

Father Leonard Sanesi

Biographical Information

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| YEAR OF BIRTH: | 1923 |
| YEAR OF DEATH: | 1992 |
| ORDINATION: | 1953 |

Employment/Assignment History

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| 6/16/1953 – 6/21/1955 | St. Rita, Connellsville, PA |
| 6/22/1955 – 7/7/1958 | St. Cajetan, Monesson, PA |
| 7/8/1958 – 1/15/1962 | Immaculate Conception, Irwin, PA |
| 1/16/1962 – 6/12/1966 | St. Joseph Minor Seminary, Greensburg, PA |
| 6/13/1966 – 5/28/1974 | Holy Family, West Newton, PA |
| 5/29/1974 – 8/22/1983 | Immaculate Conception, Irwin, PA |
| 8/23/1983 – 6/17/1990 | Mount St. Peter, New Kensington, PA |
| 6/18/1990 – 1/10/1992 | All Saints, Arnold, PA |

Summary

In 2002, the Diocese of Greensburg received its first allegation of sexual abuse committed by Father Leonard Sanesi. The victim alleged in a letter that during the early 1960's when Sanesi served at St. Joseph's Diocesan Minor Seminary - - a school for boys who had completed high school and believe they may be called to the seminary - - Sanesi repeatedly sexually abused him.

The victim stated that he suffered from psoriasis, the treatment of which required the application of a variety of lotions and salves. Sanesi suggested to the victim that *"I'd [the victim] be more comfortable with these applications in the privacy of his [Sanesi's] residence rather than in the dorm room."* According to the victim, during Sanesi helping him apply his lotions and salves, Sanesi's contact escalated to fondling the victim's genitals. This would happen as a nightly occurrence. The victim related that Sanesi *"always took care of me – trips, gifts, clothes, restaurant meals."*

According to notes in Sanesi's file, Bishop Anthony Bosco wrote back to the victim and apologized for Sanesi's abuse. However, no response was received. The victim's complaint was forwarded to the Westmoreland County District Attorney's Office but because Sanesi had been deceased for a decade at the time the abuse was reported, no action was taken.

In 2013, via an e-mail communication exchange with Monsignor Raymond Riffle, a second victim alleged that Sanesi sexually abused him at St. Joseph Hall beginning in 1962. The second victim alleged that Sanesi came into his dormitory room on two or three occasions in the middle of the night and attempted to fondle his genitals and masturbate him. In response and to deter Sanesi, the victim pretended to be asleep and rolled onto his stomach. On another occasion

Summary

when the victim was sick, Sanesi took him to his quarters and provided him with alcohol and again attempted to fondle him. The victim also claimed “*there was another occurrence in January 1963 which ended in the same fashion.*” Because of Sanesi’s repeated attempts at fondling him, the victim began sleeping on his stomach. He continued to do so throughout the remainder of his life.

Riffle apologized to the second victim and offered him counseling sessions, which he declined.