

Reverend Francis A. Bach

Biographical Information

YEAR OF BIRTH:	1936
YEAR OF DEATH:	2010
ORDINATION:	May 19, 1962

Employment/Assignment History

6/01/1962-6/30/1964	St. Theresa, New Cumberland, PA
6/30/1964-5/28/1965	St. Patrick, York, PA
5/28/1965-5/29/1970	St. Patrick Cathedral, Harrisburg, PA
1/06/1967	Relieved of duties, Young Adult Ministry, Harrisburg, PA
5/29/1970-6/24/1970	St. Joseph, Danville, PA
6/24/1970	Appointed Area Scout Chaplain, Columbia-Montour area
8/27/1970	Coordinator, Family Life Apostolate
10/04/1971	Campus Minister, Millersville University, Lancaster, PA
9/03/1974	St. Joan of Arc, Hershey, PA
4/15/1975	Inappropriate behavior with adult at seminary
5/14/1975-4/12/1976	St. Rose of Lima, York, PA
4/14/1976	Leave of Absence
10/19/76-8/01/1977	Annunciation Blessed Virgin Mary, McSherrystown, PA
8/01/77-12/01/1980	Holy Family, Harrisburg, PA
12/01/80-4/21/1983	Assumption Blessed Virgin Mary, Lebanon, PA
4/22/91	Appointed Dean, Lebanon, PA
5/09/94	Resigned; early retirement

Summary

In a letter dated May 1, 2007, Bishop Kevin C. Rhodes informed the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith of complaints that Bach sexually abused minors. Rhodes attached multiple exhibits to the letter. The first report of abuse concerning Bach occurred in 1994. A man reported that in 1969, when he was 13 years old, Bach invited him to his boat in Maryland. They went to sleep in separate beds on the boat. The then-boy woke to Bach stroking his penis. The man stated the sexual abuse included kissing and oral sex. The man also reported Bach took Polaroid pictures of his naked body.

Father Paul Helwig interviewed Bach. Bach did not admit, nor deny the allegation concerning the boat incident. When asked if there were other situations like this one with the boy discussed above, Bach admitted there were. Bach stated he recognized his situation was a "timebomb;" he was willing to leave active ministry, but he did not request laicization.

Summary

The Diocese issued Bach a penal precept and sent Bach to be evaluated at St. John Vianney Center. A Diocesan document summarizing his treatment stated Bach admitted to sexually abusing 14 victims, between 14 and 16 years old.

In 2002, the Diocese of Harrisburg learned that Bach abused another victim, whose identity at that time was unknown. This victim stated Bach sexually abused him in the 1970's on Bach's boat in Maryland and in the Cathedral parish in Harrisburg. This victim reported that Bach and another priest jointly owned the boat in Maryland. This victim died in 2004.

In 2007, the Diocese received an e-mail from another man. When this man was in the fifth or sixth grade, he was sexually abused three times. The then-boy was 12 years old during the first incident when Bach touched him inappropriately while staying in a motel.

The second incident of abuse also occurred in a motel. The boy swam in the motel's pool. When he returned to the motel room, he removed his swimsuit and was naked. He turned to find Bach was also naked. Bach wrestled with the boy, which led to Bach attempting to anally penetrate the boy.

When the boy was 17 years old, Bach took him to his boat in Maryland. Bach gave him alcohol and attempted to anally penetrate the boy.

In 2007, Bishop Rhoades sent a summary of Bach's sexually abusive behavior to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Rhoades wrote that he did not believe there was a need for any trial or process, judicial or administrative. Bach was living his life in "*basic solitude, doing good when he can,*" and "*spending time in prayer and penance, trying to make reparation for the harm he has caused others through his acts of sexual abuse that occurred early in his priesthood.*" Rhoades also stated, "*[f]urthermore, the true reason Francis Bach left all priestly ministry is unknown to others. If his case is now brought to trial or given any kind of publicity, I fear it will cause scandal to many, as he is still a priest who is beloved by many in our diocese.*" The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith agreed with Rhoades.

In 2009, another man came forward and reported to the Diocese that he was abused by Bach. The then-boy was between 9 and 13 years old when Bach took him to a motel to stay overnight. Bach directed the boy to remove his clothes. The boy complied and undressed to his underwear. Bach photographed the boy in his underwear. Bach then removed his clothes and wrestled with the boy. Bach fondled the boy and anally penetrated the boy. Afterwards, the boy showered and Bach fondled the boy's penis again.

The Diocese interviewed Bach about this allegation in 2009. Bach stated he could not remember the incidents raised by the victim in 2009. Bach stated, "with my history, anything is possible. I'm not saying he is fabricating the story."

In 2016, the Diocese received a phone call from another man. This man was an altar boy at St. Patrick in York in 1960. He stated that he was eight years old when Bach fondled him.