

NAME: Fr. William Rosensteel
DATE OF BIRTH: February 12, 1943
DATE OF DEATH: June 26, 2007
ORDINATION: May 24, 1969

ASSIGNMENTS:

06/1969-11/1969 St. Leo's Church, Altoona, PA
11/1969-05/1973 St. Patrick's Church, Johnstown, PA
05/1973-02/1986 St. Mary Immaculate Conception, Altoona, PA
Part time religion teacher Bishop Guilfoyle High School
02/1986-06/1988 St. Patrick's Church, Gallitzin, PA
06/1988-07/2002 St. Patrick's Church, Newry, PA
07/2002-05/2007 Holy Rosary Church, Altoona, PA
05/2007 Resigned from parish after accusations

Father William Rosensteel's list of victims is long and tragic. Rosensteel began sexually assaulting a boy in the early 1970's when the boy was approximately 9-years-old and Rosensteel was a parish priest at St. Patrick's Church in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. The abuse continued until the boy was approximately 15-years-old. The victim recounted he became involved in various church duties as an altar boy at the request of his father who was a devout Catholic. His parents took enormous pride of their son's service in ministry. The victim explained he kept the secret of his sexual abuse for his parents' sake and reported it only after they died. The victim described that the assaults occurred almost constantly and every time he served Mass. On some occasions Rosensteel would ask the victim to accompany him to St. Francis Seminary or into the rectory of St. Patrick's Church in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. During the assaults Rosensteel would hug, kiss and grope the victim. As the assaults escalated he would try to force his tongue down the victim's throat and shove his hands down his pants. The victim was sexually assaulted to such a degree that it became nearly synonymous with actual church ceremonies.

Father Rosensteel would often spend time with Father Dennis Coleman. Coleman is identified in this report as a known child predator. Rosensteel and Coleman would play sexually explicit comedy albums for the victim and other boys. The sexual abuse continued for many years.

A rift began in Rosensteel's relationship with the victim when he took him to the St. Francis Seminary and the victim refused to go into the sauna with Rosensteel and two

other men the victim recalled as priests or clergy. The victim was under the impression that Rosensteel had planned to have them all offend on him and decided to wait in the car. The victim paid a price for angering Rosensteel. Rosensteel began to tell his parents he was a bad child and needed drugs to make him more compliant. As a result the victims' parents had him treated for Attention Deficit Disorder.

The victim reported that Rosensteel had a group of older boys with whom he was very close. The boys had a strange relationship with Rosensteel and Rosensteel enjoyed their company. As the victim began to break away from Rosensteel the older boys began to harass him for refusing Rosensteel's invitations. They told the victim not to "cause trouble" and on one occasion the victim was raped by one of the boys who stated "this is for Father Rosensteel."

The victim reported the incidents to his parents as a child and they chose to not believe him. The victim's report to the Diocese came in 2006. Having built the courage to finally report his childhood hell, he contacted Sister Marilyn Welch, the diocesan victim advocate. The advocate for victims recorded an interaction with this broken man noting the following:

We left the possibility of the review board open at the end of the conversation. (REDACTED) was very upset and was crying. At times his speech was garbled due to crying or possibly because he was talking on a cell phone. He agreed to think about it and I will call him again in a week or so to discuss the case further. I feel that he is in a very fragile state at this point. He doesn't seem to know exactly what he wants to do about the case. He does not have a lawyer.

The Grand Jury again concludes the "victim advocate" for the Diocese is an advocate for the Diocese against the interest of victims. Where the victim advocate can shuffle a victim into the Allegation Review Board without the involvement of legal representation for a victim she does so. Money is offered. Confidentiality and release claims are signed by victims and the Diocese to avoid public scrutiny. This type of "advocacy" is not advocacy at all but investigation and information gathering to assess the liability of the Diocese. Again and again the Grand Jury observed evidence of this type of cover-up cloaked in the guise of advocacy. The Grand Jury learned that this victim was the tip of the iceberg; in early 2007 additional victims came forward.

On March 2, 2007, the Diocese was told by another victim of Father William Rosensteel that he and potentially 8 other boys were sexually abused. The victim was an altar server at St. Patrick's Church in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. He explained that Rosensteel would invite boys to sleep over at the rectory. Rosensteel was a young, vibrant and popular priest. He would take the boys on trips to Canada and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. When overnighting with the children, Rosensteel and the children would all sleep in their underwear. Rosensteel would pick one boy to sleep in his bed. Rosensteel would engage in "passionate deep throat tongue kisses" and fondle their genitals. Rosensteel would invite boys into the shower with him and touch their buttocks. After nearly 20 incidents of sexual abuse the 12-year-old boy managed to break his ties to Rosensteel. To this day the victim thinks back and wonders how a young priest could walk around holding the hand of his victim in the parish. The victim told his mother of the abuse in the mid-1990's at the height of the publicity regarding clergy sexual child abuse. His mother contacted Monsignor George Flinn. The Grand Jury could find no evidence within the Diocesan records that Flinn recorded that call or took any action.

On May 15, 2007 another victim came forward. This victim reported being one of the 8 boys. He corroborated much of what the other victim had reported. He added that Father Rosensteel used to like to play a "kissing game" in which Rosensteel would engage in "french kissing" between himself and two boys. In June 2007, an additional victim came forward. He reported sexual abuse at the hands of Father William Rosensteel and stated that he thought it was because Rosensteel loved him.

The Grand Jury heard from various witnesses on this matter. Specifically, the Grand Jury heard from witnesses who recalled Rosensteel meeting with Diocesan officials to be informed of his suspension from ministry. Rosensteel is attributed with stating that the disclosure of sexual child abuse on his part had "done him in." Rosensteel was aware of the various opportunities to continue in some fashion following an investigation. However, no witness could recall a report to law enforcement being made. One witness, a priest, opined that he felt the treatment of Rosensteel was cruel and that he could have been dealt with more kindly rather than by public disclosure of his sins.

The same month Father William Rosensteel's fourth victim came forward he committed suicide. Rosensteel died from multiple injuries caused by the 190-foot drop

from a bridge crossing over the Stonycreek River in Cambria County. Bishop Joseph Adamec issued a release following his death stating "There was hope that the final determination would allow him to retire with some type of ministry." Of the suicide, the Diocese spokesperson stated "Bishop Joseph is deeply saddened by the news about Father William Rosensteel. It is difficult to comprehend a priest taking the action that he did." No comment was made to the victims of Rosensteel's crimes, many of whom reported that his conduct killed their faith and ruined their lives.