

Reverend Henry Paul

Biographical Information

YEAR OF BIRTH:	Unknown
YEAR OF DEATH:	1982
ORDINATION:	1941

Employment/Assignment History

To the extent they are known, assignments are noted in the Summary.

Summary

Father Henry Paul was ordained in 1941 as a religious priest from an Order known as the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales. He worked in various positions in the Pennsylvania Dioceses of Erie, Philadelphia, and Allentown, the New York Dioceses of Buffalo and New York City, and Salesianum School in Wilmington, Delaware.

In April 1979, a known individual wrote a letter to Bishop McShea of the Diocese of Allentown stating that her niece and “*a few other little girls*” from the parish of the Sacred Heart Church, New Philadelphia, Schuylkill County, had been “bothered” by Paul. The individual reported that Paul took the little girls to the rectory and kissed them. One girl went home and told her mother that she knew how to “French kiss.” When the mother asked how the little girl knew that, the little girl responded that Father Paul had showed her. The individual reported that Paul had her niece and another little girl in the rectory one day and her niece ran home terrified. Her niece’s mother and some of the other mothers wanted to keep the incidents quiet. The individual wrote, “*I think to keep it quiet is wrong. If this continues some innocent people are going to be hurt. And it will be too late then.*” The individual went on to describe that, during Easter preparation, Paul would have the children sit on his lap for confession and then give him a kiss.

In a handwritten letter to Bishop McShea from “Tony” (apparently Monsignor Anthony Muntone), Tony reported that he confronted Paul with the accusations. Paul admitted that he had a deep love for children and that he did kiss younger children but that it was done in an appropriate way. Paul denied any inappropriate conduct. Tony wrote that he had a very strong feeling that Paul was not telling the truth. As a result of not believing Paul, Tony dug further and asked an individual named Bob Fagan what he knew about the matter. Fagan’s role in the Diocese is not known. Fagan spoke to fifteen to twenty children in the parish about Paul. He reported that three or four of the children told Fagan that they had kissed Paul and, while they did not use the term, they described a French kiss. None of the children with whom Fagan spoke was over the age of twelve.

Fagan then spoke to Paul about what he had learned and Paul became “*panic stricken.*” Paul began to pack his belongings in preparation to leave the parish. Fagan then promised not

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to report Paul since the situation “*seemed under control.*” Fagan apparently did speak and report the issue to Paul’s Oblate Superior, Dennis Murphy.

Fagan heard nothing about the matter for approximately two months, when another parishioner called to report another incident. The parishioner stated that her daughter was told by Paul to go home and take her underwear off and then return to him at the chapel. It was at this point that Fagan and “Tony” recommended to McShea that Paul be removed from the parish.

In documents received by the Allentown Diocese, it is shown that Paul was relieved of his responsibilities at Sacred Heart Church in April 1979. He was believed to have returned to his religious order and continued in ministry.

On August 5, 2011, the *Wilmington News Journal* reported that the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales had settled some 39 lawsuits filed by the victims of sexual abuse for \$24.8 million. As part of the settlement, the Oblates named twelve priests said to have committed the abuse, including Paul. According to information released by the Oblates, after leaving Sacred Heart, Paul was assigned to St. Joachim in Philadelphia. He died in 1982.