

Monsignor J. Peter Crynes

Biographical Information

YEAR OF BIRTH:	1941
YEAR OF DEATH:	N/A
ORDINATION:	May 27, 1967

Employment/Assignment History

6/1967 – 9/1967	Asst. Director, Camp St. Andrew, Tunkhannock, PA
9/1967 – 9/1968	Asst. Pastor, St. Patrick, White Haven, PA
9/1968 – 9/1972	Asst. Pastor, Holy Rosary, Scranton, PA
9/1972 – 9/1975	Chaplain, St. Joseph's Children's and Maternity Hospital, Scranton, PA
9/1975 – 6/1988	Director, Our Lady of Fatima Center, Elmhurst, PA
6/1988 – 7/1994	Pastor, Church of Corpus Christi, Montdale, PA
7/1994 – 5/2006	Pastor, St. Therese, Shavertown, PA
5/2006	Removed from active ministry
5/19/2006	Resigned

Summary

On March 2, 2006, the Diocese received a letter from a law firm stating they represented a female that was sexually abused by Father J. Peter Crynes from 1974 until 1977. The abuse began when she was 17 years old and Crynes kissed her at a retreat. Over the course of the next three years, the abuse included fondling, fellatio and intercourse. At the suggestion of another priest during the victim's sophomore year at college, she confronted Crynes. When she did so, he laughed at her and told her that he wanted to continue even once she was married.

On March 2, 2006 Bishop Joseph F. Martino issued a Decree that a preliminary investigation be opened concerning the allegations against Crynes. The allegation was reported to the Lackawanna County District Attorney's Office on March 8, 2006.

The Diocese was made aware of another allegation of sexual abuse against Crynes on March 7, 2006. A female reported that when she was 15 years of age, she suffered from anorexia and her parents sent her to Crynes for counseling and direction. She stated that for two years the counseling was fine but then she rebelled at her situation at home. Her parents called Crynes to intervene. Crynes picked her up from a hotel and took her to Fatima Center for evaluation and counseling. The first night there, Crynes came into her room, sat on her bed, lifted her nightgown up and rubbed her thigh. A few days later, he stopped by to see her and asked her to rub his shoulders. He pulled her around and sat her on his lap where she felt his erection. Later that month, Crynes kissed her, putting his tongue in her mouth.

Summary

Upon returning home, the girl discovered that she was pregnant. Her parents were upset and called Crynes for help. He came to the house and drove her to Keystone College. When they arrived, he parked the car and pulled her over onto his lap. That was her last contact with him.

On March 12, 2006, Father Kopacz met with Crynes about the allegations of the first two women. He admitted to the sexual contact. He stated that he always saw his physical behavior with women as gestures of loving paternal affection.

On March 29, 2006, the third woman met with Father Kopacz and the Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator. It was discovered that she first consulted with Kopacz in 2002. She had brought her concerns to Kopacz on the advice of her confessor and had difficulty understanding why Kopacz did not take her concerns to Diocesan personnel. Kopacz explained that he had been her confessor in the past and felt that her trust in him meant that he would not reveal her experiences to anyone. He stressed that he believed her and that he never forgot what she had revealed. Kopacz further explained to her that, at that time, there was no defined policy mandating disclosure of such matters.

On May 19, 2006, Crynes resigned from St. Therese.

On June 6, 2006, a woman and her husband met with Kopacz and the woman revealed that she was sexually abused by Crynes in 1970 and 1971 during her junior and senior years in high school. She stated that it began with her going for rides to various points around the area with Crynes after school. Crynes would park the car and pull her onto himself to hold and kiss her. He kept it at the level of holding, touching and kissing, and told her they would only progress to the level at which she was comfortable. He also told her that Jesus would say this behavior was okay as a sign of their special friendship. Stated noted that she had written a letter to Crynes in April, 2002 wherein she told him how she agonized over the years because of what he did to her and how it ruined her life. She demanded an apology from him. That same month, she received a letter from him. He asked her to please accept his deepest and most heartfelt apology. He then asked her to forgive him for the pain and trauma she experienced.

On June 13, 2006, an adult female was interviewed by the Diocese. She was born in October, 1957. Throughout the course of her senior year, she and other friends attended events on a monthly basis (sometimes more than that) that were sponsored by the Diocese. Crynes was at these events. She reported that the abuse involved hugging and kissing and, on one of those occasions, he put his tongue in her mouth. She relayed that there was one occasion during the Sacrament of Confession where Father Crynes hugged her and told her that God loved her very much. He stated that he loved her and she was very special to God and very special to him. He then put his mouth on her mouth with his tongue going in and out of her mouth like a snake. He pulled her close to him and she could feel he had an erection. He continued to kiss her and was moaning during it.

On June 21, 2011, the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, issued a Decree that Crynes was removed from any public ministry and shall live a life of prayer and penance.

Summary

On January 15, 2016, a law firm notified the Diocese that they represented a 59-year-old woman who reported that she was repeatedly sexually molested by Crynes from approximately 1972 to 1973 when she was 16 to 17 years of age. She met him through an encounter program sponsored by the Diocese. On January 21, 2016, the Diocese notified the Lackawanna County District Attorney's Office of these allegations.

The Diocese of Scranton assisted with therapy for those victims that followed through with the protocol set up by the Diocese.