

Reverend Charles J. Chatt

Biographical Information

YEAR OF BIRTH:	1936
YEAR OF DEATH:	N/A
ORDINATION:	May 9, 1964

Employment/Assignment History

5/27/1964-3/27/1969	St. Alphonsus, Springdale, PA
3/28/1969-5/29/1974	St. Anne, Castle Shannon, PA
5/30/1974-8/23/1981	St. Albert the Great, Baldwin, PA
8/24/1981-7/27/1992	Our Lady of Loreto, Brookline, PA
7/27/1992-1/31/2003	Leave of Absence
1/31/2003	Withdrew from Active Ministry

Summary

Subpoenaed Diocesan files concerning Father Charles J. Chatt, including confidential, personnel and victim files, indicate that on July 27, 1992, the father of a young man reported his son's sexually abuse by Chatt. These incidents occurred in either 1970 or 1971, when the victim was in seventh or eighth grade at St. Anne. According to the Diocesan report, the father reported that he had gone to see Chatt and had told Chatt that he (Chatt) needed to call the Diocese or he (the victim's father) would.

That same day, Chatt met with Diocesan officials and admitted to the sexual contact which began at St. Anne when victim one was 14 years of age. The report recited that: "*Chatt states he never felt 'it' was wrong, felt it was a service—later felt like their whore.*" The sexual contact continued after Chatt's assignment at St. Anne's had ended because "*they came to him.*" Chatt advised that the "*relationship*" lasted during his assignment at St. Anne's and that it (sexual contact) "*tapered off*" after that. He claimed that the victim would ask for money and that the "*relationship*" stopped when the victim was 20 years of age.

The report further disclosed that when Chatt was assigned to St. Albert's, he had sexual contact for a few months with a 15-year-old from that parish. Chatt admitted this conduct during his meeting.

Chatt denied ever having contact with anyone from Our Lady of Loreto, but admitted to having contact with the first victim and his two brothers at Our Lady of Loreto when the boys were over 18. Chatt submitted his letter of resignation from Our Lady of Loreto on July 27, 1992. According to Diocese-provided documents, after submitting his resignation, Chatt sought treatment at St. Michael's Community in St. Louis, Missouri. Documents in the file indicated that he worked at St. Michael's and at "Vianney Renewal Center" until approximately 1999.

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A letter in the file dated August 3, 1992 provided further details of the sexual abuse against the first victim. The letter was addressed to Father William D. Perri of the St. Michael's Community and was written by then-Father David Zubik.

The letter provided the details about the abuse of the first victim. It also furnished additional details about Chatt's subsequent statements to Diocesan representatives. The letter indicated that Chatt confirmed for church representatives that he was "*involved in sexual relationships*" with the first victim as well as "*five other youngsters under the age of eighteen in the 1970's.*" He attributed his behavior to the "*free spirit*" of that time when the "*anything goes*" mentality was in "*vogue,*" in addition to his own sexual weaknesses and what he described as the "*promiscuity of the adolescent boys involved.*"

On February 3, 1994, the first victim and his wife met with Diocesan officials. He advised that in 1970, he was 13 years old and in the seventh grade at St. Anne school. The victim went to Chatt, who was principal of the school, to tell him that the basketball coach, Mr. Giles, had been fondling the genitals of many boys on the basketball team. He further reported that Giles would also spank the boys. The victim advised that Chatt did nothing about the reported incidents.

The victim further recalled going to the rectory to visit Chatt on many occasions after Saturday night mass. The victim said that they would listen to the radio, have Cokes, etc. The abuse began shortly after he reported the incidents involving Giles.

The victim reported that he knew of at least five other victims. He said that Chatt had confessed to him about three of them and that he [the victim] was present when two others were abused at the same time he was. This occurred in the rectory and at a cottage on the Youghiogheny Reservoir that belonged to Father Mihock. The victim stated that there was a lot of alcohol consumption, mostly at the cottage.

The victim described sexual acts to include, oral sex, anal sex and said that Chatt would insert objects into his anus. The victim recalled that he and Chatt would pair up and that Chatt would encourage the other two victims to be partners.

There were also instances of abuse within the victim's home by Chatt, who was a frequent guest. Chatt would go up to the victim's room after he went to bed and abuse him.

The victim stated that Chatt had bought him expensive gifts, including: a dirt bike, a drum set and hockey equipment. When he was 15, the victim told his mother about the abuse. The victim, his mother and Chatt then went to Father Hugh McCormley for confession. The victim's relationship with Chatt "*tapered off around the age of 16.*" Chatt then moved to St. Albert the Great, but the victim continued to occasionally visit Chatt.

The victim said that Chatt kept pornographic magazines in a safe in the rectory. He recalled one magazine in particular, "*Blue Boys,*" which contained images of young men and

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boys together. Chatt then moved on to his assignment at Our Lady of Loreto. The victim further recalled seeing a pornographic video there that Chatt claimed he found in a dumpster.

The victim's wife recalled seeing nude photographs of a six-year-old girl, who lived next door to Chatt's parents. She said that Chatt had told her and the victim that he took showers with the girl.

The Diocese's file indicated that on February 16, 1994, officials met with Chatt to discuss the meeting they had had with the victim and his wife. According to the file, Chatt was "*disheartened*" that the victim and his wife were "*still focusing so much anger and hatred towards him.*"

Documentation, including correspondence, receipts and treatment plans, indicated that the Diocese paid for counseling for the first victim and members of his family for several years after the allegations were reported.

In July 2001, another allegation involving Chatt was brought to the attention of the Diocese. This victim (the third victim) reported that Chatt had fondled him on many occasions while the victim worked in the rectory answering phones in the evening. This occurred in the early 1980's at Our Lady of Loreto when the victim was approximately 15 to 16 years of age. The abuse occurred one to two times per week, about every week or two, and lasted for several years. The fondling then abruptly stopped.

The victim explained that he was part of a small group of boys that worked within the rectory and parish. The boys were seen as "*Father Chatt's favorites.*"

The victim recalled an incident when Chatt asked him to retrieve something from his (Chatt's) room. The victim found a nude photograph of one of the boys who worked at the rectory. The victim said that, based on the photograph, he assumed that at least one of the other boys was sexually involved with Chatt. The file indicated that the Diocese offered assistance with counseling to this victim.

In August of 2001, Diocesan representatives spoke with Chatt, via telephone, regarding the incident reported in July 2001. The details of the conversation were documented in a memorandum and contained the following information. Chatt admitted that there were occasions that he "*playfully groped*" the victim, but advised that they were infrequent and denied that the fondling occurred several times per week, off and on, for a year.

Chatt stated that he was not sexually involved with the victim. He was confronted with, but did not respond to, questions about the nude photograph of a boy that the victim found in the rectory. In notes of the conversation, Chatt was described as "*remorseful*" and concerned that he may have hurt the victim. The report further indicated that, "*Charles minimized his behavior as being 'much less than' his behavior that ultimately led to his treatment at St. Michael's.*" Chatt further expressed concern about possible legal action, but was advised that the victim's allegation was "*time barred*" so no legal action could take place.

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The Diocese's file further documents a series of e-mail conversations with Rita Flaherty, Diocesan Assistance Coordinator, and a fourth victim in July and August of 2003. He alleged "*sexual, moral, and mental manipulation*" that occurred at St. Anne, St. Alphonsus in Springdale and at also a cottage outside of Pittsburgh. The abuse initially occurred when the victim was 15 years old. In speaking of Chatt, the victim stated, "*Due to his [modus] operandi of taking nude photos as part of his grooming process, it is safe to say that [dozens] of individuals are affected.*" "*I am in contact with a family where all of the brothers were sexually abused in Castle Shannon.*" Flaherty advised him in the e-mails to file a formal complaint, however nothing appears in the file.

Following the first documented report of sexual abuse of children reported in July 1992 that occurred in 1970 or 1971 at St. Anne's Parish, Chatt resigned as pastor of Our Lady of Loreto Parish. The parishioners were told that he had resigned for health reasons and to allow him time to better care for his aging parents. Chatt was sent to St. Michael's Community for an evaluation and thereafter returned to the facility for treatment where he remained for approximately five months. At the completion of treatment, St. Michael's staff recommended he be returned to ministry. Bishop Donald Wuerl did not honor Chatt's request for ministerial assignment and instead encouraged him to consider offers for assignment at St. Michael's. Chatt began an assignment at St. Michael's where it appears he remained on staff until approximately 1999. Thereafter, it appears that he began to do "*telephone work*" assisting the elderly and later became a social worker. In January 2003, at the request of the Bishop, Chatt withdrew from ministry and the Bishop withdrew his faculties and permissions.