

## William Cloutier

### **Threatened victims at gun point – Archdiocese sent Cloutier to mental health facility to avoid criminal charges; parishes left in the dark**

William Cloutier, like many of the other priests whose files were released, began abusing while still in the seminary—in this case, Mundelein. For almost 40 years, Cloutier used alcohol, drugs and the privacy of health clubs to get boys alone and sexually molest them.

Church officials first heard of the problem in 1976, when the principal of the school where Cloutier was assigned said that he no longer wanted the cleric on his campus. Victims reported to Msgr Martin J. O’Day at St. Damian Church, O’Day said he confronted Cloutier, who was contrite and “sounded repentant.”

In 1979, Cloutier took two other boys to his cabin and molested them. He threatened the boys with a handgun and said he would kill their parents if they reported the abuse. The event was reported to the Oaklawn Police. According to victims’ attorneys, the Archdiocese colluded with police to send Cloutier to a mental health facility to avoid criminal charges and a public record.

In 1981, Cloutier was back in Chicago working at the University of Illinois and parishes throughout Chicago, where he continued to molest. In 1989, parents and teachers at St. Francis Xavier Cabrini demanded that Cloutier not be allowed on campus.

Cloutier was sued for sex abuse in 1991. The Archdiocese hired a public relations and crisis communications firm to respond to the allegations. Cloutier resigned from the priesthood in 1993 and died in 2003.

In a sworn deposition, Bishop Raymond Goedert claims that no one at any of Cloutier’s assignments was informed of allegations against the priest, except for the pastor at St. Peter’s in Skokie.

### **TIMELINE OF DOCUMENTS – WILLIAM CLOUTIER**

1966            According to a 2005 report, Cloutier abused a minor while Cloutier was in the seminary in Mundelein. The abuse began in 1966 or 1967 and continued until 1974. The abuse consisted of Cloutier providing the survivor with alcohol and marijuana, the survivor waking up in the middle of the night to find Cloutier fondling him, and Cloutier attempting to orally stimulate the survivor when he was passed out from drinking alcohol. The survivor believes others at the seminary knew of the abuse because they would joke about Cloutier bringing boys to stay with him overnight. (ACO 001544-001545)

5/14/75 - Ordained

5/23/75 - Associate, St. Francis Xavier Cabrini, Chicago, IL

1975 According to a 1996 report, Cloutier begins abusing minor parishioner of St. Francis Xavier Cabrini. The abuse allegedly continued until 1983.

4/76 Ed Duffing of St. Francis Xavier Cabrini asks Cloutier to leave the parish after allegations of Cloutier taking out 8 boys, and the principal indicating that he did not want Cloutier in the school. (AOC 001585)

6/10/77 – Associate, St. Damian Church, Oak Forest, IL

6/8/79 **According to a 6/30/89 memo to file, a boy reports to Monsignor Martin O’Day that he had “some sort of relations” with Cloutier on Memorial Day. (AOC 001598)**

6/9/79 **According to a 6/30/89 memo to file, Monsignor Martin O’Day confronts Cloutier about the boy’s allegations; Cloutier sounded repentant. (AOC 001598)**

6/10/79 **According to a 6/30/89 memo to file, Cloutier takes two other boys to his cottage and abuses them in some fashion. The boys report it to their parents who go to the police. (AOC 001598)**

6/11/79 **The incidents regarding the two boys are reported O’Day. (AOC 001598)**

Spring 1979-  
May 1979

According to the survivor’s complaint, Cloutier abused minor boy who was a seminarian at Cloutier’s summer cottage. The abuse allegedly consisted of Cloutier providing the survivor with alcohol, and performing oral sex on him. Cloutier then allegedly threatened the survivor with a handgun, instructing him not to tell anyone about the abuse. The survivor allegedly reported the abuse to teachers at St. Damian Church including Monsignor Martin O’Day, who took no action to help him or alert authorities. After the report, Cloutier again allegedly took two other minor boys to the same cottage. This time, the abuse allegedly consisted of providing both boys with alcohol and marijuana and fondling one of the boys, performing oral sex on him, sodomizing him, and making him fondle Cloutier. Cloutier again allegedly threatened both boys with a handgun. **After reporting the abuse to the police and the Archdiocese, there was a meeting between the Archdiocese, the police and the prosecutor wherein it was decided that Cloutier would not be criminally charged. Rather, the entire matter would be handled as a mental health case and all records would be sealed. As a result, Cloutier was sent to the hospital for a few months instead of prison and all information regarding the case remained sealed. (AOC 001562-AOC 001571)**

10/17/79 – Active duty outside the Archdiocese of Chicago-St. Margaret Mary Parish in Worcester, Massachusetts

6/21/81 Cloutier returns to Chicago; it is recommended that he not go back into full time parish work. (AOC 001649)

7/2/81 – Campus Minister, University of Illinois at Chicago Circle, Pope John Paul II Catholic Student Center, Chicago, IL and Associate at Our Lady of the Snows, Chicago IL

8/28/85 – Associate, St. Peter Church, Skokie, IL

3/17/87 Memo to Cloutier from Tom Ventura summarizing meeting in which Cloutier was to be limited from having unsupervised or professional contact with youth, and that Cloutier could not participate in the Meet the Wilderness program for youths.

7/3/87 **Memo to Archdiocese file from Tom Ventura indicating that Fr. Cronin, Cloutier's supervisor at St. Peter Church, was alerted on 1/11/86 to Cloutier's background and that Cloutier was to have no unsupervised contact with youth. Cronin indicated on 4/30/86 that Cloutier had been working out with teens and talking about camping trips with the teens. Cloutier also had a young 19 or 20 year old man in his room with the door closed. (AOC 001602-001606)**

6/30/89 **Memo to Archdiocese file indicates that principal and teachers at St. Francis Xavier Cabrini considered Cloutier to be dangerous around children and insisted that he not come into the school. (AOC 001598)**

6/20/89 Memo to Archdiocese file indicates that Cloutier is taking a young man who works at the rectory to a health club.

7/10/90 Memo to Archdiocese file indicates that Cloutier is taking young boys to local health clubs.

9/14/91 Statement to Parishioners at St. Peter's by Fr. Charles Cronin stating that Cloutier has been placed on administrative leave stemming from a recent lawsuit relating to allegations of child abuse in 1979. The statement indicates that the Archdiocese knew about the allegations in 1979 and placed Cloutier on leave, only allowing him to return to ministry after they received assurances from authoritative sources that he could function in ministry. (AOC 001587-001589)

12/30/91 **Letter from Reverend Patrick O'Malley, Vicar for Priests, stating that the Archdiocese has removed Cloutier because of the allegations against him, and hired public relations and crisis management**

**professionals. The letter states that the Archdiocese is seeking to address this “serious problem” while also working with Cloutier to allow him to continue his ministry. (AOC 001579)**

1992 – Absent on “sick leave”, Retreat House in Mundelein

3/29/93 Cardinal Bernadin issues penal precept imposing residency requirement on Cloutier preventing him from leaving the United States and reminding him that he cannot be in the presence of a minor without an adult being present. (AOC 001561).

7/12/93 Cardinal Bernadin issues precept imposing restrictions on Cloutier preventing him from being alone with any minor without an adult present and requiring him to live in a supervised residence.

7/28/93 – Resigned from the priesthood

6/5/96 Report made stating that Cloutier abused a minor from 1975 to 1983 at the St. Francis Xavier Cabrini parish, on a camping trip, and at Cloutier’s home in Peoria, Illinois. The abuse consisted of providing the survivor with drugs and alcohol, oral sex, and anal penetration. The survivor estimates at least 100-200 instances of sexual contact. (AOC 001643)

8/03 – Deceased

1/7/03 Report made of abuse of minor. Unclear when abuse occurred. The abuse consisted of one incident of fondling and oral sex, which occurred in Cloutier’s vehicle. (AOC 001546)

11/23/05 Report made of “problems” with Cloutier from nun who previously had Cloutier on her staff. Nun explains that she had previously begged Revs. William J. McNulty and Tom Ventura to address the problems with Cloutier, but that no one acted on her request to have Cloutier removed (AOC 001543)

11/13/07 Bishop Goedert is deposed in order to meet a non-monetary demand of sex abuse survivors. In the deposition, he is asked about Cloutier and says that no one was informed of allegations against Cloutier at his parish assignments, except for Charles Cronin at St. Peter’s in Skokie.

2/23/09 Report made of Cloutier abusing minor during 10 to 15 incidents over a sixth month period of time, occurring at St. Francis Cabrini parish, a parish in Oak Forest, and at a cabin in Illinois. The abuse consisted of providing the survivor with alcohol and marijuana, and fondling the survivor. The survivor believes that another priest at St. Francis Cabrini suspected that Cloutier was abusing him (and other boys that Cloutier brought to the

parish) because that priest would hang around the parish and try and catch them in the act.