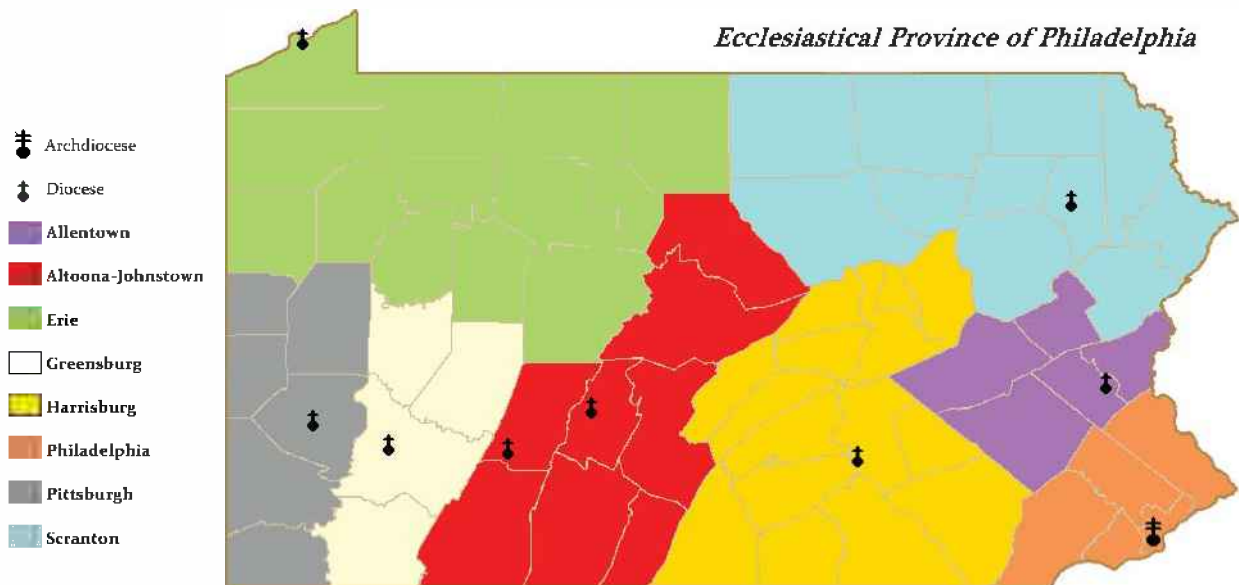


# Roman Catholic Diocese of Erie



## I. General Overview of the Diocese of Erie Pennsylvania

The Diocese of Erie was founded on July 29, 1853 and includes thirteen counties in northwestern Pennsylvania. These counties are Erie, Crawford, Mercer, Venango, Warren, Forest, Clarion, Jefferson, Elk, McKean, Clearfield, Cameron and Potter Counties. This is the largest geographical diocese in the state of Pennsylvania. Due to its large size the Diocese of Erie is divided into three sections known as Vicariates: Eastern, Northern and Western. Each of these Vicariates is run by a priest or Monsignor who takes their direction from, and is answerable to, the Bishop of Erie. The Diocese serves the roughly 221,508 Catholics of the region or approximately 25.7% of the regional population. The Bishop is the chief authority within the Diocese of Erie.

## II. History of Bishops of the Diocese of Erie

- 1) Bishop John M. Gannon (1920 – 1966)
- 2) Bishop John F. Whealon (1966 – 1968)

- 3) Bishop Alfred M. Watson (1969 – 1982)
- 4) Bishop Michael J. Murphy (1982 – 1990)
- 5) Bishop Donald W. Trautman (1990 – 2012)
- 6) Bishop Lawrence T. Persico (2012 – Present)

### **III. Additional Church Leadership within the Diocese of Erie Relevant to the Grand Jury's Investigation**

The Grand Jury finds that that the following Church leaders, while not Bishops, played an important role in the Diocese of Erie's handling of allegations of priest sexual abuse.

- 1) Monsignor Mark Bartchak
- 2) Father Glen Whitman

### **IV. Findings of the Grand Jury**

The Grand Jury uncovered evidence of child sexual abuse committed by priests in the Diocese of Erie. Evidence showed that Roman Catholic priests engaged in sexual contact with minors, including grooming and fondling of genitals and/or intimate body parts, as well as penetration of the vagina, mouth, or anus. The evidence also showed that Diocesan administrators, including the Bishops, had knowledge of this conduct and yet priests were regularly placed in ministry after the Diocese was on notice that a complaint of child sexual abuse had been made. This conduct enabled offenders and endangered the welfare of children.

Evidence also showed that the Diocese made settlements with victims and had discussions with lawyers regarding the sexual conduct of priests with children. Further, these settlements contained confidentiality agreements forbidding victims from speaking about such abuse under threat of some penalty, such as legal action to recover previously paid settlement monies.

Finally, the Grand Jury received evidence that several Diocesan administrators, including the Bishops, often dissuaded victims from reporting abuse to police, pressured law enforcement to terminate or avoid an investigation, or conducted their own deficient, biased investigating without reporting crimes against children to the proper authorities.

## **V. Offenders Identified by the Grand Jury**

- 1) Michael J. Amy
- 2) Michael G. Barletta
- 3) Donald C. Bolton
- 4) Robert F. Bower
- 5) Dennis Chludzinski
- 6) Donald Cooper
- 7) Michael R. Freeman
- 8) Gregory P. Furjanic
- 9) Chester “Chet” Gawronski
- 10) Herbert G. Gloeker
- 11) Robert E. Hannon
- 12) James P. Hopkins
- 13) Barry M. Hudock
- 14) Joseph W. Jerge
- 15) Stephen E. Jeselnick
- 16) Thomas C. Kelley
- 17) Gary L. Ketcham
- 18) Thaddeus Kondzielski



## **VI. Examples of Institutional Failure: Fathers Chester “Chet” Gawronski, William Presley, and Thomas Smith**

The Grand Jury notes the following examples of child sexual abuse perpetrated by priests within the Diocese of Erie. These examples further highlight the wholesale institutional failure that endangered the welfare of children throughout the Pennsylvania Dioceses, including the Diocese of Erie. These examples are not meant to be exhaustive; rather, they provide a window into the conduct of past Pennsylvania Bishops and the crimes they permitted to occur on their watch.

## The Case of Father Chester Gawronski

### Known Assignments

06/1976 – 09/1978	St. Joseph, Oil City
09/1978 – 07/1979	St Bernard, Bradford
07/1979 – 02/1987	St. Agatha and St. Bernadette Mission, Saegertown
02/1987 – 01/1988	Health Leave
01/1988 – 05/1989	Holy Family Monastery, Erie
01/1988 – 05/1989	St Patrick, Erie
05/1989 – 12/1989	Health Leave
12/1989 – 08/2001	Pleasant Ridge Manor, Girard
06/1992 – 11/1992	Hamot Hospital, Erie
08/1995	St Ann, Erie
09/2001	St Mary's Asbury Ridge, Erie

Father Chester Gawronski became a priest in the Diocese of Erie in 1976. In August 1986, Bishop Michael Murphy was notified that Gawronski had fondled and masturbated a 13-to-14-year-old boy on multiple occasions from 1976 to 1977 under the pretext of showing the victim how to check for cancer. Complaints continued to be received for decades.

In early 1987, the complaints were commonly made by parents who reported similar conduct with their sons. An internal Diocesan memorandum was obtained by the Grand Jury and indicated that the number of victims could be as high as twenty.

**So many of the parents know about the skinny dipping and the cancer check. That as one parent said - How many boys were involved?. The same number that he took to camp; my guess we would be counting fifteen or twenty over the years.**

### Diocesan Records Attempt to Tally the Abuse

Diocesan administrators, concerned about negative publicity and potential legal liability, attempted to assure the families of the victims that action would be taken. Internally the Diocese worked to compile data on the number of families affected and how to keep the matter secret.

On January 7, 1987, Father Glenn Whitman, head of the Diocese's Clergy Personnel Office, wrote a letter addressed to a parent of one of Gawronski's 13-year-old victims. Whitman wrote, among other things, "My only caution to you ... is to refrain from probing for any more information about past events as it may raise undue concern and attention on the part of people who aren't involved." That same day, Whitman documented the need for "discretion" in another Diocesan communication to an interested party. Among other things, Whitman wrote:

I can't stress enough the necessity for discretion in this matter. It is obvious at this time that legal action isn't pending, or being considered. Undue attention or publication of this information to other families, or other priests would be harmful and certainly unnecessary."



**Diocese of Erie**  
Caring Roman Church  
of Northeast Pennsylvania

**Clergy Personnel**  
St. Ignace Center  
600 Washington Ave.  
Erie, PA 16501

*1-7-59*

Dear Henry,

Thanks again for your understanding and insight into the issues we discussed the other day. I'm sure everything will work out for the best, for St. Agatha/St. Bernadette, for Clark and the family involved as the weeks unfold.

I can't stress enough the necessity for discretion in this matter. It is obvious at this time that legal action isn't pending, or being considered. undue attention or publication of this information to other families, or other priests would be harmful and certainly unnecessary. I hope I can rely on you and your wisdom to avoid the dissemination of this information.

I am planning to share the information with Andy Clark at the end of this week, as it is within the realm of his responsibility and pastoral concern.

Thanks again, for your thoughtfulness.

000000000000000000

Whitman's "Discretion" Letter



Diocesan records, obtained by the Grand Jury through a subpoena served on September 1, 2016, recorded the ever-growing list of affected and traumatized parishioners. A summary of potential families affected noted that the mother of a group of brothers that were molested continued “to be very angry about this whole thing” and is in conversation with at least one other family on this list. She stated that “going public would be a distinct possibility should (Gawronski) ever be assigned to parish work.” On February 9, 1987, Gawronski provided the Diocese with a list of forty-one possible victims. He confirmed at least twelve children as victims on whom he had performed the “cancer check.”

February 9, 1987

Frank:

Here is a list of any young man that I had some contact with in the Meadville and Saegertown area. (Played racquetball with, took to the cottage, friends of their family, friends of some of the boys, etc.) Since [REDACTED] says that I was with so many kids, he think I have done something with all of them. I have put a asterisk next to the names of the boys I had taught how to check for cancer.

MEADVILLE: (ST. AGATHA PARISHIONERS)

[REDACTED] \*  
[REDACTED] \*  
[REDACTED] \*  
[REDACTED] \*  
[REDACTED] \*  
[REDACTED] \*

FRIENDS OF SOME OF THE BOYS ABOVE:

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

SAEGERTOWN: (ST. BERNADETTE PARISHIONERS)

[REDACTED] \*  
[REDACTED] \*  
[REDACTED] \*  
[REDACTED] \*

RCDErie 0001970

1. A few days before Christmas, 1986, Family A called the Pastor asking why Diocese wasn't doing anything about Fr. Chet. Pastor unaware of her meaning...she explained about camp owned by a Doctor in/near Oil City. Her son was asked to go skinny dipping in pool and felt that CW was going for "those parts of his body forbidden to touch". Son got out, went to shower, CW insisted on showering together and boy was masturbated. Pastor believes boy was 12 then; he told his siblings about it but not his parents until fall of 1986.

Family A still angry about this and threatened to come forward - go public - if CW assigned to parish.

2. Family B (also from Saegertown as is Family A) Son also touched by CW. Family went to previous parish administrator about the incident. Boy about 14 when CW arrived on scene. He went with CW to camp three or four times, always with other boys. He resisted stripping for the skinny dipping. In summer of 1980 (boy 15 at time), with two other boys, CW put all in circle and CW told them all to "get it up". CW helped this boy as he was having trouble getting an erection. Once this was accomplished, the "cancer check" proceeded.

This boy continued going to confession to CW, who told him to "keep it in your pants".

Boy has since married at 19 to emotionally immature girl, possibly to prove his sexuality...since broke up. Mother expressed concern that priests shouldn't be treated any differently than others in these cases (jail? trial?)

3. Family C Two boys, mother feels certain that CW propositioned them both, if not actually did "the check" on them. They often went to the camp, but like the others, mysteriously and suddenly stopped accompanying CW.

(Also Saegertown)

4. Strong suspicions from the parents of three other families in Saegertown the CW molested or at least propositioned their boys. Also a family in Cambridge Springs through his ministry at Alliance College.

5. Family D (Meadville) Two sons, mother says that the oldest was molested. Constant presence of CW in house, "rub downs", racquetball, wrestling in livingroom. Mother not sure about second son's possible molestation - pretty sure of proposition.

6. Family E Mother feels that of her several boys, the oldest was molested. Continues to be very angry about this whole thing and is in conversation with at least one other family on this list. She has said that "going public" would be a distinct possibility should CW ever be assigned to parish work.

RCDErie 0001968

- 
7. Suspicions about two other families - nothing more than that, however.

Comment at Parish council meeting in Saegertown. Discussion was centered on apparent waning of interest/activity. Reasons were cited. One parent spoke up "Don't forget what happened here 3-4 years ago (reference to CW); there's hardly anyone around this table who hasn't been hurt."

RCDErie 0001969

A 1987 List of Families Affected

Additional records, obtained from the secret or confidential archives of the Diocese, noted that, in April 1987, Gawronski freely confessed to numerous instances of sexual abuse. He was sent to Chicago for psychological evaluations but denied any problems with boys. He was placed on a temporary leave of absence. In some instances, entire families of young boys were molested by Gawronski. Regardless, Gawronski was still permitted to wear the collar of the priesthood as he engaged the public.

In addition to this information, more victims reported Gawronski for criminal sexual acts with children to the Diocese in 1988. In 1990, Bishop Donald Trautman took command of the Diocese. Trautman also received additional complaints in 1995 from a victim who had been molested at the age of 15 in 1986. The victim reported he had fallen prey to Gawronski's "cancer checks."

By 1996, there was no possible doubt that Gawronski had spent most of his priesthood preying on the vulnerable. However, even as complaints continued, on November 6, 1996, Gawronski was notified that Trautman had approved his request to hear confessions for persons with disabilities. On May 19, 1997, Trautman sent a letter to Gawronski and thanked him for "all that you have done for God's people during those twenty-one years of ordination. Only the Lord knows the many acts of kindnesses on your part and the deep faith that you have shown. The Lord, who sees in private, will reward."

For approximately fifteen years, from 1987 to 2002, Murphy and Trautman allowed Gawronski to remain in active ministry by reassigning him multiple times. As late as 2001, Trautman assigned Gawronski to a new five-year term as a chaplain for St. Mary's Home in Erie.

In January 2002, the *Boston Globe* broke national news by publishing an article detailing child sexual abuse by clergy in the Archdiocese of Boston. Located within records provided by

the Diocese was a petition for “withdrawal from priestly ministry” signed by Gawronski with the handwritten notation, “EFFECTIVE FEB. 27, 2002.”

On June 2, 2002, one of Gawronski’s 13-year-old victims wrote a letter to Trautman. Among other things, the victim requested that the Church: 1) stop aiding and abetting priests; 2) ensure collections were not used to compensate priests; 3) publicize the names of pedophile priests; 4) identify any priest who has molested a child; and 5) establish a policy to ensure offending priests were reported to law enforcement. The victim also advised that Trautman had never contacted him since the *Erie Times* ran an article identifying potential offenders within the Diocese in April 2002. The victim specifically cited that his dealings with his molestation recently resurfaced when learning of Trautman’s “libelous statement that there were no pedophiles in the Erie Diocese.”

Trautman responded to this victim by letter dated June 21, 2002. Trautman stated that he was shocked the victim would “go to the press directly rather than to contact me regarding the past” and argued that the victim was 14 years old when the abuse occurred, not 11 as stated in the article. Trautman explained that the Diocese had a “zero level tolerance for any abuse situation”; that he knew of no priest with a pedophile background in any form of ministry; and that he had never transferred an accused priest from parish to parish as had occurred in other dioceses.

On November 12, 2004, Trautman wrote a ten-page letter to Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in Rome. The letter was accompanied by a twelve-page directory of Gawronski’s victims and crimes. In total, forty-four identified children were identified in the documents. In providing a basis for Gawronski’s removal from the priesthood, Trautman stated, “Gawronski identified, pursued, groomed, and then abused his victims. The classic use of manipulations of the parents, siblings, and friends of the victims in order to get to

those victims or cultivate other potential victims is consistently evident throughout.” Trautman went on to write:

I now see in its totality that his conduct has been deeply harmful to several individual persons, to the faith communities of St. Joseph Parish, Oil City, PA, St. Agatha Parish, Meadville, PA and St. Bernadette Mission, Saegertown, PA, and the common good of the Church. He has gravely offended the dignity of the priesthood, the Sacrament of Penance, and the dignity of marriage, as well as against good morals in general. As long as Gawronski exercises priestly ministry and that is publically known, the effects of scandal among the people of the Diocese of Erie will continue. Justice has yet to be restored, given the number and kind of his offenses.

Trautman’s scorching indictment of Gawronski’s decades of child sexual abuse was necessary to convince Rome to remove Gawronski from ministry. It was also the only full and fair accounting of Gawronski’s crimes that either Trautman or the Diocese has provided to date. Unfortunately, it was contained within a private letter to Rome rather than through a public acknowledgment to Gawronski’s victims or the public. Additionally, it occurred fifteen years after the Diocese received the first report of child sexual abuse and only occurred after immense external pressure was placed on the Diocese by press accounts and litigation.

## **The Case of Father William Presley**

### **Known Assignments**

05/1956 - 06/1965	St. Cosmas and Damian, Punxsutawney
06/1965 - 08/1970	Elk County Christian High School, St. Marys
05/1971 - 08/1971	Immaculate Conception, Brookville
05/1972 - 08/1971	Our Lady Queen of the Americas, Conneaut Lake
08/1970 - 06/1976	Leave of Absence, Graduate and Student Counselor, Notre Dame, Indiana
06/1976 - 06/1977	Leave of Absence, St. Joseph University, Philadelphia
06/1977 - 06/1978	Leave of Absence, Campus Minister, University of Maryland, Baltimore, Maryland
06/1978 - 08/1981	St. Therese, Shinglehouse
06/1971 - 08/1981	Sacred Heart Mission, Genesee
08/1981 - 03/1983	Leave of Absence, Parish Ministry in Raleigh, North Carolina
03/1983 - 03/1988	St. Agnes, Morrisdale (three separate assignments)
03/1988 - 04/1990	Leave of Absence, Outside the Diocese
04/1990 - 07/2000	Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Sykesville (three separate assignments)
07/2000	Retired in Lancaster (Diocese of Harrisburg)

The Diocese of Erie was first apprised of Father William Presley's sexual abuses as early as November 1987, during his assignment as Pastor of St. Agnes. These sexual abuses, as reported to the Diocese, involved two victims and spanned nearly sixteen years. One of the victims had been abused as recently as 1986; the second victim was abused prior to 1971 when he was a high school student in another parish.

Between February and May 1988, various meetings or discussions were held between Presley and Diocesan officials. Fathers John Rosenhamer, A. Joseph Book, Joseph Bobal, Glen Whitman, John Beal, and Bishop Michael Murphy participated in the review of the complaints. The Diocese noted that Presley did not directly deny the allegations. However, Diocesan memoranda obtained by the Grand Jury recorded the Diocese's negative view of the complaining victims. Documents regularly referred to the victims as "troubled" or having psychological



“problems.” Indeed, it was noted that one victim may have been the victim of a previous sexual assault by a family member.

During the course of the counseling, Bill learns that she has read over 400 of these trashy, romantic novels, and that she fantasises about everything. The girl, obviously, to me, Fr. Book, has psychological problems. That's one element of the story.

#### An Excerpt of a Diocesan Memo Regarding a Victim

There was a consensus amongst diocesan officials that Presley was extremely violent and predisposed to assaultive behavior. On May 16, 1988, Bobal wrote a letter to Murphy containing his recollection of a meeting with Presley. He confirmed that Presley had given the teenaged female victim a job and had obtained other items for her, including clothing and money. He also noted the possibility that Presley would become violent. The meeting concluded with a request that Presley undergo a psychological evaluation. Presley ultimately refused the evaluation but agreed to see another doctor at the recommendation of the Diocese.

Immaculate Conception Church

408 Stone Street  
Osceola Mills, PA 16666

May 16, 1988

Most Rev. Michael J. Murphy, P.D., S.T.L.  
Bishop of Erie  
205 W. 9th St.  
Erie, Pa. 16501

Dear Bishop Murphy,

In response to a request made by Father A. Joseph Beck I am writing my recollections of a meeting held at Immaculate Conception rectory on Thursday, Feb. 18, 1988 at 11:00am. Present at the meeting were Fathers John Rosenhamer, William Ptasley and myself. Father Rosenhamer and Father Ptasley did all of the talking. I was there mainly because we knew of Bill's propensity toward anger and we were concerned about the possibility of his becoming violent.

As we sat down, Father Rosenhamer began by telling Bill of his talks with [redacted] and he (Fr. R.) read through a list of things she had accused Bill of. These accusations were about sexual conduct with her. Bill sat there listening to Fr. Rosenhamer until he was finished with occasional comment on his part. Then he said something to the effect of -- "Do you want to hear my side now" and I believe John said "yes".

Bill then began to describe his association with [redacted]

- a- How she came to him for money.
- b- How he offered her part time work as a secretary.
- c- How she always seemed to want or need more money.
- d- How he increased her hours of work.
- e- How he worked to get her a scholarship at St Francis College.
- f- How he went shopping for clothes for her.
- g- about her dating some fellow now who was the possible cause of her dropping out of school.

170  
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Immaculate Conception Church

408 Stone Street

Osceola Mills, PA 16866

He denied having sexual intercourse with her and also denied several times the accusation of any sexual involvement of [REDACTED] with her. There may have been other comments made which I can't remember now.

After this, Bill asked John what he wanted him to do and John said he wanted him to go up to Saint Georges for the weekend and then he would be taken to St. Louis - I think - for evaluation. Then at this point, I believe, Bill said "Do I get to see the Bishop" and I believe that John's response was not until after the evaluation. There was some discussion on the length of time required for the evaluation and Bill kind of balked at the amount of time that he would be away but then he said that he would go - that he owed it to Bishop Murphy to go thru the evaluation.

I am not sure of the sequence here but it seemed that they began to cover the same ground over again but this time Bill gave a detailed and graphic history of [REDACTED] life as he knew it - how she was mistreated and abused by her grandfather. After this I think John restated what he wanted Bill to do and Bill said something about the possible outcome of the evaluation and then said "I've worked too hard for what I have and I won't give it up. I'll get a lawyer." and John said that he thought that he should. Bill also talked about his dogs. He said that he wouldn't give them up since they were a sort of therapy for him. I believe that somewhere along here Bill said, "I want to see the Bishop" and I believe that John said we want you to go for evaluation first. Somewhere in this dialogue Bill said that he respected his vow of celibacy and that the whole conversation was extremely embarrassing to him. (146)

In the end he did promise to go back to the parish and get things lined up for him to go up to St. George's and then on to St. Louis for evaluation. Father Rosenhamer said that he would be at St Agnes and St Severin churches for the weekend.

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Immaculate Conception Church  
408 Stone Street  
Osceola Mills, PA 16666

He said that he would simply tell them that Father Presley was on a health leave. As he was leaving, I told Bill to either let me know or write down what his weekday schedule for Masses was and any other details he might want to leave for us so that Father Mastrian and I could maintain things for him until he got back. Bill left and then called me that afternoon or the next day to check out Mass schedules for the bulletin.

Again, Bishop, I have to admit that I am not at all positive about the sequence of everything written here and that there were other things said that I could not recall but what is here are my recollections of that afternoon's meeting.

Respectfully Yours in Christ,

*Joseph K. Bobal*

c. -Very Rev. A. Joseph Book E.V.

c. - Rev. John P. Beal, J.C.D. Judicial Vicar

112

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The Bobal Letter

Following an evaluation in April 1990, Murphy placed Presley in a temporary assignment. That assignment was made permanent in June 1990. Shortly thereafter, Trautman allowed Presley to remain in his position as Pastor and Administrator at the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Sykesville, Jefferson County. In April 1996, Trautman appointed Presley to a new six-year term as Administrator of this Church, where Father Presley remained until his retirement in 2000.

In January 2002, an article detailing the practice of reassigning priests accused of sexual abuse of children was published in the *Boston Globe*. In April 2002, three separate victims notified Trautman of sexual abuse perpetrated upon them by Presley from 1963 to 1974. One of the victims was as young as 13 years old when it occurred. The abuse of these individuals consisted of “choking, slapping, punching, rape, sodomy, fellatio, anal intercourse,” and other acts according to Diocesan records reviewed by the Grand Jury. On April 18, 2002, Trautman contacted Presley by telephone. Trautman recorded that, during that call, Presley admitted the sexual abuse of the victims. Trautman revoked Presley’s priestly faculties later that year.

In April 2003, and in response to media inquiries about Presley, the Diocese of Erie issued a press release stating, among other things, that Presley’s priestly faculties were removed in July 2002 shortly after the allegations prompted the Diocese to conduct an internal investigation. The Diocese stated that Trautman’s understanding of the alleged incidents was that the crimes had occurred 28 years ago during the time of the late Bishop Watson. The Diocese explained that the individual making the allegation was twenty years old at the time and enrolled at a college in another state where the incidents were reported to have occurred. The Diocese told the public that it had “no information to provide on other possible allegations against the priest.”

This press release was false and misleading. Trautman had personal knowledge of at least three victims, one as young as 13, who reported their abuse to him in 2002. Only one victim was an out-of-state college student. Moreover, the Diocese was aware of sexual abuse complaints against Presley as early as 1987 but permitted him to stay in active ministry for another thirteen years. Additionally, Diocesan records showed that Presley was so violent that priests who interacted with him were concerned for their safety.

Later that year, Trautman communicated with the Vatican and outlined additional details with respect to sexual abuse committed by Presley. Trautman cited information provided by a doctor who was counseling one of Presley's victims, the same doctor who counseled Presley in 1988. Trautman reported that the information "...confirms my suspicion that there are even more victims of the sexual abuse and exploitation perpetrated by Presley."

By 2005, the Diocese was actively engaged in an attempt to formally remove Presley from the priesthood. In the course of that effort, personnel for the Diocese interviewed other witnesses or associates of Presley and identified numerous additional victims or potential victims. Monsignor Mark Bartchak led the investigation. Several of these individuals stated that they informed the Diocese of their concerns in the 1980's, including a report to a parish council member, who stated that Presley would not allow anyone else inside the rectory when certain children were present and that some of these children spent the night with him on multiple occasions.

Bartchak also re-interviewed the male victim who had previously disclosed his abuse to the Diocese in 1982, 1987, and 2002. He explained that Presley invited him to his rectory after befriending him. Presley then tried to hypnotize him before assaulting him. Presley took him on trips to New York and Yosemite. Presley brought other children on some of these trips, including

one occasion when he tried to abuse both the victim and another high school student at the same time. Presley taught the victim how to have sexual intercourse by bringing in a female high school student and using index cards to show them where to touch each other. On more than one occasion, Presley gave him some type of a sedative to relax him prior to abusing him. Presley stated that it was okay “because he was a priest” and used his position as a spiritual guide to further the abuse.

On August 25, 2005, Bartchak sent a confidential memo to Trautman that detailed the results of his interviews to date. Bartchak stated the following: “I was not surprised to learn from other witnesses from the Elk County area, that there are likely to be other victims” and that “... several more witnesses who could attest to the brutality that they were subjected to by Father Presley.” Bartchak asked, “It is likely that there may be others who were also of the age for the offenses to be considered delicts, but to what end is it necessary to follow every lead?” He sought Trautman’s opinion, asking:

Is it worth the further harm and scandal that might occur if this is all brought up again? I am asking you how you want me to proceed. With due regard for the potential for more harm to individuals and for more scandal, should I continue to follow up on potential leads?

Four days later Bartchak documented a meeting earlier that day with Trautman, in which he stated:

Bishop Trautman decided that in order to preclude further scandal, these additional witnesses should not be contacted, especially given the fact that is not likely that they will lead to information concerning delicts involving minors under 16 years of age.

In 2006, Trautman made a confidential, formal request to the Vatican in support of Presley’s laicization. The Grand Jury reviewed similar requests in Dioceses throughout Pennsylvania. Often called “The Acts” of the subject priest, the summaries were often the most detailed documents within Diocesan records and contained decades of long-held secrets only

disclosed in an effort finally to remove an offending priest from the priesthood. The “Acts” of Presley stated, in part:

Presley is a violent man....He managed to work his will and way by fear, intimidation, charm and deception, all the classic signs of a hardcore predator. How he managed to escape for so many years defies reason and understanding.

His behavior was carefully planned behavior....Victimization didn't happen spontaneously; it was programmed, masterfully designed, almost perfectly executed.

Given the pattern of behavior over his years in ministry, I believe that Presley constitutes a threat to others.

Presley's abuse has had a rippling effect on the spiritual, mental and emotional lives of his victims.....Presley's case has been made public by way of the printed media – causing scandal among the Christian Faithful.

He manipulated families to welcome him into their homes and worked to garner the approval of parents. He then used this privileged position to solicit sexual acts with the children.

Father Presley's behaviors of manipulating families into giving him their trust and grooming their children for engaging in sexual acts continued and improved as he moved to other assignments.

In the course of these proceedings to remove Presley, the Bishop of Harrisburg, Kevin Rhoades, provided a statement. He acknowledged that Presley had moved to Lancaster, Pennsylvania after his retirement in 2000. Rhoades wrote that his predecessor, Bishop Nicholas Dattilo, was personally aware of this matter and that more information regarding the violent behavior of Presley had come to light since Presley moved to the Diocese of Harrisburg. Further, the letter stated that “were this information to become known, especially in the light of his offers of public assistance at Mass in several parishes, great public scandal would arise within this diocese.”

On July 13, 2006, Trautman wrote to the Lancaster County District Attorney. His letter stated that Presley was now defrocked and that the Diocese had received “credible allegations



regarding sexual misconduct with a minor which allegedly occurred many years ago.” Trautman falsely wrote, “We were unaware of these allegations until they came to light only a few years ago. As a result, no criminal charges were ever brought forward because the statute of limitations had expired.” The truth was that Murphy, Trautman, and the Diocese of Erie intentionally waited out the statute of limitations and curbed their own investigation to prevent finding additional victims.

The Grand Jury finds that the failure of the Diocese of Erie and of Murphy and Trautman to aggressively pursue the removal of Presley in a timely fashion had left Presley cloaked in the authority and respect of the priesthood. Moreover, the lack of transparency and candor with respect to the concerns surrounding Presley only aided seamless insertion into another Catholic community. Presley, a priest Trautman would eventually describe as a “hardcore predator,” had escaped to a new region of Pennsylvania.



**DIOCESE OF HARRISBURG — Office of the Bishop**

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4800 Union Deposit Road — Box 2153 • Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17105-2153  
(717) 657-4804

**Votum of the Bishop of Harrisburg**

Prot. N. 242/2003  
Rev. William F. Presley

Your Eminence, Cardinal William Levada:

Permit me this opportunity to offer an opinion in the matter of Rev. William F. Presley, a priest of the Diocese of Erie, in a case concerning the commission of a *gravius delictus*, namely the sexual abuse of a minor.

I was ordained and installed as Bishop of Harrisburg on December 9, 2004. My predecessor, Bishop Nicholas C. Dattilo, was personally aware of and directly involved in this matter.

Following his admission of the sexual abuse of a minor, Father Presley moved to the area of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, within the Diocese of Harrisburg. This occurred in the Summer of the year 2000. My predecessor learned of this from priests of the area, because of Father Presley's assistance to the parishes of the Lancaster area.

Upon inquiry, it was learned that Father Presley left his diocese of incardination following an admission of sexual abuse of a minor, and the sexual abuse with force and threats of multiple other persons. At the time, Bishop Donald Trautman of the Diocese of Erie was under the impression that Father Presley had voluntarily assumed a life of prayer and penance, refraining from public ministry or the public celebration of the sacraments.

Bishop Trautman wrote the following to Bishop Datillo on May 6, 2002:

*Dear Bishop Datillo,*

*I wish to inform you that Rev. William F. Presley, a 73 year old retired priest of the Diocese of Erie who is currently residing at 1606 Sunset Avenue, Lancaster, PA 16701, no longer enjoys the faculties of the Diocese of Erie. In view of recent conversations with him, he has voluntarily decided not to assist in the public celebration of the sacraments or in preaching in the Lancaster area. Nevertheless, I want you to be informed that he does not have the faculties of the Diocese of Erie any longer. I am fully confident that he will not attempt to exercise any ministry in your diocese.*

*Sincerely yours in Christ,*

*Most Rev. Donald W. Trautman  
Bishop of Erie*

RCDERIE0052124

Conversations between curial officials of this diocese with members of the curia of the Diocese of Erie confirmed the history of sexual abuse which Father Presley exhibited, and also that he was not to exercise ministry in any public forum.

It is a source of grave concern to me, as it was to my predecessor, that Father Presley misrepresented to his own diocesan bishop that he had voluntarily assumed a life of prayer and penance, and had voluntarily withdrawn from public ministry.

More information regarding the violent behavior of Father William F. Presley toward many victims of his disordered sexual appetite has come to light since he moved to the Diocese of Harrisburg. Were this information to become known, especially in light of his offers of public assistance at Mass in several parishes, great public scandal would arise within this diocese.

It is also of grave concern to me that Father Presley has not only prevaricated to his diocesan bishop regarding his lifestyle past and present, but in so doing has obviously not withdrawn from contumacy. His lengthy history of sexual misconduct in violation of his promise of clerical celibacy and perpetual continence, his deliberate misrepresentation of the truth to the bishop to whom he promised respect and obedience, and the grisly nature of his many sexual acts even beyond the one known *gravius delictus* committed with a minor, all combine to suggest to me as the ordinary of the place where he now resides, that Bishop Trautman's request is reasonable and necessary. Dismissal from the clerical state may be the only means of removing a sexual predator from the ranks of the priesthood. His age is not necessarily an obstacle to his sexual misconduct, given his history.

As long as Father William F. Presley remains in the clerical state, I harbor fear for the People of God within the Diocese of Harrisburg. I fear that his possession of the clerical state will allow him a means of continuing his pattern of carefully insinuating himself into the lives of others as a prelude to violence and sexual misconduct. Further, I believe that his own contumacy, and his denial of the seriousness of his behavior, may be intransigent until an action as serious as dismissal from the clerical state awakens within him a semblance of repentance.

Given in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, this fifth day of April 2006.

+ *Kevin C. Rhoades*

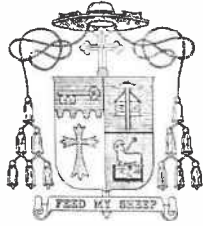
Bishop of Harrisburg

In testimony whereof...

*Carol J. Houghton*  
Chancellor

RCDERIE0052125

The Statement of Bishop Rhoades



*Office of the Bishop*

*Diocese of Erie  
P.O. Box 10397  
Erie, Pennsylvania 16514-0397*

July 13, 2006

County of Lancaster  
District Attorney's Office  
50 N. Duke Street  
P.O. Box 83480  
Lancaster, PA 17608-3480

Dear District Attorney Totaro,

I am writing to you to confirm the information which you received in a letter from the Diocese of Harrisburg dated June 23, 2006 concerning William F. Presley. He is a priest of the Diocese of Erie who recently moved to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Our records indicate that Mr. Presley currently resides at 1606 Sunset Avenue in Lancaster.

Mr. Presley was suspended by me several years ago for credible allegations regarding sexual misconduct with a minor which allegedly occurred many years ago. We were unaware of these allegations until they came to light only a few years ago. As a result, no criminal charges were ever brought forward because the statute of limitations had expired. I would also like to update you to that fact that by means of an administrative decree dated June 10, 2006, Pope Benedict XVI has ordered that the penalty of dismissal from the clerical state be imposed upon William F. Presley. Consequently, we now consider Mr. Presley to be defrocked.

If you have any questions or if I can be of any help to you, please do not hesitate to let me know. In the meantime, be assured of my prayers.

Sincerely yours,

The Most Rev. Donald W. Trautman, S.T.D., S.S.L.  
Bishop of Erie

cc: The Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades  
Bishop of Harrisburg

/eml

RCDErie 0022730

Trautman's Letter to the Lancaster County District Attorney

## The Case of Father Thomas Smith

### Known Assignments

06/16/1967 – 08/15/1967	Our Lady of Peace, Erie
09/15/1967 – 06/03/1970	Sacred Heart, Erie
06/03/1970 - 02/12/1971	St. Patrick, Franklin
02/12/1971 – 07/16/1972	Notre Dame, Hermitage
07/16/1972 – 06/23/1978	St John the Baptist, Erie
06/23/1978 – 06/01/1981	St. Cosmas and St. Damian, Punxsutawney
06/01/1981 – 10/23/1984	St. Mary of the Assumption, Frenchville
02/01/1984 – 10/01/1984	Health Leave
03/08/1984 – 03/08/1989	Presbyterian Council, Erie
10/23/1984 – 02/05/1985	St. Joseph, DuBois
02/05/1985 - 03/12/1985	St. Hippolyte, Guys Mills
08/08/1985 – 09/16/1985	St. Joseph, Mt. Jewett
09/16/1985 – 12/12/1986	St. Teresa, Union City
12/12/1986 – 04/22/1987	Health Leave, Girard, Ecclesia Center
04/22/1987 – 11/30/1987	Health Leave, Suitland, Maryland, St. Luke's Institute
12/01/1987 – 09/01/1992	St. Joseph, Warren
09/01/1992 – 05/01/1994	Holy Rosary, Erie
05/01/1994 -	Pleasant Ridge Manor, East Mercy Motherhouse
05/01/1994 -	Sisters of Mercy Motherhouse, Erie
05/01/1994 -	St. Patrick's, Erie, St. Hedwig Cluster

Father Thomas Smith was ordained in 1967. In 1981 he was assigned to Saint Mary of the Assumption. Bishop Michael Murphy was first told of child sexual abuse perpetrated by Smith against a 17-year-old boy in January 1984 while at Saint Mary's. Smith resigned on January 20, 1984.

From February 1984 to October 1984, Smith was placed on "health leave." In reality, he was in residential psychological therapy. In October, Smith was released and reassigned by Murphy to Saint Joseph's in DuBois, Pennsylvania until February 1985. In February 1985, Smith was transferred to Saint Hippolyte in Guys Mills, Pennsylvania for approximately one month. From March 1985 to August 1985, Murphy sent Smith to residential psychological therapy once again. Official Diocesan records obtained by the Grand Jury show this was designated as a leave

of absence. Upon his release, Smith was sent to Saint Joseph's in Mount Jewett in August 1985. After about one month at Saint Joseph's, Smith was transferred to Saint Teresa in Union City, Pennsylvania where he remained for approximately 10 months. In spite of Smith's history of child abuse, and his need for continued treatment, Murphy continued to permit Smith's contact with children. While at St. Teresa's, Smith sent a letter to Murphy describing his gifts and accomplishments in "working with young people."

In December 1986, Smith was placed on a leave of absence yet again. This leave of absence continued for almost a year while Smith was returned to residential psychological therapy. In January 1987, Diocesan records indicated that the treatment facility informed Murphy that Smith suffered from a "driven, compulsive, and long standing" obsession with sexually assaulting children. The facility warned that since his first treatment in 1984, Smith had not stopped sexually assaulting children and that interdiction was needed.

These secret Diocesan records obtained by the Grand Jury pursuant to a subpoena showed that, while in treatment, Smith admitted to sexually molesting at least fifteen children. Smith stated that all of his victims were boys, some as young as seven. Smith had raped them anally and orally. This information was provided to Murphy in November 1987. That same month, Smith was discharged from the facility.

In spite of Smith's confession to sexually violating at least fifteen prepubescent boys, Murphy assigned Smith to the parish of Saint Joseph's in Warren on December 7, 1987. Approximately three months later, in March 1988, Father Glenn Whitman wrote a letter to Smith and advised him of recent conduct that placed him in violation of his aftercare agreement with St. Luke's Institute. Regardless, Smith continued in ministry at Saint Joseph's with the approval of Murphy, and, beginning in 1990, Trautman.

On July 25, 1990, Whitman wrote a memo to Trautman and noted two known parishes affected by Smith's abuse. He also wrote that "The number of victims is not clearly known." The same day, Trautman wrote his own memo regarding Smith. In this document, Trautman wrote that he had met with Smith about his problems and that Smith was a person of "candor and sincerity." Trautman noted that after another year and a half he would consider a new assignment for Smith because he wanted Smith to complete his aftercare and was fearful of future litigation.

**Diocese of Erie**

**Office of Clergy Personnel**

**Bishop Trautman**

I was mistaken about the known occurrences of misbehavior on Tom's part. 2 parishes were affected:

- (1) ST. MARYS – FRENCHVILLE  
from which he went to therapy  
in Pittsburgh at Bethel Park
- (2) ST. TERESA – UNION CITY  
from which he went to  
therapy at St. Luke Institute

The number of victims is not clearly known.

Rev. Glenn R. Whitman  
Clergy Personnel Director

July 25, 1990

RCDErie 0008565





*Office of the Bishop*

*Diocese of Erie  
P.O. Box 10897  
Erie, Pennsylvania 16514-0897*

TO: Personnel File  
FROM: Most Rev. Donald W. Trautman, STD, SSL  
RE: Confidential (Rev. Thomas E. Smith)  
DATE: July 25, 1990

Today I met with Father Smith and discussed in detail past problems. I found him to be a person of candor and sincerity. I commended him for the progress he has made during the past two and one-half years in controlling his addiction. Our meeting was friendly.

In reference to the future, I told him that I would prefer that he would wait another year and one-half which would mark the end of his Aftercare program before he applied for a new assignment. He concurred with my thinking that since he is doing so well in Warren --- is happy, fulfilled, satisfied -- that we should continue in that same direction and not take a chance by trying a new assignment at this time.

I wanted to give him courage for the future, but at the same time, I clearly indicated that I would prefer him to wait another year and one-half and then have an evaluation at the end of the Aftercare program.

He asked for my blessing at the end of the meeting. We both recognized that there are serious difficulties and limitations regarding future ministry. There is also the fear of future litigation. Nevertheless, this man has made peace with God and has demonstrated for two and one-half years his ability to handle his addiction.

I carefully reviewed with him the steps that he takes on a daily and weekly basis to enforce his self-discipline. He will continue to meet with Father Glenn Whitman who will monitor his progress.

*+D.W.T.*

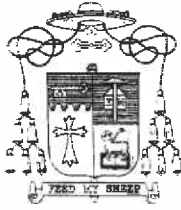
DWT/eg  
cc: Fr. Glenn Whitman

RCDErie 0008567

The July 25, 1990 Memos of Whitman and Trautman

Smith was so relieved to find a refuge in Trautman that he wrote to him on July 17, 1990 with respect to the aforementioned meeting. He thanked Trautman for truly caring about him. In reference to his desire to stay in active ministry, Smith wrote, "And so why did I worry?"

On July 20, 1992, Smith was transferred to the Holy Rosary Parish in Erie, Pennsylvania by Trautman. Smith was very active in the "Isaiah 43" ministry program, a program for Catholic children.



*Office of the Bishop*

*Diocese of Erie  
P.O. Box 10897  
Erie, Pennsylvania 16514-0897*

July 20, 1992

Reverend Thomas E. Smith  
Saint Joseph Church  
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, W.  
Warren, Pennsylvania 16365

Dear Father Smith:

Acting on the recommendation of the Personnel Board, and in response to your own request, I am pleased to appoint you Parochial Vicar at Holy Rosary Parish in Erie, effective September 1, 1992. The limitations placed on your ministry, as mutually understood, are to be observed with absolute fidelity. This assignment will continue as long as it is mutually agreeable and productive, as evaluated by yourself, myself and the Pastor, Very Reverend Richard D. Lynch, V.F.

I have been most pleased by the progress you have made in your continuing care program, in the contributions you have made at Saint Joseph Parish in Warren and in the interest you have shown in the Isaiah 43 program. I know I join you in profound gratitude to Very Reverend Sal Luzzi, V.F., Pastor of Saint Joseph for his generous and characteristic hospitality and fraternity extended to you after your discharge from Saint Luke Institute. It is just such a warm and supportive environment I am sure you will find at Holy Rosary Parish.

Continue to adhere to your aftercare plan, your support groups, the Jesus Caritas Fraternity and the enthusiasm you bring to the ministry. I am confident you will continue to make progress...progress in the Lord.

With every best wish, I remain

Fraternally yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Donald W. Trautman, STD, SSL  
Bishop of Erie

/nh

RCDErie 0008635

Trautman's Letter of Appointment to Holy Rosary

A little over a year after Smith was transferred to Holy Rosary, Trautman received a letter. Dated September 20, 1993, the letter was from the parents of one of Smith's victims. They described the abuse suffered by their son when he was only nine years old. Trautman wrote to St. Luke's Institute, one of Smith's treatment providers, and requested information as to the future ministry of Smith. Among other things, Trautman noted that he was "worried about appearances" and that "Father Smith does participate in the Isaiah 43 Program which takes him outside of the Diocese. I have no supervision of his activity away from the Diocese; it is an act of trust in him." Trautman explained his sudden interest in Smith's activities, stating, "The mother of this individual has raised concerns about Father Smith's involvement in Isaiah 43 since there are youth present for this type of retreat."

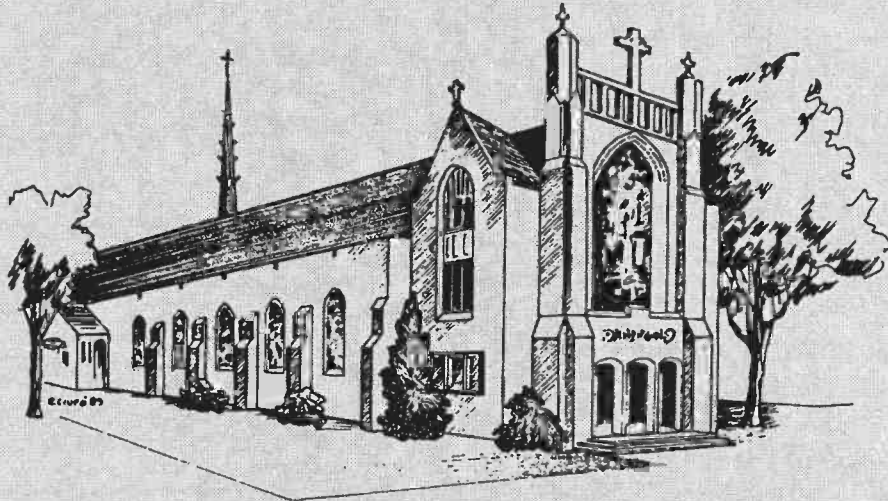
St. Luke's Institute responded on December 28, 1993. Trautman was informed that Smith had failed to report his involvement with the Isaiah 43 program as part of his continued aftercare. Trautman sent a letter to Smith and informed him that his duties at Holy Rosary would be altered. However, Trautman permitted Smith to remain in the Isaiah 43 program until he completed his duties there in March 1994.

The church bulletin for the Holy Rosary Parish, January 1994, announced the assignment of Father Thomas Smith, Parochial Vicar, to several chaplaincy positions in the Erie area beginning at the end of March 1994 and noted that Smith would remain in residence at Holy Rosary with the title of Resident and Weekend Assistant. This assignment permitted Smith to roam freely about the Diocese, serving as a chaplain with all the authority and power of the priesthood. Moreover, he continued to be a friendly face in residence at the parish and a weekend assistant. Nowhere in the bulletin was it indicated that Trautman notified the parishioners that Smith had been in treatment since 1984 due to sexually abusing children, nor was it noted that Smith admitted

to such conduct with as many as fifteen boys in 1987. Nowhere did it warn that the Diocese was aware that he had re-offended and that the offenses included anal and oral sex with prepubescent boys. These warnings were conspicuously absent because Trautman failed to warn his own parishioners of the danger Smith posed to their children.

January 9, 1994

# Holy Rosary Church



2701 East Avenue, Erie, Pennsylvania 16504

**PARISH STAFF:**

Rev. Richard D. Lynch, V.F. *Pastor*  
Rev. Thomas Smith, *Parochial Vicar*  
Rev. Jeffery J. Noble, *Parochial Vicar*  
Msgr. James J. Gannon, *Weekend Celebrant*  
Pat Marshall, *Director of Elementary Rel. Ed. - RCIA*  
Jan Nicolla, *Director of High School Rel. Ed.*

**RECTORY OFFICE:**

Telephone - 456-4254

**SUNDAY LITURGY:**

Saturday Vigil 5:00 p.m.  
Sunday 7:30, 9:30, 11:30 a.m.

**SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION:**

Saturday 3:30-4:30 and by appointment

**BAPTISMS:**

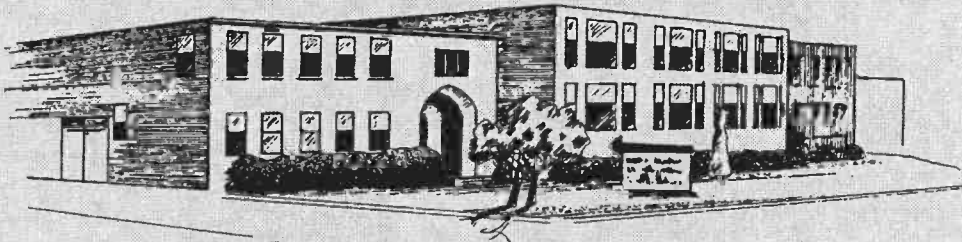
Parent sessions monthly

**MARRIAGES:**

Contact priest six months prior to wedding

**PRAYERLINE:**

Call Veronica 456-0989 or Mary 456-9788



**HOLY ROSARY SCHOOL**  
Pre-School through Eighth Grade  
1012 East 28th Street  
Telephone: 456-7212  
Mrs. Mary Lee Cook, *Principal*

RCDErie 0008648

**School News**

Wed., Jan. 12 - Hot Lunch  
 Mon., Jan. 17 - NO SCHOOL - Martin Luther King

**Campbells Labels, Quality & Giant Eagle Tapes**

Please save for benefit of Holy Rosary School students. Leave in boxes at church.

**January Confirmation Schedule**

Sun., Jan. 9 - NO CLASSES  
 Sun., Jan. 16 - 11th Gr. - 6-8p.m.; Saints Summary Due; Sacramental Sheets due for those who did not bring them in as yet.  
 Sun., Jan. 23 - Large Group Meeting - 9th, 10th and 11th - 6-8p.m. - in the Gym.  
 Sun., Jan. 30 - NO CLASSES - Superbowl Sunday.

**Rel. Ed. Resumes TODAY**

K-8 Religious Education resumes today, January 9 at regular times. Laura Drapcho, our new coordinator, invites any parent in to say hello. She is looking forward to meeting and knowing as many of you as possible. Let's welcome her warmly.

**Ham & Cheese Pretzels**

Sandwich Sale benefits the Boy Scouts, Pack 40. \$1.25 ea. - Delivery on Thursday, Jan. 27. Please call Liz at 456-7476 or Patty at 825-6314. Thank you for your support.

**H. R. Knights of Columbus****FREE THROW CHAMPIONSHIP**

ALL boys and girls ages 10 - 14 are invited to participate in this local level of competition, which will be held on Saturday, January 22, 1994 in the Holy Rosary Gym. Sign-ups for the event will be held on Sundays: Jan. 2, 9, and 16 in the new school section of the school from 10:30am to 1:00pm. For additional information contact: Matt Killion at 459-7107 or Bruce Eicher at 825-0061.

**Altar Rosary Society**

There will not be any meetings during January or February. See you in March.

**BAPTISMS:**

As a general rule, the season of Lent is a time to prepare for the Feast of Easter, when the Sacraments of Initiation are celebrated. Therefore, we are asking parents to schedule their Baptism before or after Lent...January 23, February 13 or at Eastertime.

**ANNOUNCEMENT:**

Bishop Donald Trautman is announcing the assignment of Fr. Thomas Smith, our Parochial Vicar, to several chaplaincy positions in the Erie area beginning at the end of March. Fr. Smith will remain in residence here at Holy Rosary with the title of Resident and Weekend Sacramental Assistant.

**Food Pantry**

REMINDER: The Pantry will be distributing every other Tuesday morning to any parishioner in need. Please call Irene (455-9467) or Charlotte (456-9556) if you have this need or with questions.

**Family Perspective**

Parents can sometimes focus on the wrong things children do that they begin to think that they are bad kids. Take a tip from heaven in today's Gospel—be sure to tell your children that you love them and that you are well pleased with them—and do it OFTEN!!!

**Pro-Life Media Campaign**

This weekend our church will participate in the Annual Pro-Life Media Campaign conducted by People for Life. By your donation you will be contributing to positive pro-life messages on television, radio and newspaper, as well as other areas of the media. Thank you for helping to spread the pro-life message throughout the community.

PLEASE JOIN US: The 16th Annual Greater Erie Area Ecumenical Prayer Breakfast & March/Motorcade for Life on Saturday, January 15 at 9:00am at Cauley Auditorium, 4th & Holland. Janet Folger, from the Ohio Right to Life Society, will be our featured speaker. Reservation requested by TODAY, Jan. 9. The March/Motorcade will begin at 12:00 noon and proceed to Perry Square. Bring your children, your banners and signs.

The 21st Annual National March for Life in Washington, D.C. will be on Friday, Jan. 21st. Friday allows us to visit our elected representatives. Buses leave St. George's parking lot at 11:45pm Thursday night, Jan 20. Cost: \$30. Reservations requested by Jan. 15 by calling Fran (833-7012), Mary (456-7364) or Carol (833-7105).

**Parish Appreciation Dinner**

An Appreciation Dinner Invitation went out to all the workers and volunteers of the parish. Sometimes someone is missed. If you or someone you know has been overlooked, PLEASE, call Fr. Smith right away. Thanks

Some people received invitation addressed to Mr. & Mrs. because both parties volunteer. Others were addressed to only one. If your spouse is not a volunteer and wishes to join you, they may do so. We ask that you cover the cost of \$10 for them. Please note it on the R.S.V.P. and pay that night.

**RING LOST**

At Christmas Midnight Mass: A man's gold ring with 5 diamonds inset. If you know the whereabouts of this item, please call the Rectory or drop off the item there. Thanks.

RCDErie 0008649

## Snowflakes

Snowflakes are one of nature's most fragile things, one not like the other, but look what they can do when they stick together!

## Christmas Cleanup

### HELP NEEDED!!

We will be removing the Christmas Tree and other decorations from the church TODAY, Sun., Jan. 9th at 2:00pm. PLEASE COME AND HELP! The more hands we have the sooner we will get done. Anyone still need service hours?

## MINISTRY WORKSHOP

Holy Rosary Parish has planned an afternoon for all its ministers on Sunday, February 5th. Bishop Murphy will be the Keynote Speaker, plus others. More information will follow next week. The following groups should reserve the date of Feb. 5th from 2 til 6pm: Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, Ushers, Choir & Music Ministry, Coaches and anyone working with the youth, Religious Education Teachers, School Teachers, Long Range Planning Committee, Parish Council and Liturgical Committees. If anyone else in the parish is interested in coming, you are welcome. Perhaps you would like to join one of the above groups. This would be a good opportunity to do this.

## Workshop for Rite of Christian Initiation

The Diocese is offering a three-session workshop on January 13, 20, and 27 for those wishing to learn the basic skills of Breaking Open the Word, which follows the Rite of Dismissal, and for those interested in becoming parish sponsors for catechumens and candidates. The sessions will be held in the rectory basement at Blessed Sacrament Church from 7 to 8:30pm. Register by Jan. 10 by calling 454-0171 or 824-1272. No charge except for a workbook. Anyone from Holy Rosary who has any questions or is interested, please call Fr. Jeff at the rectory (456-4254).

## Thought for the New Year

Take time to work... It is the price of success.  
Take time to think...It is the source of power.  
Take time to play...It is the secret of perpetual youth.  
Take time to read...It is the fountain of wisdom.  
Take time to be friendly...It is the road to happiness.  
Take time to be to laugh...It is the music of the soul.  
Take time to dream...It is the road to greater vision.  
Take time to give...The day is too short to be selfish.  
Take time to love and be loved...It is the privilege of all God's children.  
Take time to pray...It is the road to God.

## January 9, 1994 The Baptism of the Lord



"Then a voice came from the heavens: 'You are my beloved Son. On you my favor rests.'"

Mark 1:11

### Monday, January 10

7:00am Luigi Sansone (Laura & Michael DeSanctis)  
8:00am Henry Konapka (Family)

### Tuesday, January 11

7:00am Marion Anthony (Family)  
8:00am Kathleen Lynch (Helen Kloecker)

### Wednesday, January 12

7:00am Peter Krizmanick (Helen Krizmanick)  
8:00am Stephen Nemerhut (Judith Kirk)

### Thursday, January 13

7:00am Charles Clark (Estate)  
8:00am Shirley Ann Hanlin (Ellen Rainey)

### Friday, January 14

7:00am Edward Nowak, Death Anniv.  
(Andrew Savindi)  
8:00am Marie Tenace (M/M Joseph Mikowski)

### Saturday, January 15

8:00am Mary Torelli, Birth Anniv.  
(Harrick Grandchildren)  
5:00pm VIGIL Paul Lipinski, Anniv.  
(Wife & Family)

### SUNDAY, January 16

7:30am Parishioners of Holy Rosary  
9:30am Patricia Bargielski (Fred & Kathy Weaver)  
11:30am Ann Bernardini (Children)

## Sanctuary Candle

The candle in the Mother's Chapel will be lit the week of January 9 in memory of the birth of Avellino Duchini. If anyone wishes intentions for the Sanctuary candle in the Mothers Chapel please call the Rectory at (456-4254). Feb. 6 & 27 open.

## Readings for Sunday, January 16

1st Reading - 1 Sm 3:3-10, 19  
2nd Reading - 1 Cor 6:13-15, 17-20  
Gospel - John 1:35-42

RCDErie 0008650



That same month, all Pennsylvania Bishops received a confidential letter from the Most Reverend Joseph V. Adamec, Bishop of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown. Adamec and the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown were involved in the high profile litigation of child sexual abuse offenses perpetrated by Father Francis Luddy. As discovered by the Thirty-Seventh Statewide Investigating Grand Jury in their investigation of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown, Adamec and the Diocese were aware of sexual offenses committed by Luddy. Documentation within their secret archives contained incriminating information regarding numerous priests who had molested children. In Adamec's letter to the other Bishops, he explained the steps he had taken to protect the secret archives from litigation. Notations on the document appear to indicate that Trautman took note of Diocesan records which Adamec was forced to disclose, and that the Diocese's motions in the case, such as seeking bifurcation, jury sequestration, and to dismiss based on a "time bar," were being denied.



## Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown

Office of The Bishop  
Box 126 Logan Boulevard  
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648

January 31, 1994

CONFIDENTIAL

His Excellency  
The Most Reverend Donald W. Trautman  
Bishop of Erie  
205 W. 9th Street  
Erie, PA 16501

Dear Don:

I write to inform you that jury selection begins today in the civil case of Michael Hutchison versus Francis Luddy, Bishop James Hogan, et al (which includes the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown). The case is being heard by Judge Hiram Carpenter in Blair County. The allegation is that the Reverend Francis Luddy sexually molested the plaintiff (which he denies) and that the Diocese was negligent in protecting potential victims in this and other cases of alleged pedophilic behavior on the part of its priests (which we deny).

The court has ordered (and, we have complied) that the Diocese produce documents and information of any and all allegations of pedophilia relating to our priests between 1967 and 1984. This includes documentation which was in the Secret Archives. I refused to comply in the latter matter until it became evident that the Diocese could suffer sanctions and would lose its insurance coverage for non-compliance.

We have placed a number of motions before the Judge. These include the following: a - bifurcation (requiring plaintiff to first prove its case against Luddy and receive jury's verdict before expanding its litigation to other priests), b - sequestering of the jury (due to expected publicity), c - motion in limine (to exclude from trial allegations of child molestation against any other priest), and d - motion to time bar (given the statutes of limitations). However, all of these motions have been denied.

Defense for the Diocese continues to be provided by our underwriter insurance companies through the Pittsburgh firm of Meyer, Darragh, Buckler, Bebeneck and Eck; - being represented by Attorney Carl Eck and Attorney Julie Sweeney. Attorneys of both the United States Catholic Conference and the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference have been kept informed.

A "gag order" continues to be in place, preventing plaintiffs or defendants from speaking with the mass media. However, this was recently

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

RCDErie 0002044

[Pennsylvania Bishops RE Luddy Case; 1/31/94]

breached; even though, not by us. This may or may not change when the trial begins.

The Presbyteral Council is unanimously supportive of the Diocesan position that no offer of settlement should even be considered. It is our position that the Diocese and its Bishop acted appropriately and thoroughly in each case of alleged pedophilia. Last Thursday, I met with the Presbyterate and Diaconate of this Diocesan Church in order to bring them up-to-date. I sensed the same support there, as well.

It would appear to me, given the facts of this case and the procedures allowed the attorney for the plaintiff, that this is another effort to discredit the Church. We have been viewing our situation within the context of our faith journey and are putting forth every effort to approach the matter in a positive way.

Please remember us in your conversations with the Lord.

May the gift of the Holy Spirit be a source of strength for you during 1994, bringing with it peace and joy for your journey to the Kingdom.

Fraternallly yours in the Lord,

  
(Most Rev.) Joseph V. Adamec  
Bishop of Altoona-Johnstown

SAME: Apostolic Pro-Nuncio  
Pennsylvania Bishops

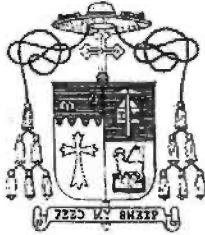
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RCDErie 0002045

Adamec's Letter Regarding Child Sexual Abuse Litigation

Meanwhile, Smith was unhappy with his new assignment and sought a reprieve from Murphy, his first enabler. Murphy, now retired, reached out to Trautman on behalf of Smith and another priest seeking greater leniency. Trautman responded by letter on May 6, 1994. Trautman explained that he had not been overly restrictive but that the Diocese could not adopt a “posture” less than what Pittsburgh had done. The Grand Jury noted that Trautman did not cite to the evils of child sexual abuse as the external pressure which warranted the restriction of offending priests. Rather, Trautman provided Murphy a copy of an article from Time Magazine on “this problem” and stated that “[t]he article is vicious and demonstrates, once again, the need for vigilance on the part of the church.”



*Office of the Bishop*

*Diocese of Erie  
P.O. Box 10897  
Erie, Pennsylvania 16514-0897*

May 6, 1994

Most Rev. Michael J. Murphy, DD, STL  
Retired Bishop of Erie  
St. Patrick Rectory  
130 East 4 Street  
Erie, Pennsylvania 16507

Dear Mike,

As a follow-up to our conversation regarding two of our brother priests with a past problem of sexual misconduct, may I share with you guidelines that are operative in the Diocese of Pittsburgh. I cite these only to demonstrate that the Diocese of Erie is not overly restrictive. I could cite other dioceses, Chicago, for example, which has a much more restrictive policy than even Pittsburgh. I believe it important for us to see what other Bishops have done to supervise priests in this predicament. I believe, also, these guidelines can be a model for us in forming a written policy. When that written policy has been composed, I would like, then, to present it to our two priests in question. I do not believe it will come as any surprise to them since we have already verbally discussed it. I emphasize, again, the Diocese of Erie is simply following the practice in other dioceses. Permit me to cite some of the guidelines from the Diocese of Pittsburgh:

"Ordinarily, a cleric against whom a serious accusation of sexual misconduct has been substantiated, will not be permitted to return to public ministry. If an exception were to be made, at least the following criteria must be met: 1. He has undergone extensive treatment; 2. He receives ongoing professional counseling and participates in a therapy group or life management support group on an ongoing basis, both such activities being subject to termination only with the written permission of the diocesan bishop; 3. It is possible to supervise adequately and monitor his contact with the public; 4. He is subject to special placement in a situation in which he will be monitored by an on-site supervisor, and appropriate diocesan official; 5. The cleric must be willing to disclose the nature of his problem with his coworkers; 6. He must demonstrate a spirit of repentance and goodwill.

RCDErie 0002033

*Diocese of Erie*  
*Office of the Bishop*

- 2 - May 6, 1994

Most Rev. Michael J. Murphy, DD, STL


Pittsburgh further states "the diocesan bishop reserves the right to modify or supplement these procedures to meet the needs of a particular case and commits himself to review them periodically for adequacy." In Pittsburgh, there is a full-time person called the 'process manager' who oversees these cases. The responsibilities of the 'process manager' are the following: review the actions taken in each case to insure that all diocesan policies and procedures are being followed; maintain regular contact with clerics with whom the diocese must exercise some degree of supervision; update the priest's personnel files of these same clerics noting particularly what steps the diocese has taken relative to allegations of sexual misconduct; administer the supervisory program; prepare reports for the clergy task force and serve as a liaison to the Assessment Board.

I do not believe the Diocese of Erie can adopt a posture less than what Pittsburgh has done or other dioceses. Therefore, I am suggesting that for our two priests to be in residence at St. Patrick's Rectory, that there be clearly defined in writing, guidelines, procedures, expectations. We've already discussed some of these with them, namely, reporting to the Diocesan Review Board, limitation of public ministry to the Nursing Home Apostolate, restriction of diocesan faculties to exclusively the Nursing Home Apostolate, and on-site supervision.

I am also enclosing a copy of this week's article in Time Magazine on this problem. The article is vicious and demonstrates, once again, the need for vigilance on the part of the Church. After Monsignor Smith and Monsignor Brugger have had a chance to come up with specific guidelines, perhaps we can all get together and discuss them. I certainly want to balance these guidelines with a reach-out in love and fraternal support. However, there is an obligation at this point to protect the flock as well as to go in search of those who have strayed.

Best wishes.

Faternally yours in Christ,

  
Most Rev. Donald W. Trautman, STD, SSL  
Bishop of Erie

DWT/nh

Enclosure

cc: Monsignor Robert J. Smith  
Monsignor Robert L. Brugger

RCDErie 0002034

Trautman Responds to Murphy

Ultimately, Smith served as a chaplain as described in the Holy Rosary church bulletin until his retirement in March 2002. In April 1996, Smith wrote to Trautman and asked to be appointed to the board of the local YMCA, as well as to be returned to the Isaiah 43 program. Trautman was aware that Smith continued to seek contact with children and elected not to warn anyone.

Due to the national coverage following the article about the Archdiocese of Boston, Trautman was forced to field letters from concerned parishioners and answer inquiries from the local press. On January 31, 2002, Trautman wrote to parents of one of Smith's victims and stated, "I believe appropriate action has been taken in the fact that there is no parish assignment and there is a definite curtailing of his ministry." On March 15, 2002, Trautman gave an interview to a news reporter and stated, "we have no priest or deacon or layperson that I know of that has, in any way, a pedophile background." Smith retired that same month and was still a Roman Catholic priest.

By April 2002, some victims had begun litigation in connection with their past abuse. In a letter dated April 24, 2002, from counsel for the Diocese to the attorney for one of Smith's victims, the following statement was made:

... it must be understood that we cannot simply write checks because an event occurred 20, 30, or 40 years ago, but we must limit our assistance to rehabilitation and encourage people such as your client to attempt to put the past behind them and move on with their lives.

By February 2003, it appeared that Smith had moved on with his own life. A February 26, 2003, memo by Trautman documented that Smith had obtained employment as a counselor at "Turning Point" and that Trautman had relied on Smith's word that he disclosed his past abuses to them.

Trautman wrote a memo on July 22, 2003, documenting that Turning Point had made a complaint. Smith had never disclosed his history of child sexual abuse offenses to them. Trautman documented that "I felt he had made a complete recovery from alcoholism and sexual abuse. He

had been faithful to his treatment program and gives every indication of having taken full responsibility for his actions.”

Under public pressure, Trautman submitted a formal request to the Vatican on November 10, 2004, and requested the laicization of Smith. Now that Trautman needed a basis to remove Smith from the priesthood he acted with candor. Contrary to nearly every one of Trautman’s previous statements regarding Smith, Trautman now disclosed his knowledge to the Vatican in a confidential letter. Trautman admitted that the Diocese of Erie had been aware of Smith’s abuses since at least 1987. Trautman disclosed that Smith abused boys between 7 and 12 years of age. He described Smith’s acts as chilling and noted that Smith used physical force to bring about the offenses and threats to secure the secrecy of his crimes. Trautman wrote that Smith invoked the name of God to justify his actions against his victims while using their faith and the priesthood to manipulate them and secure their silence. Trautman noted that, even after Smith was told to avoid any and all occasions that would place him in the company of minors, he continued to do so in a public manner. For example, he was photographed assisting high school students in the collection of food for the poor and the photograph was published in the local newspaper. Trautman summarized Smith’s worldview and stated that he saw his victims as objects rather than people.

The Vatican finally acted in 2006 and removed Smith from the priesthood. Smith’s former flock was never told the reason for his removal. On August 3, 2006, Trautman directed the pastor of St. Hippolyte to make the following notation in the record of the parish with respect to Smith: “Dismissed from the clerical state on June 10, 2006 by Pope Benedict XVI. Nothing else need be noted.”