

Priest P

Priest P was also assigned to a parish with an elementary school. After his assignment, the pastor learned that *Priest P* suffered from a foot fetish. As a result, he took a sabbatical. The pastor denied any knowledge of the details of the fetish or of any other activities of *Priest P*. A nun who worked at this parish, told the Grand Jury that she had concerns about *Priest P*'s behavior. She testified that in the early 1990's, a woman had spoken with her about an incident of sexual abuse involving her son and *Priest P*. There was an indication that the victim of the abuse was probably mentally ill. The nun confirmed this and discussed the allegations with the deacon assigned to the parish. *Priest P* left the parish for a while and returned acting as if nothing had happened. Unable to reach any Diocesan representative involved in the evaluation of cases involving sexual abuse, she wrote a letter to the Diocese about *Priest P*. In the letter, she details inappropriate sexual conduct of *Priest P* with four victims.⁶¹ She states that a senior cleric in the Diocese, *Priest P*'s pastor, and a deacon, all knew this. The letter expresses concern over the potential return of *Priest P* to the parish. She was concerned too, because *Priest P* was trained in psychology and she was afraid he could manipulate the treatment professionals.⁶²

In response to her letter, the nun received a phone call from a priest involved in dealing with Diocesan personnel issues. He advised that *Priest P* would not be returning to the parish. This, in turn, upset the pastor who was willing to take any priest, including a sexually abusive one, rather than be short of personnel.

⁶¹ Not all of these victims were children.

⁶² Grand Jury Exhibit 129.

Priest P was assigned to a new parish where, yet again, there was an elementary school. The pastor there never knew about any sexual contact between *Priest P* and his parishioners in his earlier assignments. He indicated that he should have been told about it.

This pastor told the Grand Jury that his rectory policy prohibited young people from visiting the priest residences. Despite this admonition, *Priest P* had teenage boys in his room. He also advised the pastor that he considered *Priest P* to be too touchy/huggy with kids. (Grand Jury Exhibits 15E, 126). In a conversation with a high ranking Diocesan official involved in cases of sexual abuse committed by a priest, he reported that *Priest P* is, “an accident looking for a place to happen”. (Grand Jury Exhibit 126).

A new pastor was appointed to the parish where *Priest P* was assigned. Shortly after becoming pastor, he spoke with a senior representative of the Diocese about *Priest P* and articulated concerns about his behavior. The representative made notes of the conversation, as well as of his conversation with the another earlier pastor. These notes clearly indicate that the Diocese was told that on the pastor’s day off, *Priest P* would break his rules and have boys in his private room. A little over a year later (Grand Jury Exhibit 126), this same pastor contacted officials in the Diocese because of additional concerns about *Priest P*’s behavior. Specifically, he complained that *Priest P* was giving back rubs and tickling a 15-year-old boy in the rectory. He was aware this boy experienced panic when in the company of *Priest P*. The pastor reported that at one point, *Priest P* slipped his hand inside the boy’s shirt and rubbed his nipple. The pastor also knew that *Priest P* had moved his hands towards the boy’s groin but never actually touched it. (Grand Jury Exhibit 15D).

The information provided by the pastor is memorialized in notes that the Grand Jury reviewed.⁶³ The notes indicate these concerns, including information that *Priest P* was frequently in the company of 18, 19 and 20 year old males in his rectory room, using what he called “dirty talk”. A parishioner had also alleged that *Priest P* engaged in sex with boys and the parish staff confirmed, at the very least, that *Priest P’s* conduct with boys was inappropriate. The youth minister of the parish also complained of *Priest P’s* sexual talk in the presence of young people. When confronted with these allegations, *Priest P* appeared shocked. The notes also reveal that a high ranking Diocesan official, involved in the investigation of priests who were alleged to have sexually abused minors, reported this information at personnel supervision meetings.

To his credit, this pastor wrote again to senior representatives of the Diocese and expressed his uncertainty that *Priest P* could manage his sexual desires.⁶⁴ The Pastor indicated that he was not able to assure parents that their sons would not be the next recipient of *Priest P’s* advances. In his letter, the Pastor refers to a previous report that teenagers were seen in *Priest P’s* room. He reiterates the youth minister’s report that some of these teenagers indicated they had been the recipients of foot massages by *Priest P*. A deacon in the parish told the pastor that he had seen *Priest P* watching objectionable movies with teenagers. The pastor himself had seen young men in *Priest P’s* personal residence, despite his direction that this not happen. He reported that some people in the rectory referred to *Priest P* as “Pete”, a nickname for pederast.

⁶³ Grand Jury Exhibit 15E.

⁶⁴ Grand Jury Exhibit 15F.

The pastor concluded his letter with the caution that he could not give *Priest P* what he needed, close supervision.

A few months later, the pastor again wrote to the Diocesan priest involved in personnel decisions.⁶⁵ *Priest P* had been sent for psychological evaluation and treatment. It is apparent from this correspondence that the Diocese, in conjunction with the pastor, had circulated a story for the parish to cover up the reason for *Priest P's* absence. The pastor explained that he was working hard to keep the true story from exploding. The cover that *Priest P* was on a medical leave was successful until *Priest P* returned unexpectedly for a visit to the rectory with no apparent sign of illness. Additional Diocesan correspondence demonstrated just how secrecy was perpetuated by Diocesan officials.⁶⁶

The pastor of the parish to which the Diocese wanted to transfer *Priest P* next, reported to personnel officials that the youth minister in his parish had discovered *Priest P's* history. The pastor believed he had successfully kept the information from going any further so that it would not be an impediment to *Priest P's* transfer.

Subsequent to his treatment, *Priest P* was placed in residence at one parish with weekend mass duties. This was of particular concern to the nun who had originally complained to the Diocese about *Priest P*. She knew the weekend parish had only one full-time priest. As such, she feared that *Priest P* would be left unsupervised when the full-time priest was away.

⁶⁵ Grand Jury Exhibit 15G.

⁶⁶ Grand Jury Exhibit 15N dated May 10, 2001