

# Reverend James L. Armstrong

## Biographical Information

YEAR OF BIRTH:	1950
YEAR OF DEATH:	2012
ORDINATION:	October 1, 1977

## Employment/Assignment History

10/13/1977 – 7/07/1982	St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Pittsburgh, PA
7/08/1982 – 6/02/1985	St. Francis Xavier, Pittsburgh, PA
6/03/1985 – 6/21/1989	Resurrection, West Mifflin, PA
6/21/1989 – 2/20/1990	St. Ursula, Allison Park, PA
7/23/1990 – 6/27/1991	Holy Sepulcher, Butler, PA
6/27/1991 – 12/27/1991	Leave of Absence
10/24/1992 – 8/02/1999	St. Paul, Butler, PA
8/02/1999 – 7/23/2007	Newman Center, Slippery Rock, PA
8/02/1999 – 7/23/2007	St. Peter, Slippery Rock, PA
7/24/2007	Administrative Leave

## Summary

According to a “File Synopsis” contained in records subpoenaed from the Diocese of Pittsburgh, a file was opened on Father James Armstrong on February 16, 1990. That synopsis and attached documents reflected that there was an allegation that Armstrong gave homeless boys from Pittsburgh drugs, alcohol, and money in exchange for sex.

In May 1991, Armstrong was sent to St. Luke Institute in Maryland for evaluation. Residential treatment was recommended and the Diocese placed Armstrong on administrative leave. Armstrong was granted a leave of absence for health reasons on June 27, 1991. He was admitted to St. Michael Center in St. Louis for residential treatment in July of 1991 and was discharged on December 27, 1991. He completed his aftercare program in December, 1993.

A confidential memorandum authored by Rita Flaherty, Diocesan Assistance Coordinator, indicated that a victim contacted the Diocese on September 30, 2009 and requested counseling. He reported that he had been abused by several priests in the course of his life, including a priest whom he knew as “Father Tom.” The male stated that his father was a heroin addict and his mother was a prostitute. He eventually ran away from home and became a “street kid.” He said he was struggling to put the pieces of his abuse together. Flaherty asked the male to put his allegation in writing to the best of his ability.

The male’s therapist subsequently indicated that he was sure that something happened to the male; that the names, places, and other information was very specific. The therapist

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advised that the incidents involved “sex for pay” and occurred when the male was 14 to 15 years old.

Within the Diocesan records was a letter dated August 3, 2011 informing Armstrong of the sexual abuse allegations against him. The letter that the victim wrote to the Diocese dated January 22, 2010 was attached and referred to Armstrong as “Father Tom.” The victim indicated that he was introduced to him when he was 16 years old in the winter of 1985-86.

According to the victim, Armstrong would drive him [the victim] and a “hustler” far out Route 28 to Route 8, the Red Belt, toward Shaler Township up a winding road, always late night around 11:00 PM to midnight. In his letter, the victim wrote that Father Tom had them do various violent sex acts like calling him degrading things while he gave them oral sex. They beat his body, slapped his face, and spanked him too. This lasted for a couple of years.

In the period following his placement on administrative leave, there was correspondence between Armstrong and the Diocese for approximately four years, until 2011, which reflected he was still receiving treatment in Maryland. Armstrong died in 2012.