

NAME: Fr. Joseph Strittmatter  
DATE OF BIRTH: January 11, 1931  
DATE OF DEATH: August 21, 2014  
ORDINATION: May 26, 1956

ASSIGNMENTS:

05/1956-06/1959	Teacher, Johnstown Catholic High School
06/1959-07/1961	Sacred Heart Church, Altoona, PA
07/1961-07/1963	St. Agnes Church, Lock Haven, PA
06/1963-04/1967	St. Therese Church, Altoona, PA
04/1967-04/1981	St. John's Church, Acosta, PA
04/1981-09/1987	St. Matthew's Church, Tyrone, PA
09/1987-06/1992	St. Mark's Church, Altoona, PA
06/1992	Medical leave

Some years ago Joseph Strittmatter was accused of molesting young girls in his capacity as a parish priest. Between 1961 and 1969 Strittmatter would fondle and touch a 6-year-old girl while acting as a parish priest at St. Agnes Church in Lock Haven, Pennsylvania. Strittmatter would force her head into his lap. It is believed the abuse continued into the child's teens. The Diocese was made aware of this sexual abuse in 1991. Bishop Adamec left Strittmatter in ministry until June 1992. When interviewed on another allegation sometime later, Strittmatter explained that he molested the child because he was never "taught" about sex. On February 19, 1993 at the behest of Bishop Adamec, Monsignor George Flinn noted that he "told Joe not to minister publically."

In 2002, Monsignors Flinn and Servinsky interviewed Father Strittmatter regarding another allegation. In that interview Strittmatter admitted to molesting another 8-year-old girl stating, "In her mind she might think it was inappropriate." The priest clarified, "I can't remember individual acts. But I was trying to learn about sex." The child predator had now admitted to two separate victims. Monsignors Flinn and Servinsky did not call the police. Bishop Adamec never notified law enforcement.

FBI Special Agent Adrienne Isom noted that various forms of sexual deviancy are often present in those with a sexual interest in children. Perhaps it's not a surprise that Father Joseph Strittmatter was accused of masturbating to a female parishioner while in confessional between 1987 and 1992. The parishioner reported that she became unable to go to confessional and contacted Monsignors Flinn and Servinsky following the alleged

incident. Shortly thereafter the congregation learned that Strittmatter would be going on "medical leave." Diocese records do not indicate he ever returned to ministry.

If one questioned the exceptional damage that is caused to faithful Catholics by the priests listed in this report, one needs to look no farther than Joseph Strittmatter. The Grand Jury heard from numerous devout Catholics speaking to their deep and abiding concern for the wellbeing of the Church and the faith. These Catholics seek to have the misconduct of the priests and Bishops in this report addressed and assurances this kind of conduct will not be tolerated by law enforcement or the Church. While perhaps not as heinous as the victimization of children, the victim of Strittmatter's conduct in the confessional haunted the victim. Cognizant of the sacred role confession holds within her faith, the victim asked the Diocese if her Strittmatter induced confession phobia would cause her to "go to Hell." Strittmatter's other victims suffer from a lifetime of emotional and psychological trauma. The Church itself becomes a symbol of pain.

The Grand Jury notes with grave concern that the exact number of Father Strittmatter's victims may never be known. Father Joseph Strittmatter, who had been active in the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown for over 30 years, stated "I remember *some* of these... I am not denying this." Strittmatter died in 2014.