

NAME: Fr. James B. Coveney
DATE OF BIRTH: January 18, 1937
STATUS: unknown
ORDINATION: May 23, 1964

ASSIGNMENTS:

06/1964-06/1968 St. John Gualbert Church, Johnstown, PA
06/1968-06/1971 St. Benedict's Church, Geistown, PA
06/1971-08/1972 Saints Cyril & Methodius Church, Windber, PA
08/1972- Unknown St. Patrick Church, Gallitzin, PA
10/1985-08/1988 St. Joseph's Church, Portage, PA
08/1988- Unknown Holy Family Church, Culver, PA;
Board of Directors for Bishop Carroll High School
07/2000- Unknown St. Mark's Church, Altoona and Penn State Altoona
Campus
07/2011 Senior Priest

In 1986, Father James B. Coveney fondled the genitals of a 10 year old boy while serving as a parish priest at St. Joseph's Church in Portage, Pennsylvania. The matter was reported to Bishop Joseph Adamec and the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown in 1996. The events of the Diocese's 1996 investigation of this molestation are disturbing.

The victim came forward to report the matter in early 1996. Bishop Adamec, Monsignor George Flinn, Reverend Thomas Acklin, and Reverend Alan Thomas met with Father James Coveney at St. John Gualbert's parish rectory on May 14, 1996 at 8:30 P.M. Coveney denied the allegation and haggled over details stating that the victim alleged he was abused between 1984 and 1986, but Coveney wasn't in Portage in 1984. In the course of this meeting Coveney stated it was like *déjà vu* since he had been accused of molesting numerous boys in 1988 and addressed the matter with Bishop Joseph Adamec. Adamec acknowledged that there had "indeed" been previous allegations.

Coveney insisted that those involved in the inquiry go back and look at the reports of his psychiatrist when he was sent to treatment in 1988. Coveney was shocked at Adamec's response that he "doesn't keep those records. There's a lot of stuff I don't keep." Coveney was stunned, he asked again if the records were in his personnel file. Adamec replied "I don't know. No. I don't keep a lot of stuff." Coveney asked the Bishop again how such records could not be maintained and asked if they were, Bishop

Adamec again responded that they were not in his file and that he doesn't keep "those things."

Coveney was becoming increasingly frustrated. He had been accused of molesting numerous boys in 1988. Coveney was sent to treatment by Adamec and believed that he had been cleared of pedophilia. However, Coveney was now being questioned about molesting a boy in 1986, and yet the Bishop Adamec was denying knowledge of the details of the previous allegations which he had been personally involved in. Moreover, Adamec was claiming no paperwork had been maintained.

Father Thomas Acklin was at the May 1996 meeting and was also aware of the 1988 allegations. Coveney asked him if he recalled discussing the matter with him at a Shoney's restaurant. Acklin indicated he did. However, in March 1996, Acklin was now claiming difficulty in remembering the "treatment" involved in the prior allegations of sexual child abuse.

The 1988 allegations were nearly identical to the allegation being brought forward in 1996. Coveney fondled the genitals of approximately five 7th grade boys. The boys described Coveney's contact with their genitals as being "pulled" or "grabbed". The Diocese located a child who stated it had never happened to him, but he had seen it happen to other boys. Coveney would keep them late at the rectory or offend on them while they served at parish functions. The Grand Jury found these reports to be credible and corroborative. Father James Coveney was molesting the children of St. Joseph's parish in Portage, Pennsylvania. However, Bishop Joseph Adamec never notified the police. The Grand Jury further notes that the allegation reported in 1996 is consistent with the allegations made in 1988.

Coveney was dispatched for "treatment" approved by the diocese which, as usual, was based upon self-reporting and limited information to render a conclusion that based upon the information provided by Coveney he could continue in ministry. This useless "treatment" protocol was accepted by Adamec and Coveney returned to ministry following yet another allegation of molesting children. As in 1988, no one called the police.

The Grand Jury does not find Adamec's statements that he does not keep records shocking. The Grand Jury found significantly less records from Adamec's time as

Bishop than during the time of Bishop Hogan. But by that time Adamec was aware of the potential to be held accountable for the Diocese's shell-game of moving predatory priests. Adamec simply chose to avoid a paper trail. In the case of Father James Coveney, even the accused predator found this disturbing. The Grand Jury, on that single point, agrees with Father Coveney.