

Reverend Robert Castelucci

Biographical Information

YEAR OF BIRTH:	1938
YEAR OF DEATH:	N/A
ORDINATION:	May 9, 1964

Employment/Assignment History

5/27/1964-3/07/1965	St. Rosalia, Greenfield, PA
5/08/1965-5/21/1973	St. Joseph, Coraopolis, PA
5/08/1965-5/21/1973	St. Martha, Groveton, PA
5/22/1973-5/29/1974	St. Patrick, Canonsburg, PA
5/30/1974-6/29/1981	St. Mary of Mt. Carmel, Braddock, PA
6/30/1981-12/09/1994	St. Lawrence, Hillsville, PA
12/09/1994-7/27/1999	Leave of Absence
7/28/1999-3/25/2002	Administrative Leave
3/25/2002	Withdrew from active ministry

Summary

Documents obtained by subpoena from the Diocese of Pittsburgh show that Father Robert Castelucci is alleged to have engaged in inappropriate sexual conduct with several minors throughout his active ministry. The Diocese determined the allegations to be credible based on one victim's knowledge of Castelucci's anatomy, and Castelucci's psychological evaluation at St. Luke Institute. Despite having knowledge since 1994 of Castelucci's sexual abuse of children, the Diocese did not remove him from ministry, instead initially allowing him to take a leave of absence for personal reasons. Eventually, they requested Castelucci to voluntarily withdraw from the active priestly ministry in March 2002.

The first victim met with Fathers Robert Guay, David Zubik, Joseph Karabin and Rita Flaherty, Diocesan Assistance Coordinator on October 27, 1994. The victim stated that Castelucci molested him at the St. Mary rectory and in Castelucci's car. The victim said the abuse occurred from age 13 or 14 until age 17 in the 1970's. The victim alleged that sexual activity with Castelucci included masturbation, oral sex and one attempt at anal sex. He stated that he was a "troubled" youth at the time of the abuse. He reported that Castelucci gave him money and cigarettes.

The victim initially sent a letter to Castelucci on October 22, 1994, and wanted to speak with Castelucci regarding the abuse. In that letter, the victim stated, "I was 13 or 14 when you talked me into masturbation parties only to offer me money later." According to a letter written by Bishop Donald Wuerl to the Vatican on May 6, 2005, after the victim confronted him, Castelucci reportedly called the victim and stated

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not to get diocesan officials involved in the matter, and told [the victim] that he would never have gotten sexually involved with him had he known how much difficulty it would have caused him.

Castelucci also allegedly reminded the victim that he was “*a messed up young man already when he had met him.*”

The Diocese determined the allegation was credible due to the victim having detailed knowledge of Castelucci’s anatomy. Based on the information available, it does not appear that the Diocese notified law enforcement of the allegations. The victim eventually filed a civil lawsuit along with 32 other individuals, which resulted in a \$1.25 million settlement in October 2007. Diocesan records revealed that this victim signed a “Settlement Agreement and Release” document on October 3, 2007. The Diocese later forwarded three checks to the victim’s therapist: One in 2008 for \$1,130; one in 2010 for \$1,820; and one in 2011 for \$1,620.

Information about an additional victim was contained in materials obtained from the Diocese pursuant to subpoena. This additional victim appears to be a brother of the first victim. According to the civil lawsuit documents, this victim “*was a minor child approximately eight (8) years old when he was first sexually abused by Father Robert Castelucci.*” Based on the victim’s date of birth and his approximate age, the abuse would have occurred in approximately 1978. It does not appear that the Diocese provided any further information regarding this victim or his alleged abuse. This victim also signed a “Settlement Agreement and Release” document on October 3, 2007.

In October 1994, Castelucci reluctantly agreed to go to St. Luke Institute for a psychological evaluation. According to a document entitled, “*Reverend Robert Castelucci – Confidential File Chronological Review,*” St. Luke Institute recommended that Castelucci undergo testify to determine, *inter alia*, “*to what degree this includes sexual attraction to adolescents.*” According to a letter in Castelucci’s file from Bishop Wuerl dated February 28, 1996, Castelucci was unwilling to accept the recommendation for inpatient treatment, instead citing that he needed to take care of his ailing mother. Castelucci requested three extensions of his personal leave of absence. In May 1999, Castelucci requested an early retirement, which Wuerl “*did not grant since he did not meet the requirements in place for such a request.*”

Shortly after Castelucci requested an early retirement, the Diocese received information in July 1999 regarding an allegation that Castelucci had given a 17-year-old male a pornographic video, and performed oral sex on him. This third victim lived in Ohio where Castelucci moved after he took an extended leave of absence to care for his sick mother. Castelucci was placed on administrative leave. The Diocese reached out to the victim’s family regarding assistance with counseling. According to the Diocese, they never received a response from the victim’s family. In February 2000, Castelucci notified the Diocese that “*the authorities of Columbiana County, Ohio had decided not to press any charges against him.*”

According to a memorandum dated February 12, 2002, a fourth victim met with Diocesan officials to report a sexual conduct allegation against Castelucci. The victim alleged

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that the abuse occurred while he employed as an organist at St. Mary, beginning in May or June 1974, when he was approximately 17 years old. The victim stated that almost immediately upon his arrival, he began to experience “*touchy feely*” behavior from Castelucci. He said that Castelucci would come up behind him, grab him, and put his hands down his pants. He would also attempt to kiss him.

The victim recalled that in July 1974, Castelucci offered him alcohol in the rectory living room. Castelucci came over to him and began to caress his legs, shoulders and chest, eventually performed oral sex on him. These incidents occurred off and on while the victim was employed at Mt. Carmel, ending in June 1977. He also recalled an incident where he stayed in the rectory to watch Castelucci’s dogs while he was out. Castelucci returned around two in the morning, and suggested that the victim stay the night. He agreed to stay in the guest room, but Castelucci came into the room several times during the night to “*bother him.*” The memorandum does not detail what “*bother*” involved.

The victim further stated that there were multiple times that he told Castelucci he wanted the sexual activity to stop, but Castelucci made it known that sexual activity was expected as a condition for employment. The victim recalled, “*Father Castelucci saying on more than one occasion that ‘this is why I hired you’ or ‘you can just leave your keys then.’*” The victim mentioned that he was paid by check for playing the organ but was also given cash.

The victim also said that his friend (the first victim mentioned in this report) told him that Castelucci abused him. He also mentioned another young male who lived in the rectory for two months until he eventually grew tired of the sexual arrangement and moved out. According to the victim, this male “*had a suspect background and who implied to (victim’s name) that his living arrangement was in exchange for sexual favors provided to Father Castelucci.*”

The victim recalled nearly walking in on Castelucci and another unknown boy as they were about to engage in some type of sexual activity. The victim did not know the identity of this boy. Finally, the victim said that Burchianti would frequently visit St. Mary along with a “*TOR priest*” named “*John,*” and both were also “*touchy feely with him.*” (See narrative regarding Leonard Burchianti in this report for further information regarding sexual abuse allegations against him.)

Diocesan officials offered counselling which the victim declined. They then advised the victim that if he became aware of other individuals who have been harmed by Castelucci he should direct them to the clergy office so assistance can be offered to them.

In March 2002, after the fourth victim’s allegation, Diocesan officials met with Castelucci and indicated that it was in his best interest to voluntarily withdraw from ministry rather than be subjected to a canonical process. On March 25, 2002, Castelucci submitted a handwritten letter to Bishop Wuerl withdrawing from active ministry. On the same date, Castelucci sent a second letter to Bishop Wuerl which denied all allegations against him.

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A fifth victim sent an allegation to the Diocese in October 2002. The victim claimed that in the 1970's when he was a 12 or 13-year-old altar boy, Castelucci had asked his mother if he could stay overnight at the St. Joseph rectory. According to the victim, his mother readily agreed since his father was no longer around. She wanted him to spend time with a man, particularly a priest for a positive role model. The victim had heard from other altar boys that Castelucci had "dirty movies" that some of the boys watched. During the overnight stay, the victim asked to see Castelucci's "dirty movies." Castelucci allegedly responded, "he [the victim] would have to allow Father Castelucci to put his hand in a 'dirty place' on [victim's name] before he would show him a movie." According to the victim, he declined. However, the victim stated that he awoke to Castelucci masturbating him while the two of them slept in the same bed. The victim also stated that he remembered "seeing Father Castelucci standing by the window in the room and saying, 'What have I done[?]'"

The Diocese offered to assist with the victim's counseling costs, which he initially declined. However, he called in November 2002 to accept the offer. On November 22, 2002, the Diocese issued two checks: One to the victim totaling \$2,550 and the other to the provider of the therapy the victim was receiving (Clover Psychological Assoc.) for \$494. The Diocese noted that the victim's allegation were credible, and the Allegheny County District Attorney's Office was allegedly notified. However, it does not appear that there were any documents with the victim's actual name in the file containing the written allegation.

Father David Bonnar and Flaherty, wrote to Castelucci on February 10, 2009 to explain the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* promulgated in 2002. Bonnar and Flaherty reassured Castelucci, "Please understand that all of these allegations are past the current Statute of Limitations and therefore time barred."

Another victim called Flaherty in May 2011 to report sex abuse by Castelucci at St. Mary when he was 15 or 16 in the late-1970s. The victim would not go into much detail, but stated that the alleged incident happened once when he was alone with Castelucci. The victim remembered that Castelucci took him to see an "X" rated movie. On another occasion when the same victim spoke with Flaherty, the victim's friend, who had also been molested, was present. The victim mentioned that he did not believe that his friend was inclined to come forward because he was mentally slow. Flaherty told the victim that the Diocese would be happy to help his friend if he decided to come forward.

In January 2015, Flaherty sent a letter to the victim's former therapist which indicated that the Diocese was moving towards a more time-limited approach to the therapy they would cover. The Diocese would offer a limitation of three years or 90 sessions for alleged victims. In this victim's file there were three photocopied checks made out to the victim's counselor in the amounts of \$190, \$814 and \$1,447 for therapy. An allegation with the victim's name was sent to the Allegheny County District Attorney's Office on December 5, 2012.