

Reverend Michael C. Romero

Biographical Information

YEAR OF BIRTH:	1937
YEAR OF DEATH:	2000
ORDINATION:	October 1, 1977

Employment/Assignment History

10/13/1977-2/23/1978	Parochial Vicar, North American Martyrs, Monroeville, PA
2/24/1978-7/07/1982	Parochial Vicar, Immaculate Conception, Washington, PA
7/08/1982-6/02/1985	Parochial Vicar, St. Veronica, Ambridge, PA
6/03/1985-3/15/1990	Parochial Vicar, St. Basil, Carrick, PA
3/15/1990-6/17/2000	Leave of Absence

Summary

The first allegation of sexual abuse against Father Michael C. Romero surfaced on June 14, 2013. A memorandum to the file indicated that on that date, the Diocese of Pittsburgh received a telephone call from a woman named “Andrea.” Andrea advised that her boyfriend was sexually abused by Romero when Romero was assigned to Immaculate Conception.

Andrea advised that her boyfriend’s mother had previously contacted the Diocese to report the abuse and to obtain referral information to help her son. In the internal memorandum, it was observed that notes from a June, 2012 telephone conversation with the mother were located. According to the notes, the mother had provided some information about her son and asked if the Diocese would be able to help him. It was represented that the Diocese provided the mother with some referral information for the area in which her son lived. There was no report about the allegation made at that time.

Andrea subsequently contacted her boyfriend’s mother and asked her to re-contact the Diocese. The mother called again and advised that her son was sexually abused by a priest and that she believed that the priest was Romero. She stated that the abuse occurred at Immaculate Conception when her son was a student there. She stated that Romero bought her son all kinds of gifts, including a ski jacket. On one occasion many years later, her son came home for a visit and knocked a picture of himself off the wall and broke it. It was a picture of her son wearing the ski jacket. She also reported that Romero once took her son on a trip to Cleveland and gave him alcohol. Her son got so drunk that he could not remember anything afterward. She stated that her son was now a heavy drinker and she believed that it stemmed back to the sexual abuse and his early exposure to alcohol by the priest.

In a memorandum to the file dated October 2013, it was noted that the son contacted the Diocese and advised that he wanted to report “*questionable behavior*” that occurred when he was a child. He stated that he was an altar server at Immaculate Conception in grade school

Summary

through freshman year of high school. He stated that Romero would encourage him to drink wine after mass before he returned to class. He also recalled that, on occasion, Romero also took him to the racetrack and bought him alcohol there. He recalled Romero buying him gifts, specifically, a sweat suit that Romero asked him to change into. The male reported that other “things” happened but that he was reluctant to talk about anything else. He stated that Father John Bauer also provided him with alcohol and encouraged him to drink it. He stated that Bauer would also engage him in “wrestling” matches. He recalled that Romero and Bauer would talk about masturbation a lot in front of him and the other young boys. The male stated that he has spent his life dealing with issues of alcohol abuse and addiction. He attributed it to his early exposure to alcohol by Romero and Bauer.

The male advised that he was seeking assistance with counseling to deal with his repressed issues of sexual abuse. The Diocese advised that its counterpart in Florida (where the male now lived) would be contacted and that referral information would be provided to him. He was asked to make a written statement and that this information would be shared with the Washington County District Attorney’s Office.

On October 17, 2013, the Diocese sent a follow up e-mail message to the victim providing him with contact information for a local counselor. She also asked him to make a written statement.

A letter in the file revealed that the Diocese forwarded the victim’s information to the Washington County District Attorney’s office on August 5, 2014.

The file also contained a January 19, 2012 memorandum from Father Harry Bielewicz that included information about a second allegation of abuse against Romero. The memorandum documented that on January 19, 2012, Father George Moneck called to report that he had received a telephone call from a male victim who alleged that he was sexually abused by Romero while he was a parishioner at Immaculate Conception. The memorandum stated that Moneck was advised by telephone and in a letter to have the victim call Rita Flaherty of the Diocese.

No other information about the victim was provided in the files obtained from the Diocese.