



ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA

Office of: Secretary for Clergy

TO: Anthony Cardinal Bevilacqua  
FROM: Reverend William J. Lynn  
DATE: October 16, 1992  
RE: Reverend Edward V. Avery (50) (1970)

CONFIDENTIAL

Allegations of sexual abuse have been brought against Reverend Edward V. Avery, now pastor of St. Therese of the Child Jesus by [redacted] James, who is now twenty-nine years of age, a medical student, married and the father of one child. All of the alleged incidents happened between 10 and 15 years ago, when Father Avery would have been in his mid-thirties and [redacted] James a young teenager.

[redacted] James met Father Avery in the late 1970's when Father was assigned Associate Pastor at St. Philip Neri Church, East Greenville, which was [redacted] James's home parish. [redacted] James would, along with other boys, accompany Father Avery to the shore and help him when he was working as a Disc Jockey at dances.

Allegations:

1. Father Avery was responsible for [redacted] James's first drink of beer at the age of twelve. Father Avery encouraged drinking while at the shore and while the boys helped him as D.J.
2. At the shore, Father Avery would wrestle with the boys. [redacted] James recalls that Father Avery's hands slipped to his genital area at least three or four times.
3. While Father Avery was stationed at St. Agatha-St. James Parish, [redacted] James helped him D.J. at Smokey Joe's. Pitchers of beer were passed to both of them. [redacted] James passed out on one occasion. Father Avery took him back to the rectory and told him to sleep in his (Father Avery's) bed. [redacted] James awoke to find Father Avery grabbing at him and reaching down into his undershorts. [redacted] James did note that Father Avery could have been under the influence of alcohol at the time.
4. On a trip to Wisconsin to help a Laotian family, nothing sexual happened, but Father Avery did tell [redacted] James he had found pictures/magazines of nude men in the rectory. [redacted] James found it unusual that this would be mentioned to him.

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5. The last encounter happened ten years ago. James went on a ski trip to Vermont with Father Avery and his brother. They stayed in a hotel one night in a room with two double beds. Father Avery and James slept in one bed; Father Avery's brother slept in another. Father Avery began to touch James and fondle his genital area. James stated he was not under the influence of alcohol this time but he was not sure about Father Avery. James claims from that point on he was distant from Father Avery and did not travel with him again.

James stated that he has been in counseling with Dr. Fitzgibbons since February, 1992. He began counseling because he has been having difficulty relating to male professors and authority figures. James noted he wishes no vendetta. He would like Father Avery to receive treatment and would like assurance that this will not happen to anyone else. No legal action was mentioned or discussed.

Interview with Father Avery:

Father Avery expressed absolute denial of all the accusations. He stated that he was friendly with James's whole family while in East Greenville. He thought James was a potential vocation. Below is his response to each allegation:

1. Father Avery denied that he allowed the boys who accompanied him to drink. If he ever caught boys with alcohol, he would confiscate it. I did question the discretion of bringing minors into an establishment such as Smokey Joe's. Father Avery noted that he would not have allowed anything illegal regarding teenage drinking.
2. Father Avery would take groups of altar boys to his home at the shore. He did not serve beer. He would rough-house with the boys but never touched their genital areas. His mother often accompanied him on these trips. He never slept in the same room with the boys.

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3. Father Avery did recall the incident at Smokey Joe's. James met some girls who gave him drinks which caused him to get drunk. Father Avery stated that beer was given to him while he was working. Father Avery stated he did not remember the events afterwards too well since he had so much to drink himself. Father Avery noted he had no choice but to take James back to the rectory since James was too sick to go home. Father Avery noted his bedroom was on the fourth floor and he had a single bed. He does not remember where James slept; he thought he might have slept on the floor. He noted again that he was sound asleep and doesn't remember anything about the night.
4. Father Avery did remember mentioning to James about finding the pictures/magazines of nude men. He stated he mentioned it because he was so upset about it and had never seen anything like that before in his life.
5. Father Avery recalled the ski trip to Vermont. He stated that James's description of the beds and sleeping arrangements were accurate. Father Avery denied the accusation of his touching James's genitals. Father Avery said he had been skiing all day and did drink alcohol to keep warm. During dinner, he had some "red sauce" which caused him to be ill. He remembered being more sick than drunk. He stated that if, while in bed, he touched James, it was strictly accidental, due only to his tossing and turning.

Father Avery did mention something which James did not. Father Avery stated that not too long after this incident in Vermont, James was engaged to be married. He and his fiance were in a car accident during which both had been drinking. James's fiance was killed in the accident. Father Avery was at the hospital with James that night and helped him obtain a lawyer. This was the last time Father Avery saw James.

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I did ask Father Avery if he thought these incidents could have happened under the influence of alcohol and he might not remember. Father Avery said "it could be". He then said: "I was definitely under the influence of alcohol but I'm not an alcoholic." I asked if he thought these things could have happened. His response was: "I don't know." I mentioned it might be a prudent course to have a psychological evaluation. Father Avery responded: "I'll definitely go for all of that to clear myself."

Recommendation:

Because of Father Avery's cloudedness on some of the allegations, the issue of alcohol seeming to be involved, and immaturity involved, I recommend the following:

1. That Father Avery take part in a four day out-patient assessment at the Anodos Center of Saint John Vianney Hospital. This would be a more thorough evaluation than he would receive by just seeing one psychologist, and it might assist in determining if these allegations are true and/or if there are other problems involved.
2. That further recommendations be provided to your attention in light of the results of the evaluation called for in # 1 above.

*Approved*  
*WJL*  
*10/22/92*

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