

Reverend Thomas Lawler

Biographical Information

YEAR OF BIRTH:	1925
YEAR OF DEATH:	1987
ORDINATION:	November 1, 1955

Employment/Assignment History

11/11/1955-5/24/1960	Sacred Heart, Lewistown; Youth Chaplain and Scout Chaplain, Juniata Valley Area, PA
5/24/1960-10/26/1960	St. Aloysius, Littlestown, PA
10/26/1960-12/14/1960	Good Shepherd, Camp Hill, PA
12/14/1960-6/02/1961	St. Vincent, Hanover, PA
6/02/1961-6/01/1962	St. Joseph, York, PA
6/01/1962-10/10/1969	Annunciation Blessed Virgin Mary, McSherrystown, PA
10/10/1969-9/01/1971	St. Peter, Columbia, PA
9/01/1971-10/19/1987	Sacred Heart of Jesus, Lewisburg, PA

Summary

A document issued by Diocesan officials discussed a 2002 allegation made by a man against Father Thomas Lawler. The man stated the abuse occurred in 1963 when he was 10 years old. Lawler hugged the boy and placed his hands inside the back of the boy's pants and underwear. Lawler squeezed and fondled the boy's buttocks. The Diocese of Harrisburg reported this boy's allegation to the Dauphin County District Attorney's Office.

A Diocesan document provided that another man came forward in 2014 and notified the Diocese that Lawler abused him while Lawyer was assigned to Sacred Heart of Jesus in Lewisburg. The reported abuse started in 1985 and ended when Lawler died in 1987. The man was 13 years old when the abuse started. Lawler kissed the then-boy and told the boy that he was proud of him. The abuse progressed to touching and "French" kissing. The man stated the abuse occurred in the basement of the rectory. The man remembered one instance when he painted a table in the basement. Lawler crawled under the table and pulled the boy's pants down. Lawler then fondled the boy's genitalia and kissed his buttocks.

The man told his parents about the abuse in 1987. Initially, his parents did not believe him. After the boy was able to convince his parents the abuse occurred, his stepfather decided to contact the police. The next morning, the man was told Father Lawler died. The man noted no report was made to the police. The Diocese made a report to the Union County District Attorney's Office in 2014.