The Case of Father Edward R. Graff

Known Assignments

06/1955 - 04/1957	Annunciation B.V.M., Shenandoah
04/1957 - 05/1958	St. Anthony of Padua, Easton
05/1958 – 09/1958	St. Elizabeth's, Pen Argyl
09/1958 – 09/1959	Pius X High School, Roseto
09/1959 – 06/1962	Residence, St. Anthony, Easton
06/1962 – 09/1963	University of Notre Dame
09/1963 – 03/1964	Our Lady Help of Christians, Allentown
03/1964 – 07/1964	St. Elizabeth, Pen Argyl
07/1964 – 02/1965	Pius X High School, Roseto
02/1965 – 11/1966	Holy Rosary, Reading
	Central Catholic High School, Reading
11/1966 – 08/1968	Holy Name High School, reading
08/1968 – 10/1969	St. Margaret, Reading
10/1969 – 04/1971	St Peter, Coplay
04/1971 – 04/1974	Annunciation B.V.M., Catasauqua,
04/1974 – 11/1979	Director, Thanksgiving Clothing Drive
11/1979 – 07/1980	Sick Leave
07/1980 – 06/1983	St. Margaret, Reading
06/1983 – 02/1992	Holy Guardian Angels, Reading
02/1992	Departed Diocese of Allentown
1992 – 2002	Served in various capacities in Dioceses in New Mexico and Texas

Father Edward R. Graff served as a priest in the Roman Catholic Church for approximately forty-five years, approximately thirty-five years in the Diocese of Allentown and ten years in the Dioceses of Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Amarillo, Texas. During his years in ministry, Graff raped scores of children. The Grand Jury investigated not only Graff's conduct but the knowledge of the relevant Dioceses.

The case of Graff is an example of dioceses that minimized the criminal conduct of one of their priests, while secretly noting the significant danger the priest posed to the public. The Grand Jury notes that the use of euphemisms was constant throughout the Dioceses of Pennsylvania, but particularly apparent in the case of Graff. Terms such as "sick leave" or "health leave" were often used to reference an absence from ministry related to child sexual abuse. In Graff's case, it was

coded as sick leave and retirement. Additionally, child sexual abuse was often minimized with terms such as familiarity, boundary issues, or inappropriate contact. In Graff's case, internal records and correspondence referred to it as difficulties. Finally, it was common to see collateral issues highlighted as the primary underlying problem, while the sexual abuse of children was deemed a collateral and lesser, related form of misconduct. Known child abusers were regularly referred to as having alcohol problems or classified as naïve. In the case of Graff, his primary problem was documented as being an alcoholic. A review of the documents obtained by the Grand Jury stands in stark contrast to the acts described by Graff's victims.

The Grand Jury obtained internal Diocesan records after the Diocese was served with a subpoena on September 1, 2016. Those records were maintained in the secret or confidential archives of the Diocese as well as personnel records. In August 1986, Graff entered the Neumann Center in Reading for what was reported as chemical dependency. The Grand Jury concluded that this was not solely a case of chemical dependency but that the Diocese was aware of some type of sexual conduct with a minor.

After almost thirty years of service in school and parishes in the Diocese, Graff was sent to New Mexico for treatment of undefined but "serious" conduct on the part of Graff. On November 28, 1989, there was an exchange of letters between Welsh and Archbishop Robert Sanchez of the Catholic Center, Santa Fe, New Mexico. The subject of the letters was whether Sanchez was "aware of the seriousness of these cases." The context of the letter reflected more than a mere problem with alcohol. However, no further details were provided in the letters.

By February 1992, Welsh authorized Graff to retire from active ministry in the Diocese. However, Welsh also authorized Graff to begin ministry to the needy in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, New Mexico. On February 25, 1992, three letters were dispatched by Welsh. Welsh wrote to

Graff authorizing him to "continue your ministry to the various needy persons you are already serving." Welsh noted that this was done by agreement with Sanchez. Welsh reminded Graff that he was accountable to the Servants of the Paraclete[1] in Albuquerque as his supervision was continued. Welsh also made arrangements to provide Graff with a monthly pension, living allowance, medical and life insurance, and automobile insurance.

Welsh's second letter was sent to Sanchez. In this letter, Welsh explained that he had granted Graff faculties from the Diocese of Allentown and understood that Sanchez had permitted Graff limited faculties within the Archdiocese of Santa Fe under the supervision of the Servants of the Paraclete. Welsh's third letter thanked the clinical director of the Albuquerque Villa for the care provided to Graff and informed him of the aforementioned arrangement between the Dioceses of Allentown and Santa Fe.

[1] The Servants of the Paraclete was a treatment center regularly used by Pennsylvania Dioceses for the evaluation and treatment of sexual offenders.

6894W

BISHOP'S OFFICE
POST OFFICE BOX F
ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA
18105

202 NORTH SEVENTEENTH STREET
(215) 437-0755

February 25, 1992

The Reverend Edward R. Graff
Albuquerque Villa
Post Office Box 72151
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87195

Dear Father Graff,

After consultation with Archbishop Sanchez, I have decided to accede to your desire to retire from active service to the Diocese of Allentown and to continue your ministry to the various needy persons you are already serving.

With this letter I hereby grant you faculties of the Diocese of Allentown. It is my understanding that Archbishop Sanchez, following the recommendation of the Archdiocesan Personnel Board, will also grant you limited faculties for the Archdiocese of Santa Fe.

I shall also arrange with the Finance Office to provide you with the monthly pension and living allowance as stipulated in Diocesan policy. In addition, your medical and life insurance premiums will also be covered, as will one half of your automobile insurance.

I feel it is important to remind you that you must continue to be supervised by the Paracletes to whom you will remain accountable.

Finally, I extend my prayers and best wishes as you begin this phase of your priestly ministry.

Sincerely yours in Our Lord,

+ Thomas J. Welsh

Bishop of Allentown

6896W

BISHOP'S OFFICE
POST OFFICE BOX F
ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA
18105

February 25, 1992

202 NORTH SEVENTEENTH STREET
(215) 437-0755

His Excellency
The Most Reverend Robert F. Sanchez, D.D.
Archbishop of Santa Fe
4000 Saint Joseph Place, N.W.
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87120

Dear Archbishop Sanchez,

You will recall my letter of December 18, 1991 regarding the Reverend Edward R. Graff, a priest of the Diocese of Allentown currently under the care and supervision of the Servants of the Paraclete in Albuquerque.

In view of the consistently positive reports I have received concerning Father Graff, I intend to allow him to retire from active service to this Diocese and to continue his ministry to the various needy persons he has been serving under the supervision of the Paracletes.

I had my Chancellor contact Father Richard Olona about the recommendations of your Archdiocesan Personnel Board. It is my understanding that, provided Father Graff has faculties from the Diocese of Allentown, you are willing to grant him limited faculties to carry out the ministry referred to above. It is further understood that the Servants of the Paraclete will continue to supervise his activities and pastoral ministry.

I shall grant faculties of this Diocese to Father Graff and arrange with our Finance Office for his pension and living allowance.

Permit me to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks for your solicitude towards Father Graff.

If you have any questions in regard to this matter, please feel free to get in touch with me.

Sincerely yours in Our Lord,

+ Thomas J. Welsh

Bishop of Allentown

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POST OFFICE BOX F
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February 25, 1992

202 NORTH SEVENTEENTH STREET
(215) 437-0755

The Reverend P. Roberto L. Martinez, M.Div.
Clinical Director
The Albuquerque Villa
2348 Pajarito Road, S.W.
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87105

Dear Father Martinez,

I have today written to Father Edward R. Graff to inform him that I intend to allow him to retire from active ministry to the Diocese of Allentown in order to pursue the ministry to the needy in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe in which he has already been engaged.

Archbishop Sanchez, as well as the Personnel Board, is in agreement with this arrangement and will grant limited faculties to Father Graff who enjoys the faculties of the Diocese of Allentown.

Knowing that you and the staff at Albuquerque Villa support this request made by Father Graff, I have decided to permit retirement provided that supervision of his activity and ministry by the Servants of the Paraclete will continue.

I take this opportunity to thank you for the care you have given to Father Graff and the other priests of Allentown.

Sincerely yours in Our Lord,

+ Thomas J Welsh

Bishop of Allentown

The February 25, 1992 Letters

In 1993, correspondence between Welsh and Bishop Leroy Matthiesen of Amarillo, Texas, detailed an alarming development. Welsh expressed his concern that Graff had been transferred within Matthiesen's Diocese without prior consultation of Welsh. Welsh was also concerned about Graff's living arrangements. Welsh wrote, "It had been my understanding that he was residing in a rectory, but it has now come to light that he has purchased a house. Because of his past history in this Diocese, this development raises additional concerns about the potential risk surrounding Father Graff's activity in your Diocese."

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29 October 1993

His Excellency
The Most Rev. Leroy T. Matthiesen
Bishop of Amarillo
1800 North Spring Street
Amarillo, Texas 79117-5644

Dear Bishop Matthiesen,

I am writing in regard to the Reverend Edward R. Graff, a priest of this Diocese who is currently located in Silverton within your Diocese.

After Father Graff completed his therapy with the Servants of the Paraclete at The Albuquerque Villa, he presented a request to me that he be allowed to retire from active service to the Allentown Diocese and remain in Albuquerque to continue with the ministry he had been engaged in with the homeless and Aids patients. I granted his request after determining that the Archbishop of Santa Fe agreed to give limited priestly faculties of that Archdiocese to Father Graff. It was understood, however, that he would continue to be supervised by the Paracletes.

Subsequently it came as a surprise to learn that Father Graff had transferred to Silverton in your Diocese since this was done without any prior consultation with me. This move, I was later told, was prompted by the fact that faculties of priests not incardinated in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe had been withdrawn by the then Archbishop. On the suggestion of Father Liam Hoare, s.P., Father Graff sought and obtained permission from you to assist at Our Lady of Loreto parish in Silverton.

Only recently have I been made aware of Father Graff's living arrangements. It had been my understanding that he was residing in a rectory, but it has now come to light that he has purchased a house. Because of his past history in this Diocese, this development raises additional concerns about the potential risk surrounding Father Graff's activity in your Diocese. I can only hope that he continues to maintain close contact with the Paracletes and with you as well.

Bishop Matthiesen / 2

October 29, 1993

I shall greatly appreciate any update you can provide me about Father Graff.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely yours in Our Lord,

+ Thomas J Welsh

Bishop of Allentown

Welsh's "Potential Risk" Letter

Matthiesen responded on November 2, 1993, that Graff tended to be a "loner" and thanked Welsh for "alerting me to the risk I may be taking." Matthiesen indicated he planned "to be even more vigilant and to supervise him even more closely." On November 11, 1994, Welsh wrote Reverend Liam Hoare, Servant General, Servants of the Paraclete, and wanted to know whether Graff was being monitored. Welsh sought a description of the precise nature of the monitoring. Welsh wrote, "While this is not a new concern, I am prompted to express it anew at this time because an individual came forward recently and reported that he had had some difficulties with Father Graff in the past." Welsh closed his letter stating:

> I know that you will appreciate the reasons for my concern, since the matter presents both your Congregation and the Diocese of Allentown with the potential of legal liability for anything untoward which may occur in the course of Father Graff's ministry in Amarillo.

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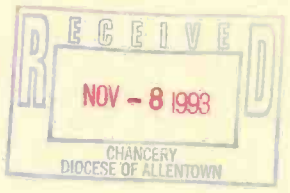
diocese of amarillo

November 2, 1993



Most Rev. Thomas J. Welsh
Bishop of Allentown
P.O. Box F
Allentown PA 18105

Dear Bishop Welsh:

Grace and peace!

I am in receipt of your letter of Oct. 29 sharing your concerns about Father Ed Graff's ministry in the Diocese of Amarillo.

I accepted Father Graff on the recommendation of Father Liam Hoare, s.P., Servant General of the Servants of the Paraclete, who stated that he would take personal responsibility for him. I was unaware that you had not been consulted. In hindsight, I should have contacted you and apologize to you for that oversight. I had simply taken it for granted. I was told that he is a recovering alcoholic, and my subsequent inquiry confirmed that.

I assigned Father Graff to Our Lady of Loreto Church, a mission of Holy Spirit Parish, Tulia, and placed him under the care of the pastor. For a while he lived in a small, rundown house made available to us at no cost by a member of the mission Church. Subsequently, a better house near the church was offered to us for $12,000 and I approved the purchase as a rectory.

An after-care program, directed by Father Peter Lechner, s.P., is in place. Father Graff is a member of a support group comprised of himself and two other priests that meets monthly. Every six weeks he returns to Albuquerque to touch base with his program directors. My Vicar of Clergy is on the road each week visiting our priests, including Father Graff. I require him to attend our clergy gatherings, the next of which will be four Priests' Study Days concentrating on personal development, relationships, boundaries, clergy misconduct, etc.

DIOCESAN PASTORAL CENTER AMARILLO, TX 79117-5644
P.O. BOX 5644 806-383-2243
FAX 806-383-8452

Father Graff, with his pastoral sensitivity and ability to speak Spanish, is much loved by the people, almost 100 per cent of whom are Mexicans and Mexican-Americans. In addition to the care of Our Lady of Loreto in Silverton I have given him the care of St. Elizabeth's Church in Turkey as well, another poor mission community that is totally Hispanic.

My one concern about Father Graff is that he tends to be a loner. I have spoken to him about that and shared my concern with Father Liam, who will be with us on one of the Study Days (Thursday, Nov. 11).

Thank you for alerting me to the risk I may be taking. I am in frequent touch with Father Liam and have confidence in his judgment in present circumstances. Nevertheless, I plan to be even more vigilant and to supervise him even more closely.

Fraternally yours in Christ,

+ Leroy

Bishop Leroy T. Matthiesen

Matthiesen's Letter to Welsh

BISHOP'S OFFICE

11 November 1994

The Very Reverend Liam Bhore, O.P.
Servant General
Foundation House
Jemez Springs, NM 87025-0010

Dear Father Liam,

I have for some time had some concern about the advisability of Father Ed Graff's exercising priestly ministry in the Diocese of Amarillo.

My concern centers principally upon the issue of Father Graff's accountability. I would like to know whether he is, in fact, being monitored by anyone, and, if he is, what the precise nature of that monitoring may be.

While this is not a new concern, I am prompted to express it anew at this time because an individual came forward recently and reported that he had had some difficulties with Father Graff in the past.

I know that you will appreciate the reasons for my concern, since the matter presents both your Congregation and the Diocese of Allentown with the potential of legal liability for anything untoward which may occur in the course of Father Graff's ministry in Amarillo.

I would be very appreciative of any information which could help address this concern.

Sincerely yours in Our Lord.

+ Thomas J. Welsh

Bishop of Allentown

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November 19, 1993

His Excellency
The Most Reverend Leroy T. Matthiesen, D.D.
Bishop of Amarillo
Diocesan Pastoral Center
Post office Box 5644
Amarillo, Texas 79117-5644

Dear Bishop Matthiesen,

Thank you very kindly for your letter of November 2, 1993 concerning Father Edward R. Graff's ministry in the Diocese of Amarillo.

I appreciate very much the information you have furnished as well as your willingness to be even more vigilant in your supervision of Father Graff.

Thank you for your interest in this matter.

Sincerely yours in Our Lord,

+ Thomas J. Welsh

Bishop of Allentown

Welsh's Letters of Warning

Welsh had the power to remove Graff's faculties to minister in light of Graff's known risk, concern, and legal liability. However, Welsh left Graff in ministry by agreement with Matthiesen. On January 5, 1995, Matthiesen wrote to Welsh, "Bishop, I am happy to report to you that Father Graff is carrying out a wonderful ministry in Silverton, Turkey, and Quitaque. He is well received and loved by the people who are almost totally Hispanic and among the poorest of the poor."

In 1997, Cullen took command of the Diocese of Allentown. Diocesan records do not show any indication that Cullen took any action against Graff. In fact, Graff appears to have continued in ministry outside of Pennsylvania with no real attempt to understand where he was or what he was doing.

On October 4, 2002, Graff was arrested in Briscoe County, Texas, for sexually abusing a 15-year-old boy. Several news articles were written about the incident. Graff died on November 25, 2002, due to injuries from an accident while in a Texas prison awaiting trial.

A news article written in the Allentown Morning Call, dated November 27, 2002, reported that the boy Graff abused in Texas was hired by Graff to work at the church rectory where Graff was assigned. It was reported that the victim stated that he watched pornographic movies with Graff and Graff performed oral sex on the victim. The news article quoted investigator Jay Foster as saying Graff would hire mostly Hispanic boys in their early teens to clean the rectory and mow the lawn. Foster went on to say Graff "always had things to attract kids, like video games, Cokes, candy." The article cited to Texas criminal records related to his arrest.

On October 10, 2002, a victim reported to the Diocese of Allentown that he was sexually abused by Graff between 1983 and 1984 at the Holy Guardian Angels, Reading. The abuse involved a series of incidents such as showering together, masturbation, and fondling.

On June 28, 2003, a second known victim wrote a statement detailing the sexual abuse committed by Graff on him. The second known victim indicated the abuse occurred in the rectory of the Holy Guardian Angels Elementary/Middle School when the second victim was in seventh grade. The second victim detailed the grooming techniques of Graff. After the grooming period, Graff had him take his pants down and sit down. Graff then fondled the second victim's penis as Graff masturbated. According to the second victim, when he questioned Graff about the abuse, Graff responded by telling the second victim that it was "OK" because he was "an instrument of God." The second victim indicated the abuse occurred over the next six months as Graff would have the second victim come to his room, where Graff would masturbate both himself and the second victim. The second victim believed his friend and other boys were also abused by Graff during this same period.

In July 2003, after these complaints, the Diocese notified Catholic Mutual Insurance Group of potential liability.

On January 13, 2005, the Diocese received insurance paperwork regarding coverage for several sexual abuse allegations, including a claim by a third victim who asserted sexual abuse by Graff between 1971 and 1978, when the third victim was between twelve and thirteen years old. The third victim was a parishioner at Annunciation BVM located in Catasauqua when the abuse occurred. In the suit the third victim stated Graff repeatedly took pictures of him while he was naked, masturbated the third victim until he ejaculated, and performed oral sex on the third victim. Graff forced the third victim to masturbate and on one occasion Graff attempted to perform anal intercourse on the third victim, stopping only after objection. For many years the abuse occurred on a daily basis. The abuse occurred in Graff's bedroom or living room of the rectory. Often,

before Graff abused the third victim, Graff would force the third victim to drink alcohol until he was intoxicated.

On January 25, 2007, a fourth victim reported to the Diocese that he was sexually assaulted by Graff in 1986, within the Holy Guardian Angels Rectory, when he was 17 years old. The fourth victim died in April of 2015. The Diocese paid for his funeral.

The Grand Jury heard testimony from some of Graff's victims. In addition, the Grand Jury learned of Joey from his grandmother, mother, and sister in August 2016.

Some years after his abuse, Joey disclosed his secret to his grandmother, Kitty. Kitty and Joey had a special relationship. They would go on walks together. They would discuss their life and the future together. They were best friends.

Kitty recalled that, after years of a downward spiral, Joey finally told her what had happened to him as a child attending his home parish within the Diocese. Graff had raped Joey. During the violent assault, Graff had borne down on Joey's back with such force it had damaged his back. Kitty believed Joey had tried to tell her this years earlier when he had asked if priests molest children. Kitty thought then it was just the gossip of children.

Joey eventually told his mother, Judy, and his sister. Suddenly, the changes they noticed in this happy, out-going, science-fiction-loving boy made sense. He was dealing with trauma and conflict.

Joey wrote the Diocese on July 31, 2007. Joey described how Graff befriended him and then violently violated him. Joey wrote, "Father Graff did more than rape me. He killed my potential and in so doing killed the man I should have become."

In August 2016, Joey's mother testified before the Grand Jury. Judy explained that, in spite of his victimization, Joey had kept the faith. She stated:

> He stayed with the church. And he asked me if anything ever happened to him to have a Catholic mass and I didn't want to do it and he made me promise and I did. I did what he wanted, but it was the hardest thing to go into that church and being counseled with by a priest. I listened to him and tried to help him out a little bit but I was against it. But he -- the religion was very important to him and he was so afraid of going to hell that I think that is why he stuck with it.

Judy testified that the Diocese did provide some support to Joey before his death. However, Judy said that financial support was never the thing they most desired. Judy noted, "They never admitted anything happened. It was like he was trying to prove his entire life what had happened and that he was telling the truth. They never admitted – they never said there was abuse."

Joey wrote a letter to Cullen before his death. Joey spoke for all victims of child sexual abuse who suffered at the hands of Roman Catholic Priests. Joey noted that the Church's resistance to providing victims their day in court was inconsistent with supporting victims. Joey wrote:

> Pennsylvania law does not, for one moment, bar the Diocese of Allentown from making financial settlements with persons who were abused as minors, even though they might not report the abuse until they become adults. Pennsylvania's so-called statute of limitations is merely a defense, a legalistic prescription which the Diocese of Allentown may choose to invoke in civil litigation when it wishes to have an allegation of abuse dismissed without a hearing on the merits.

Joey did not live to have his day in court. He passed away due to an addiction to painkillers. Joey became addicted to these pain killers after his back was injured during a particularly violent attack by Graff.

Joey's account is but one account of many victims who were harmed by Graff as children. After Graff's arrest in Texas, public scrutiny turned on the Diocese. On October 14, 2002, the Allentown *Morning Call* broke the news that four individuals in Pennsylvania had come forward with reports of child sexual abuse perpetrated by Graff. The article stated that a Diocesan spokesman, Matt Kerr, responded that he was "surprised" by the reports and explained that "We communicated to the Amarillo Diocese rumors that had surfaced, but we never had any contact

with actual victims," Kerr said, "This is all new to us." These were the same four victims described above, who reported their abuse to the Diocese after reporting it to the *Morning Call.*

However, the Diocesan statement stands in stark contrast to the evidence held within the records of the Diocese. While the Diocese stated they were "surprised," internal records documenting the opinion of the Bishops showed constant references to Graff as being a "risk," a "concern," and a "legal liability." This language was much more consistent with language used in relation to predatory priests than a priest with a drinking problem.

Other victims continued to speak out after 2002. One of Graff's victims testified before the Grand Jury and provided a compelling and detailed account of a violent assault by Graff. In particularly graphic testimony, this victim explained how, as Graff prepared to anally penetrate him, he decided that he could either let the rape happen or run. He explained how he fled into the street, mostly nude, rather than allow the assault by the formidable and imposing Graff. He further explained the lasting effect of the assault and its continuing impact on his daily life. This victim's mother testified before the Grand Jury as well. She stated that her son immediately reported the abuse to her after it occurred in 1984. She reported the abuse to Father John A. Krivak and her son's school principal. In spite of this report, Graff continued in ministry as a priest.

The Grand Jury heard from still more victims who reported Graff was particularly violent in his assaults and seemed to take as much pleasure in causing pain as in the criminal sexual acts themselves. All of Graff's victims have struggled to move forward, and many question why so little has been done to hold the institution accountable for enabling the commission of such heinous crimes by their leaders.