

scapegoats is too easy. We must look at a very painful issue, examine our consciences, and remind ourselves that we who love the Church must always protect the innocent – especially the children.

See Coughlin-58.

5. PAUL J. FINEGAN

Father Paul J. Finegan was ordained on May 23, 1970. See Finnegan 315. Between 1975 and 1987, Father Finegan was assigned to St. Michael's parish in North Andover, Massachusetts. See Finnegan 312-313.¹⁰ On October 12, 1980, [REDACTED] wrote a letter to Reverend Gilbert Phinn, then Personnel Director of the RCAB, in which she related that her younger sister, [REDACTED], age 13, was sexually molested by Father Finegan. See Finnegan 121-23. Ms. [REDACTED] asked for Father Phinn's assistance in addressing Father Finegan's sexual transgressions. See Finnegan 121-23. Ms. [REDACTED] became aware of Father Finegan's assault upon her sister because [REDACTED] wrote her a letter detailing Father Finegan's offenses which [REDACTED], in turn, sent to the RCAB. See Finnegan 115-20. In that letter, [REDACTED] relates, in pertinent part:

You know how I work at the rectory on Sunday nights. Well my friend [TM] (she's our cousin too!) he does the same thing to her. Father Paul is perverted. Trisha I'm serious he'll start out rubbing your shoulders then he'll reach down your shirt (back) & says what feels better? So we stay outside & he just kinda laughs- its pathetic

¹⁰ The documents produced by the RCAB regarding Father Paul J. Finegan were Bates stamped with a misspelling of Father Finegan's name. However, for ease of reference, documents are cited exactly as they are stamped, "Finnegan".

& I don't know what to do. I wore a turtleneck & a blouse Sunday & he didn't bother me & I told [TM] that & she said she wore a turtleneck too & he went right down it. I wasn't gonna say anything cause I didn't want rumors going around. But, [Tm] brought it up to me cause she thought he only did it to her & I thought he only did it to me. I feel a little better that I'm not alone but I still don't know what to do. w/b & tell me what you would do o.k.. – don't forget.

See Finnegan 115-120. Father Phinn received the [REDACTED]'s complaint. See Finnegan 106. In his reply letter to [REDACTED] Father Phinn requested the name of the priest and stated: "please be assured that we shall address this matter with great sensitivity." See Finnegan 106. On October 18, 1980, [REDACTED] responded to Father Phinn's request. See Finnegan 107-08. Ms. [REDACTED] provided Phinn with Father Finegan's name and asked for an update on what was being done by the RCAB to address Father Finegan's sexual transgressions. See Finnegan 107-108.

On November 5, 1980, Father Phinn wrote back to [REDACTED]. See Finnegan 109-110. Father Phinn suggested that [REDACTED] resign her position at the rectory as part of the "solution to the difficulty." In addition, Father Phinn stated in his letter: "I cannot confront the priest if I am unable to cite any evidence or if I do not have the name of one who had registered a complaint." See Finnegan 109-110. Father Phinn sought permission to use the victims' name. See Finnegan 109-110.

There is evidence that [REDACTED] then called Father Phinn. See Finnegan 111. [REDACTED] recalls that Father Phinn told her by phone that she should keep the Finegan matter confidential and reassured her that “it was being handled by the RCAB.” See Affidavit of [REDACTED] (“[REDACTED] Aff.”). She never told or suggested to Father Phinn that she and her sister were not committed to have the RCAB take appropriate disciplinary measures with Father Finegan. See [REDACTED] Aff.. Nonetheless, Father Phinn created a memorandum which inaccurately stated that “[REDACTED]-called on phone to say that the matter has been resolved.” See Finnegan 112.

Despite the fact that he posed a danger to minors, Father Finegan remained in active ministry at St. Michaels Parish until 1987 when he was transferred to St. Margaret’s Parish in Lowell. See Finnegan 095. There is no evidence in the RCAB files that Finegan was ever confronted about the [REDACTED] allegations or that any efforts were made by the RCAB to protect minors.

In approximately 1984, Father Finegan sexually abused Jane Doe at St. Michael’s Parish, the same Parish where [REDACTED] and her friend were molested. See Complaint of Jane Doe v. RCAB, Rev. Gilbert Phinn. (“Jane Doe Complaint”).