

The Case of Father Thomas D. Skotek

Known Assignments

07/1963 – 09/1963	St. Patrick, Milford
09/1963 – 11/1967	SS Peter and Paul, Plains
11/1967 – 06/1969	St. Joseph, Wyoming
06/1969 – 09/1972	St. Mary of the Mount, Mount, Pocono
09/1972 – 05/1977	St. Hedwig, Kingston
05/1977 – 01/1980	Lady of Mount Carmel, Lake Silkworth
01/1980 – 03/1985	St. Casimir, Freeland
03/1985 – 10/1986	St. Stanislaus, Hazleton
12/13/1986	Resigns from St. Stanislaus, Hazleton
01/1987 – 06/1999	St. Aloysius, Wilkes-Barre
06/1999 – 04/2002	St. Mary and Ascension, Mocanaqua
04/08/2002	Resigned from St. Mary and Ascension, Mocanaqua
06/14/2002	Removed from Active Ministry

Father Thomas D. Skotek was ordained on June 8, 1963 in the Diocese of Scranton. Skotek sexually assaulted a minor female while serving as pastor of St. Casimir in Freeland between January, 1980 and March, 1985. The female became pregnant and Skotek aided the girl in obtaining an abortion. Diocesan records obtained by the Grand Jury showed that Bishop James C. Timlin was fully aware of the conduct by October, 1986. Timlin accepted Skotek's resignation from St. Stanislaus on October 9, 1986, and dispatched Skotek to St. Luke's Institute in Suitland, Maryland for an evaluation. In January, 1987, Skotek was reassigned to ministry at St. Aloysius, in Wilkes-Barre.

October 9, 1986

Reverend Thomas D. Skotek
Saint Stanislaus' Rectory
652 Carson Street
Hazleton, Pennsylvania 18201

Dear Father Skotek,

It is with sadness and deep regret that I accept your resignation as Pastor of Saint Stanislaus Church, Hazleton, effective Monday, October 13, 1986.

I understand that you will leave Saint Stanislaus after Mass on Sunday, October 12, 1986, and that you will enter Saint Luke's Institute, Suttland, Maryland, on the evening of October 18, 1986. Ask you to call on me in November after you have completed your stay at Saint Luke's.

This is a very difficult time in your life, and I realize how upset you are. I too share your grief. How I wish it were not necessary to take this step. With the help of God, who never abandons us and who is always near when we need Him, this too will pass away, and all will be able to pick up and go on living. Please be assured that I am most willing to do whatever I can to help.

With every best wish, I am,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend James C. Timlin, D.D.
Bishop of Scranton

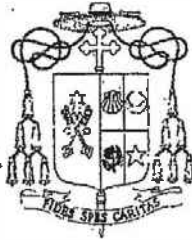
DS 34437

Timlin Accepts Skotek's Resignation from the Parish

On January 20, 1989, Timlin sent a letter to Rome and reported that:

a priest in the diocese has been rendered irregular as a result of having assisted in the procurement of a completed abortion . . . Although I cannot absolutely give assurance that this priest's criminal action will never become public, I do not foresee that such would likely be the case. This priest is currently residing in a parish quite far from the town where the crime was committed. He is awaiting a response to his request for a dispensation."

Timlin closed his letter with his "sincere hope" that he would receive a favorable response since such a response would be to the "spiritual benefit" of the priest involved as well as to the benefit of the "people of this diocese who heed the gifts he shares in priestly ministry." Timlin noted that he was convinced of Skotek's sincere repentance and permitted Skotek to continue in ministry. The Grand Jury noted that the focus of Timlin's letter seemed to exclusively address the procurement of the abortion with little concern that Skotek had impregnated a child. In 1988, Diocesan records indicated that the victim contacted the church and indicated that she was struggling with her faith.



Diocese of Scranton
300 Wyoming Avenue
Scranton, Pennsylvania 18603

January 20, 1989

COPY

His Eminence
Luigi Cardinal Dadaglio
Peniteziere Maggiore
Penitenzieria Apostolica
Palazzo della Cancelleria
00186 Roma

Your Eminence,

It has come to my attention that a priest of this diocese has been rendered irregular as a result of having assisted in the procurement of a completed abortion. Conscious as I am of the severity of the crime he admits to, I nevertheless judge him worthy of consideration for a dispensation from this irregularity.

The priest in question undoubtedly acted out of fear and panic. He had impregnated the girl he assisted in procuring the abortion.

Upon learning of this priest's action, I removed him from the parish where he had been ministering as pastor and sent him for psychological evaluation. The evaluation concluded that while this priest acted in a most irresponsible fashion, they did not find evidence of any emotional or psychological dysfunctions indicating that he would actively seek any future sexual liaisons or again commit the crime for which he is guilty.

Following upon the time spent in receiving psychological evaluation, the priest then spent an appropriate period of time at a monastery seeking spiritual assistance.

I am firmly convinced of the priest's sincere repentance and his ability to successfully wage the struggle against any future sexual temptations. I also do not believe, judging from his intense sorrow and sincere contrition, that he ever again would assist in the procurement of an abortion for anyone.

Although I cannot absolutely give assurance that this priest's criminal action will never become public, I do not foresee that such would likely be the case.

This priest is currently residing in a parish quite far from the town where the crime was committed. He is awaiting a response to this request for a dispensation.

Luigi Cardinal Dedaoglio

Page Two
January 20, 1989

It is my sincere hope that a favorable response to this request will be forthcoming. I believe that such a response will be to the spiritual benefit of the priest involved, as well as to the benefit of the people of this diocese who need the gifts he shares in priestly ministry.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend James C. Timlin, D.D.
Bishop of Scranton

DS 34383

Timlin Reports to Rome

On December 13, 1989, the victim and her parents entered into an agreement with the Diocese and received a payment of \$75,000. In exchange, the Diocese secured a confidentiality agreement and liability waiver for the Diocese and Skotek. The agreement prohibited the victim and her family from disclosing what had occurred, and released the Diocese from any responsibility, liability, or damages. The agreement stated, in part,

It is expressly understood and agreed that this release and settlement is intended to cover and does cover not only known injuries, losses and damages, but any further injuries, losses and damages which arise from or are related to the occurrences arising from the alleged sexual conduct of Reverend Thomas Skotek.

FULL AND FINAL RELEASE

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS, for the sole consideration of the sum of SEVENTY-FIVE THOUSAND (\$75,000.00) DOLLARS paid to the undersigned, receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, the undersigned hereby forever fully release and discharge Reverend Thomas Skotek, the Diocese of Scranton, and all other persons, partnerships, associations or corporations whether or not named herein, their heirs, executors, administrators, affiliates, successors, assigns and insurers, and their respective agents, servants and employees from any and all actions, causes of action, claims and demands or suits of any kind in law or in equity on account of known and unknown injuries, losses and damages including claims for damages to reputation or psyche allegedly sustained by the undersigned and specifically from any claims or joinders for sole liability, contribution, indemnity or otherwise arising out of, relating to, or in way connected with a claim or claims by the undersigned of the alleged sexual conduct of Reverend Thomas Skotek which is alleged to have begun on or about September 1, 1980 and continuing to on or about September 1, 1984 but is in no way limited to this period of time. The undersigned understand and agree that acceptance of the amount set forth herein is in full accord and satisfaction of a disputed claim and that no professional liability or

DS 34391

personal fault on the part of Reverend Thomas Skotek or the Diocese of Scranton is implied or admitted as a result of this compromise settlement, and that all parties released herein shall not be estopped or otherwise barred from asserting the lack of any such liability in any other proceeding or for any purpose whatsoever.

IT IS EXPRESSLY UNDERSTOOD AND AGREED that this Release and settlement is intended to cover and does cover not only known injuries, losses and damages, but any further injuries, losses and damages which arise from or are related to the occurrences arising from the alleged sexual conduct of Reverend Thomas Skotek.

IT IS FURTHER UNDERSTOOD AND AGREED that this is the Complete Release Agreement and that there are no written or oral understandings or agreements directly or indirectly connected with this Release and settlement that are not incorporated herein. This Agreement shall be binding upon and inure to the parties hereto and the successors, assigns, heirs, executors, administrators and legal representatives of the respective parties. This Agreement shall specifically include the waiver and release of any claims in subrogation which the undersigned may now or hereafter possess.

IT IS FURTHER AGREED AND UNDERSTOOD that one of the undersigned, [REDACTED] was born on September 13, 1966 and having reached eighteen (18), the age of majority on September 13, 1984, and having been fully advised of her

DS 34392

rights under the circumstances, hereby agrees and consents to the terms of this Agreement.

Additionally, we the undersigned, the parents of [REDACTED] a minor until September 13, 1984, having been advised of our rights and the rights of our daughter, do hereby agree and consent to the terms of this Agreement.

IT IS FURTHER UNDERSTOOD AND AGREED and made a part hereof that neither the undersigned, nor any of their directors, officers, officials, employees, attorneys, agents, or other representatives will in any way communicate or divulge to any person whatsoever or publicize or cause to be publicized in any news or communications media, including but not limited to, newspapers, magazines, journals, radio or television, the facts, terms or conditions of this Release and settlement as well as the facts or conditions of these alleged claims. All parties to this Agreement expressly agree to decline comment on any aspect of this Release and settlement as well as the facts or conditions of these alleged claims to any member of the news media. This paragraph is intended to become part of the consideration for the settlement of this claim.

IT IS FURTHER UNDERSTOOD AND AGREED that the undersigned for themselves, their successors, assigns and representatives, parent, subsidiary and related organizations covenant and agree to indemnify and hold harmless Reverend Thomas Skotek and the Diocese of Scranton, and all other persons, partnerships, associations or

corporations whether or not named herein, their heirs, executors, administrators, affiliates, successors, assigns and insurers, and their respective agents, servants and employees from any and all claims, demands, suits for damages, costs and expenses which they may hereafter expend in any claims or suits in any way arising from the alleged claims involved in this matter.

THE UNDERSIGNED HEREBY DECLARE that the terms of this settlement have been completely read, fully understood, and voluntarily accepted for the purpose of making a full and final compromise adjustment and settlement of any and all claims on account of the injuries and damages mentioned above, and for the express purpose of precluding forever any further or additional claims or suits arising out of the aforesaid claims.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] intending to be legally bound, have caused this Release to be duly executed this 13 day of December, 1989.

[REDACTED] (SEAL)
[REDACTED] (SEAL)
[REDACTED] (SEAL)

[REDACTED]
WITNESS

DS 34394

On January 6, 2002, the *Boston Globe* newspaper ran an article on child sexual abuse by clergy within the Archdiocese of Boston. Subsequently, on February 19, 2002, the Diocese was contacted by legal counsel for a 47-year-old woman. It was reported that while attending Pocono Central Catholic High School, and working at the rectory at St. Mary's in Mount Pocono, she was sexually abused by Skotek. Skotek admitted to his conduct when confronted.

On March 15, 2002, an issue arose with the victim whose family had settled with the Diocese in December, 1989. Recent hardships, and her original abusive trauma, had placed her in need. She contacted the Diocese and obtained \$4,000.00 from Skotek. Timlin acted as the intermediary and noted, "This settles the matter – for now!" On June 14, 2002, Skotek was finally removed from active ministry approximately two decades after he impregnated a minor and procured an abortion.

Memorandum Re: Fr. Skatch & ^{Yaffa} ~~Timlin~~

On Friday, March 15, 2002.

I telephoned Fr. Skatch and told him about [redacted] letter and telephone call. He offered to send [redacted] the \$4000.00 she was requesting.

I explained to [redacted] that we were not able to give her the money, but I called Fr. Skatch and he offered to do so. [redacted] was elated, very happy, could not stop thanking me. This settles the matter - for now!

+ JLT.

Timlin's Note - "This settles the matter - for now!"