

The Case of Father Edmond A. Parrakow

Known Assignments

1968 (summer)	Catholic University Ponce, Puerto Rico
1968-1969	Assumption Catholic Church, Tuckahoe, New York
1969-1973	St. Peter, Yonkers, New York
1973-1984	St. Martin of Tours, Bronx, New York (St. Thomas Aquinas H.S., Faculty)
1985	Servants of the Paraclete, Jemez Springs, New México
December 1985	Accepted into Greensburg Diocese
1985-1986	Holy Family Catholic Church, Latrobe
1986-1989	St. Pius X Catholic Church, Mount Pleasant
Leave	(Return to Archdiocese of New York)
2004	Request for Laicization

Father Edmond Parrakow was born and raised in New York City and ordained on June 1, 1968, at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City at the age of 28. Parrakow thereafter spent seventeen years serving in various parishes within the Archdiocese of New York. At some point during his assignment to the parish of St. Martin of Tours, Bronx, New York, and St. Thomas Aquinas High School, complaints related to the sexual abuse of children were made against Parrakow.

While records within the Diocese of Greensburg regarding Parrakow's alleged misconduct in the Archdiocese of New York were somewhat limited, Parrakow's Greensburg Diocesan file indicated a complaint was made against him around the beginning of 1985 by a man alleging he was sexually abused by Parrakow fifteen years prior when he was a teenage boy (Victim One). This abuse allegation appears to have prompted the Archdiocese of New York to arrange for Parrakow to receive counseling with a Father Benedict during the first months of 1985. Parrakow underwent an intensive "evaluation" at the St. Bernardine Clinic in Suitland, Maryland, in May 1985, which resulted in his referral for in-patient treatment at the Foundation House operated by the Servants of the Paraclete in Jemez Springs, New Mexico ("Foundation House") in July 1985.

Foundation House was a facility that provided evaluations and treatment for priests accused of sexual abuse of children or other improper acts.

According to a memorandum dated February 20, 1985, from Monsignor Thomas Klinzing of the Diocese of Greenburg to Bishop William Connare, an inquiry was received from the Archdiocese of New York asking if Parrakow could be accepted into the Diocese of Greensburg “for the next three or four months.” This initial request from the New York Archdiocese included information that Parrakow was undergoing counseling at the time, but assured the Greensburg diocese “that there were no unusual psychological problems but that Father Parrakow needs time to sort out his problems.”

Parrakow underwent a series of interviews and tests upon his arrival at Foundation House. During one such interview on July 22, 1985, Parrakow admitted to having molested approximately thirty-five male children over the previous seventeen years he had served as a priest (he was 45 years old at the time). Parrakow indicated he preferred his victims around the age of 15 or 16 and admitted to having engaged in sexual touching, mutual masturbation, mutual fellatio, and mutual anal intercourse. Parrakow further stated that he “thought that sex with a girl was sinful and that sex with a child was not violating them—it was doing something to them externally.”

The doctor who conducted the July 22, 1985, interview with Parrakow reached the following conclusion:

My impression is that he [Parrakow] certainly has pedophilia. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind. The real issue with treating him is going to be giving him insight and helping to motivate him to change his behavior. I am not sure the level of motivation that is within him right now [sic]. Basically if he had not got caught he would be continuing the behavior without really thinking that it was really not that harmful [sic].

While Parrakow was undergoing “treatment” at Foundation House, letters were exchanged between the Archdiocese of New York and Connare, confirming that Parrakow would be granted

a ministry within the Diocese of Greensburg. On October 7, 1985, Connare wrote to Reverend Henry Mansell, Vice Chancellor for Priest Personnel for the Archdiocese of New York, and indicated he would “be happy to help Father [Parrakow] with an assignment” after his release from Foundation House. On October 11, 1985, Mansell responded with a letter of gratitude and agreed to facilitate an exchange of information regarding Parrakow’s time in New Mexico. Specifically, in his October 7 letter, Connare requested “a complete report on that treatment and his needs so that we can consider his needs when the time for an appointment draws near.” Mansell later assured Connare that the Greensburg Diocese would “be provided with a complete report on his treatment and needs.”

While Parrakow’s complete records from Foundation House, including those pertaining to his interview when he confessed to having sexually abused thirty-five boys, were sent from Foundation House to the Archdiocese of New York on August 6, 1985, the records of the Diocese of Greensburg do not reflect whether this information was provided by New York to Greensburg at that time. For instance, according to a letter sent by Parrakow to Connare on December 9, 1985, Parrakow was including with the letter several “progress reports” pertaining to his treatment at Foundation House. These progress reports only addressed his general participation in various programs at Foundation House and did not include any details of his prior sexual abuse.

In a confidential memorandum dated December 11, 1985, prepared by Connare that was held within the secret archives of the Diocese of Greensburg, Connare acknowledged receipt of the progress reports sent with Parrakow's December 9, 1985, letter. In this confidential memorandum, Connare documented that although the official reason offered for Parrakow's stay at Foundation House was “‘burn out’ due to his teaching experience,” he was informed during a telephone conversation with a Father Isaias that the reason Parrakow was dispatched to New

Mexico was a complaint of sexual abuse committed by Parrakow on a teenage boy fifteen years prior. Connare noted that the victim was “older and unbalanced” and had been contacting the Archdiocese of New York about Parrakow.

Connare further remarked in his confidential memorandum that he spoke with Parrakow about the matter and that Parrakow confirmed he was sent to Foundation House because of the accusation of abuse made against him. There is no indication, however, that Parrakow revealed to Connare his complete history of sexual abuse. In response to learning about the complaint against Parrakow, Connare wrote the following:

From my interview with Father Ed, it would seem that his problem is in the past. It would also seem that from the program at Foundation House, he has come a long way in discovering his own nature and personality, including implications of sexuality. He realizes he must limit contacts with young people and work on developing patterns of mature conduct.

In a letter dated November 4, 1985, sent by the Director of Foundation House, Connare was directly warned not to assign Parrakow to a parish that had a school and recommended he be assigned with at least one other priest.

I would like to offer some suggestions concerning possible assignments for Father Parrakow:
1) We recommend that Father Parrakow be assigned with at least one other priest in a parish setting that does not have a school.
2) In addition, we recommend that Father Parrakow continue in therapy with a competent therapist, psychologist or psychiatrist.
3) He should also be seeing a qualified Spiritual Director on a regular basis and belong to a priests's support group of some type.

A Selection from the Letter of Warning received by Connare
from the Director of Foundation House

On November 20, 1985, Klinzing responded to the Director's letter of warning and advised that the Diocese of Greenburg would not be able to abide by his recommendations:

As Bishop Connare has previously stated, he is more than willing to have Father Parrakow serve in the Diocese of Greensburg in the pastoral ministry while on leave from the Archdiocese of New York. However, the Bishop does not feel he can comply with your suggestion that Father Parrakow be assigned in a parish setting that does not have a school. The Diocese of Greensburg is made up of many parishes with between 600 and 900 families and these parishes usually have a small parochial school attached. The Parish school usually has under 200 students. The Bishop feels that in asking Father Parrakow to accept an assignment, he would have to place him in such a parish.

Klinzing further stated, “If you have a problem with any of the above, please feel free to call me or Bishop Connare.”

Thomas J. Klinzing

November 20, 1985

Reverend William D. Perri, s.P.
Director, Foundation House
Servants of the Paraclete
Jemez Springs, New Mexico 87025

Dear Father Perri:

Bishop Connare asked me to respond to your letter of November 4, 1985, concerning the possible assignment of Father Edmond Parrakow of the Archdiocese of New York.

As Bishop Connare has previously stated, he is more than willing to have Father Parrakow serve in the Diocese of Greensburg in the pastoral ministry while on leave from the Archdiocese of New York. However, the Bishop does not feel that he can comply with your suggestion that Father Parrakow be assigned in a parish setting that does not have a school. The Diocese of Greensburg is made up of many parishes with between 600 and 900 families and these parishes usually have a small parochial school attached. The parish school usually has under 200 students. The Bishop feels that in asking Father Parrakow to accept an assignment, he would have to place him in such a parish.

Concerning the other suggestions, the Bishop is more than willing to cooperate in any way he can to make the six months prior to his return to the Foundation House in June, an experience that will be beneficial to Father Parrakow and the people he will serve.

If you have a problem with any of the above, please feel free to call me or Bishop Connare to discuss the matter. Our phone number is [412] 837-0901.

With every best wish, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Reverend Thomas J. Klinzing, J.C.L.
Vicar General/Chancellor

DG0004412

Monsignor Klinzing's Letter of Response

Shortly after Connare's interview with Parrakow in December 1985, Parrakow completed his tenure at Foundation House and with the consent of the Archdiocese of New York and approval of Connare, entered into ministry in the Diocese of Greensburg.

Between December 11, 1985, and July 1, 1986, Parrakow was not assigned to a single parish, but rather aided various parishes in the Diocese. On May 14, 1986, Parrakow wrote a letter from St. Procopius Parish in New Salem, Fayette County, thanking Connare for his acceptance and expressing his satisfaction with his involvement in parish ministry. Parrakow also spent a short time at Holy Family Catholic Church in Latrobe, Westmoreland County, in the early months of 1986. On July 1, 1986, Parrakow received his first formal appointment in the Diocese when he was appointed Parochial Vicar of St. Pius X Catholic Church in Mount Pleasant, Westmoreland County. Throughout his assignments, Parrakow regularly had contact with Catholic schools.



Bishop's Office
Greensburg, Penna.

July 1, 1986

Reverend Edmond Parrakow

Reverend and dear Father:

We hereby appoint you

Parochial Vicar at the

Church of Saint Pius X

in Mount Pleasant, Pennsylvania.

You will please take your place

Tuesday, July 15, 1986.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Bishop of Greensburg

Chancellor

DG0004404

Parrakow's First Assignment in Pennsylvania

Parrakow served in the Diocese until early 1989, when a complaint was made against him regarding inappropriate contact he had with a seventh grader at Holy Trinity Catholic School located in Mount Pleasant (Victim Two). Parrakow had been tasked with instructing Victim Two in the faith and his upcoming sacraments. According to internal Diocesan records, on February 13, 1989, Klinzing met with the child's parents and was informed that, from the outset of their son's involvement with Parrakow, Parrakow was verbally abusive towards them and accused them of abusing and harming their son. They stated that Parrakow was “overprotective of [their] child and interfering with [their] child's life” and that, since his involvement with Parrakow, Victim Two's performance in school had suffered. They described that Victim Two's experience with Parrakow had “been extremely bad for him.”

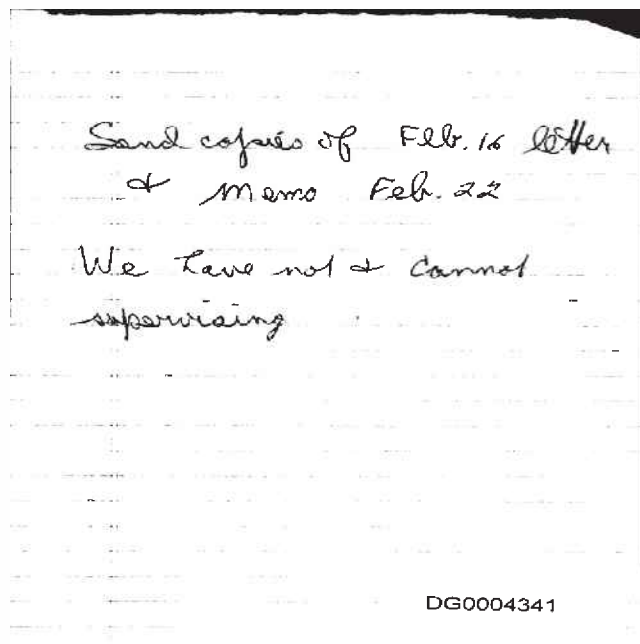
The situation escalated during an incident in which Victim Two was taken to the emergency room because of an illness. While Victim Two's parents were with him at the hospital, Parrakow entered the treatment room, insulted the parents, and “began to touch [Victim Two] on his face and hands and chest while he lay on the emergency room bed.” A violent argument ensued with the boy's father. Parrakow called Victim Two's home that evening inquiring about the boy and appeared at the hospital the next day, which “terrified and petrified” Victim Two.

Meanwhile, in January of 1989, Parrakow requested incardination with the Diocese of Greensburg, meaning that he would be formally transferred from the Archdiocese of New York to the Diocese of Greensburg. The request prompted the disclosure of Parrakow's full records from the Archdiocese of New York. This included his complete records from Foundation House, which included his admission to having molested approximately thirty-five male children while he served as a priest. At the same time these records were being disclosed in the first weeks of February, 1989, the complaint involving Victim Two was received by the Diocese.

On February 16, 1989, Bishop Anthony Bosco of the Diocese of Greensburg notified Lawrence M. Connaughton, Vice-Chancellor for Priest Personnel of the Archdiocese of New York, of his concern over the incident with Victim Two and his parents. Bosco stated that he had relieved Parrakow of his assignment in the Diocese of Greensburg on February 10, 1989, and would not provide him any further assignments.

On February 22, 1989, Klinzing wrote a memorandum to Bosco stating, "Father Connaughton asked if there were any incidents because he's worried about legal ramifications. I told him that we have suspicions but no hard evidence."

Significantly, an undated note in Parrakow's Diocesan file appeared to confirm that the Diocese of Greensburg had engaged in no meaningful supervision of Parrakow since his arrival in 1986. The note stated, "We have not & cannot supervising."



Sand copies of Febr. 16 letter
& memo Feb. 22

We have not & cannot
supervising

DG0004341

The File Note

According to correspondence between the Archdiocese of New York and the Diocese of Greensburg in 2003, Parrakow resided in the Greensburg Diocese but did not engage in any priestly

activities between 1989 and 2003. In 2004, Parrakow consented to laicization and was formally removed from the priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church.

Pursuant to the Grand Jury's investigation, Victim Two was contacted and later interviewed by Special Agents of the Office of Attorney General (OAG) on April 12, 2017. Victim Two confirmed the details of the incident as documented within Diocesan records and stated that Parrakow was "a pervert" and that "he always made me feel uncomfortable and intimidated." Victim Two further expressed his firm belief that, had his father not intervened that day at the hospital, Parrakow would have gone much further than rubbing his body and face. Victim Two identified a boyhood neighbor of his as another possible victim of Parrakow. This young man had served as an altar boy before abruptly withdrawing from that role in his local parish. On May 4, 2017, this additional victim (Victim Three) was interviewed by OAG Special Agents.

Victim Three explained that, for approximately one year when he was 10 or 11 years old and in fourth or fifth grade, he served as an altar boy at St. Pius X Catholic Church in Mount Pleasant. He stopped being an altar boy due to Parrakow. Victim Three reported that, while he was an altar boy, Father Ed, as the boys called Parrakow, told the altar boys not to wear any clothing under their cassocks because God did not want any man-made clothes to be worn next to their skin while they were serving Mass. Parrakow also told the boys their cassocks had been blessed and were meant to be worn next to the skin. Victim Three stated he never felt comfortable about this and that it did not seem right not to wear any clothing under his cassock.

Victim Three also reported that Parrakow took the altar boys into a private room and told them he had to do a physical examination on them because there had been a report of abuse at the school. Parrakow told the boys he was checking them for any signs of abuse and further stated that the school did not want this to be common knowledge because they might never find out which

student was being abused. Parrakow told the altar boys not to say anything to their parents, teachers, or other students. Victim Three further added that Parrakow would touch the children “all over” during these “examinations,” including their genitals and buttocks. Victim Three specifically recalled Parrakow breathing on his neck when he was behind him checking his buttocks.

On December 11, 2017, Parrakow appeared before the Grand Jury pursuant to a subpoena. During his testimony, Parrakow admitted that he had molested children as a priest, many of whom were altar boys. When asked if he had abused numerous children, Parrakow stated, “... I don’t – well, I didn’t keep contact – contact with them, and I didn’t count them. So whatever the Diocese is saying is probably correct.” Although Parrakow could not recall the names of all the children he had molested, he did recall that he had sexual contact with the child of a youth minister in Bethlehem, Lehigh and Northampton Counties, during drives between New York and Greensburg. Parrakow explained that he had developed a friendship with the youth minister and was invited to stay at their home as a point of respite on the long drive.

Parrakow further testified that the Diocese never placed any restrictions on his ministry and never limited his contact with schools, despite the warning and recommendations of the Director of Foundation House. Parrakow stated he was unaware of any such recommendation and did, in fact, have frequent contact with school children.

Parrakow testified that he confessed his crimes to his fellow priests, but admitted he would offend again after he received absolution. During a particular exchange with the attorney for the Commonwealth, Parrakow conceded that he could not be cured of his desires and indicated that he was unaware of the “serious effects” of his criminal actions. The prosecutor challenged his assertion regarding the seriousness of his offenses in the following exchange:

Q: Okay. You didn't know that Scripture itself says it is better to put a millstone around your neck and be cast into the sea than harm a child?

A: That, I knew.

Neither Edmund Parrakow nor William Connare can be prosecuted for their crimes. The statute of limitations has expired for the multiple indecent assaults Parrakow committed in Pennsylvania. Parrakow is currently employed in a shopping mall in Westmoreland County.

Connare died in 1995. The Bishop Connare Center, the Diocese of Greensburg's ecumenical retreat, social, and educational conference facility, was named in his honor.