

World & Nation

Seattle archbishop identifies priest with history of pedophilia

Seattle (NC) — In an effort "to break the cycle of silence that perpetuates abuse in the human family," Archbishop Raymond G. Hunthausen of Seattle has identified an archdiocesan priest who has a history of pedophilia.

In a letter read at Masses in the archdiocese May 28-29, the archbishop said that 65-year-old Father James McGreal "has undergone extensive treatment for a sexual disorder eventually identified as pedophilia," a sexual attraction to children.

The priest has been in four treatment programs since the late 1970s, including the current series of care which began in 1986.

Father McGreal was removed May 25 from St. Theresa Parish in Federal Way, where he had been living for the past year and ministering to the elderly under strict conditions imposed by the archdiocese.

The conditions stipulated that Father McGreal could not visit any families with children under the age of 24, was not permitted to participate in any parish activities for children or to talk to young people or their parents. The restrictions also barred him from attending coffee hours after weekend Masses and required him to attend counseling sessions.

Prior to his assignment to St. Theresa's, Father McGreal had been assigned in 1986 to Queen of Angels Parish in Port Angeles, according to Russell Searce, archdiocesan director of public affairs. At the time of Father McGreal's assignment to Queen of Angels, Father Alan F. Marshall, pastor, and Father Paul J. Cohn, associate pastor, were apprised of Father McGreal's past and asked to monitor his behavior, Searce said.

Father Conn was himself removed from Queen of Angels on April 17, after being accused of taking indecent liberties with five young boys. His trial is set for August 1.

The charges against Father Conn involve incidents that allegedly occurred between June 1, 1987, and April 16, 1988. He was removed from the parish as soon as the archdiocese was notified of accusations against him. He had served at Queen of Angels since his ordination in 1985.

Archbishop Hunthausen identified Father McGreal after a woman told a Seattle talk-show audience that a priest at one of two parishes in Federal Way had a 30-year history of pedophilia.

The program and subsequent newspaper ar-

ticles — which did not name the priest but listed 10 parishes and two hospitals at which Father McGreal had served since 1948 — led to hundreds of phone calls at the parishes.

Since 1977 Father McGreal had been removed from at least two parishes and from a chaplaincy position at Providence Hospital in Everett for problems related to pedophilia, archdiocesan officials said. The King County prosecutor's office investigated at least one of the incidents, but no charges were filed, according to Father Jack Walmesley, director of priest personnel.

In his letter, Archbishop Hunthausen said there are "no easy answers" to the problem of pedophilia, but that the archdiocese has a "commitment to act quickly and responsibly" in any cases of child abuse that come to its attention.

"In every case, we will attempt to provide prompt pastoral care for the victim, cooperate fully with civil authorities and provide due process for the accused," he wrote.

A letter from the archdiocesan chancellor, Father George Thomas, encouraged people who had been victims of abuse by a priest to phone his office. Searce said Father Thomas

had received some calls, but would not comment further.

About 200 members of St. Theresa's Parish attended a May 26 meeting at the church, to discuss the case with the pastor, archdiocesan officials and Father McGreal's counselor.

Father Joseph A. Kramis, the pastor, had informed parishioners of Father McGreal's past at Masses the previous weekend. He apologized for having kept the priest's condition a secret, but said that at the time he felt the information should be remain confidential.

With treatment and the conditions imposed on his ministry, Father McGreal's pedophilia "was contained," Father Kramis said.

The pastor asked parishioners to be understanding. Noting that Father McGreal "himself was a victim (of child abuse) in his early teens, Father Kramis said, "He is in my mind truly repentant."

Father Thomas said that a task force established earlier this year to deal with priests accused of pedophilia will make recommendations to Archbishop Hunthausen regarding Father McGreal.

"The hard question that we still have to face is, 'Can a priest with a known history of pedophilia ever be returned to active ministry,'" Father Thomas said.

Archbishop's column on pedophilia victims draws officials' ire

Milwaukee (NC) — Milwaukee Archbishop Rembert G. Weakland's statement that some adolescent victims of sexual abuse are "sexually very active and aggressive" has provoked strong objections from two Milwaukee public officials.

The archbishop discussed pedophilia — sexual abuse of children — in his May 26 column in the *Catholic Herald*, archdiocesan newspaper. "Not all adolescent victims are so 'innocent,'" the archbishop wrote. "Some can be sexually very active and aggressive and quite often streetwise."

The column was published less than a month after previously sealed court records revealed a \$595,000 court settlement in a case involving Father Dennis Pecore, a Salvatorian priest assigned to a parish in the archdiocese. Father Pecore was convicted of sexual abuse of a minor, and the Archdiocese of Milwaukee was among defendants in the civil suit.

In a May 31 letter to the editor of the *Catholic Herald*, Circuit Court Judge John Foley, criticized Archbishop Weakland for "casting blame" on some adolescent victims of sexual assault.

To say that in certain instances the adolescent victim "is sexually provocative and therefore must assume some of the responsibility for the act is dead wrong," Foley wrote. The relationship between a priest and an adolescent, he added, is based on "the highest form of trust obtainable."

In a May 27 interview with the *Milwaukee Sentinel* daily newspaper, Milwaukee Assistant District Attorney John J. DiMotto criticized the archbishop for perpetuating the "victim-must-share-the-blame syndrome." DiMotto is head of the city's Sensitive Crimes Unit and was prosecutor in the case involving Father Pecore.

Members of the Milwaukee Common Council Task Force on Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence asked Archbishop Weakland to meet with them to discuss his comments. The archbishop agreed to a June 8 meeting.

In his column, Archbishop Weakland also said it would be better for the Church and the priests themselves if members of the clergy "involved in deep-seated cases" of pedophilia — which he defined as those involving pre-pubescent children — were laicized, or returned to the lay state of life.

Such cases, the archbishop said, "do not seem curable and are rarely totally containable. "In such cases, the priestly state becomes a hindrance rather than a help for the psychological adjustment of the pedophile," he wrote.

The archbishop noted, however, that it is sometimes hard to convince the priest pedophile that leaving the priesthood is the best course. It is difficult to obtain a laicization from the Vatican if it is against the priest's will, he said.

Archbishop Weakland also emphasized that the Church must be conscious of the need to create the "right conditions for healthy psychosexual development" of priest candidates.

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