

Father Salvatore P. Luzzi

Biographical Information

DATE OF BIRTH:	1935
YEAR OF DEATH:	
ORDINATION:	May 31, 1962

Employment/Assignment History

6/09/1962 – 8/29/1968	Faculty, Venango Christian High. Residence at St. Joseph, Oil City, PA
8/28/1968 – 8/28/1969	Sp. Ministry, St. Mark's Seminary, Erie, PA
8/28/1968 – 7/16/1972	Dean/Collegians, St. Mark's Seminary, Erie, PA
7/16/1972 – 5/05/1979	Sp. Ministry, St. Mark's Seminary, Erie, PA
5/05/1979 – 7/19/1994	Pastor, St. Joseph, Warren, PA
3/19/1991 – 8/01/1994	Sp. Ministry, Dean/Warren Co. Deanery, St Joseph, Warren, PA
7/19/1994 – 2/10/1995	Sick Leave
5/05/1979 – 9/15/1995	Resided at St. Joseph
9/15/1995 - currently	Faculties removed

Summary

After several years teaching at Venango Christian High School, Reverend Salvatore P. Luzzi was moved to St. Mark's Seminary, where he filled several roles. Over the course of his 30 year ministry, he was accused of sexual misconduct by eight male victims ranging in age from early teens to early twenties. Some of these victims were groped, inappropriately kissed, hugged, and/or fondled. He also faced allegations of responsibility for the suicide of a former student/victim.

Luzzi worked extensively with young would-be priests at St. Mark's where he and fellow priest Leon Muroski served as Spiritual Directors to the seminarians. Luzzi's inappropriate touching and fondling of at least two seminarians prompted the Diocese to settle with those seminarians for large sums of money. The first former Seminarian's case was settled in civil court for \$34,500 and this individual received several thousand dollars over the course of the many years that the Diocese paid for his counseling and medication costs.

Several other former juvenile victims of Luzzi received letters or phone calls of apology from the Diocese. These victims were counseled by the Diocese through correspondence or in-person interviews wherein Luzzi's behavior was dismissed as "*Sal's way of expressing himself*" and his "*touching approach*" to ministry was attributed to his Italian upbringing.

The Diocese listed several Luzzi victims in its internal reports, but little to no documentation was contained in the files. It was alleged that Luzzi groped the buttocks of one

Summary

victim in a hardware store in 1998. This individual was 19 at the time of the incident. Luzzi denied the touching and only admitted to patting this individual on the back.

In 1974-1975, Luzzi and Father Leon Muroski were working at Camp Notre Dame in Fairview when a young seminarian named Michael Amy was accused of fondling two juveniles. These victims reported the incident to the Pennsylvania State Police, the Diocese of Erie, and to their parents. The Diocese representative for this incident at Camp Notre Dame was Father Lawrence Speice. Speice assisted Amy by interceding on Amy's behalf with the State Police and the boys' parents. No arrest was made. Luzzi and Muroski dealt with Amy by making him attend counselling and keeping him in seminary. Amy would go on to abuse at least two more juveniles, along with several other unidentified juvenile prostitutes as an ordained priest prior to being laicized.

During Amy's laicization process, he called Speice, Muroski and Luzzi as his witnesses. Muroski denied knowledge of any wrongdoings by Amy. Speice and Luzzi both admitted some knowledge of Amy's molestation of children in 1974-1975. Luzzi wrote on Amy's Witness Statement that he was "*amazed that he was made a pastor in a place where something happened before,*" and that "*there certainly should have been something in his Seminary day files.*" Luzzi added, "*I personally wondered when these things would resurface.*"

In 1994, Bishop Trautman sent both Luzzi and Muroski to St. Luke's Institute for therapy. The Diocese publicly announced that Luzzi was going on an extended sabbatical for "*personal, spiritual and academic growth.*" Once Luzzi was discharged, the Bishop welcomed him back into pastoral ministry by letter on February 14, 1995. However, the welcome also came with several conditions and a Penial Precept, a formal notification in the church that restricts ministry. Trautman directed Luzzi to refrain from all contact with youth under 19 years of age and to avoid travel and social interaction with such parishioners. Later that same year, in September 1995, Trautman had Luzzi's faculties as a priest removed and Luzzi began residing in a private residence, where he remains today.

It was Luzzi's position that Trautman forced him to retire. It was the position of Trautman and the Diocese that what led to Luzzi's resignation was the weight of new allegations and the real possibility of widespread publicity. It was found in subpoenaed files that Luzzi's accusers threatened to take "*appropriate steps*" if Luzzi was not removed from ministry. This information was found in an internal document written by Monsignor Robert Smith and placed into Luzzi's file on October 12, 1995. Smith and Trautman informed Luzzi that if he did not retire of his own free will, the Diocese would follow the canonical process specified in church law to remove Luzzi. Luzzi resigned less than 30 days later.