabulary or the range of emotional experience to draw a boundary and say, '[h]ey, get the hell off me. You can't do this, this is wrong.'" O'Brien told Ross that unfortunately, based on his age, that is very common. Later in the interview, O'Brien asked the same question a different way – this time, he asked whether Ross ever had a "big moment where there was a big scene and you said, '[h]ey, knock it off' and stormed out" or whether Ross "just kind of slowly but surely, you know . . . got away." Ross responded that he did not understand why O'Brien would ask him that question and repeated that, at that age, "[y]ou have an inherent respect for authority, especially when this is an authority figure that you're supposed to trust and supposed to look up to. And when that sense of trust is violated and desecrated, in the moment, you're upside down." Like Laprade, Ross was asked to take a polygraph examination; Ross similarly refused. At the end of the interview, Director O'Brien offered Ross the opportunity to speak with Bishop Tobin, but Ross declined. Ross reportedly never heard from the Diocese again after his interview.

Director O'Brien offered Father Santilli the opportunity to be interviewed about the allegations and "provide [his] version of events," but Santilli declined twice via email, citing his attorney's advice.

On March 3, 2022, the Review Board determined that Ross's allegation against Santilli was credible. On May 16, 2022, Director O'Brien submitted a case report regarding Scott Ross's allegation to Bishop Tobin, in which he noted that "[h]e was able to provide detailed information regarding his abuse in a matter fact manner without displaying any need to embellish."

Bishop Tobin referred Santilli to the DDF on July 25, 2022. Notably, the Diocese did not include Santilli's membership on the Diocesan Review Board (from 2009 to 2012), where he counseled the Bishop regarding allegations of child sexual abuse, in its referral to the DDF, but it did include his designation as an "appointed member" of other Diocesan advisory groups, including the Council of Priests. Bishop Tobin requested that Santilli be penalized with a "life of prayer and penance."

Ross sued Bishops Gelineau and Tobin, Our Lady of Lourdes Church, and the Roman Catholic Bishop corporation in 2022. The case was dismissed after the Rhode Island Supreme Court's 2023 decision in *Houllahan, et al. v. Gelineau, et al.*, 296 A.3d 710 (R.I. 2023), discussed in Chapter 3 of this Report.

In 2024, as part of this Office's Investigation, members of this Office met separately with Laprade and Ross, who confirmed their earlier reports of abuse by Santilli and described the pain and anguish that Santilli's actions, and the actions of the Diocese, caused them and their families. Laprade described how "[t]hey shot me right down. I've been part of the church all my life . . .. [I felt] awful, devastated, I couldn't believe [the] Catholic Church did this to me . . .. I was devastated sitting on this for so many years and deemed not credible[.]" State Police attempted to contact Complainant A to confirm his previously reported allegations in 2024 and 2025, but they were not able to speak with him.

This Office also sent a letter to Father Santilli in 2024 offering him an opportunity to respond to these allegations, but we have received no response as of the date of this Report.

**Status**

Father Santilli remains suspended from ministry, and to this Office's knowledge, has not been laicized as of the date of this Report. The Diocese added him to its List of Credibly Accused Clergy in 2022.

# Father Peter Scagnelli

| Born | Ordained | Suspended | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jan. 13, 1949 | Aug. 6, 1976 | Jul. 21, 1994 | Jul. 12, 2017 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1975 – 1976 | St. John the Evangelist Church, North Smithfield |
| 1976 – 1977 | St. Ann Church, Providence |
| 1977 – 1981 | St. Timothy Church, Warwick |
| 1981 – 1987 | Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church, Bristol |
| 1981 – 1985 | Roger Williams University, Bristol |
| 1985 – 1986 | East Bay Regional CYO Center, East Providence |
| 1986 – 1987 | St. Mary of the Bay Church, Warren |
| 1987 – 1988 | Cathedral of SS. Peter & Paul, Providence |
| 1988 – 1991 | Office of Worship and Liturgy, Providence |
| 1988 – 1991 | Sacred Heart Church, Woonsocket |
| 1988 | Holy Trinity Church, Central Falls |
| 1988 | St. Patrick Church, Providence |
| 1991 | St. Anthony Church, Woonsocket |
| 1991 – 1994 | *Sabbatical,* St. Anselm Abbey, Manchester, NH |
| 1994 | *Suspended on Leave* |

## Summary

Father Peter Scagnelli was accused of sexually abusing six boys and two young men from 1977 to 1994. Scagnelli was also accused of grooming a teenage boy in 2000. The alleged abuse occurred at St. Timothy Parish in Warwick, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in Bristol, Sacred Heart Parish in Woonsocket, and St. Anselm Abbey in Manchester, New Hampshire. The Diocese received the first complaint of abuse against Father Scagnelli in 1993, and the following year, 1994, Scagnelli was placed on indefinite leave, his faculties were suspended, and he never returned to full-time ministry. Also in 1994, Scagnelli received an evaluation at The Institute of Living in Hartford, Connecticut, though there is no record of the outcome of the evaluation in the records produced to this Office.

Between 2000 and 2004, the Diocese received multiple notifications that Father Scagnelli was saying Mass in Massachusetts, despite his suspension. After several warnings, the Diocese reported the allegations against Scagnelli to the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith ("CDF"). The CDF requested additional documentation in 2005. The Diocese apparently did not supply additional documentation until 2013, whereupon the CDF recommended that Scagnelli request voluntary laicization. Instead, Scagnelli's canonical advisor requested that Scagnelli

remain on administrative leave because he was terminally ill. Bishop Tobin agreed to pause the laicization in June 2016, writing to a Diocesan official that "God will resolve it for us!" Scagnelli died in July 2017.

In total, the Diocese received nine complaints of sexual misconduct involving children and young adults against Scagnelli: seven while Scagnelli was still living, and two after he died. Of the seven complaints the Diocese received while Scagnelli was alive, it appears the Diocese referred only two to law enforcement. Based on our review of the records produced by the Diocese, it appears that one of those complaints may have been prosecutable had it been referred to law enforcement, as the allegations were not time-barred.

Father Scagnelli died in 2017. The Diocese included him on its 2019 List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

**The Reported Abuse**

Father Scagnelli reportedly sexually abused three minors from 1977 to 1981 while assigned to St. Timothy Parish in Warwick. Complainant A reported to the Diocese in 1993 that Scagnelli sexually assaulted him approximately four times in the St. Timothy Rectory when he was 16 or 17 years old, by attempting to kiss him on the mouth and place his hands down the boy's pants.

Complainant B reported to the State Police in 1993 that Scagnelli molested him on three separate occasions in 1978 and 1979, when he was an altar boy at St. Timothy and in the 7th and 8th grades. In the first reported instance, Scagnelli instructed Complainant B to sleep in his bed in the St. Timothy Rectory, where Scagnelli forced the boy to perform oral sex on him. The second time, according to Complainant B, Scagnelli brought Complainant B to Our Lady of Mount Carmel Rectory in Bristol, instructed him to sleep in his bed again, and forced him to masturbate Scagnelli. Complainant B reported that the third time Scagnelli molested him was during a Catholic Youth Organization trip where Scagnelli sat next to him on a bus ride and rubbed the complainant's penis on the outside of his pants.

Scagnelli reportedly sexually abused a third boy ("Complainant C") from 1979 to 1982. Complainant C reported the abuse to the Diocese in December 2020 through his attorney, who wrote that Scagnelli physically, sexually, and emotionally abused his client at St. Timothy Church in Warwick between 1979 and 1982 but did not provide further details. OEC Director O'Brien replied to Complainant C's attorney in January 2021, offering to schedule an interview with the complainant. The next month, Director O'Brien reported the complaint to the Rhode Island State Police after he did not hear back from Complainant C's lawyer.

Scagnelli reportedly sexually abused two teenage boys and a young man from 1981 to 1987 while he was assigned to Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in Bristol. Complainant D reported that Scagnelli abused him over a span of five to six years, beginning he was 15 years old. Complainant D reported that the sexual abuse began

when Scagnelli invited him upstairs to the rectory, offered him beer, and began touching him inappropriately. Scagnelli reportedly masturbated Complainant D, slept with him, and raped him. This period overlapped with the timing of the arrest of Father William O'Connell, who had sexually abused children at another parish in Bristol. Following O'Connell's arrest, the pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel reportedly instructed Scagnelli not to bring boys upstairs in the rectory. Complainant D stated that he heard this admonition while he was hiding—under a desk in Scagnelli's office. He reportedly waited until the pastor was gone before going upstairs. Complainant D reported his abuse to the Diocese in 1995.

Complainant E reported that Scagnelli met him in the early 1980s at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, where Complainant E was serving as an altar boy. Complainant E reported that Scagnelli raped him approximately 15 times when he was 14 years old. Complainant E also reported that Scagnelli drugged him in order to rape him. Complainant E reported his abuse to the Diocese in 2020.

Complainant F reported that Scagnelli sexually abused him when he was 23 years old, in the early 1980s. The young man met Scagnelli while living in a Benedictine community in Portsmouth. Complainant F reported that, on one occasion, Scagnelli invited him to sleep at the Our Lady of Mount Carmel rectory. During the night, Scagnelli came to his bed and fondled his genitals without his consent. Complainant F reported the incident to the Diocese in 2002.

Complainant G was 11 years old when Scagnelli reportedly began abusing him in 1988. Scagnelli was assigned to Sacred Heart Parish in Woonsocket at the time. According to Complainant G, Scagnelli invited him to sleep in the rectory because of domestic violence at the boy's home. Scagnelli instructed him to sleep in his bed and brushed up against Complainant G's genitals at night; on one occasion Scagnelli masturbated him. Complainant G said the abuse continued over a period of three years. Complainant G reported the abuse to the Diocese in 2005.

Complainant H reported that he met Scagnelli while living and studying at St. Anselm College in Goffstown, New Hampshire in 1994 and 1995. Complainant H, who was 24 years old at the time, considered becoming a monk. Complainant H reported that after going to a bar with Scagnelli, they returned to sleep at Scagnelli's parents' home in Framingham, Massachusetts, where Scagnelli was also residing at the time. Complainant H said he woke up to Scagnelli performing oral sex on him and sodomizing him without his consent. Complainant H reported the assaults to the Diocese in 2007.

In December 2000, a faculty member at St. Gregory's Academy, a boarding school in Pennsylvania run by the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter, reported to the Diocese that Scagnelli had developed an inappropriate relationship with a 17-year-old student. The faculty member stated that Scagnelli communicated with the student on the internet and had recently paid for the boy's travel to Scagnelli's house for Thanksgiving. During the trip, Scagnelli reportedly purchased over $1000 worth of gifts for the boy, including a silver pocket watch. Upon returning to the school, the

boy had informed the faculty member that he felt uncomfortable with Scagnelli, but he did not report any sexual contact.

**Diocesan Response**

On April 16, 1993, Bishop Louis Gelineau received a letter from Complainant A alleging that Scagnelli had sexually abused him in the late 1970s at St. Timothy Parish in Warwick. Complainant A asked the Diocese for help paying for therapy. In a note dated August 9, 1993, Gelineau remarked that the complainant appeared "sincere and honest. Consideration could be given to help him with counseling, but again with clear limits placed." There is no evidence that the Diocese reported the complaint to law enforcement at the time. There are no records that Complainant A was given counseling assistance at the time, though Bishop Gelineau eventually approved payment to cover therapy expenses in 1997.

On December 7, 1993, Complainant B reported to the Rhode Island State Police that Scagnelli had sexually abused him in the late 1970s at St. Timothy Parish in Warwick. In addition to the alleged sexual abuse, Complainant B reported that Scagnelli regularly invited teenage boys to sleep at the rectory and gave them alcohol. Complainant B also reported seeing Scagnelli wrestle with altar boys and touch their penises before Mass in the sanctuary area. A Rhode Island State Police detective informed Complainant B that he would report the allegations to the Attorney General.

On January 7, 1994, Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") Director Robert McCarthy informed Bishop Gelineau that the Rhode Island State Police had informed him they were investigating Complainant B's allegations. On January 13, McCarthy met with a State Police detective who informed him that, "it was his opinion and that of the Attorney General's Office that there was more than enough to arrest and convict Fr. Scagnelli in this case, but because of the statute of limitations, no further activity from either office was contemplated at this time." McCarthy informed the detective that there was another complaint against Scagnelli, but he did not provide the detective with Complainant A's information or with the details of that complaint. In a memorandum of the meeting provided to Gelineau, McCarthy noted that, "[w]e are currently waiting for several items in the [Complainant A] matter to resolve some outstanding questions in that case." McCarthy also noted that Scagnelli was living at St. Anselm Abbey in Manchester, New Hampshire, where he was planning to become a Benedictine Monk and teach at St. Anselm College. "If this is in fact so," McCarthy wrote, "he places himself and the college in great jeopardy should these two separate and unrelated allegations be true."

On January 31, 1994, Father Normand Godin wrote to The Institute of Living in Hartford, Connecticut to request that Scagnelli receive a psychiatric evaluation. Records indicate that Scagnelli received an evaluation there in February 1994, but the files produced by the Diocese to this Office did not include a report of said evaluation. According to Complainant H, Scagnelli told him about the evaluation even though he stated he was not supposed to tell anyone about it, and claimed that he underwent a battery of tests and "they found him normal."

On June 10, 1994, Director McCarthy informed the Rhode Island State Police that the Diocese was awaiting the conclusion of the police investigation before beginning an internal investigation "so as not to interfere with [the] criminal investigation," and that, "Fr. Scagnelli has returned to this Diocese and is currently on administrative leave until this matter is resolved." A State Police detective then informed McCarthy that the case was suspended in January 1994 due to the applicable statute of limitations.

On July 18, 1994, Director McCarthy informed Scagnelli that he was investigating two allegations against him. On July 21, 1994, McCarthy wrote in a memorandum that Chancellor Robert Evans had called Scagnelli that month to inform him that Bishop Gelineau instructed Scagnelli not to celebrate Mass publicly and to refrain from administering the Sacraments, but that he would still receive his monthly compensation. The Diocese did not produce any record of Scagnelli's suspension other than McCarthy's memorandum. On July 25, 1994, McCarthy met with Scagnelli at the Emerald Square Mall in North Attleboro and advised him of the allegations against him. Scagnelli denied any inappropriate behavior, though he admitted that "in the past, he has surrounded himself with children and had in fact brought several into the rectory on various occasions. He stated that he now knows, looking back in perspective, it was not a wise thing to do, but he stated that he has never done an immoral sexual act with them." McCarthy also consulted Monsignor George Frappier, who informed McCarthy that he had counseled Scagnelli "on numerous occasions... regarding his conduct with young teenagers." The Diocese did not provide any records shedding light on what prompted Monsignor Frappier to counsel Scagnelli about his conduct and when that counseling took place.

On January 26, 1995, Complainant D wrote to Bishop Gelineau to report that Scagnelli sexually abused him for a period of five or six years beginning when he was 15 years old. In a February 20, 1995, memorandum, McCarthy stated that, "this may be the allegation that we need to follow up on." McCarthy interviewed Complainant D on February 22, 1995. During the interview, Complainant D described the abuse and identified several other boys who spent time with Scagnelli in their teenage years. On March 10, 1995, McCarthy informed Gelineau that he had spoken to the Rhode Island State Police about Complainant D's allegations and that, pursuant to their conversation, McCarthy would ask Complainant D if he wished to speak with State Police.

On April 6, 1995, Complainant D wrote McCarthy about two individuals who knew Scagnelli and might be aware of his sexual misconduct. On April 25, 1995, McCarthy informed Gelineau that he would question Scagnelli regarding the three allegations. "Should Fr. Scagnelli deny [Complainant D's] allegations and those of the others," McCarthy wrote, "I then plan to advise him that I will interview a list of other possible individuals supplied by [Complainant D] in this matter. I will explain to him that it is in his best interest to minimize the inquiries of others so as to limit the extent of the damage."

McCarthy met with Scagnelli on May 11, 1995. Scagnelli denied Complainant D's allegations, though he admitted that Complainant D had slept over at Our Lady of Mount Carmel's rectory and accompanied him on a trip to a seminary in West Springfield, Pennsylvania. During the meeting, Scagnelli agreed to a polygraph evaluation and an examination at Johns Hopkins Medical Center, though he later canceled both.

On June 28, 1995, Complainant D submitted to a polygraph examination in Providence. The polygrapher determined that Complainant D "has not told the entire truth." On July 20, 1995, Complainant D met with McCarthy to discuss the results of the polygraph examination and schedule a second examination, though a second examination did not take place.

On September 20, 1995, McCarthy met with a Rhode Island State Police detective to discuss Complainant B's allegations. In a memorandum of the meeting, McCarthy noted that all three of the allegations were similar, though the complainants did not know each other.

Records show that on November 1, 1995, a Diocesan advisory group known as the Consistory found Complainant A's, B's, and D's allegations credible. The members agreed that Scagnelli should be required to undergo an evaluation at Johns Hopkins Medical Center, or a similar institution, as soon as possible. They also recommended that Scagnelli remain on administrative leave until the matters were resolved, feeling, as McCarthy recorded, "that Fr. Scagnelli's position on these matters was suspect at best."

On January 4, 1996, Monsignor Robert Evans responded to an inquiry from the Archdiocese of Boston asking whether Scagnelli could be granted faculties in Boston. "I communicated . . .," Evans recorded in a memorandum, "that due to present circumstances the Bishop is unable to complete the questionnaire."

McCarthy interviewed Complainant B on February 20, 1996. During the interview, Complainant B agreed to take a polygraph examination and provide the names of individuals who could corroborate his account. On March 27, 1996, McCarthy received the polygraph results which indicated that Complainant B "has not told the entire truth." On March 29, 1996, McCarthy met with a childhood acquaintance of Complainant B and a friend of Scagnelli who informed McCarthy that he had no knowledge of any assaults committed by Scagnelli, though he had slept at the rectory more than two dozen times. On May 15, 1996, McCarthy reviewed the polygraph examinations of Complainant D and Complainant B with the polygrapher and with former Massachusetts State Police Staff Sergeant Jack Nasuti who was also a trained polygrapher. Both agreed that the complainants should complete another polygraph examination. Complainant B took a second polygraph examination on August 8, 1996, with a different examiner, and that polygrapher concluded that Complainant B had been truthful.

In November 2024, the State Police contacted Complainant B, who told the detective that he thinks about his abuse every day and sees a therapist regularly.

McCarthy interviewed Complainant A on August 20, 1996. During the interview, Complainant A provided McCarthy with the details of the abuse and identified a childhood friend who was also reportedly abused by Scagnelli. On October 3, 1996, Complainant A took a polygraph at the OEC; both polygraphers present concluded that Complainant A was truthful. On the same day, Complainant A informed McCarthy that his previously identified childhood friend was willing to report more abuse, and that his friend knew of three or four more individuals who were assaulted by Scagnelli. McCarthy interviewed Complainant A's parents on October 16, 1996. On October 22, 1996, Director of the Counseling Center of La Salette contacted Bishop Gelineau at Complainant A's request to request that the Diocese pay for Complainant A's counseling. On November 6, 1996, Complainant A's mother informed McCarthy that Complainant A's friend did not want to move forward with the complaint. Gelineau approved counseling support for Complainant A on January 14, 1997. It does not appear that any of the information provided by Complainant A was reported to law enforcement at the time.

Father George Frappier recorded in a memorandum dated January 15, 1997, that he had spoken with a housekeeper at St. Anthony Rectory who had informed him, unsolicited, that Scagnelli had "young/adolescent boys staying overnight" in the rectory. The housekeeper recounted seeing one boy come downstairs shirtless in the morning and stated that Scagnelli had invited him to stay over.

On December 11, 2000, Father Robert Plante informed Moderator of the Curia Paul Theroux that he had spoken to a faculty member at St. Gregory Academy, a Catholic boarding school in Pennsylvania. The faculty member told Plante that Scagnelli had a relationship with a student whom Scagnelli met over the internet. The faculty member felt the relationship with the 17-year-old student was suspicious. "[The faculty member] asked what 'on leave' means in the case of a priest," Plante wrote. "I told him that it would differ from case to case. I told him that to my knowledge, Scagnelli's leave of absence is voluntary." There is no record indicating that Plante ever reported the complaint to McCarthy. The faculty member further reported that Scagnelli had celebrated Mass for a convent of Sisters in Massachusetts and that the student had accompanied him as an altar server. On March 27, 2002, Theroux warned Scagnelli by letter not to celebrate Mass publicly but did not mention the faculty member's concerns about Scagnelli's associations with the student. The Diocese did not produce any records to this Office indicating that the Diocese shared any information regarding the sexual abuse allegations concerning Scagnelli with the Pennsylvania boarding school.

On May 28, 2002, Complainant F met with Theroux to report that Scagnelli had attempted to grope him in the early 1980s at Our Lady of Mount Carmel's rectory. McCarthy interviewed Complainant F on June 4, 2002. There is no record indicating that he reported Complainant F's complaint to law enforcement. In November 2024,

the State Police contacted Complainant F who confirmed his earlier complaint of abuse by Scagnelli.

On June 2, 2003, Bishop Robert McManus wrote to Scagnelli to inform him that he was aware that he was celebrating Mass for the Sisters of St. Joseph in Boston and that he was not allowed to perform any public ministry whatsoever. "This ministerial restriction is also in accord with the American Bishops' Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People," McManus wrote.

In March 2004, a man notified Father John Darcy by email that Scagnelli had celebrated a funeral Mass in Massachusetts. On March 31, 2004, McCarthy informed Vicar for Religious Sister Paula Kelleher of the Diocese of Worcester that Scagnelli had no faculties and was not in good standing with the Diocese of Providence. "The Office of Education and Compliance has five outstanding complaints filed against Father Scagnelli for sexual misconduct with juveniles," McCarthy wrote. Darcy admonished Scagnelli in an April 5, 2004, letter, warning him not to celebrate Mass in Massachusetts. Darcy noted the previous two warnings, and stated his, "fraternal hope that your exercise of public ministry in any fashion does not precipitate a canonical crisis for all of us."

On November 9, 2004, Bishop Robert Mulvee submitted an *acta* and *votum* against Scagnelli to the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith ("CDF"). The *acta* listed the allegations of Complainants A, B, D and F. Mulvee stated in the *votum* that Scagnelli had been on administrative leave with his faculties suspended since 1994 but had been celebrating Masses in Massachusetts. Bishop Mulvee also wrote that he was "convinced in conscience that Father Peter J. Scagnelli did sexually abuse minors during the years following his ordination in 1976." Mulvee requested that the CDF dismiss Scagnelli from the clerical state *ex officio*, "given our present inability to monitor his activities in any way," and "in order to avoid the possibility of further scandal and damage to the local Church." On June 13, 2005, Angelo Amato, Secretary of the CDF, replied to Bishop Thomas Tobin and requested the complete *acta* of the case, including original documents.

On November 29, 2005, Theroux met with Complainant F, who stated that he saw Scagnelli perform a Mass "last winter" at St. Cecilia Church in Ashland, Massachusetts. Theroux then called the Archdiocese of Boston to notify them that Scagnelli did not have faculties for public ministry. Theroux sent another warning to Scagnelli not to practice public ministry.

On February 27, 2006, Diocesan Attorney William Murphy informed Theroux of new allegations against Scagnelli brought by Complainant G. Murphy informed Theroux that, "[Complainant G] made these remarks at the arbitration of his claim before a retired judge of the Massachusetts District Court, on January 25, 2005." Records show that Complainant G was awarded $25,000 following the arbitration. There is no record indicating that Diocesan officials reported this complaint to law enforcement. If they had, prosecution might have been possible.

On July 16, 2007, McCarthy informed Theroux that he had spoken with an attorney representing Complainant H regarding Complainant H's allegations that Scagnelli sexually assaulted him in 1994 and 1995. McCarthy interviewed Complainant H on July 23, 2007. During the interview, Complainant H identified a man who used to drink and watch pornography with Scagnelli often. This individual was previously identified by Complainant B, and McCarthy had previously interviewed this person nearly a decade earlier (in 1996) regarding Scagnelli's conduct. McCarthy reported Complainant H's allegations to the Middlesex District Attorney on July 24, 2007.

On August 29, 2013, a CDF official wrote the Diocese asking for a response to the 2005 request for documentation of the allegations against Scagnelli. On February 28, 2014, the Diocese submitted another *acta* and *votum* to the CDF. In the *votum*, Bishop Tobin reiterated Bishop Mulvee's 2004 request for *ex officio* dismissal from the clerical state. The Diocese also supplied an investigative file that did not contain any information about the two allegations received since 2004. Likewise, the 2014 *acta* did not contain any additional information about the four allegations reported to the CDF in 2004. On November 6, 2014, Reverend Daniel Reilly informed Scagnelli that the CDF had suggested that Scagnelli request voluntary laicization. After awaiting a reply from Scagnelli for nearly a year, Bishop Tobin instructed the CDF to go forward with *ex officio* laicization. On June 10, 2016, Scagnelli's canonical advisor informed Tobin by letter that Scagnelli was requesting "that the status quo remain," because Scagnelli was suffering from a potentially terminal medical condition. Tobin delivered the letter to Reilly with a note that read, "I presume that Scagnelli's case will be on hold. God will resolve it for us!" Reilly informed Scagnelli's advisor by email on June 20, 2016, that, "[d]ue to the serious medical condition of Father Scagnelli as described in your letter, Bishop Tobin will not seek further canonical action regarding Father's status at this time."

Scagnelli died on July 12, 2017. After his death, the OEC received two other complaints against him. On January 30, 2020, McCarthy's successor, Director of Compliance Kevin O'Brien, informed the Rhode Island State Police that Complainant E had reported to him that Scagnelli had abused him in 1984 and 1985 at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish in Bristol. State Police contacted the complainant in 2021; the complainant declined to provide a statement and asked to remain anonymous.

On December 15, 2020, Complainant C's attorney wrote a letter to Bishop Thomas Tobin stating that Scagnelli physically, sexually, and emotionally abused his client at St. Timothy Church in Warwick between 1979 and 1982. The attorney sought information about the Diocese's claims procedure and available therapy or counseling programs for his client. Director O'Brien replied by email on January 5, 2021, and offered to schedule an interview with the complainant. About a month later, after receiving no response from Complainant C's counsel, O'Brien reported the complaint to the Rhode Island State Police. However, in his February 3, 2021, letter to State Police, O'Brien mistakenly listed Complainant C's abuser as Father Barry Meehan; a week later, O'Brien clarified in another letter to the State Police that he had misidentified the accused priest, and that Complainant C's allegations were against Father

Scagnelli. O'Brien then informed the State Police that there were seven additional allegations of child sexual abuse against Scagnelli on file at the Office of Compliance.

The Rhode Island Attorney General's Office received no further records regarding Complainant C's complaint until December 2025, after making a specific request for records. After several months of communicating with Complainant C's counsel, Director O'Brien scheduled a videoconference interview with Complainant C (who lived out of state). On June 22, 2021, O'Brien interviewed Complainant C in the presence of his counsel. Complainant C stated that he first met Father Scagnelli at St. Timothy where he asked if Complainant C would serve as an altar boy. According to Complainant C, the first incident of abuse occurred around 1979 or 1980 when Father Scagnelli took Complainant C and another altar boy to Boston Common to see Pope John Paul II with several other priests. That evening, Scagnelli spilled wine on Complainant C's lap and accompanied him into the bathroom, where Scagnelli removed his pants and offered them to Complainant C, who refused, noting that he had his own pants with him in his suitcase. Scagnelli insisted on wiping Complainant C's pants, which reportedly made Complainant C uncomfortable. Complainant C stated that the alleged abuse escalated over time to include multiple incidents of fondling and three incidents where Scagnelli masturbated himself in front of Complainant C: twice at St. Timothy's rectory in Warwick, and once at Scagnelli's childhood home in Framingham, Massachusetts. Complainant C recalled one incident where Scagnelli exposed himself beneath his robe and said, "It's Wednesday. I don't have to wear underwear on Wednesday, so when you see me on Wednesday, smile."

During the final incident of alleged abuse, Complainant C was asleep in bed and awoke to find Scagnelli with his hand on Complainant C's penis. Complainant C told O'Brien that he immediately moved away and asked Scagnelli, "What are you doing?" to which Scagnelli replied he was saying a prayer, and quickly left the room, leaving a prayer note behind. Complainant C provided O'Brien with the name of a friend to whom he disclosed this incident to the day after it occurred and stated that he and his friend confronted Scagnelli with the prayer note in the parking lot of a Newport Creamery that same day. During the confrontation, Scagnelli was injured, and later that day, when his friend's father confronted the boys about this incident, Complainant C disclosed his abuse by Scagnelli. His friend's father then brought Complainant C, his mother, and his aunt to the rectory that evening where the group confronted Scagnelli in the presence of another Diocesan priest. Complainant C then disclosed his abuse by Scagnelli to everyone in the group, to which Scagnelli reportedly responded, "I don't have anything to say about the situation." His friend's father then told Scagnelli, "You better be out of here in 30 days or I'm going to the Bishop." After this disclosure, Complainant C stated that he never saw Scagnelli again. Eventually, Complainant C said, his family was forced to move away after receiving threats of excommunication from the Church for reporting Father Scagnelli to church officials.

On November 30, 2021, the case was presented to the Diocesan Review Board, though the records produced by the Diocese do not indicate what action, if any, was

taken by the Board. The Diocesan records available to us also do not indicate whether any Diocesan official attempted to contact any of the individuals who could corroborate Complainant C's account of the confrontation with Scagnelli.

At the end of 2021, Complainant C's attorney sought financial assistance from the Diocese for Complainant C's counseling. Dr. Hansen replied by email that the Diocese would be willing to cover Complainant C's insurance co-pays for a period of six months, subject to review after that time. It is unclear from the records produced by the Diocese whether Complainant C ever received financial assistance. The following year, Complainant C requested a meeting with Bishop Thomas Tobin. O'Brien replied by email on July 26, 2022, that "Diocesan protocol requires Dr. Hansen meet with all victims prior to their meeting with the Bishop," and suggested a few available times for Complainant C to meet with Dr. Hansen. It is unclear from the records produced to this Office whether any meeting between Complainant C and Dr. Hansen or any Bishop ever occurred.

The Rhode Island State Police contacted Complainant C's attorney in 2024 and informed her that while criminal prosecution was not possible due to Scagnelli's death, State Police could take a statement from the complainant and forward it to this Office. State Police did not hear from Complainant C and unsuccessfully attempted to reach the attorney two additional times.

**Status**

Father Scagnelli died in July 2017. He is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father John Gerard Brendan Smyth

| Born | Ordained | Convicted | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jun. 8, 1927 | Jul. 31, 1951 | Jun. 1994 | Aug. 22, 1997 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1951 – 1957 | Holy Trinity Abbey, Kilnacrott, Republic of Ireland |
| 1957 – 1959 | St. Columba Church, Annan, Scotland |
| 1959 – 1963 | St. Mary Cathedral, Wrexham, Wales |
| 1963 – 1965 | Holy Trinity Abbey, Kilnacrott, Republic of Ireland |
| 1965 – 1968 | Our Lady of Mercy Church, East Greenwich |
| 1968 – 1979 | Holy Trinity Abbey, Kilnacrott, Republic of Ireland |
| 1979 – 1983 | St. Alphonsus Church, Langdon, North Dakota |
| 1983 – 1990 | Holy Trinity Abbey, Kilnacrott, Republic of Ireland |
| 1990 – 1993 | Tralee General Hospital, Kerry, Republic of Ireland |
| 1993 | Mercy Hospital, Cork, Republic of Ireland |
| 1994 – 1997 | *Imprisoned for sexual abuse*, Northern Ireland |

## Summary

While assigned to Our Lady of Mercy Church in East Greenwich as an assistant pastor, Father Brendan Smyth, an Irish national, reportedly sexually abused 17 children between 1965 and 1968. Similarities between the complaints reveal that Smyth preyed on young parishioners at Our Lady of Mercy School, abusing his position as a supervisor of altar servers to gain access to and sexually assault children. According to records produced by the Diocese to this Office, Church officials received their first complaint of sexual abuse against Smyth in the spring of 1967. But the Diocese did not take any steps to restrict Smyth's access to children until three more complainants came forward. In February 1968, Bishop Russell McVinney ordered Smyth to return to his religious order in Ireland.

Accusations against Smyth pre- and postdated his three-year stint with the Diocese of Providence. Following his departure from the Diocese, Smyth continued to sexually abuse children at subsequent assignments in Ireland, the United Kingdom, and North Dakota. In 1994, following an extradition dispute between Ireland and the United Kingdom, Smyth pled guilty in a British court to charges of sexually abusing five girls and two boys and then to 26 additional charges of sexually abusing nine girls and four boys in 1995. After serving a four-year prison sentence, Smyth pled guilty to 74 charges of sexually assaulting 13 girls and seven boys in a Dublin District Court. Smyth died at Carragh Prison in August 1997, only a month after he was sentenced to serve 12 years.

In 1995, following Smyth's conviction in the United Kingdom, the Diocese of Providence inexplicably told *The Providence Journal* that they did not know of any alleged wrongdoing arising from his time in Rhode Island. Of the 17 individuals who reported abuse by Smyth to the Diocese, only two were referred to law enforcement. He was never prosecuted for sexual abuse of children in Rhode Island.

In 2024, investigators from the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office and the Rhode Island State Police attempted to contact all living, known complainants of Smyth. The accounts of those complainants who were successfully contacted are included here.

Smyth's confirmed sexual abuse of children spanned from 1958–1991. He is included on the Diocese of Providence's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

**The Reported Abuse**

Smyth's first Rhode Island victims were three young brothers ("Complainants A, B, and C"), who served as altar servers and attended Our Lady of Mercy during 1965-1968. Complainant A reported that Smyth abused him on several occasions when he was nine to ten years old. The incidents occurred in the church following Mass when Complainant A returned his altar server cassock. Complainant A alleged that Smyth would embrace him from behind in the dressing room, insert his hands down the boy's pants, and grope his genitals and buttocks for 10 to 15 minutes. Complainant A asserted that Smyth's abuse was well known amongst the altar servers, and boys commonly feared having to serve Mass with him. He identified Complainants B, C, and D as victims as well. Complainant A first reported his abuse by Smyth to the Diocese on February 6, 1995.

Complainant B, Complainant A's older brother, reported he was abused on one occasion by Smyth, when he was 11 or 12 years old. Complainant B recounted how, after serving a morning Mass with Smyth, while in the church dressing room, Smyth wrapped his arms around Complainant B, forced his hands down the boy's pants, and groped his buttocks. Complainant B also noted that Smyth's behavior was "common knowledge with the kids my age."

Complainant C, the youngest brother of Complainants A and B, likewise reported that he was sexually abused by Smyth as an altar server at Our Lady of Mercy between 1965-1968. Records provided by the Diocese to this Office did not include a description of the abuse.

Complainant D, also an altar boy at Our Lady of Mercy, alleged he was sexually abused by Smyth on more than 30 occasions between 1965 and 1968, beginning when he was 10 years old, in a similar manner. The Diocese was initially informed of Complainant D by Complainant A in 1995. There is no record of an attempt to follow up with Complainant D at that time. In January 2019, Complainant D contacted the Diocese and provided a personal account of his victimization to Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") Director Kevin O'Brien.

Complainant E reported he was abused by Smyth at Our Lady of Mercy School in 1965-66, when he was around nine to ten years old. The complainant described the abuse in similar terms to the first four complainants. He stated that the assaults occurred in the janitor's room and a secluded area in the cafeteria or gym at Our Lady of Mercy School. The complainant wrote a letter to Bishop Thomas Tobin in September 2007 to report the abuse. Complainant E died in 2008.

Between 1966 and 1968, Smyth allegedly abused two young girls, Complainant F and her sister, while assigned to Our Lady of Mercy. The two girls met Smyth at Our Lady of Mercy School and through his involvement in the parish. Complainant F reported she was abused in the school, church, her family home, and in the woods. The first incident reportedly occurred when she was seven years old at Our Lady of Mercy School: she was sent to Smyth's office, and he reportedly digitally raped her and threatened her with death if she told anyone. Complainant F reported multiple other occasions when Smyth raped her. She reported her abuse to the Diocese in June 2006.

Complainant F also disclosed that Smyth abused her younger sister in a similar fashion between 1966 and 1968. Complainant F said she saw Smyth lean over her sister while she lay in her bed and walk into the woods with her, where they remained out of sight for a prolonged period of time. Complainant F notified the Diocese of her sister's abuse by Smyth in June 2006, after her sister died of a drug overdose. There is no indication in the files produced by the Diocese that Complainant F's sister ever reported her abuse by Smyth to the Diocese.

In 1967, an Our Lady of Mercy parishioner told the Pastor of Our Lady of Mercy that "Smyth had placed his hands under the trousers of one of his altar boys at the rear saying that he wished to do this to warm his hands." Later, another parishioner told the same Pastor that Smyth had abused her child as well, in the fall of 1967. The documents provided by the Diocese do not contain any further description of these incidents.[30]

According to Complainant J, Smyth sexually abused her while she attended Our Lady of Mercy School between 1965 and 1968. Complainant J reported these incidents to Monsignor Paul Theroux in September 2008. She stated that the abuse began when Smyth visited her family home when she was 11 years old. Complainant J stated that Smyth abused her when she was babysitting her younger siblings. She recounted that Smyth "laid on top of me on the couch and he . . . would . . . feel me all over, and it would last a long time." She alleged this occurred on several occasions. Complainant J told of a separate incident at school when she was 12 years old: her

[30] There is no record of any independent report by, or interview of, the reported victims in the files provided by the Diocese to this Office, and the limited Diocesan records provided to this Office regarding their complaints do not record their identities.

teacher told her to go to the parish rectory and, once there, Smyth locked the door and sexually assaulted her.

Complainant K reported that she was sexually abused by Smyth approximately a dozen times between 1966-67 while in the fourth and fifth grades at Our Lady of Mercy School. Complainant K informed former OEC Director Robert McCarthy of the alleged abuse in February 1995.

The mother of a young parishioner alleged that her daughter was similarly victimized by Smyth on several occasions between 1965 and 1968 when she attended Our Lady of Mercy School. Her daughter was between 8 to 10 years old at the time of the alleged abuse. Smyth reportedly "grabbed [her] daughter's ankles, held her upside down, and exposed her to boys hanging around, showing them, and him, her panties." The mother notified Director McCarthy of the allegations in a June 2008 letter, writing that she wanted her daughter's allegations recorded but would not reveal her daughter's name.

Complainant M reported that she was abused by Smyth as a third-grade student at Our Lady of Mercy when Smyth worked there. She said the abuse occurred when she was sent to the principal's office, and the principal then sent her to Smyth's office where Smyth sexually assaulted her. She notified Director McCarthy of the allegations in October 1995.

In addition, two fathers told the Diocese that their sons were also abused by Smyth while serving as altar boys at Our Lady of Mercy. The documents produced by the Diocese to this Office reference sworn statements by the boys' parents concerning their sons' abuse which were reportedly provided to the Diocese in February 1968.[31]

Complainant P sued the Diocese of Providence in 2008, alleging he was sexually abused by Smyth while in the second grade at Our Lady of Mercy School. He alleged that the abuse occurred between 1967 and 1968 when he was seven to eight years old. There is no record of Complainant P informing the Diocese of his allegations prior to filing suit in the documents produced by the Diocese to this Office.

Dr. Herbert Brennan[32] reported that he was sexually abused by Smyth at Our Lady of Mercy School and Church between 1965 and 1968 when he was between eight and eleven years old. He disclosed his abuse to the Diocese but did not file a formal complaint. In 2023, as part of this Office's Investigation, members of this Office met with Dr. Brennan. He could not recall the year that he disclosed his abuse to the

[31] The original 1968 statements were not included in the files produced by the Diocese and there is no record of any independent report by, or interview of, these victims in the files; the limited Diocesan records about these complaints do not record the victims' identities.

[32] Dr. Herbert Brennan authorized this Office to publish his name.

Diocese, but he recalled meeting with Monsignor Theroux and providing him with a statement of events regarding the abuse. Dr. Brennan, who became an outspoken advocate for children abused by Diocesan clergy, expressed that he had no interest in filing a formal complaint with the OEC, or in using any of the services the Diocese had to offer. Regarding the OEC, he stated,

> [i]f this was Hasbro, or South Kingstown High School, you go to the police. A crime has been committed, you go to the police, you don't go to the internal "We Rape Kids" group. But when it's the Diocese of Providence, an internal office of investigation somehow makes sense . . . . I couldn't believe that the people who committed the crime were going to be the ones to fix it . . . . It was like a guise.

There were no records regarding Dr. Brennan's allegations in the documents produced by the Diocese to this Office, aside from a copy of the statement he reportedly provided to Monsignor Theroux.

**Diocesan Response**

The first documented accusation of Smyth's sexual abuse dates back to the spring of 1967. According to the sparse documentation in the Diocesan files, the Pastor of Our Lady of Mercy, received a call from a parent in the parish who disclosed that "Smyth had placed his hands under the trousers of one of his altar boys at the rear saying that he wished to do this to warm his hands." The Pastor then allegedly spoke with Smyth, "warning him of what was being said and telling him that if the chargers were correct, he had best watch his step and correct his behavior. Father Smyth said that he would." Records provided by the Diocese do not reveal any further action taken by the church to limit Smyth's interactions with children following this incident and no report to the Rhode Island Department of Children and their Families ("DCF," now "DCYF") or law enforcement.

The Diocese received its second complaint against Smyth in the fall or winter of 1967 from a mother who notified the Pastor of Our Lady of Mercy that Smyth abused her son that fall. In identifying similarities between the first and second complaints, the Pastor informed the assistant Chancellor Sullivan, who then notified Monsignor Daniel P. Reilly the following day. Records provided by the Diocese do not reveal any further action taken by the church to limit Smyth's interactions with children following this incident, and no report to DCF or law enforcement.

On February 3, 1968, Monsignor Reilly received the Diocese's third and fourth complaints of abuse against Smyth from the parents of two altar boys. Two days later, the parents provided sworn statements at the Chancery building concerning the behavior of Smyth towards their sons. Again, these statements were not included in the records provided to this Office by the Diocese. Later that same day, Monsignor William Varsanyi, acting in Reilly's stead, confronted Smyth with the most recent accusations against him in the presence of Father Sullivan. In Sullivan's notes,

Varsanyi told Smyth that reports of his "imprudent and indiscrete actions with altar boys . . . could no longer be passed over."

During the confrontation with Varsanyi and Sullivan, "Smyth admitted freely that the charges were true and that the most recent incidents were not the only ones." Smyth was instructed to discontinue his involvement with supervising altar servers and return to his parish until the Bishop of Providence decided on his future. On February 13, 1968, Bishop Russell McVinney ordered Smyth to leave the Diocese within two weeks and return to Holy Trinity Abbey in Ireland. At no time in the intervening period was there any report to DCF or law enforcement, any effort by the Diocese to warn parishioners, or any attempt to ascertain whether there were other complainants.

In a vague February 15, 1968, letter to Abbot Colwell of Holy Trinity Abbey, Bishop McVinney informed Abbott Colwell that he was sending Smyth back to Ireland. McVinney alluded to the allegations of child abuse (without expressly mentioning them) by writing that Smyth "seemed dedicated enough to the young people, *and in some cases too much*. So, we feel that for the good of the parish and the souls and for his own sake that he should return to his Monastery." (emphasis added)

According to an account provided by Father Bruno Mulvihill for a 1995 book published on Smyth's legacy of abuse, however, Bishop McVinney called Holy Trinity Abbey to speak with Abbot Colwell shortly after learning that Smyth had sexually abused two altar boys in February 1968. With Colwell unreachable, the Bishop reportedly informed Mulvihill that "Smyth was being put on a plane back to Ireland in disgrace after it was discovered that he had been sexually abusing children in Providence, Rhode Island."

Upon returning to Holy Trinity Abbey in 1968, Smyth reportedly received "medical treatment" for his pedophilia at Purdysburn Hospital in Belfast, Northern Ireland. In a 1994 letter, the Abbot of Holy Trinity Abbey attested that Smyth was sent for "treatment" four separate times between 1968 and 1990. During that time, Smyth reportedly also visited Rhode Island every two to three years, in violation of the Bishop's order forbidding his return to the state.

Despite their knowledge of Smyth's pedophilia, Church officials allowed Smyth to continue serving as a priest in Ireland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Accusations against Smyth occurred at each of these assignments, and the reported conduct took place in hospitals, youth homes, schools, and a parish. In June 1994, Smyth pled guilty to charges of indecently assaulting five girls and three boys in Northern Ireland between 1964 and 1988. The court sentenced Smyth to four years in prison.

Smyth's conviction and his legacy of abuse caused an uproar both in Ireland, the U.K., and the United States, and received extensive media coverage. On January 12, 1995, Richard Dujardin of *The Providence Journal* contacted the Diocese of Providence requesting information and comment concerning Smyth's time in Rhode

Island. The Diocese responded that "there is no evidence of any wrongdoing on [Smyth's] part while he lived in Rhode Island." Diocesan records also indicate that the pastor at Our Lady of Mercy at the time of Smyth's assignment "said that Smyth was a nice guy and there was no evidence of any impropriety." *This is despite the fact that the Diocese had a record of multiple allegations of child sexual abuse by Smyth dating to 1967 and 1968, and it was those allegations that precipitated Smyth's expulsion from the Diocese*.

Following a February 6, 1995, article published in *The Providence Journal* about Smyth, the Diocese received the fifth, sixth, and seventh complaints against him. Complainant A called the Diocesan Office of Communications that day and reported his abuse. In an interview four days later with former OEC Director Robert McCarthy, Complainant A reiterated his allegations and identified Complainants B, C, and D as additional victims. On February 10, 1995, McCarthy notified Monsignors George Frappier and Jacques Plante of the complaint and instructed them to inform Bishop Louis Gelineau.

On February 13, 1995, Complainant C, the brother of Complainant A, notified McCarthy that he too was victimized by Smyth. Again, McCarthy informed Bishop Gelineau about the new complaint. On February 16, 1995, McCarthy also called Smyth's religious order at Holy Trinity Abbey to notify them about the three active investigations concerning Smyth's alleged abuse of Complainants A, B, and C. By March 2, 1995, Complainant A notified McCarthy that he and his brothers, upon the advice of legal counsel, would no longer speak with the Diocese.

In December 2024, an investigator from the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office spoke with Complainant B, who confirmed that Smyth had sexually abused him and his two brothers between 1965 and 1968 at Our Lady of Mercy, where they were altar servers. He also told the investigator that the abuse had a significant effect on his life, and it took him years to come to terms with what Smyth had done to him. He noted that he and his brothers had contacted a lawyer but because the lawyer wanted additional funds and did not believe that the suit against Our Lady of Mercy would be successful, they decided not to move forward. An investigator from the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office also spoke with Complainant C in December 2024. Complainant C confirmed his earlier report but told the investigator that he wanted to leave it behind him.

On February 24, 1995, Complainant K left a phone message with the OEC requesting a return call. On March 4, 1995, McCarthy conducted a phone interview with Complainant K where she disclosed her abuse by Smyth – the eighth complaint received by the Diocese. On March 10, 1995, McCarthy notified Irish law enforcement that the Diocese of Providence was conducting four investigations into the accusations against Smyth, likely referring to the complaints brought by Complainants A, B, C, and K.

In September 1995, Smyth pled guilty to 26 charges of sexually abusing nine boys and girls in Northern Ireland. Smyth was sentenced to three years to run concurrently with his earlier sentence.

On October 17, 1995, McCarthy received the ninth report of sexual abuse against Smyth from Complainant M. McCarthy conducted a telephone interview of Complainant M on October 18, 1995. No further correspondence between the Diocese and Complainant M was included in the records produced by the Diocese to this Office.

In March 1997, Smyth was extradited to Ireland to face 74 charges of child sex abuse of seven boys and thirteen girls between 1958-1993. On March 26, 1997, Smyth pled guilty to all charges. In July 1997, the court sentenced him to twelve years in prison. On August 22, 1997, Smyth died in prison.

On June 14, 2006, Bishop Tobin received a letter from Complainant F detailing the tenth and eleventh reports of abuse against Smyth. In the two-page letter, Complainant F identified herself and her sister as victims of Smyth. The complainant also signaled her intention to "seek full compensation for the injuries and damages suffered due to the sexual abuse inflicted by Brendan Smyth." On July 17, 2006, Complainant F met with Monsignor Theroux and Dr. Michael Hansen. During the meeting, Theroux informed Complainant F that the Diocese was aware of five complaints against Smyth. Complainant F submitted a second letter to Bishop Tobin on October 18, 2006, in which she further detailed Smyth's abuse, the debilitating effects of the abuse, and medical expenses tied to the abuse totaling more than $49,000. Complainant F also identified Smyth's abuse as the source of her sister's alcohol and drug issues, culminating in her lethal drug overdose in 2005. Records provided by the Diocese indicate the Diocese reimbursed the complainant for the above medical expenses. The Diocese did not forward Complainant F's complaint to law enforcement at the time, but Complainant F reported her abuse to the State Police directly in 2014.

On June 16, 2008, Complainants F and P sued the Roman Catholic Bishop of Providence corporation in Rhode Island Superior Court for their negligent supervision of Smyth, among other claims. Complainant P's allegations marked the twelfth complaint against Smyth received by the Diocese. The Superior Court granted summary judgment in favor of the defendant in 2014, and the Rhode Island Supreme Court affirmed in 2016. Not long after the lawsuit was dismissed, the Diocese stopped paying for Complainant F's therapy. In a February 2017 email, Dr. Hansen informed Complainant F that the Diocese would no longer reimburse her counseling expenses, stating that the Diocese "facilitated the reimbursement of a total of $116,370.67 for [Complainant F's] therapy related expenses . . . we are no longer able to continue at this rate." The Diocese reimbursed the complainant's counseling expenses between the fall of 2006 until February 2017.

An investigator from the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office contacted Complainant F in December 2024, and she confirmed the details of her prior report of

abuse to the Diocese. She recounted that Smyth threatened her that she would wind up like a girl that was found in a garbage pile if she told anyone about the abuse (which she believed was a reference to the body of a young child found in a compost pile in Warwick or East Greenwich around 1967). She shared that the most frustrating part of the abuse was how it affected her relationship with her family, specifically her daughter. In addition, Complainant F confirmed that the financial support for her counseling ended after a court dismissed her civil suit against the Diocese on statute of limitations grounds. She told the investigator that she believed the Diocese feigned concern for victims but only cared about money.

On September 12, 2007, Bishop Tobin received a thirteenth complaint against Smyth: a two-page handwritten letter from Complainant E. Monsignor Paul Theroux notified McCarthy, who interviewed Complainant E on September 13, 2007. Following the interview, Complainant E wrote McCarthy to request assistance with counseling. McCarthy referred Complainant E to Paula Loud, Diocesan Director of the Office of Outreach and Prevention. On February 4, 2008, Director Loud received a letter from Complainant E outlining his request for monetary compensation. Complainant E died unexpectedly on March 7, 2008. The records we reviewed do not indicate whether the Diocese provided the requested financial compensation.

The Diocese received the fourteenth complaint alleging sexual abuse by Smyth on June 23, 2008. The mother of a former student at Our Lady of Mercy wrote McCarthy to report that Smyth abused her daughter. McCarthy wrote back the next day that he would bring the matter to the Diocese's Review Board and asked to interview her daughter. The mother responded that McCarthy "may close this case" because Smyth was dead and her daughter did not want to relive the events.

On September 14, 2008, the Diocese received its fifteenth complaint against Smyth from another former student of Our Lady of Mercy. Complainant J wrote to seek compensation for her abuse. She wrote that she was looking for closure and would never forget what happened. Director McCarthy interviewed Complainant J on September 26, 2008, and reported her complaint to the Rhode Island State Police on the same day. In his letter to the State Police, McCarthy characterized the complainant's description of abuse as second-degree sexual assault. The records produced by the Diocese do not indicate whether the complainant's request for financial compensation was accepted by the Diocese, but Monsignor Theroux wrote the complainant apologizing "for the betrayal and hurt that was brought upon you by a priest" and stating that he was sure McCarthy and Loud would "follow up in providing whatever assistance is available to you." In December 2024, Complainant J spoke with an investigator from the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office about her ordeal and the anger she still feels at the thought that Smyth abused her and so many others when they were just young children.

On January 13, 2009, the Diocesan Review Board denied Complainant K's request for a financial settlement. In a letter the following day, Diocesan attorney William Murphy stated he concurred with the Board's decision following his own legal analysis "including a review of the statute of limitations and the apparent lack of prior

notice to Bishop McVinney of any propensity for sexual misconduct on the part of Fr. Smyth." Attorney Murphy also stated that the Diocese would offer therapeutic support to the complainant if requested.

The Diocese received its sixteenth complaint of sexual abuse against Smyth on January 25, 2019. Complainant D reported to Dr. Hansen that he had been violated by Smyth while serving as an altar server at Our Lady of Mercy. On February 11, 2019, OEC Director O'Brien interviewed the complainant. O'Brien notified the State Police of Complainant D's allegations on February 13, 2019. Records provided by the Diocese reveal that church officials were made aware of Complainant D in 1995, during McCarthy's interview with Complainant A. There is no record that the Diocese attempted to contact Complainant D at that time.

As noted above, the seventeenth, and last, known victim of Smyth, Dr. Brennan, reported his abuse to the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office in 2023. Although Dr. Brennan recalls reporting his abuse to Monsignor Theroux at an earlier point in time, and the Diocese produced a copy of a written statement of his, the Diocesan records do not indicate when this document was received by the Diocese.

**Status**

Father Smyth is deceased. He is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father William Tanguay

| Born | Ordained | Retired | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jun. 18, 1943 | Jun. 28, 1969 | Jul 1, 2008 | No |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1969 | Immaculate Conception Church, Cranston |
| 1969 – 1974 | Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church, North Providence |
| 1974 – 1983 | Church of St. Michael the Archangel, Providence |
| 1983 – 1984 | Pastoral care of Hmong Refugees, Minneapolis, MN |
| 1984 – 1995 | Church of St. Michael the Archangel, Providence (Dir., Hmong Ministry) |
| 1995 – 2000 | Hmong Ministry, Diocese of Charlotte, NC |
| 2000 | *Suspended on leave*, St. John Vianney Center, Downingtown, PA |
| 2000 – 2002 | Hmong Ministry, Diocese of Charlotte, NC |
| 2002 | *Suspended on Leave* |
| 2008 | *Retired* |

## Summary

Between 1965 and 1987, Father William Tanguay reportedly solicited four teenagers and a young man for sex. Except for Tanguay's first complainant, who was a student at a boarding school where Tanguay was a coach, Tanguay's victims were all from low-income families and/or homeless. Tanguay reportedly met the complainants in downtown Providence or in the neighborhood near the Church of St. Michael the Archangel and offered them food and a place to stay. Several of them reported that Tanguay performed oral sex on them in his bedroom in the rectory and then gave them money. Some also reported that Tanguay restrained them, beat them, and/or gave them drugs and alcohol.

The first documented complaint about Tanguay to the Diocese was made in March 2000. The complainant reported that Tanguay had oral sex with him in the 1970s, when he was 15 or 16 years old and homeless. Robert McCarthy, Director of the Diocese Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC"), investigated the complaint, and interviewed Tanguay. Tanguay admitted having sex with a young man in his rectory in the 1970s, but said he believed the complainant, whose name he did not recall, was an adult. As a result of this complaint, Tanguay's ministry in the Diocese was briefly suspended. Tanguay then reportedly received a favorable psychological evaluation at the church-run St. John Vianney Center, and his faculties were restored a month after his suspension. The Diocese did not refer the specific complaint to law enforcement, although Diocesan records indicate that Diocesan counsel spoke with an Assistant

Attorney General at the time about the need to refer pre-1979 sexual abuse allegations to law enforcement. According to Diocesan counsel's notes, the Assistant Attorney General agreed with him that such reporting was not legally mandated. Under Rhode Island law, prior to 1979, rape was prosecuted as a common law offense, and it did not include sodomy. Thus, Tanguay's conduct could only have been charged as a misdemeanor, subject to a three-year statute of limitations and thus time barred.

In 2002, the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office received an anonymous letter generally alleging misconduct by Tanguay. The Office forwarded the letter to the Diocese. In June 2002, Bishop Robert Mulvee granted Tanguay's request for an immediate and indefinite leave of absence from the Diocese. Three more complainants came forward later in 2002 and 2003. Director McCarthy noted that "[a]ll of the complainants that were interviewed were very consistent in their allegations." Nevertheless, the Diocese did not refer these complaints to law enforcement. In 2008, Tanguay was allowed to retire in Thailand with a monthly retirement pension, medical benefits, and dental benefits.

The Diocese includes Tanguay on its List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

**The Reported Abuse**

Complainant A reported that Tanguay sexually assaulted him in 1965, when he was 15 years old. At the time of the alleged abuse, Tanguay was a cross-country coach at a Diocesan boarding school in Warwick, where the boy was a student. Complainant A initially disclosed his allegations to his wife in the late 1980s and first disclosed his allegations to the Diocese in June 2002.

Complainant B reported to the Diocese in 2002 that Tanguay, while he was assigned to St. Michael the Archangel in Providence, solicited him for oral sex in exchange for money and food beginning in 1975, when he was a young man in his 20s. In a recorded interview with McCarthy, Complainant B stated that he first met Tanguay outside St. Michael's rectory in the winter of 1975. Complainant B was hungry and looking for food, and Tanguay invited Complainant B into his room in the rectory and offered him food and money in exchange for sex. Complainant B reported that he later entered into a sexual relationship with Tanguay lasting approximately six months. During this time, Tanguay engaged in oral sex with the complainant "ten to twenty times" in Tanguay's bedroom at St. Michael's rectory. On some occasions, Tanguay would give the complainant food or money. This reportedly ended when Tanguay left for Cambodia. During the interview, Complainant B positively identified Tanguay after looking through several photographs of priests in a 2002 Official Diocesan directory.

According to Complainant C, Tanguay began abusing him in 1976, when he was 15 years old. Complainant C first disclosed the alleged abuse in an affidavit filed in support of a lawsuit he brought against the Diocese in 2003. According to Complainant C's affidavit, at the time Tanguay began abusing him he was a ward of

the state, living next to St. Michael Church in Providence. Complainant C was helping an individual he referred to as "Father Dan" with construction near the church. "Father Dan" introduced him to Tanguay. Tanguay invited Complainant C to the rectory to help him paint and afterward encouraged him to take a shower; when he refused, Tanguay forced him to undress and get in the shower. Complainant C also alleged that Tanguay would pick him up in the morning and force him to perform oral sex on Tanguay while they were driving around the park. Tanguay would reportedly provide him with drugs and alcohol and take him to motels where he would sexually assault him using various restraints. Additionally, Complainant C stated that Tanguay showed him pornographic movies and pictures of "hundreds of kids" and told the boy "what they like[d]." Tanguay also allegedly brought a male friend, "Steve," who would also perform sexual acts on Complainant C and beat him while Tanguay watched. Complainant C reported that Tanguay threatened to call the police and tell them that Complainant C stole money from him or the church and threatened to get him sent back to the O'Rourke Children's Center, where the complainant stated he had also suffered sexual abuse. Complainant C also reported that Tanguay told him that he would not go to heaven if he told anyone, and that Tanguay gave him money following each sexual encounter. This continued, Complainant C said, until 1981, when he turned 20 years old. Complainant C received a $50,000 settlement from the Diocese in 2005.

Around this time, Tanguay allegedly also paid a 16-year-old homeless ward of the state to have sex with him on several occasions ("Complainant D"). Complainant D reported these incidents to Church officials in 2000. According to Complainant D, he met Tanguay late one evening in 1976 or 1977 when Tanguay offered him a place to stay. He said that Tanguay gave him a ride to the rectory at St. Michael's Church in a red Corolla or Datsun and that Tanguay performed oral sex on him there. According to OEC Director McCarthy, Complainant D described the room where it took place "in great detail." When Complainant D left the rectory the next morning, Tanguay reportedly gave him ten dollars. Approximately six months later, Tanguay picked up Complainant D again, brought him to the rectory, and performed oral sex on him. After this encounter, Complainant D stated, Tanguay gave him $15.00. Complainant D stated this occurred approximately five or six total times, and he last saw Tanguay in the late 1970s or early 1980s. On one such occasion, Complainant D alleged, Tanguay attempted to anally rape him but stopped when Complainant D complained it was too painful for him. Complainant D reported that Tanguay was well known to other homeless teenage boys in the neighborhood and many of them had similar experiences with him. Complainant D reported that Tanguay "cruised" regularly on the weekends and at night, and he was surprised that Tanguay was never picked up by the police. The complainant also alleged that Tanguay told him, "I'll give you money and . . . sleep with you and somebody else." Complainant D made similar allegations against Father Richard Meglio, who is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

In an interview with the Rhode Island State Police in 2024, another priest recalled an incident from around 1984 when he observed an older teenage boy walking down the stairs of the rectory of St. Michael's Church in Providence in the

morning with a priest he identified as "Bill Tanguay." He considered the incident "strange" because of the time of day and because only priests went upstairs in the rectory, but he said he did not discuss the incident with Tanguay.

Complainant E reported that Tanguay also solicited him for sex in exchange for money and drugs in 1987, when he was a 16-year-old boy living in foster care. According to Complainant E, Tanguay picked him up in downtown Providence one night, bought him dinner, and drove him home. The second time Tanguay saw Complainant E, Tanguay had oral sex with him in his bedroom. Complainant E stated that Tanguay kept in contact with him over the years, gave him money for drugs, and when the complainant went to jail, Tanguay put money in his prisoner account. The Attorney General first reported these allegations to the Church in 2002 after receiving an anonymous letter alleging sexual abuse by Tanguay. Four months later, Complainant D also provided Director McCarthy with the name of another victim and the details of that individual's abuse. McCarthy concluded that the person mentioned by Complainant D, and the anonymous complainant who had raised abuse allegations against Tanguay earlier that year, were both Complainant E.

**Diocesan Response**

The first documented complaint of sexual abuse by Tanguay in the records produced to this Office by the Diocese dates to March 21, 2000, when Complainant D reported his interactions with Tanguay to Diocesan attorney William Murphy. In a letter to McCarthy, Murphy wrote that a plaintiff's attorney had referred the complainant to him, and when the complainant asked for counseling, Murphy immediately referred him to a psychiatrist who used to work in the same building as Murphy and the plaintiff's attorney.

McCarthy notified Bishop Robert Mulvee, Monsignor Paul Theroux (who was serving as the Moderator of the Curia), and Monsignor George Frappier of the complaint. Director McCarthy interviewed Complainant D regarding these allegations on March 29, 2000, and referred Complainant D to Diocesan-sponsored counseling. McCarthy sent Complainant D a "CBF List of Approved Therapists" on March 30, 2000, and told him that if he did not have success with his current therapist, to contact one of the individuals on the list. "CBF" likely referred to the Clergy Benefit Fund, an insurance program for Diocesan personnel, and this list included therapists who had evaluated or treated Diocesan clergy accused of child sexual abuse.

McCarthy interviewed Tanguay about Complainant D's allegations on May 7, 2000, in Hickory, North Carolina, where Tanguay had been serving as the Director of the East Coast Ministry to the Hmong people since 1995. A representative of the Diocese of Charlotte was also present during the interview, at Tanguay's request. Tanguay did not dispute the general allegations made by Complainant D, except to state that he believed the young man was an adult at the time. According to Complainant D, the abuse began when he was 15 or 16 years old. Tanguay specifically admitted to having sex with a young man in his rectory bedroom in the 1970s but could not recall his name. Tanguay neither confirmed nor denied whether he had sex

with other individuals but said that he "didn't think anybody else would come forward." Tanguay also reported to McCarthy that he was planning to return to Rhode Island on May 30 for four months. Tanguay told McCarthy he planned to stay at St. Joseph Church in Newport, Saint Andrew's Church and a rental house on Block Island, and Sacred Heart Church's rectory in Pawtucket, and be involved in Hmong Ministry in Providence, Boston, and Worcester. In an OEC memorandum following the interview, McCarthy noted several statements by Tanguay that corroborated Complainant D's allegations: he was assigned to St. Michael Church in South Providence at the time of the incident; he owned and operated a red Datsun around 1977; and Tanguay's description of the rectory interior was "identical to the description" given by Complainant D in his interview.

On May 8, 2000, McCarthy advised Murphy of the matter and on May 12, 2000, McCarthy advised Father Theroux that the allegations made by Complainant D were "sustained." Six days later, on May 18, Tanguay's "public ministry" faculties in the Diocese of Providence were suspended, and his summer residence plans were changed. Instead of "residing at his intended place of residence," he would stay in Newport for two weeks and Block Island the following three weeks.

According to an OEC memorandum, in June 2000 Complainant D contacted the OEC to advise that he was having trouble finding a therapist from the CBF List provided by McCarthy. McCarthy clarified that Complainant D could choose anyone with whom he felt comfortable. The complainant also asked whether McCarthy had reached Father Tanguay, whether he had admitted to assaulting him, and whether he had been sent to North Carolina to hide his whereabouts. McCarthy reportedly advised Complainant D that Tanguay "had made certain admissions, but that Father Tanguay did not recall any individuals" with his name. He also told Complainant D that Tanguay was sent to North Carolina because he had a special ministry to the Hmong people, but that because of Complainant D's allegations, Tanguay was not administering the Sacraments.

Bishop Mulvee ordered Tanguay to be evaluated at St. John Vianney Center in Downingtown, Pennsylvania, in mid-June 2000. Upon receipt of the treatment center's report—and despite Tanguay's admission to certain allegations, and McCarthy's determination that Complainant D's allegations were credible—Bishop Mulvee renewed Tanguay's faculties. The Diocese did not produce the treatment center's report to this Office. The only information about it in the file comes from a memorandum from Father Godin, the Minister for Priests, to Bishop Mulvee stating that Tanguay "received a very favorable evaluation." According to Godin, the doctor who coordinated Tanguay's evaluation "found absolutely no evidence against Father and recommended that he should return to active ministry as soon as possible." The Diocese returned Tanguay to active ministry.

Bishop Mulvee also recommended Father Tanguay to the Catholic Church Extension Society for the East Coast Ministry to the Hmong in December 2000. The letter identified Tanguay as "the only priest working full-time in ministry with the Hmong who are settling into many areas of the Northeast and Southeast."

It does not appear that the Diocese took any further steps to monitor or restrict Tanguay's ministry until around March 2002, when an anonymous complainant, identified only as "Concerned," sent a letter about Tanguay to Vincent McAteer, the Chief Investigator at the Office of Attorney General at the time. The letter identified Tanguay as "Father Bill, William T." from St. Michael, and stated, "I hope he was investigated. I would not want to hear that he did this sort of thing to someone else in another state." No specific details of abuse were disclosed. McAteer advised McCarthy of this complaint. Initially, McCarthy told McAteer that he suspected this complainant was Complainant D. However, he later believed that this complainant was Complainant E, who was incarcerated at the time of the complaint.

The following month, in April 2002, McCarthy received a letter from Complainant D, identifying Complainant E and detailing Tanguay's alleged abuse of Complainant E. McCarthy met with Investigator McAteer regarding this letter and the investigation surrounding Complainant D's allegations that had been conducted two years earlier. McCarthy also gave Monsignor Theroux a copy of this letter and a synopsis of the investigation. McCarthy wrote to Complainant D, requesting contact information for Complainant E, but it does not appear that McCarthy succeeded in interviewing Complainant E at the time.

According to Diocesan records, in May 2002, Father Tanguay, Father Wilbur Thomas and William Curlin, the Bishop of Charlotte, met to discuss the recent allegations against Father Tanguay. Father Darcy reported in a letter to Bishop Mulvee that he had spoken to Father Thomas regarding the meeting. Father Thomas stated that Bishop Curlin had "no difficulty with Fr. Tanguay continuing his ministry in Charlotte," but requested that Bishop Mulvee send Curlin his *votum* "telling him everything was OK and that Fr. Tanguay was cleared for a return to ministry."

On June 17, 2002, Bishop Mulvee arranged a meeting with Tanguay to "speak with him regarding several matters involving sexual complaints." As a result of this meeting, Tanguay requested an immediate and indefinite leave of absence, which was granted the same day. His faculties for priestly ministry were withdrawn, but, at his request, he would continue to receive a basic support allowance and healthcare benefits. That day, the Diocese approved financial support for Tanguay through the Clergy Special Assignment Fund.

On June 21, 2002, Complainant A left a voicemail with the Diocese's Director of Human Resources identifying himself as a former altar boy and victim of molestation and asked to speak with someone. Director McCarthy reached out to Complainant A, who reported that Father Tanguay sexually abused him in 1965 when he was 15 years old and Tanguay was his cross-country coach at a boarding school in Warwick. Complainant A reportedly told McCarthy he did not want to be interviewed, but that he was looking for support groups. It is unclear whether this complainant ever received compensation for the therapy he was already receiving. McCarthy spoke with Complainant A's wife who stated that Complainant A first disclosed his allegations to her 15 years earlier. McCarthy immediately notified Diocesan attorney William Murphy and Auxiliary Bishop Robert McManus about Complainant A's

allegations, and four days later, McCarthy forwarded the complaint to Bishop Mulvee, Father Theroux, and Father Normand Godin.

The next month, in early July 2002, Complainant B called McCarthy to report that Tanguay had solicited him for oral sex in exchange for food and money in 1975. McCarthy interviewed Complainant B that day, and Complainant B described the 10-20 sexual encounters he had with Tanguay in the priest's rectory bedroom in which Tanguay would frequently offer him food and money in exchange for oral sex. Complainant B stated that he was suffering from mental health issues and was finally able to come forward due to the treatment he was receiving.

In December 2002, after Complainant B had notified the Diocese that he believed he needed therapy, McCarthy sent him the same list of therapists he previously sent to Complainant D, but this time without the heading "CBF List of Approved Therapists" at the top. McCarthy also attached a therapist referral list from the Sexual Assault & Trauma Resource Center of Rhode Island.

A few days later, McCarthy received a letter from Complainant D with more details about Complainant E's abuse. This letter stated, "You should ask the old Bishop to take a polygraph test and ask him about his past activities. I'm sure he would fail the test he knew what was going on." McCarthy notified Father Theroux, Attorney Murphy, and Office of Attorney General investigator McAteer about this letter and its contents. However, it does not appear that McCarthy informed Investigator McAteer that the Diocese received *two additional complaints* against Tanguay from Complainants A and B earlier that year. As a result of this letter and Complainants A's and B's disclosures, McCarthy sent a letter to Tanguay on July 8, informing him that a complaint had been filed and asking him to meet. Tanguay, through his attorney, declined to be interviewed, citing recent developments in litigation against the Diocese.

McCarthy attempted to contact Complainant D multiple times in July and August 2002 to discuss Complainant E. On August 28, 2002, Complainant D called McCarthy and informed him that Complainant E had been released from prison but that he did not know his address.

In January 2005, Father Darcy responded to a letter that Tanguay had sent to the Diocesan Review Board while he was living in Thailand. Father Darcy's letter informed Tanguay that, as a cleric on administrative leave or suspended from ministry, his monthly stipend was to remain in effect until further notice. Father Darcy implied that Bishop Mulvee kept Tanguay on the payroll despite the Review Board's wishes, stating that the Bishop "intervened in the discussion to protect [Tanguay's] canonical rights." By March 2008, however, the Diocese informed Tanguay that his financial support was being terminated. Father Darcy told Tanguay that his leave of absence could not be permanent, and that the Diocese needed to "come to an approved canonical resolution of [his] present status in the priesthood." Tanguay could either "withdraw permanently from exercise of all priestly ministry" or undergo "an

administrative or judicial process to evaluate [his] fitness for priestly ministry as a priest under suspension for credible allegations of the sexual abuse of minors."

In response to this letter, Tanguay asked Bishop Tobin to allow him to retire and maintain his retirement pension. Tanguay explained that he had moved to Thailand because Bishop Mulvee asked him to "step back;" this was "best for the Diocese," although Tanguay "never had any allegations made against [him] from anyone under [his] pastoral care." In addition, Tanguay's letter noted that he was currently working as a teacher in Thailand.

Darcy then requested that McCarthy review any cases involving Tanguay. In an April 2008 letter to Darcy summarizing the allegations, McCarthy wrote about his 2000 interview with Tanguay: "[He] did not deny any sexual misconduct and, in fact, stated that he had sex with individuals who he did not know by name, that he had picked up on the street; and there is a good possibility there could be other complainants who have not yet been identified." McCarthy also noted that "[a]ll of the complainants that were interviewed were very consistent in their allegations."

In a subsequent May 2008 letter from Darcy to Tanguay, Darcy wrote that Bishop Tobin requested an evaluation from the headmaster of the school Tanguay taught at in Thailand, describing the school, Tanguay's role, and the ages of his students. The records provided by the Diocese do not include a response to this request. Bishop Tobin also asked where Tanguay would be staying when he returned to visit Rhode Island. Tanguay responded that because Bishop Mulvee asked him not to stay or work at any church institutions, he always stayed with friends when he visited.

Bishop Tobin subsequently permitted Tanguay to retire for "reasons of health," effective July 1, 2008. This would allow Tanguay to receive his monthly retirement pension, medical, and dental benefits. Tanguay's faculties were revoked, and he was not permitted to wear clerical attire or present himself as a Catholic priest. Finally, in late July 2008, Monsignor Darcy sent a letter to Tanguay's Thai employer, regarding Tanguay's allegations and status, at the Review Board's request. The letter stated, in pertinent part:

> Fr. Tanguay was named in allegations of sexual impropriety with young adults, and possibly with some under the age of 18. No criminal charges were brought against him. The *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* obliges the bishops of the United States to transparency in these matters, and prompts this correspondence. . . . I hasten to note that the Office of Education and Compliance has not received any recent concerns about Father Tanguay. The past allegations concerned behavior between 1965-1981. Notification of these matters came to us in 2000-2003 through litigation. All these matters have been resolved.

> If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact me at this address. You mentioned that Father Tanguay is a talented and gifted teacher. He indicated that he enjoys his teaching and hopes to continue his association with your institute.

An OEC memorandum states that on July 29, 2008, Monsignor Darcy informed Director McCarthy that another school where Tanguay taught would be notified later that week, but there is no record confirming that the notification occurred in the records produced by the Diocese.

In 2021, the Rhode Island State Police attempted to contact all five known complainants against Tanguay. It was determined that Complainant A was deceased, and the State Police were unable to contact Complainants B, D and E. The State Police interviewed Complainant C on March 30, 2021, and during that interview Complainant C recounted in vivid detail his abuse by Tanguay. And although State Police informed Complainant C that his allegations fell beyond the applicable statute of limitations and were therefore not prosecutable, Complainant C expressed hope that his statement might assist others. State Police also spoke with Complainant D in 2025, and he confirmed his report to McCarthy, but declined to provide further documentation or an interview.

In 2025, this Office delivered a letter to Father Tanguay notifying him of the allegations against him described in this summary and inviting him to provide a response. Tanguay acknowledged receipt but did not reply.

**Status**

Records show that Tanguay was living in Thailand from on or about 2014 to 2023 when he moved back to Rhode Island. It does not appear that the Diocese ever initiated laicization proceedings against Tanguay.

Father Tanguay is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy. Tanguay is also included on the Diocese of Charlotte's list of Credibly Accused Clergy "who served in western North Carolina with no allegation documented in the Charlotte diocese but were named on lists or publicized by other dioceses and religious orders."

# Father Peter L. Tedeschi

| Born | Ordained | Retired | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| May 22, 1931 | Jun. 4, 1960 | N/A | Oct. 18, 1986 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| Summer 1960 | Holy Trinity Church, Central Falls |
| 1960 – 1962 | Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church, Providence |
| 1962 – 1964 | St. Alexander Church, Warren |
| 1964 – 1965 | St. Ann Church, Providence |
| 1965 – 1971 | St. Anthony Church, Woonsocket |
| 1971 – 1979 | St. Mary Church, Cranston |
| 1979 – 1985 | St. Joseph Hospital, Providence |
| 1985 – 1986 | St. Joseph Church, Cumberland |

## Summary

Twenty-six years after his death, Father Peter Tedeschi was accused of sexually abusing a 14- to 15-year-old girl while he was assigned to Holy Trinity Church in Central Falls during the summer of 1960. The complainant, Margaret McKenna,[33] reported her abuse to Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") Director Robert McCarthy in 2012 and has spoken about it publicly since that time. There are no other documented allegations of abuse against Father Tedeschi in the records produced by the Diocese to the Rhode Island Office of the Attorney General.

The Diocese lists Tedeschi as a "publicly accused" priest on its website.[34]

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[33] Margaret McKenna authorized this Office to publish her name.

[34] On its website, the Diocese explains the "publicly accused" priests category as follows:

> Each of these priests retired in good standing. After their deaths, allegations were made against them dating back 37 and 54 years, respectively. Each priest is the subject of a single allegation. The claims were investigated at the time they were received but could not be verified or substantiated without any corroborating witnesses or facts. Based upon the Director's standards, process and procedure, the accused would not have been included on the list. However, each priest has been the subject of significant publicity at recent

**The Reported Abuse and Diocesan Response**

According to Diocesan records, McKenna reported Father Tedeschi's abuse to Robert McCarthy, then Director of the OEC, on October 18, 2012. Mckenna sought Diocesan financial support with counseling expenses. In a meeting with members of this Office in 2023, McKenna said that she had previously notified the Diocese about the abuse three different times: in or around 1961, 1968, and the early 2000s. There is no documentation of those complaints in the records produced to this Office by the Diocese.

McKenna reported that she got to know the newly ordained priest through the Catholic Youth Organization ("CYO"), when she was about 14 years old. She alleged that Tedeschi sexually abused her multiple times from May to the fall of 1960 when they were alone conducting errands, and at the church. McKenna reported that Tedeschi touched her intimate parts under her clothes and that he made her perform oral sex on him. These assaults reportedly occurred at the sacristy and rectory of Holy Trinity Church in Central Falls, in Tedeschi's vehicle, and at Lincoln Woods Park. McKenna also reported that Tedeschi would call her at her home, pick her up from school, and told her that he loved her and would leave the priesthood to marry her.

When she reported her abuse to the Diocese in 2012, she recounted that she had previously told another priest about the abuse during confession at a school retreat in or about 1961. She stated that the priest "told her to feel sad for [Tedeschi], to pray for him and his vocation."

McKenna also told the Diocese that she confronted Tedeschi at his parish in 1968. She alleged that Tedeschi admitted to abusing her as well as an unspecified number of other people and sought to explain his conduct by reportedly saying "I have a problem. I know it is a problem. I love you."

Following the 2012 disclosure, Director McCarthy reviewed Tedeschi's personnel file and attempted to schedule an interview with McKenna. Tedeschi's personnel file revealed no other complaints of sexual abuse. After losing contact with McKenna, McCarthy notified the Rhode Island State Police of the allegation on November 19, 2012.

On December 7, 2012, McCarthy reestablished contact with McKenna. According to McKenna, that conversation did not go well. She wrote a letter to Bishop Thomas Tobin recounting the event, stating "never once did he say or exhibit understanding or empathy." McKenna was subsequently interviewed by Paula Loud of the Diocese's Office of Outreach and Prevention and Monsignor Albert Kenney,

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legislative hearings. This media coverage eroded the consideration given to reputational harm and warranted a separate category.

Vicar General of the Diocese, on January 29, 2013. Following the interview, the Diocese forwarded the information to the State Police.

On September 29, 2014, McKenna met with the State Police to file a complaint against Tedeschi. During that meeting, she informed law enforcement of the Diocese's confrontational manner in relation to her case. The criminal investigation could not proceed due to Tedeschi's death in 1986.

In addition to what is described above, McKenna also told members of this Office that during her initial discussion with McCarthy in 2012, he asked her to take a polygraph, and "insinuated if I didn't, no one would believe me." She also stated that she learned about the Review Board and asked to address them, but Director McCarthy and Bishop Tobin denied her request. She added that she met with Bishop Tobin in 2013 and he "also treated her as if she was a suspect, rather than a victim." She stated that Bishop Tobin told her, "you want me to say I'm sorry for something that happened 50 years ago . . . fine, I'm sorry," and informed her that Father Tedeschi had other issues as if to "excuse his abuse and make me feel sorry for him." After her meeting with Bishop Tobin, McKenna said, she never heard back from anyone at the Diocese or learned the result of their investigation.

The Boston Globe wrote a 2019 article about McKenna's efforts to hold Tedeschi, and the Diocese, accountable for her alleged abuse. She reiterated her efforts, discussed above, to confront the priest when she was a young woman and the frustration she experienced attempting to report the abuse to Diocesan officials. McKenna also lamented the Diocese's decision to omit Tedeschi from its Credibly Accused List and questioned why the Diocese did not find her credible.

**Status**

Father Tedeschi died in 1986. As of the publication of this Report, this Office is unaware of other known allegations of child sexual abuse against him. The Diocese lists Tedeschi on its website as "publicly accused."

# Father John Tormey

| Born | Ordained | Resigned | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Feb. 12, 1942 | Jun. 3, 1967 | Mar. 2, 1979 | No |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1967 | Our Lady of Fatima Hospital, Providence |
| 1967 – 1973 | St. Margaret Church, East Providence |
| 1970 – 1973 | St. Mary Academy – Bay View, Providence |
| 1973 | *Sabbatical* (studying journalism) |
| 1973 | Blessed Sacrament Church, Providence |
| 1973 – 1974 | House of Affirmation, Whitinsville, MA (Director of Pastoral Services) |
| 1973 – 1974 | St. Maria Goretti Church, Pawtucket (residence) |
| 1974 – 1979 | St. Francis Xavier Academy, Providence (school chaplain) |
| 1974 – 1979 | St. Joseph Hospital, OLP Unit, Providence (residence) |
| 1979 | *Resigned* |

## Summary

The Diocese included John Tormey on its List of Credibly Accused Clergy after receiving a report alleging that he sexually abused two sisters in the late 1960s. Tormey was assigned to St. Margaret Church in East Providence at the time of the alleged abuse.

The women first reported the alleged abuse to the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office in 2002 but declined to press charges as they wished to remain anonymous. As a result, no investigation took place. They then reported to the Diocese in 2003 and were interviewed by Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") Director Robert McCarthy. It does not appear that McCarthy informed Tormey of the complaint against him at the time or took any steps to further investigate the complainants' report. According to McCarthy, because Tormey had left the priesthood some twenty years earlier, the Church no longer had any canonical authority over him, and he could not pursue the matter.

In 2019, McCarthy's successor, OEC Director Kevin O'Brien, revisited the complaint, interviewed Tormey, and spoke to one of the sisters ("Complainant A") (the other sister had died). Complainant A stood by her earlier account. Tormey denied he sexually abused either complainant. The case was presented to the Diocese's Review Board after which Tormey was listed on the Diocese of Providence's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

In December 2019, following the publication of the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy, Tormey sued the Diocese for defamation. That case remains pending.

**Allegations and Diocesan Response**

Tormey was assigned to St. Margaret Church in 1967, as a newly ordained priest, and remained there until 1973 when he left to study journalism and work at the House of Affirmation. The complainants recounted that their parents immediately became friendly with him, that he was "always at their house," and that their mother helped Tormey by typing for him, as he was writing books during that time. These facts were confirmed by Diocesan records and by Tormey during an interview with OEC Director Kevin O'Brien, though he denied "always" being at their house.

On April 5, 2002, the complainants reported their alleged sexual abuse to the Office of the Attorney General. According to Diocesan records, that day, they met with the Chief Investigator of the Attorney General's Office, Vincent McAteer, and alleged that Tormey committed both first and second-degree sexual assault/child molestation, but they declined to press charges because they wanted to avoid publicity. As a result, their allegations were not referred to the Rhode Island State Police for investigation. The Attorney General's Office notified the Diocesan Director of the OEC at the time, Robert McCarthy, of the allegations, but did not identify the complainants.

According to OEC Director McCarthy, the Chief Investigator of the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office filed a formal complaint with the OEC on April 9, 2002. That day, McCarthy met with Chief Investigator McAteer. In a memorandum of that meeting, McCarthy noted:

> In a meeting at the Office of Education and Compliance with the Chief Investigator at the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office, he advised me that he received a complaint that two twin girls had been forced to give oral sex to a priest who he identified as John Tormey when both of these girls were fourteen to fifteen years of age. The sexual abuse was alleged to have taken place over twenty years ago.

In a 2014 memorandum to Bishop Thomas Tobin summarizing his investigation, McCarthy wrote that when he spoke with McAteer again on June 19, 2002, to request information about Mr. Tormey so that he could conduct an internal investigation, McAteer advised him that the complainants did not wish to be identified or come forward. This Office has no corresponding record of that meeting, however, during a 2025 interview with members of this Office, McAteer vaguely recalled interviewing the complainants together at his office back in 2002 and speaking with McCarthy regarding their complaint against Tormey. He added that he had no reason to doubt the veracity of the complainants' allegations.

On November 11, 2003, the complainants went to the OEC with their attorney and provided McCarthy with a detailed written summary of their allegations. The

summary contained information regarding potential witnesses, including outcry witnesses, whom McCarthy could have interviewed as part of his investigation. McCarthy interviewed both women separately that day.

According to both complainants, the alleged abuse began in the late 1960s, when they were in seventh or eighth grade and continued for several years. They alleged that Tormey sexually abused them on hundreds of occasions at various locations, including in the movie theater, their parents' basement, his aunt's beach house, his home, and at other locations. They alleged that Tormey forced them to touch his penis and masturbate him, that he touched their breasts and pelvic region, and that during one instance of alleged abuse he coerced a complainant to perform oral sex on him during a trip to Florida with the complainants' parents before their freshman year of high school around 1968. The complainants stated they were 13-14 years old at the time of that alleged incident and their parents had Tormey share a room with them. One recounted that Tormey once told them that he "needed to touch [them] to see what a girl's body felt like" and that "God would want him to know."

The complainants claimed that they called the Diocese to report the alleged abuse sometime when they were in high school but could not recall whom they told or the circumstances around the earlier report. A review of Diocesan records did not reveal any documentation of a complaint against Tormey from that time. The complainants stated they never heard anything after their complaint, but shortly afterwards, Tormey allegedly "disappeared" for a while. According to records produced by the Diocese, from January to June 1973, Tormey took an educational sabbatical from the Diocese, at his own request. During this time, Tormey also began work at House of Affirmation near Worcester, Massachusetts.

The complainants told McCarthy that that they suspected their parents and Tormey's family knew that Tormey's relationship with them was improper. One stated that she told her parents that "he did bad things" but was too embarrassed to provide details; according to the complainant, her parents never followed up and continued their friendship with Tormey. They also told McCarthy that they disclosed the alleged abuse to their husbands. Although the complainants told McCarthy that their father had passed away and their mother suffered from severe dementia, it does not appear that McCarthy followed up with the complainants' husbands.

The complainants also reported that years later, after they were married, they traveled to Tormey's house in Rumford with a friend to warn Tormey's fiancé about him. The complainants recalled that they knocked on his door and Tormey and his fiancé both answered, and that they "told her everything." They claimed Tormey called their parents afterwards "because he was furious with us." It does not appear that McCarthy endeavored to follow up with Tormey, his wife, or the complainants' friend. In 2025, efforts by a member of this Office to locate the complainants' friend and Tormey's ex-wife were unsuccessful.

The complainants also gave McCarthy the names of two priests who reportedly knew about the alleged abuse. One complainant stated that Tormey told them that these priests "were starting to get suspicious and advised her not to have [them] come over to the rectory." Although one of these priests predeceased the complaint, it does not appear that McCarthy sought to interview the second priest named by the complainants. The complainants also alleged that there were several other girls they suspected may have also been abused. Although the complainants' provided McCarthy with the name of one of these girls, it does not appear that McCarthy followed up with any of them.

Following their interviews, McCarthy advised both complainants that the Diocese did not "have any control of Tormey" because he was no longer functioning as a priest in their service. On November 24, 2003, McCarthy received a fax from Chancellor John Darcy regarding Tormey. Chancellor Darcy wrote "there is nothing in the files to suggest any concerns with sexual abuse of minors or adults." On February 18, 2004, McCarthy received a letter from the complainants' attorney, who provided McCarthy with a four-page written statement by the complainants regarding the alleged abuse and requesting that McCarthy "advise of the next step in this claim's process." On March 22, 2004, McCarthy updated Bishop Mulvee and the members of the Bishop's Diocesan Review board on the status of the case.

McCarthy continued to follow up with complainants' counsel over the next several years. In April 2007, counsel for the complainants requested that their cases be presented to the Bishop's Advisory Board on May 6, 2007, and expressed interest in a resolution. McCarthy forwarded this request to an attorney for the Diocese, and that records reflect that the case was presented to the Bishop's Advisory Board at a May 16, 2007, meeting. However, there are no records of the details of that meeting. Other than providing complainants with contact information for Dr. Michael Hansen, it does not appear that the Diocese offered any compensation or conducted any additional investigation.

In March 2014, McCarthy wrote to Monsignor Albert Kenney, the Moderator of the Curia, in response to his request to review Tormey's file. McCarthy's letter includes a reference to a controlled phone call that the complainants made to a person they had identified as another potential victim of Tormey's when they initially alleged the abuse to McCarthy. The controlled phone call was made in September or October 2005, and McCarthy was given a transcript of the call by the complainants' attorney. During the call, the person identified as a potential victim denied that she was sexually abused by Tormey, denied knowing anything about him sexually abusing the complainants, but remembered that Tormey was frequently at their house. At one point during the recorded call, the individual stated, "maybe he did more to you than he did to me." According to her, she was friendly with Tormey while in high school but then severed contact with him when she went to college. The caller also said that she did not believe the complainants' mother would have let Tormey continue to go to their house had she known what was going on. In a later interview with OEC Director Kevin O'Brien, Tormey stated that he had a relationship with this young

woman when she went to college, but that it was consensual. In 2025, efforts by members of this Office to locate this woman were unsuccessful.

Monsignor Kenney, Father Theroux, Dr. Hansen, Attorney Eugene Bernardo, Paula Loud (Diocesan Director of Outreach and Prevention), Val Lisi (secretary to the Auxiliary Bishop), and McCarthy met on April 2, 2014, to discuss the allegations. The group "came to the unanimous opinion that there was insufficient evidence to either sustain or not sustain the complaint." The following day, McCarthy wrote a letter to Bishop Tobin summarizing the allegations, his actions to date and the April 2, 2014, meeting. He wrote, "it was a unanimous decision by all of us that there was insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove both women's complaint, but that is a far cry from being unfounded, that the incident was false and not factual."

In September 2014 and again in March 2015, the allegations were brought before the Diocesan Review Board. There is no record of the Board's determination at that time in the files provided by the Diocese to this Office. There is no record that Tormey was notified of any allegations against him, or any findings by the Diocese, at any point during the Diocese's investigation until 2019.

In early 2019, McCarty's successor, OEC Director Kevin O'Brien, reviewed Tormey's file and determined that Tormey had never been informed of the accusations. On April 2, 2019, O'Brien presented the case to the Review Board and a week later he wrote Tormey to inform him that there were two complaints filed in 2004 alleging incidents that occurred "in the 1970s." Shortly thereafter, Tormey replied by email and several letters, vehemently denying the complainants' allegations and claiming that he was denied the opportunity to retain counsel or present witnesses back in 2003, and noting that his best witnesses were the complainants' deceased parents, whom he claimed would not have supported him for years if they believed their daughters. Tormey also denied ever being confronted by Monsignor Geoghegan about the complainants' allegations. He further contended that the Diocese would not have assigned him as Chaplain and Teacher at St. Xavier Academy – an all-girls high school – in September 1974 if the complainants had made the Diocese aware of their allegations.

O'Brien interviewed Tormey on April 15, 2019. Tormey denied having any non-consensual sexual contact with the complainants and claimed that the complainants had attempted to have sexual contact with him, which he refused. Tormey admitted that he grew close to complainants' family after beginning his assignment at St. Maragret's Parish in 1967, and that he had "affectionate" physical contact with the complainants. He stated that he was "like a family" with the complainants and their parents, and that, "when I'd come in or say goodbye, I'd give them a kiss, you know." He recalled that he went on a family trip with the complainants and their parents but was unable to recall where the trip was. However, he did recall that the trip occurred around 1973, which would have made the complainants 18 years old, stating: "[s]he was born in 1954 which would make her 18 in 1972/1973 when we went to Florida and started this whole thing." (By contrast, the complainants alleged that the trip to Florida occurred around 1968, when they were 14 years old).

He alleged that during that trip the complainants attempted to remove his bathing suit while he was swimming, looked at his penis while he was urinating, and that one complainant showed him her naked body. Tormey claimed that following this trip, he told the complainants' mother about their behavior and that she stated, "I know. I've been having trouble with them. They're both boy crazy." Tormey denied that he touched the girls, stating that their parents would have seen or known of it had he done so. He hypothesized that the complainants came forward because they were upset that he told their parents about the girls' advances. He referred to them as vindictive, posited that girls generally are prone to making unfounded allegations, and referred to the allegations as "blackmail."

Tormey also told O'Brien that he officiated the weddings of both complainants, a fact that the complainants had disclosed and explained that their mother refused to attend their weddings unless Tormey served as the officiant. This was later confirmed by Complainant B's husband, who told investigators from this Office in 2025 that the complainants' mother was "infatuated" with Tormey and insisted that he officiate their wedding. Tormey also told O'Brien that he maintained a friendship with their parents through the 1970s, which he ended after he was confronted by the complainants. Tormey recalled that around 1979 the complainants confronted him at his home in Rumford and told him to stay away from their mother or else they would "go to the police with the story" if they refused. Tormey claimed that the complainants did not mention any inappropriate sexual activity during this conversation and that he did not ask the complainants any follow-up questions. Tormey also added that the complainants' mother later apologized to him, stating "I'm sorry this all happened like this."

O'Brien then wrote to Complainant A—Complainant B passed away in 2012—who called and spoke with him in May 2019. Complainant A confirmed the alleged abuse and, according to O'Brien, "was able to recall specific detailed information regarding her complaint that did not differ from her report filed in 2003." According to O'Brien, he "found her manner and tone of conversation to be consistent with someone who was not being deceptive." Complainant A also provided O'Brien with the name of a friend who traveled with the complainants to Tormey's house in Rumford where they confronted Tormey and his fiancé at the time about the alleged abuse. It does not appear that O'Brien followed up with this individual, and this Office was unable to locate this individual in 2025.

In an April 15, 2019, internal memorandum, O'Brien recounted his interview with Tormey and his impressions of Tormey's credibility. He noted that he found Tormey's selective recollection of information (for instance, as it related to the Florida trip) and his claim that the complainants maintained a lifelong vendetta against him because he reportedly told their parents that they were sexually inappropriate when they were teenagers, unlikely. O'Brien concluded that "overall Tormey's recollections and explanations did not seem to be very credible at all."

O'Brien offered to give Tormey a polygraph. Tormey initially refused, citing medical reasons, but later agreed. A polygraph was performed on August 6, 2019. According to the polygrapher, the results indicated positive for deception.

In July 2019, Tormey wrote to Bishop Thomas Tobin and Director O'Brien objecting to the inclusion of his name on the Diocese's Credibly Accused List. He wrote that he felt the complainants were not credible and that the process was unfair because "this complaint went unchallenged for 16 years and all my witnesses are deceased – leaving me with only circumstantial evidence which I have plenty of but never had the opportunity because I was denied a second interview."

In 2024 and 2025, as part of this Office's investigation, investigators confirmed that both complainants and their parents had died. In 2025, investigators from this Office spoke with Complainant B's husband who confirmed that Complainant B previously disclosed to him that Tormey had sexually abused her and her sister. He also recalled that Complainant B confided in her mother, whom he reported was "infatuated" with Tormey, and who reportedly continued to invite Tormey into her home and even insisted that Tormey officiate Complainant B's wedding. Complainant B's husband further stated that an attorney friend of his filed a complaint against Tormey on the complainants' behalf and recalled that the complainants' received a $20,000 settlement from the Diocese and that, as a part of this settlement, the complainants were not permitted to discuss the matter. He also confirmed that the complainants traveled to Tormey's residence years ago with a friend to confront Tormey, although he was unable to provide contact information for the complainants' friend. Investigators from this Office also spoke with Complainant A's husband in 2025. He denied that Complainant A disclosed her alleged abuse by Tormey to him and stated that he was unaware of the complainants' allegations.

The Rhode Island Attorney General's Office also sent a letter to Tormey offering him an opportunity to be interviewed by the State Police regarding the child sexual abuse allegations made against him. In response, his lawyer advised that his client would not speak to the State Police.

**Status**

On March 1, 1979, Tormey resigned from the Diocese and sought laicization because he could not "honestly live the call of celibacy." Tormey married seventeen days after resigning from active ministry. While Bishop Louis Gelineau, with Tormey's participation, twice petitioned the Vatican for laicization, the Vatican denied both petitions due to "insufficient grounds."

In 2019, Tormey sued the Diocese for defamation, arguing that the allegations against him were false, that he was never notified of the allegations prior to 2019, that the Diocese failed to investigate the allegations when they were received in 2002, that he was never allowed to defend the allegations when they surfaced in 2002 and again in 2019, and that his inclusion on the Credibly Accused List caused him disgrace and cost him his job at Bristol Community College. That case is still pending.

# Father Paul Tousignant

| Born | Ordained | Laicized | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jan. 25, 1926 | May 19, 1951 | Apr. 14, 1967 | May 27, 1987 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1951 – 1954 | St. Vincent Church, Coventry |
| 1954 – 1955 | St. Joseph Church, Woonsocket |
| 1955 – 1956 | Precious Blood Church, Woonsocket |
| 1956 – 1964 | Our Lady of Consolation Church, Pawtucket |
| 1960 | *Suspended on leave*, Via Coeli Monastery, Jemez Springs, NM |
| 1964 | St. Edward Church, Pawtucket |
| 1964 | St. Vincent de Paul Church, Coventry |
| 1965 – 1967 | *Suspended on leave* |
| 1967 | *Laicized* |

## Summary

Father Paul Tousignant reportedly sexually assaulted two males in the 1950s. The first complainant reported to the Archdiocese of Denver in 2013 that Tousignant sexually assaulted him at Precious Blood Parish in Woonsocket in 1956. The Archdiocese of Denver referred the complaint to the Diocese of Providence, but the complainant passed away before the matter could be investigated. The second complainant reported to the Diocese in 2019 that Tousignant sexually assaulted him in the late 1950s, when he was an altar boy at Our Lady of Consolation Church in Pawtucket. Tousignant predeceased either complainant, passing away in 1987.

On August 22, 1960, Bishop McVinney suspended Tousignant, placed him on a leave of absence, and sent him to the Monastery of the Servants of the Paraclete, also known as "Via Coeli," located in Jemez Springs, New Mexico. The Diocese did not produce any records documenting the reason for Tousignant's stay at Via Coeli, any treatment he received there, or the basis for his sudden and prolonged leave of absence from the Diocese. In early 1964, Tousignant's faculties were briefly restored; however, he was suspended again in late 1965 and remained on a leave of absence until his voluntary laicization in 1967.

Tousignant is not included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

**The Reported Abuse and Diocesan Response**

On September 19, 2013, the Diocese of Providence learned from the Archdiocese of Denver that a man ("Complainant A") had disclosed that he was sexually abused by Father Paul Tousignant in 1956 at Precious Blood Parish in Woonsocket. Complainant A was terminally ill by the time of his disclosure, and by the time it was reported to the Diocese of Providence, he had passed away. The documents produced by the Diocese to the Office of the Attorney General do not contain any further details regarding the reported abuse. Diocesan records reflect that Tousignant's case was presented to the Review Board in September 2013, although there is no record of the Board's determination.

On October 1, 2013, Diocesan investigator Robert McCarthy forwarded Complainant A's report to the Rhode Island State Police, noting that Diocesan records confirmed that Tousignant was assigned to Precious Blood Parish as the Assistant Pastor between 1944 and 1956, and that he had died in 1987. Notably, the Diocese records also indicate that Tousignant was reassigned from Precious Blood in Woonsocket to Our Lady of Consolation in Pawtucket in 1956, the year Complainant A reportedly was abused by Tousignant. Tousignant's personnel file does not provide a reason for the reassignment, however. The State Police closed the investigation after determining that both the complainant and suspect were deceased.

On October 29, 2014, Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") Director Robert McCarthy reviewed the case with the Bishop and the Diocesan Review Board. There is no record in the files produced by the Diocese of the Board's determination on that date.

On July 21, 2019, the Office of Compliance received an email from Complainant B alleging he was the victim of child sexual abuse by Tousignant. Complainant B reported that Tousignant sexually assaulted him on numerous occasions in the late 1950s at Our Lady of Consolation Church in Pawtucket, where he was an altar boy. Based on Complainant B's date of birth, he would have been between the ages of approximately 12 and 15 years old at the time of the reported abuse. Complainant B reported that Tousignant hugged him, kissed him, and forced him to put his hand in Tousignant's pants in a church bathroom prior to services. According to Complainant B, Tousignant hid in the bathroom of the church and grabbed him when he had to pass by the bathroom to serve Mass. He stated in an email to McCarthy's successor, Director Kevin O'Brien, that he had lived with this memory for approximately sixty-five years before disclosing the incident to his wife and then to the Diocese. He also told O'Brien that he did not think he was Tousignant's only victim.

Diocesan records confirm that Father Tousignant served at Our Lady of Consolation in Pawtucket from 1956 until August 22, 1960, when, according to an unofficial translation of a Latin document found in the Diocese's chancery files, Bishop Russell McVinney suspended Tousignant, placed him on a leave of absence, and sent him for treatment at the Monastery of the Servants of the Paraclete, known as "Via

Coeli," located in Jemez Springs, New Mexico. The translation further reads that, toward the end of November 1960, Bishop McVinney granted Tousignant permission to celebrate Mass, and permitted him to return to the Diocese in January 1961. It also states that throughout 1961 until early 1964, Bishop McVinney petitioned the Holy See to restore Tousignant's faculties to hear confession. On February 20, 1964, it appears that Tousignant's faculties may have been briefly restored; less than two years later, however, on October 26, 1965, Tousignant's faculties were again suspended and he was "sent to the house of penance." We found no indication in the Diocesan records produced to this Office of the specific reason for Tousignant's stay at Via Coeli; what, if any, treatment he received there; or the basis for his sudden and prolonged leave of absence from the Diocese.

The day after receiving Complainant B's report in July 2019, Director O'Brien responded to Complainant B asking him to discuss the allegations further. Complainant B told O'Brien that he was not looking for anything and only wanted to know about Tousignant's status on the Diocese's Credibly Accused List. O'Brien replied that Tousignant was not on the list "because we never received any complaints about him for child sexual abuse or any other matter." O'Brien's response was incorrect, considering the earlier report to the Archdiocese of Denver that was forwarded to the Diocese of Providence in 2013. Office of Compliance records reflect that Tousignant's case was presented to the Diocesan Review Board for review in October 2019, but the records contain no information about the Board's discussion or determination regarding the complaint. It is thus not clear whether the Review Board recalled the prior referral from 2013.

O'Brien forwarded the complaint to the Rhode Island State Police on August 6, 2019. In his letter, he again incorrectly noted that it was "the first and only allegation received regarding Tousignant." The Rhode Island State Police closed their investigation in 2019 after unsuccessfully trying to reach Complainant B. Further efforts to contact Complainant B in 2024 were likewise unsuccessful.

**Status**

Father Tousignant applied for laicization in 1961 and was granted it in 1967. The Diocese did not produce any records identifying the basis for Tousignant's laicization, despite multiple requests from this Office. He is not included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father Biagio Samuel Turillo

| Born | Ordained | Suspended | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jul. 6, 1920 | Jun. 15, 1946 | Jun. 29, 2016 | Jul. 17, 2023 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1946 | St. Benedict Church, Warwick |
| 1946 – 1948 | St. Patrick Church, Providence |
| 1948 – 1953 | Sacred Heart Church, West Warwick |
| 1953 – 1954 | St. Mary Church, Cranston |
| 1954 – 1962 | Holy Angels Church, Barrington |
| 1962 | St. Joseph Hospital, Providence |
| 1962 – 1965 | St. Anthony Church, Woonsocket |
| 1965 – 1971 | St. Ann Church, Providence |
| 1971 – 1979 | St. Joseph Church, Hope Valley |
| 1979 – 1994 | Sacred Heart Church, West Warwick |
| 1994 | *Retired* as Senior Priest |
| 2016 | *Suspended on leave* |

## Summary

Father Biagio Samuel Turillo was accused of sexually abusing at least two boys, and possibly others, in the 1950s. Though the Diocese first learned of allegations of sexual abuse against Turillo in 1952 or 1953, while he was assigned to Sacred Heart Church in West Warwick, it did not remove him from ministry or report the allegations to law enforcement at the time. Rather, Bishop Russell McVinney simply transferred Father Turillo to a different parish. Additional allegations of misconduct apparently surfaced in the early 1960s, and although Turillo was "severely admonished," he remained in ministry. One of the complainants reported sexual misconduct allegations to the Diocese in 2016, but by then prosecution was time-barred. Following this complaint, Bishop Thomas Tobin removed Turillo's faculties and reported the allegations to the Vatican. Rather than laicize Turillo, Vatican officials directed Turillo to a "life of prayer and penance."

Father Turillo is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

## Reported Abuse and Diocesan Response

The first documented report of sexual misconduct against Father Turillo dates back to a February 19, 1952 letter signed by Complainant A. In this document, Complainant A reported that in January 1952, while assigned to Sacred Heart Church

in West Warwick, Father Turillo inappropriately touched and kissed him at a Catholic Youth Organization basketball game at West Warwick Junior High School. During the encounter, Turillo also reportedly asked Complainant A if he "wanted it," and suggested that they "go out." It does not appear that this allegation was investigated by the Diocese at the time.

According to an undated Chancery memorandum written in Latin and translated by Monsignor William Varsanyi on May 10, 2016, Turillo was again accused of sexual misconduct involving several unidentified young boys at Sacred Heart in March 1953. It is not clear from the document who made the initial complaint, to whom it was reported, and if this also referenced the allegations of Complainant A. According to the same memorandum, Bishop Russel McVinney sent Turillo to the Monastery of St. Gabriel in Brighton, Massachusetts. There, he completed two weeks of "spiritual exercises" before returning to ministry, at which time he was appointed as the assistant pastor of St. Mary Church in Cranston. There is no indication in the Diocesan records produced to this Office that the Diocese undertook any investigation of this complaint or referred it to law enforcement. Turillo remained at St. Mary's for about one year, before being transferred to Holy Angels Church in Barrington in 1954.

Sometime between 1956-1958, while on assignment at Holy Angels, Turillo allegedly molested an 11-year-old boy ("Complainant B") at the Maple Avenue School in Barrington, which was located across the street from the Church. Complainant B reported the sexual abuse to the Diocese in 2016. According to Complainant B's report, Turillo took the boy from the playground to a location behind the wall of the school, out of sight from onlookers, where he pulled down the boy's pants and fondled his genitals. It is unclear from the Diocesan records whether the Diocese knew of this assault at the time it occurred.

However, in January 1962, Turillo wrote to Bishop McVinney to request a transfer from Holy Angels to chaplaincy work, allegedly due to an injury. Just three months later, the Barrington Police Chief informed Bishop McVinney that Turillo was accused of committing "serious sexual misconduct with scandal resulting" while at Holy Angels. A police narrative from the time indicates the allegations involved a 28-year-old adult.

In the wake of these allegations, Turillo was transferred in April 1962 from Holy Angels to a chaplaincy at St. Joseph Hospital. According to an internal Diocesan memorandum, the "Ordinary of Providence," i.e., Bishop McVinney, "severely admonished [Turillo] and removed him from office of assistant pastor and appointed him chaplain of St. Joseph Hospital, Providence." In a separate note regarding this transfer, Bishop McVinney wrote: "I gave [Turillo] an ultimatum. If ever I hear another word about this sex perversity I shall strip him of his priestly faculties and send him home."

Turillo was also assigned to St. Anthony Church in Woonsocket in 1962. In August 1965, the pastor of St. Anthony Church in Woonsocket wrote to Bishop

McVinney requesting that Turillo again be transferred to a different parish. He urged that the transfer request was "a matter of conscience" that was "getting serious." The Diocesan records produced to this Office do not clarify the basis for the pastor's concerns. Once again, however, Turillo was transferred, this time to St. Ann Church in Providence. Records indicate that Turillo stayed at St. Ann's for six years, before being transferred in 1971 to St. Joseph in Hope Valley, and in 1979 back to Sacred Heart Church in West Warwick. Turillo remained in active ministry until Bishop Gelineau granted his request to retire, at 75 years old, in June 1994.

On April 22, 2016, Complainant B reported to Office of Compliance Director Kevin O'Brien that Father Turillo had sexually assaulted him. The Diocese initiated a canonical investigation into Turillo the following day. O'Brien referred the complaint to the Rhode Island State Police in May 2016. The State Police took a statement from the complainant and later informed him that no criminal charges could be brought because the statute of limitations in effect at the time of the reported abuse had run.

The Diocesan Review Board reportedly reviewed the allegation on May 30, 2016, but based on the files provided by the Diocese to this Office, it is unclear what, if anything, the Board recommended or determined.

On June 20, 2016, O'Brien interviewed Turillo at his private residence in Warwick. O'Brien noted that Turillo's age-related hearing loss and mental clarity presented "significant obstacles to conducting an effective interview," and that Turillo "did not seem to comprehend the seriousness of the allegations and would frequently attempt to monopolize the conversation by repeating several rambling stories regarding his childhood and family." When confronted with the allegations, Turillo reportedly would not provide a clear answer. O'Brien also reported, however, that "several [of Turillo's] answers and behaviors were consistent with indicators of possible deception. These were noted specifically when I questioned him regarding current and past allegations of sexual misconduct." O'Brien concluded that he could not be "completely certain" whether Turillo's lack of engagement in the interview was "due to his advanced age, purposeful deception or inability to recall events from approximately sixty years ago or a combination thereof[.]"

Nine days after the interview, Bishop Thomas Tobin revoked Turillo's faculties. The next day, the Vicar General, Monsignor Albert Kenney, sent an "Important message from Bishop Tobin" via email addressed to "Brothers in Christ," stating that "[i]t is with deep regret that I inform you that the Diocese of Providence recently received a very credible allegation of sexual misconduct with a minor against our brother Father B. Samuel Turillo, a senior priest of the Diocese, a situation which is alleged to have occurred approximately 60 years ago."

In August 2016, Bishop Tobin submitted his formal referral of the complaint against Turillo to the Vatican (specifically the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith). In his *votum*, Bishop Tobin expressed his belief that that Complainant B's allegations were credible, and added that "a search of Father Turillo's personnel file revealed documents that described additional instances of sexual misconduct."

These included the February 1952 letter signed by Complainant A regarding Turillo's assault of him while Turillo was assigned to Sacred Heart Parish in West Warwick; a chancery memorandum from March 1953 regarding Turillo's alleged "sexual misconduct with several young boys of the Parish of Sacred Heart in Natick"; police reports from March and April 1962 concerning Turillo's alleged sexual contact with an adult male while assigned to Holy Angels Church in Barrington; and Bishop McVinney's written rebuke of Turillo in April 1962. Despite this record, Bishop Tobin advocated to the Vatican for leniency with respect to Turillo's punishment, writing: "At this time, I do not belief that Father Turillo is a danger to young people, and I respectfully recommend that the Congregation not impose a penalty in this matter. In many ways, due to his advanced age and physical limitations, Father Turillo's life is one of 'prayer and penance' already. For that reason, I would respectfully suggest to the Congregation that Father Turillo be allowed to live his remaining years in a spirit of prayer and penance." Consistent with Bishop Tobin's recommendation, the Vatican refrained from laicizing Turillo, and instead directed him to a "life of prayer and penance," effectively and permanently removing him from all public ministry.

**Status**

Father Turillo passed away in 2023. He is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

# Father Armand Ventre

| Born | Ordained | Retired | Deceased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Feb. 8, 1932 | Jun. 30, 1957 | Dec. 1, 1999 | Dec. 27, 1999 |

## Assignment History

| | |
|---|---|
| 1957 | St. Jude Church, Lincoln |
| 1957 – 1958 | Our Lady of Providence Seminary, Warwick |
| 1957 – 1958 | St. Joseph Church, Burrillville |
| 1959 | St. Paul Church, Cranston |
| 1959 – 1972 | Mount Saint Charles Academy, Woonsocket |
| 1972 – 1983 | Director, Cursillo Movement, Providence |
| 1972 – 1974 | St. Luke Church, Barrington |
| 1974 – 1977 | St. Raphael Academy, Pawtucket |
| 1974 – 1980 | St. Teresa of the Child Jesus Church, Pawtucket |
| 1980 – 1985 | Our Lady of Good Help Church, Burrillville |
| 1985 – 1986 | *Leave of Absence* |
| 1986 – 1987 | Continuing Education in Spirituality Program, South Bend, IN |
| 1987 | Veterans' Administration Medical Center, Providence |
| 1987 – 1999 | Our Lady of Fatima Unit, St. Joseph Hospital, North Providence |
| 1999 | *Retired* |

## Summary

Father Armand Ventre reportedly abused six boys and one mentally disabled adult male during his four decades as a priest in the Diocese of Providence. In 1985, Ventre was criminally charged with child molestation and related offenses for his alleged abuse of three boys during the previous five years while serving as the sole parish priest at Our Lady of Good Help Church in Burrillville. Following a two-day bench trial in 1986, the presiding judge dismissed two counts against Ventre and found him not guilty of the remaining count.

After his acquittal, Bishop Louis Gelineau permitted Ventre to return to active service—in medical settings. In 1987, Ventre was assigned to the Veterans' Administration Medical Center in Providence and St. Joseph's Hospital in North Providence, where he was the subject of additional allegations of inappropriate behavior. Despite Ventre's history, several reprimands from Bishop Gelineau, and the recognition by Diocesan personnel that Ventre posed an "extreme risk" (as Office of Education and Compliance Director Robert McCarthy put it in November 1995), neither Bishop Gelineau nor his successor Bishop Robert Mulvee revoked Ventre's faculties or took steps to remove him from the priesthood; rather, Ventre was

permitted to remain an active priest until his retirement in December 1999, and he died later that month.

The Diocese included Ventre on its 2019 List of Credibly Accused Clergy.

**The Reported Abuse and Diocesan Response: 1973-1985**

Father Ventre reportedly began abusing his first victim, an eight-year-old boy ("Complainant A"), in 1973. According to the scant documentation available regarding this complaint in the records produced by the Diocese, Complainant A reported that the abuse continued for several years and took place at Ventre's lake house in Gloucester, close to where the complainant's family stayed during the summer. Complainant A reported that Ventre fondled him and washed his genitals. The Diocesan records produced to this Office contain no further description of the alleged abuse. The Diocese learned of Complainant A's allegations during an August 2008 arbitration between the Diocese, Complainant A, and two of Ventre's other victims. Complainant A ultimately received a $50,000 arbitration award.

In 2007, Complainant B reported to the Diocese that Ventre abused him in 1977, when he was a 13-year-old student at St. Raphael Academy in Pawtucket. However, records produced by the Diocese reveal that the Diocese learned of this around the time it reportedly occurred, when Complainant B's uncle, himself a Jesuit brother, reported the abuse to the school principal. Ventre was assigned to St. Raphael Academy in Pawtucket and was the boy's guidance counselor. According to Complainant B, at the close of the school year, he accepted Ventre's invitation to Ventre's lake house in Gloucester for several days. Ventre suggested that Complainant B needed to bathe after swimming in the lake, Complainant B said, and Ventre insisted that he bathe the boy himself, including his genitals. Complainant B said this occurred at least four times. In addition, he alleged that Ventre slept in the same bed as him despite the availability of other beds in the house. In a meeting with former Office of Education and Compliance ("OEC") Director Robert McCarthy in 2007, Complainant B also mentioned that Ventre may have abused one of his family members ("Complainant C"), though Complainant B did not give McCarthy a name, instead telling McCarthy that Complainant C did not yet wish to come forward.

Complainant B's uncle, a Jesuit brother, notified the principal of St. Raphael Academy in 1977 that Ventre had engaged in inappropriate conduct with his nephew. Father (and future Monsignor) Salvatore Matano, of the Priests' Personnel Office, subsequently wrote a letter to Bishop Louis Gelineau summarizing the allegations (as described to him in conversations with the St. Raphael principal). According to the letter, Father Ventre had developed a friendship with a shy ninth grade student whose father had died a few years earlier. Ventre reportedly invited the boy to his summer cottage for eight to ten days and proceeded to bathe the boy to wash off a type of algae from the lake, even though "the boy was quite capable of doing this himself." A 19- or 20-year-old St. Raphael graduate who had also lost his father visited the cottage at this time, and Ventre reportedly accompanied him to the bathroom. The boy also reported that even though there was another bed available, Ventre slept in the same

bed with him. Although he reportedly claimed there was "no physical contact," he noted that they would wrestle in the mornings. The boy reported these incidents to his mother, and also told his doctor at an appointment that his uncle (the Jesuit) attended. According to Matano's letter, the doctor encouraged the uncle to speak with the principal. The letter also notes that the principal stated that there were no threats of legal action, but that Ventre should be reassigned.

Although the letter indicated that the boy's name was not provided by the principal, and that the boy did not wish to confront Ventre, it also stated that the boy "would be willing to meet with a Diocesan official if [Bishop Gelineau] deemed this as necessary." The letter concluded with Matano's recommendation that the Bishop speak with Ventre and not question the boy "unless absolutely necessary." It does not appear that the Diocese spoke with Complainant B or referred the allegations to the Rhode Island Department of Families and Their Children ("DCF", now "DCYF") or to law enforcement upon receipt.

After being confronted with this complaint by Bishop Gelineau, Ventre resigned from St. Raphael on August 19, 1977. Later records reflect that Ventre was given "a strong admonition not to engage in such behavior." But he was nevertheless allowed to remain as the Diocesan Director of the Cursillo Movement, which Ventre described as allowing him "to do more with teenagers in the Search for Maturity program." Ventre's assignment records also indicate that he remained as a pastor at St. Teresa of the Child Jesus Chuch, in Pawtucket. In July 1980, Bishop Gelineau reassigned Ventre as the pastor of a single-priest parish, Our Lady of Good Help in Burrillville.

During Ventre's time as the pastor of Our Lady of Good Help, from 1980-1985, three separate boys ("Complainants D, E, & F") reported that Ventre sexually abused them there. Complainant F initially disclosed the alleged abuse to his therapist in August 1984, resulting in a DCF referral to the State Police a month later. The State Police interviewed Complainant F and his therapist in September 1984. Complainant F, who is also mentally disabled, was 14-15 years old at the time of the reported abuse. Complainant F told the State Police that almost every Friday night during the previous academic year, Ventre, who had been assigned as Complainant F's "big brother" through his school, would bathe and sleep with him either at Ventre's lake house or the rectory at Our Lady of Good Help. Complainant F further alleged that Ventre repeatedly touched his penis. During his interview, Complainant F mentioned Complainant D as another possible victim.

The State Police interviewed Ventre on October 9, 1984. Ventre admitted to bathing and sleeping in the same bed with Complainant F, but Ventre denied that this amounted to sexual misconduct and denied any other physical contact with the boy. He also admitted to possibly giving the boy a bath when he stayed overnight at the rectory because he was "accustomed to doing it." Ventre acknowledged that Complainant D had stayed overnight at the cottage or the rectory and that he had helped that boy take a bath as well.

The State Police interviewed Complainants D and E on November 21 and November 24, 1984, respectively. Complainant D stated that he was an altar boy at the church when Ventre was the parish priest there. He alleged that Ventre abused him from the time he was 13 until he was 16 years old, from 1981 through 1984. Complainant D reported that Ventre invited him to spend the night with him, both at the rectory and at Ventre's lake house, on multiple occasions. On those occasions, Ventre bathed him and touched his penis; slept in the same bed with him; and hugged and kissed him in bed. Complainant D identified Complainant E as both a witness and another victim.

The State Police soon interviewed Complainant E, who corroborated Complainant D's account. Complainant E reported that Ventre repeatedly abused him at his lake house between June 1983 and August 1984, when Complainant E was about 10-11 years old. Complainant E's allegations mirrored those of Complainant D (and those of Complainant B), including that Ventre repeatedly bathed him and touched his penis; that Ventre slept in the same bed as Complainants E and D; and that Ventre hugged and kissed him. He said that when Ventre shared a bed with Complainants E and D, Ventre slept in middle, with each child on either side of him.

In June 1985, Ventre was criminally charged in Rhode Island Superior Court with one count of second-degree child molestation, one count of second-degree sexual assault, and one count of simple assault and battery, for his alleged abuse of Complainants D, E, and F. The same day as the charges were filed, Bishop Gelineau wrote a letter to the parishioners of Our Lady of Good Help, informing them of Ventre's leave of absence, but expressing support for him and asking for "prayers for Father Ventre." A flaw in the indictment required the Office of the Attorney General to dismiss and refile the charges in January 1986, and for the two-week period between the dismissal and the refiling, Bishop Gelineau permitted Ventre to return as pastor of Our Lady of Good Help.

Remarkably, despite Ventre's arrest and prosecution, it does not appear that the Diocese disclosed to law enforcement the complaint involving Complainant B, which the Diocese had learned of a decade earlier. Had they done so, Complainant B could potentially have been a witness for the prosecution.

A bench trial began in August 1986 in front of Superior Court Judge John Orton III. Two days into the trial, Judge Orton dismissed the counts alleging sexual assault of Complainants D and E, finding that the State had not presented sufficient evidence to substantiate the charges. The next day, Judge Orton found Ventre not guilty of sexually assaulting Complainant F, citing inconsistencies in the boy's testimony and a history of emotional problems. Ventre carried a bell tied to a string into the trial, and explained to the press that the bell symbolized the bells that lepers would wear to indicate they were infected. He stated, "Somebody made me a leper unjustly... I'm laughing, but it isn't funny."

In a public statement released right after the trial, Bishop Gelineau said that the matter was "a very difficult and trying experience for Father Ventre, for the members

of his parish of Our Lady of Good Help in Mapleville, and for the Diocese of Providence"—and announced that he had met with Ventre and determined that "it would be in the best interest of all parties concerned to permit Father Ventre some time away from Parish ministry."

**The Reported Abuse and Diocesan Response After 1986**

After his acquittal, from September 1986 to June 1987, Ventre was enrolled in a "sabbatical" program at the University of Notre Dame, where he also reportedly participated in individual and group counseling. In the opinion of one medical professional there, Ventre was the victim of false accusations. Yet in a subsequent memorandum written by Monsignor George Frappier—prompted by a later request by Bishop Gelineau in 1994 to review Ventre's confidential files—Frappier wrote that the Notre Dame sabbatical "really did not address the relevant issues," was "intended apparently for 'burn-out' religious leaders," and the counseling services were "professionally superficial at best" and indicated Ventre's "denial, anger, and worry about a next parish assignment."

In June 1987, Ventre returned to Rhode Island and was assigned by Bishop Gelineau as a hospital chaplain at the Veterans' Administration Medical Center in Providence until October of that year. Simultaneously, Ventre was also assigned to the Fatima Unit of St. Joseph's Hospital in North Providence, where he remained until his retirement in 1999.

The Diocese received a fifth complaint against Ventre in the summer of 1987. The mother of a 24-year-old mentally disabled young man, Complainant G, informed Auxiliary Bishop Kenneth Angell of Ventre's inappropriate behavior with her son. The complainant was reportedly living in a group home at the time and spent an unknown number of nights at Ventre's house. The group home eventually limited Ventre to seeing Complainant G in group settings only, after Complainant G's mother asked the home to stop allowing further overnight visits between them. Complainant G's mother contacted the Diocese again on January 20, 1988, after her son informed her that he and Ventre shared a bed during the overnight visits. There is no further description of the alleged misconduct in the Diocesan records produced to this Office.

Bishop Gelineau met with Ventre the following day. Ventre admitted to sleeping in the same bed with Complainant G, but told Gelineau he "saw nothing wrong with two grown men sleeping together." Bishop Gelineau ordered him to "never have any youth at his cottage again," and threatened to remove his faculties if he violated this command.

In early March 1988, Ventre was sent to the Saint Luke Institute in Suitland, Maryland, for a comprehensive psychological and physical assessment in the wake of the allegations involving Complainant G. In a written evaluation, Saint Luke cautioned the Diocese that the likelihood of Ventre's future "inappropriate behavior is high," and made several recommendations that the Diocese appears not to have followed. It

appears Ventre began participating in outpatient therapy with a local provider around May 1988.

On October 11, 1989, a hospital chaplain who worked alongside Ventre at St. Joseph's Hospital told Auxiliary Bishop Angell about concerns he had with Ventre's relationship with a 14-year-old boy at the hospital. Rumors were spreading among medical staff, the chaplain reported, due to Ventre spending an "excessive amount of time visiting [the boy], example two hours. He brings him gifts: books, radio. Father Ventre seldom if ever visits anyone in the pediatric unit." On October 12, 1989, Bishop Gelineau again reprimanded Ventre, and records indicate that the Bishop sought to "retire [Ventre] with a pension." On April 24, 1992, Ventre sent a letter to the Bishop requesting a parish assignment, which was not granted. But it also appears that Gelineau neither removed Ventre from his hospital assignment or otherwise took further steps to limit Ventre's interactions with young people.

It appears Ventre continued to interact with children, in spite of Bishop Gelineau's reprimands. In a 1994 memo, Monsignor Frappier recounted an incident from 1989 where Ventre allegedly had "a four- to five-year-old boy, who lives next door to his cottage at Lake Washington, into the cottage. Father Ventre read to him sitting in his lap. Father Ventre was again called in. He promised to stop." There are no additional details regarding this incident in the Diocesan records produced to this Office.

On September 30, 1993, the pastor of Our Lady of Good Help (where Ventre had served until his arrest in 1985) contacted Monsignor Salvatore Matano, of the Diocese's Vicar General's Office, concerning Ventre's attempt to hear a sixteen-year-old boy's first confession and celebrate a home mass for his first communion. The boy, a parishioner at Our Lady of Good Help, was a foster child living next to Ventre's lake house. The pastor informed the Diocese that Ventre had not cleared this request with him, and stated that it seemed inappropriate given Ventre's history.

The same day, according to the Diocesan records, Monsignor Matano met with Ventre and instructed him "that absolutely no young people are to be visiting him in his residence... [and] to avoid all situations which might in any way call into question his association with young people and even young adults." It does not appear that anyone from the Diocese interviewed the boy at the time.

In March 1994, Ventre again requested a parish assignment. In response, Bishop Gelineau tasked Monsignor Frappier, the Vicar for Social Ministry, with preparing a report on Ventre's history of complaints. Frappier's report, dated June 23, 1994, detailed the various allegations against Ventre, as described above. Frappier offered his own interpretation of these facts, writing:

> Father Ventre has obvious problems. But, he does not agree. He does not recognize he has problems. He does not think it unusual or problematical [sic] to bathe youthes (sic) and young adults, nor to share his bed with two persons (youthes or young adults) when another bed is

> available. In spite of being investigated by State Police, having been indicted twice and gone to trial twice, he has a significant problem in terms of the disparity of perception that cause [sic] enormous problems in his life. He never admits having a proclivity for men and boys. Activities to date are not criminal, but close to it (possible 2nd degree sexual assault). His victims are all somewhat emotionally deprived. He is manipulative of them. . . [Ventre] does not comprehend the danger his conduct poses to the Church. Any future proven misconduct by Father Ventre as a Catholic priest could result in diocesan officials being found liable in damages.

Monsignor Frappier then recommended two alternative courses of action: first, "[l]eave things as they are until something else may happen. With the record, however, the Church leaves itself at risk for being sued for damages . . . Ventre has 7 reported episodes (some graver than others) in the last 17 years. This after repeated warnings and promises unkept." Alternatively, Frappier wrote, the Diocese could retire Ventre at full pension in January 1995, "because he is incorrigible and sees no problems in his behavior."

It appears Bishop Gelineau also sought the input of two separate advisory bodies, the "Tuesday Group" and the "Consistory," regarding Ventre's request for a parish assignment. The results of those discussions were memorialized by Robert McCarthy, the Diocese's newly-hired Director of the Office of Education and Compliance, in a November 1995 memorandum. McCarthy wrote that "it was unanimous by each and every person in each and every group that Fr. Ventre's request be denied! All eleven people felt that Fr. Ventre was an extreme risk and a public relations nightmare." McCarthy, who was a retired Massachusetts State Police officer, concluded from his review of Ventre's files and history that he blatantly "crossed the boundaries of acceptable professional behavior on numerous occasions and in my opinion, he is lucky the 1985 chargers were dropped because of a technically defective indictment or he would be a prison chaplain on the inside looking out." Bishop Gelineau ultimately denied Ventre's request for a parish assignment, but he also permitted Ventre to remain at St. Joseph Hospital, where, as Gelineau and the Diocese knew, he could have access to young people and vulnerable adults.

Bishop Robert Mulvee, Gelineau's successor, likewise permitted Ventre to remain at St. Joseph Hospital until his retirement. According to a September 1999 memorandum to Mulvee from Monsignor Robert Evans, at that time Ventre sought to discuss with Mulvee "either retirement for health reasons or another assignment (Father Ventre has been interested in a 'small pastorate'; however, due to his past difficulties involvement in parish work was not considered an option . . . )." Two months later, in November, Ventre submitted his request to retire for medical reasons on December 1, 1999. Bishop Mulvee granted the request, telling Ventre in a November letter: "I would like to express in the name of the Diocese of Providence, and in my own name, our sense of indebtedness to you for the wonderful work you have done. Your pastoral care during these many years especially among the sick and suffering has contributed to a greater experience of the presence of the Lord as the Divine

Physician caring for His flock." Ventre was retired with full Diocesan benefits, but he died the following month.

On September 6, 2007, Complainant B reported to Monsignor Paul Theroux, the Moderator of the Curia, that Ventre abused him in 1977. Days later, on September 10, Director McCarthy interviewed Complainant B. From the interview, the Diocese confirmed that Complainant B was the former St. Raphael Academy student whose uncle, the Jesuit priest, had reported Ventre's alleged abuse in 1977. Complainant B confirmed being bathed by Ventre at his cottage and wrestling with him after sleeping in the same bed. He did not recall another bed being available (though he remembered a couch), sharing a bed with a third person, or telling his doctor about the events. McCarthy opined that he thought that Ventre's story about needing to wash off algae was a "ruse." McCarthy also told Complainant B that he had not "heard . . . a crime." McCarthy stated, "[n]ow having been in this field for almost forty years, as I listen to what you have to tell me I'm saying to myself, if this occurred today? . . . . I would say I have not heard a crime. Inappropriate conduct? Absolutely. Questionable moral conduct? Absolutely." McCarthy went on to ask Complainant B what kind of redress he was looking for from the Diocese. The complainant responded that he was angry at the Church for not protecting him and others after he first reported in 1977, to which McCarthy responded, ". . . As you well know you can't watch these guys twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week." At the conclusion of the interview, McCarthy offered Complainant B reimbursement for his therapy expenses and encouraged him to speak with a lawyer.

In November 2024, as part of this Office's investigation, the Rhode Island State Police attempted to contact all of Ventre's living, known complainants. Complainants B, D, and E spoke with the State Police, confirmed their prior reports, and advised that they had nothing to add to their complaints.

**Status**

Father Ventre died in 1999. He is included on the Diocese's List of Credibly Accused Clergy.