

NAME: Fr. William J. Kovach
DATE OF BIRTH: March 10, 1929
STATUS: Retired
ORDINATION: May 21, 1955

ASSIGNMENTS:

06/1955-05/1957	St. Joseph's Church, Renovo, PA
05/1957-06/1959	St. Michael's Church, Clarence, PA
06/1959-06/1961	St. Stephen's Church, Johnstown, PA
06/1961-06/1962	St. Patrick's Church, Newry, PA
06/1962-08/1988	St. Michael's Church, Clarence, PA
*07/1988-08/1988	Saint Luke's Institute
08/1988-07/2001	Most Holy Redeemer, Revloc, PA
07/2001	Retired from public ministry

Father William Kovach was accused of molesting a minor male in approximately 1982. Kovach admitted his conduct to Bishop James Hogan but was permitted to continue in ministry and to have contact with children. Hogan's notes of the Kovach matter were held within the "secret archives" of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown, obtained from the court of the Luddy litigation and made a Grand Jury exhibit in this investigation. On March 17, 2015, Kovach appeared before the Grand Jury and was questioned, the following exchange is a portion of that testimony:

Mr. Dye: Why did you -- and again, you know, best of your recollection, but here I'm looking at Bishop Hogan's notes from his meeting with you where he's trying to decide what to do with these allegations and what to do with you. In his notes he indicates that you admitted the conduct. Did you admit the conduct to Bishop Hogan?

Mr. Kovach: Yes.

Mr. Dye: Why did you admit the conduct to him?

Mr. Kovach: Because it happened, that's why.

Kovach was questioned in detail regarding his duties within the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown even after he had admitted to Bishop Hogan that he had molested a child. Kovach's answers to that questioning before the Grand Jury are as follows:

Mr. Dye: And this is important. I want to make sure we're clear on this. You have an interaction with Bishop Hogan where it's laid out there are allegations of attempted sodomy, fondling. He noted immoral familiarity, that there was -- that you had taken your clothes off in front of this child. You have this interaction with Bishop Hogan where all this is laid out. You're crushed, you admit it, and you want to get better, correct?

Mr. Kovach: Yeah.

Mr. Dye: And he leaves you at Saint Michael's; is that accurate?

Mr. Kovach: Right.

Mr. Dye: So now we are getting beyond the contact. This is important to note, when you go back to Saint Michael's are your duties diminished or are they the same?

Mr. Kovach: Well, they're about the same, yes.

Mr. Dye: About the same. So talk about those duties. What were you doing? Were you conducting Mass?

Mr. Kovach: Yes

Mr. Dye: Were you interacting with members of the church?

Mr. Kovach: Yes.

Mr. Dye: Were you counseling members on spiritual issues?

Mr. Kovach: Yes.

Mr. Dye: Were you engaged in any teaching of minor children?

Mr. Kovach: Yes.

Mr. Dye: Were you having -- and I guess by extension you were having contact with minor children?

Mr. Kovach: Yes.

Mr. Dye: And to be clear, this is you've sat down with the Bishop and there has been an agreement that you have had inappropriate sexual contact with a minor, but now you're back at Saint Michael's doing the exact same thing?

Mr. Kovach: Right.

Mr. Dye: And if you recall, whenever he says that you resolved to change and that you have this desire to get better and that you were no danger to the flock, what

steps did you take to better yourself? Were you involved in counseling? Did you seek any treatment?

Mr. Kovach: No.

The Grand Jury concluded Father Kovach was a child predator who had been enabled by the Diocese. Whether to avoid personal or institutional embarrassment or scandal; Bishops James Hogan and Joseph Adamec kept Kovach's secrets for him. No one called the police.

Mr. Dye: And are you still currently a priest?

Mr. Kovach: Yes.

Mr. Dye: I'm not trying to be offensive, but you were not defrocked or anything like that?

Mr. Kovach: No.

Mr. Dye: Sir, I want to ask you – I know you have counsel here today – prior to today, has anybody ever sat down with you to discuss issues involving pedophiles in the Catholic Church?

Mr. Kovach: No.

Mr. Dye: You've never had investigators come to you and talk to you about that?

Mr. Kovach: No.

Mr. Dye: Police officers never came to you?

Mr. Kovach: No.

Mr. Dye: And you were never subpoenaed to a courtroom to talk about it?

Mr. Kovach: No.

Before the close of his testimony Father Kovach testified that the Church was an incredibly powerful entity during his time in ministry. Deputy Attorney General Dye asked Father Kovach if he ever expected to hear from the police following his admission to sexually abusing children. Kovach replied:

Mr. Dye: Did you expect when you met with the Bishop, did part of you think, well, I'm going to be hearing from the police or I'm going to be hearing from somebody else next?

Mr. Kovach: No.

Mr. Dye: You felt that it was over?

Mr. Kovach: Right.

The Grand Jury notes the culture the Diocese created. An active priest groomed and engaged in sexual intercourse with a 16-year-old child and never expected anyone to report it. Father Kovach was unconscionably accurate. Business as usual in the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown continued on.