

Monsignor Thomas Snyderwine

Biographical Information

YEAR OF BIRTH:	1943
YEAR OF DEATH:	
ORDINATION:	May 8, 1968

Employment/Assignment History

6/05/1968 - 6/03/1971	Weekend Asst., St. Michael, DuBois, PA
6/05/1968 - 6/03/1971	Faculty, DuBois Central Catholic, DuBois, PA
1/01/1970 - 6/01/1970	Administrator, St. Joseph, DuBois, PA
6/03/1971 - 6/05/1976	Faculty, Erie Cathedral Preparatory, Erie, PA
6/03/1971 - 5/31/1974	Weekend Asst., St. Boniface, Erie, PA
5/31/1974 - 6/05/1976	Weekend Asst., St. Patrick's School, Erie, PA
6/05/1976 - 9/01/1979	Parochial Vicar, St. Patrick's, Erie, PA
9/01/1979 - 8/17/1992	Weekend Asst., St. George, Erie, PA
9/01/1979 - 8/17/1992	Higher Education, Gannon University, Erie PA
8/17/1992 - 9/05/1997	Pastor, St Paul, Erie, PA
9/05/1997 - 8/10/2012	Pastor, St. Luke's, Erie, PA
9/01/2009 - 8/10/2014	Diocesan Presbyterian Council, Erie, PA
8/10/2012	Retired, Private residence
10/14/2013 - 10/13/2018	Other. Sr. Priest Advocate
9/12/2014 - 9/11/2019	Diocesan Board. Presbyterian Council, Erie, PA

Summary

Sometime in 1996, a young fifth grade girl came to talk with Sister Steff at St. Boniface school. The child was a student of Steff's. Steff also served as the principal at the school. The girl approached her with her friends because she had disturbing news to report. The young girl told Steff that her godfather, Monsignor Thomas Snyderwine, had taken a shower with her and touched her in ways that she was uncomfortable with. The child reported that this incident occurred five years prior when she stayed overnight at Snyderwine's trailer. The girl added that Snyderwine would buy her dresses and shower her with gifts.

Steff took the girl's information and approached Snyderwine and the girl's parents with the accusation. The parents confirmed the incident and told Steff that they had become friends with Snyderwine, but felt awkward talking to him about the incident. The parents explained that they had informed their daughter to never be alone with him and expressed their gratitude to Steff if she would talk with Snyderwine for them.

When Steff approached Snyderwine with the accusation, she informed him of the incident and threatened to go to Bishop Murphy if this behavior ever happened again. She further admonished Snyderwine by telling him that he had better change his behavior.

Summary

This incident resurfaced in 2002 because of the increased scrutiny being cast upon the Catholic church in the United States. On May 2, 2002, Steff wrote Bishop Trautman to inform him of the incident that happened six years earlier. Steff wrote that she notified Trautman because of an article she had read in Time Magazine titled, "*What the Nuns Didn't Know.*" Steff also asked Trautman several questions in this letter. She asked Trautman, "*Is showering with a young non relative (in this case, a young girl) an act of Pedophile? I'm not sure. Is it normal Action? I don't think so.*" This letter and Trautman's handwritten notes were discovered in subpoenaed Diocesan files. In his notes, Trautman wrote that he would speak to the Diocesan Review Board on the issue and make a decision on Snyderwine's future in ministry. The only issue was that Steff refused to give the Bishop and the Review Board the name of the family or the victim. Trautman noted that Steff told him, "*she would have to pray and think about that and that she would give me (Trautman) the name only after she spoke with them (victim's parents).*"

In later notes written by Trautman, he documented that the victim was now a freshman in college and the parents (both teachers themselves) did not want to pursue the matter. He also noted that Steff informed him that Snyderwine recently said mass for the family when a death in the family occurred.

Several additional points of interest were found in subpoenaed files, which included Snyderwine's personnel file. A handwritten note by Trautman indicated the following: "*I contacted [the Diocesan lawyer] who said I am not a mandated reporter in this case.*" These documents also contained notes that Trautman took while he was talking with Steff. In one such note, Trautman wrote, "*Sister feels the matter is over with and priest deserves a second chance.*"