

Reverend Joseph A. Rock

Biographical Information

YEAR OF BIRTH:	1941
YEAR OF DEATH:	N/A
ORDINATION:	February 5, 1972

Employment/Assignment History

2/1972 – 9/1972	Sacred Heart of Jesus, Allentown, PA
5/1972 – 5/1975	Catholic Scouting, Allentown Area
6/1972 – 2/1975	Catholic Youth Organization, Lehigh County, PA
9/1972 – 2/1975	St. Catherine of Siena, Allentown, PA
2/1975 – 9/1976	St. Ignatius Loyola, Reading, PA
3/1975 – 9/1976	Scouts, Hawk Mountain, Berks County, PA
6/1975 – 9/1976	Catholic Youth Organization, Berks County, PA
9/1976 – 8/1977	St.s Simon and Jude, Bethlehem, PA
9/1976 – 4/1982	Scouts, Minsi Trails Council, Lehigh County, PA
9/1976 – 6/1982	Catholic Youth Organization, Bethlehem, PA
8/1977 – 3/1982	Our Lady Help of Christians, Allentown, PA
3/1982 – 2/1986	St. Francis de Sales, Mount Carbon, PA
6/1983 – 2/1986	Catholic Scouting, Diocese of Allentown
9/1983 – 9/1986	Social Action Bureau Advisory Board, West Schuylkill County
6/1985 – 2/1986	Youth Ministry
2/1986 – 9/1986	Sick Leave
9/1986 – 10/2001	Holy Family Manor
10/1999 – 10/2001	Retired
5/2005	Dismissed from Priesthood

Summary

In 1986, two reports were made to the Diocese of Allentown indicating sexual contact with three boys by Father Joseph Rock. One incident occurred in 1983 when the victim was nine years old. The victim stated that Rock touched him by fondling and masturbation. In addition, two brothers came forward claiming that, in the early 1980's while they were still minors, Rock sexually touched them through their clothes.

In February 1986, Rock was placed on "sick leave" and sent to Servants of the Paraclete in Jemez Springs, New Mexico. On February 3, 1986, according to Diocesan records, the Chancery was offered a "bleak picture" for Rock's prognosis by staff at Servants of the Paraclete. On February 9, 1986, the Chancery was advised by treatment staff, "He . . . is no longer capable of functioning in a responsible work situation, and his life is unmanageable." On June 12, 1986, the Chancery was advised by a staff member at the Servants of the Paraclete that Rock was "one of the worst cases he ever encountered." On October 20, 1987, Bishop

Summary

Welsh limited Rock's faculties for priestly ministry to a nursing home and the priest's retirement facility.

On December 29, 1989, Rock's civil attorney asked the Diocese for a retainer fee, which the Diocese paid. On August 6, 1991, there was a meeting held with Rock at the Chancery to "*discuss the matters.*" On January 21, 1992, another meeting was held at the Chancery to inform Rock of the second allegations made against him. Rock admitted to "roughhousing" with the boys and, in the process, feeling their genitals.

On March 25, 2000, the Diocese received a letter written from another victim who complained that Rock was always "*grabbing kids from behind,*" including the victim. The victim continued by stating, "*I recall he was always pulling me closer, always odd, I recall him pushing himself into my body...*" The victim was an adult at the time of reporting but in fourth or fifth grade at the time of the assaults. He said that Rock would begin "*touching him*" and his penis but always "*through his pants,*" and that Rock told him that he "*shouldn't tell anyone that it was a blessing and that if [he] told [he] would go to hell.*" The victim was in Rock's company about three times a week and that this touching would go on almost every time. The victim claimed it went on in front of parishioners and even once in front of his parents, explaining that a priest's vestments are long and flowing and that Rock had his hands beneath the material of his sleeves so that they could not be seen by his parents. By the time the victim was twelve or thirteen, Rock's touching went so far as Rock putting his hand down the victim's pants and directly on the victim's penis.

On June 2, 2000, the final release of the civil lawsuit against the Diocese was received and the Diocese agreed to pay \$305,000. The Diocese secured a release from the victim in exchange.

On November 9, 2001, Rock offered a letter of retirement as Chaplain of the nursing home. The resignation was triggered by an investigation by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, which received complaints that Rock had sexually abused two elderly male patients.

On August 20, 2003, the Diocese received yet another complaint concerning Rock. The complaint was that Rock molested a minor when the victim was in the seventh or eighth grade.

On September 2, 2003, Chancery officials met with Rock to go over allegation. Although Rock could not recall the incident, he stated that it could have happened "since the incident is in keeping with the way he acted with other victims."

In 2007 another victim reported that, from 1979 to 1981 while he was in the sixth through eighth grades, he was subjected to oral sex, fondling, and anal sex by Rock. In 2007, the Diocese dismissed Rock from the priesthood.