

Father Raymond O. Leneweaver

The abusive history of Father Raymond O. Leneweaver is remarkable for the number of victims who brought allegations of molestation and rape to Archdiocese managers while they were still being abused by the priest, or shortly thereafter. It is also remarkable because, even with these prompt reports and Fr. Leneweaver's repeated admissions of guilt, Cardinal John Krol allowed him to continue as a teacher and a priest, transferring him from parish to parish, thereby providing him unrestrained access to ever more unsuspecting victims.

Father Leneweaver told the Grand Jury in January 2005 that, for the past year, he had taught Latin at Radnor Middle School. In fact, Cardinal Bevilacqua and his aides had known since 1997 that the admitted child molester was teaching in suburban public schools. The Grand Jury finds that Fr. Leneweaver's large number of victims and his continued access to young boys are directly attributable to the Archdiocese's practice of not reporting a priest's crimes even after he confessed them, of persuading victims' parents not to go to the police, and of then transferring the offender to parishes where his reputation was not known and parents were unaware of the need to protect their sons from their priest.

Ordained in 1962, Fr. Leneweaver began admitting his sexual abuse of boys to Archdiocese officials in the late 1960s. In response to specific complaints made in 1975 to the Archdiocese by victims or their families, he admitted that he had "seriously" abused at least seven young boys. These sexual assaults began when the children were as young as 11 years old, usually lasted a few years, and included fondling, anal rape, and attempted oral sex. In addition to these "serious" involvements, Fr. Leneweaver told Archdiocese officials that he molested other boys "in an incidental fashion," for example, in the swimming pool at Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary. Still more victims, about whom Fr. Leneweaver was not questioned, came to the Archdiocese's attention during his 18-year tenure in active ministry. Given the typical reluctance of young sexual-abuse victims to come forward, these boys, though considerable in number, were most likely a tiny portion of the total. Over the years additional victims of Fr. Leneweaver, now adults, reported their childhood abuse by this priest.

Despite the Archdiocese's knowledge that Fr. Leneweaver was a chronic sexual offender, each time angry parents confronted Church officials with new complaints, Cardinal Krol merely transferred him to another assignment, where the priest remained in active ministry. By the time Fr. Leneweaver was transferred for the fourth time, the Archdiocese Chancellor, Francis J. Statkus, noted in a September 1980 letter that "he was appointed to this area of the diocese because it is one of the few remaining areas where his scandalous action may not be known."

Father Leneweaver admits to reported sexual abuse and the Archdiocese permits him to remain a high school teacher.

In June 1964, Fr. Raymond Leneweaver was assigned to live in the rectory at Our Lady Help of Christians Church in Philadelphia and to teach at Roman Catholic High School. It was during these assignments, which lasted until the summer of 1966, that Fr. Leneweaver began sexually molesting a minor, “Jeffrey.” The Archdiocese received a report of Fr. Leneweaver’s criminal behavior in June 1968 from Fr. Anthony Massimini of Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary. A June 3, 1968, memo to the file by Chancellor Terrence F. Monihan recorded that Fr. Massimini had informed him that Jeffrey had come forward six months after his own two years of sexual abuse had ended, because he suspected that Fr. Leneweaver was still abusing two other boys.

Monsignor Monihan recorded the complaint, but made no effort to contact Jeffrey or the boys that Jeffrey sought to protect. When Msgr. Monihan asked Fr. Leneweaver about Jeffrey’s allegation, the priest immediately confessed, as recorded in the June 3, 1968, memo: “I know; I admit it; I am deeply ashamed.”

Father Leneweaver claimed, however, that he was not abusing other boys. He suggested that Jeffrey was merely “jealous” because the priest had found new “friends” at Sacred Heart in Clifton Heights, where he had moved after leaving Our Lady Help of Christians. Had the Archdiocese looked into these “friends” in 1968, it likely would have found “Stuart,” among other of Fr. Leneweaver’s victims. Handwritten notes of a March 22, 2002, telephone call recorded that Stuart called Archdiocese authorities 35 years later to inform them that Fr. Leneweaver had abused him when he was an altar boy at Sacred Heart Parish in 1968.

Even after Fr. Leneweaver’s admission to sexual abuse, Archdiocese managers did not speak to Jeffrey or probe his allegations about other boys. Father Leneweaver, then a teacher at Cardinal O’Hara High School as a result of his reassignment in 1966, claimed that his molestation of Jeffrey for more than two years had been a temporary lapse. He blamed depression following his first assignment, where he had lived with an alcoholic priest and had had to minister to “the Negroes.” Father Leneweaver also claimed that his

parents had died shortly before he began molesting Jeffrey. The priest often used his parents – who, in fact, were not dead in 1968 – to explain the “difficulties” in his life.

Despite Fr. Leneweaver’s admitted acts of pedophilia, Archdiocese managers allowed him to continue to teach at Cardinal O’Hara High School. The Archdiocese gave no notice of Fr. Leneweaver’s problem to the school principal, much less to parents. The priest remained at the school until 1971, when a litany of complaints, including some about serving alcohol to minors, prompted the Archdiocese to transfer him to a parish assignment.

Although the new chancellor, Msgr. Francis J. Statkus, noted in a memo, dated August 4, 1971, that he knew of Fr. Leneweaver’s history as a child abuser, Cardinal Krol assigned the priest to Saint Monica’s, a South Philadelphia parish with an elementary school.

While at Saint Monica’s parish, Father Leneweaver sexually abuses several more boys; after his admission to these crimes, the Archdiocese transfers him.

At Saint Monica’s parish, Fr. Leneweaver formed a group out of the boys he abused. He named them the “Philadelphia Rovers.” The priest had T-shirts made up for them. He took them on outings – swimming at the seminary, ice skating, tobogganing. When he got them alone, he molested them. He put his hands down the front of their pants, or pulled down their pants. He fondled their genitals and rubbed his own erect penis against their buttocks until he ejaculated.

In a certified, confidential letter dated June 26, 2002, an attorney, Neil Murray, wrote to Cardinal Bevilacqua and provided the following account from “A.,” a former altar boy and Rover. On at least five occasions when A. was in 8th grade, Fr. Leneweaver came into the boy’s classroom and took him out of class. The priest took him to the school auditorium, where he forced the boy to bend over a table and rubbed against him until the priest had an orgasm. In the rectory bedroom, the lawyer wrote, “Leneweaver pulled [A.’s] pants down, poured a lubricant on [A.’s] buttocks, and thrust his penis against [A.’s] buttocks until Leneweaver had an orgasm on [A.]”

Father Leneweaver forcibly raped another of the Rover boys, overcoming his resistance to penetrate him anally. He gave the boys money or gifts afterwards. He assaulted the boys in the seminary swimming pool, in the ocean, in his rectory bedroom, at the church's summer camp, and in the church itself, in the sacristy behind the altar. Several, if not all, of the Rovers were altar boys.

One of the Rovers, "Russell," testified before the Grand Jury. He named four others – "Edward," "Stephen," "Thomas," and "Angelo." Of those, the District Attorney's office was able to locate Edward, but he refused to get involved, saying that he had put those years behind him. His father and brother, however, told their family's painful story.

Edward's older brother, "Daniel" (who, as an adult became a psychologist operating a treatment program for juvenile sex offenders), knew and remembered the most about Edward's abuse. He became aware of it when Fr. Leneweaver visited the family's rented beach apartment in the summer of 1974. Edward was 11 or 12 years old and had spent the previous year as an altar boy at Saint Monica's. Daniel, who was 14 at the time, knew that Edward and other altar boys spent a lot of time with Fr. Leneweaver either at the rectory or swimming at the seminary. Edward told Daniel that Fr. Leneweaver taught him "wrestling moves" in the priest's bedroom. At the beach that summer, Daniel discovered the true nature of Fr. Leneweaver's relationship with his brother.

Daniel watched from the shore with his youngest brother, "Dirk," as Fr. Leneweaver took Edward into the ocean. Daniel described seeing the two, "sort of plastered together," bobbing up and down, with the priest's front against Edward's back. Later that evening, Fr. Leneweaver singled out Daniel and separated him from his brothers. After taking the three boys to a movie, Fr. Leneweaver returned with them to the beach. He sent Edward and Dirk on a mission to find seashells, then asked Daniel to climb into the lifeguard stand with him. There, the priest started to rub his erect penis against Daniel's backside as he reached down the front of the 14-year-old's pants. Daniel testified that he broke away from the priest's grasp and called for his brothers. The priest told the boys not to mention their walk on the beach to their mother when he dropped them off.

Daniel did tell his mother, but he tried to be vague at first. He told her that he did not think Edward should spend time with Fr. Leneweaver. When his mother accused him

of being jealous of the priest's attention, Daniel became more explicit. He told his mother that he thought Fr. Leneweaver was a pervert and that the priest had tried to "push into" Daniel from behind. At that, his mother called Daniel a pervert and slapped him. She told her son that "priests don't do that."

When Daniel and Edward's father came home, their mother recounted what Daniel had told her. The father's response was to beat his oldest son with a belt, repeating, "priests don't do that." Upset that his father did not believe him, Daniel persisted, telling him, as he told the Grand Jury, what the "priest was fucking doing with my fucking brother." Daniel could not remember what happened after that. He heard the rest from his brother Dirk, who was hiding with Edward in the closet. Their father, according to Dirk, "went nuts," beating his oldest son until he was unconscious. Daniel did not bring up the subject again, and Edward continued to spend time alone with Fr. Leneweaver.

In the first week of May 1975, Fr. Leneweaver brutally raped Edward, anally, on a Saturday morning when he was helping to clean a church nursery. After this attack, the young boy no longer could hide his distress from his family. He went home, showered, and refused to return to the nursery to work that afternoon. His father later found him curled up in a fetal position on his parents' bed, crying. His father also found a pair of bloodstained underpants. Edward told his father that Fr. Leneweaver had "messed with him." Daniel told the Grand Jury that Edward admitted being penetrated anally to their father. In addition to the anal rape, the boy told his father that the priest had wanted to perform oral sex on him and have the boy do the same in return. Eventually Edward had been able to escape and run away.

This time, the horrified father believed his son. He picked up a baseball bat and went looking for the priest, but another priest interceded to prevent any violence.

The next day, Edward told his father about three other boys Fr. Leneweaver was abusing. Together with the parents of two of those boys, Edward's mother and father went to their parish pastor, Fr. Aloysius Farrell, and reported Fr. Leneweaver's behavior. According to Daniel, Fr. Farrell persuaded the parents not to go to the police by telling them that it would not be good for Edward or the others, or for the parish. He promised them that the Church would take care of the situation. Father Farrell then passed on the

allegations to Msgr. Statkus at the Chancery Office, who noted in a May 7, 1975, memo to Cardinal Krol that this was not Fr. Leneweaver's first "unnatural involvement."

When Msgr. Statkus questioned Fr. Leneweaver, the priest admitted, according to the Chancellor's notes, "that for almost a year he has engaged in homosexual activity" with the boys at Saint Monica's parish school whose parents had registered the complaints. A May 12, 1975, memo to the file by Msgr. Statkus recorded that the priest later told the Chancellor that he was "seriously" involved with other boys from the parish as well. In addition, he confided to Msgr. Statkus during their meeting that there were "several others" with whom he was involved "in an incidental fashion, as swimming trips to the seminary, etc. . . ." The Chancellor asked Fr. Leneweaver to provide the names of other boys with whom he was involved. In a May 13, 1975, letter, Fr. Leneweaver provided Msgr. Statkus with three names: "Kenneth" (8th grade), "Christopher" (7th grade), and "Gary" (8th grade).

Archdiocese files reflect no action taken to warn the parents of Kenneth, Christopher, or Gary, so that those boys might be saved from the abuse they were suffering. Instead, Msgr. Statkus wrote a memo to Cardinal Krol informing him about Fr. Leneweaver's admitted crimes but assuring him that "general scandal" was not imminent. The Cardinal was willing to honor Fr. Leneweaver's request to stay in his position two more weeks so that he could participate in a scheduled class reunion. Only when Edward's mother made it very clear that this would not be acceptable, was Fr. Leneweaver asked to leave.

Archdiocese officials did not report Fr. Leneweaver's criminal abuse of multiple minors to the police. Nor did they initiate proceedings to remove Fr. Leneweaver from the priesthood. Instead, on May 7, 1975, Cardinal Krol granted Fr. Leneweaver leave to take care of his still-alive parents in Florida and to seek treatment there. Three and a half months later, the Cardinal assigned Fr. Leneweaver to serve as a priest in Saint Agnes parish in West Chester. A September 4, 1975, Chancery office memo noted that the assignment would not be announced.

Father Leneweaver's victims suffer lifelong damage.

While Fr. Leneweaver moved on, the abused boys and their families were left to deal with their damaged lives. No one from the Archdiocese ever contacted the victims or their families. Edward's father told a detective from the District Attorney's Office that, when he happened to see Cardinal Krol at their church one day, he asked what was being done about Fr. Leneweaver. The Cardinal, knowing that his questioner was the father of a victim, answered: "What do you want, a public confession?" The Cardinal expressed no sympathy, compassion, or remorse.

Edward continued to suffer physically and psychologically. In his early teens, he had 18 inches of his bowel removed due to a perforation. He was afflicted with a stress-related stomach condition. Mentally, his brother testified, Edward shut down. According to Daniel, Edward "drank his way through his late teens and early twenties." He acted out sexually, Daniel believed, in order to reassure himself that he was not homosexual. As an adult, Edward told his psychologist brother that he had trouble sleeping because flashbacks continued to torment him.

Edward's father was too sick with cancer to testify before the Grand Jury. He told his story to the detective from the District Attorney's Office, but some parts were too painful for him to recount. According to the detective's testimony before the Grand Jury, the victim's father cried during the interview; it appeared to the detective that he was crying because he knew he could, and should, have done something more to protect his son.

Russell, another of the "Rovers" at Saint Monica's, also suffered long after Fr. Leneweaver left his parish. He told the Grand Jury that, as with Edward, his abuse began when he was 11 years old, in 1973, and continued until his parents reported Fr. Leneweaver to Fr. Farrell in May 1975. Russell's abuse, like Edward's, included a forceful, brutal attack. Russell told of an instance in the priest's bedroom when Fr. Leneweaver pinned his face down on the floor, fondling his genitals and "humping on him from behind." The boy tried to bang on the floor, to be heard by the priest downstairs, but Fr. Leneweaver restrained him. The assault lasted nearly twenty minutes. When it was over, Fr. Leneweaver gave Russell a few dollars and told him not to tell anyone.

Father Leneweaver never relented when Russell asked the priest to stop touching him in the pool, the rectory, or the sacristy. Father Leneweaver forced himself on the boy, saying it was “just wrestling.” Russell felt ashamed and scared. As word was getting out about Fr. Leneweaver, the priest dragged Russell out of class one day and, while crushing the boy’s hand, threatened to kill him if he told. Russell believed the priest.

Russell’s grades dropped when Fr. Leneweaver’s abuse began. He developed a nervous twitch that caused him to shake his head constantly and blink. His father could not stand the twitch and took Russell to another priest who tried to hypnotize the boy to get rid of it. The twitch lasted nearly 10 years, into Russell’s twenties. Like other victims, when they got older, Russell began to drink heavily. At age 41, he cannot get the abuse out of his mind. His wife has threatened to leave him because of his drinking. He is in counseling and on medication to help him with his anxiety. He said he still distrusts priests and cannot take his children to church – he cannot bear to see altar boys.

At Saint Agnes, Father Leneweaver sexually assaults more children and admits to it; the Archdiocese responds by moving him again.

On August 28, 1975, despite seven admitted instances of long-term sexual abuse of children and several admitted “incidental” encounters, Fr. Leneweaver was named assistant pastor of Saint Agnes parish in West Chester, another parish with a grammar school. A year later, Fr. Leneweaver was sexually abusing “Andy,” an 8th grader at Saint Agnes School. In July 1980, when Andy was a senior in high school, his parents learned from an anonymous letter that Fr. Leneweaver had been abusing their son for nearly four years. The parents immediately notified their pastor, Msgr. Lawrence F. Kelly.

In a letter to Msgr. Statkus, dated July 15, 1980, Msgr. Kelly summarized Fr. Leneweaver’s abuse of Andy. In the beginning, Fr. Leneweaver regularly approached the child in the schoolyard at Saint Agnes School, instructed him to get excused from his next class, and then abused him, usually in the rectory. Father Leneweaver also molested Andy on camping trips and in his home where Fr. Leneweaver was often a dinner guest. The abuse happened against Andy’s objections, but afterwards Fr. Leneweaver lavished the boy with gifts.

Monsignor Kelly confessed to knowing that other boys, in addition to Andy, were frequent visitors to Fr. Leneweaver's bedroom. Monsignor Kelly warned Msgr. Statkus that Andy's father had "not ruled out [going to the police] unless action [was] taken by church authorities." Monsignor Kelly related that the father "did not want to see him again at the Altar, or hear him preach." The father wanted him "away from here." Once again, Fr. Leneweaver admitted to the Archdiocese that the allegations were true.

In response to a threat to contact police, Father Leneweaver was immediately removed from the parish and sent to Villa Saint John. Yet, within two months, the Cardinal had reassigned him to another active ministry. During those two months, two more allegations of recent or ongoing sexual abuse of boys from Saint Agnes became known to the Archdiocese. Cardinal Krol's response was to transfer Fr. Leneweaver to a new parish, Saint Joseph the Worker Church, in Fallsington. As Msgr. Statkus explained: "He was appointed to this area of the diocese because it is one of the few remaining areas where his scandalous action may not be known."

Father Leneweaver's evaluations and treatment gloss over his problems, and the Archdiocese ignores them.

Between each of his last three assignments, Fr. Leneweaver underwent some type of psychological evaluation or therapy. But the actual diagnosis or treatment had no discernible effect on the priest's subsequent assignments. The Grand Jury finds that Archdiocese officials used Fr. Leneweaver's "treatment" solely for public-relations purposes, that is, so they could justify to parishioners who might question them why a serial child molester and rapist kept being reassigned to new parishes.

Father Leneweaver's first treatment followed his departure from Saint Monica's parish in 1975. While in Florida for three months allegedly assisting his aging parents, Fr. Leneweaver met twice weekly with a psychiatrist, Walter E. Afield. Following Fr. Leneweaver's return to Philadelphia, Dr. Afield sent a report to the Archdiocese, which noted that tests performed when Fr. Leneweaver first arrived in Florida showed "no signs of psychosis or serious mental disorder." This conclusion was reached before any

treatment was begun and within a few weeks of the time Fr. Leneweaver had been sexually abusing several young boys simultaneously.

The report made no mention of Fr. Leneweaver's sexual behavior with boys or anyone else. Indeed, there is nothing in the report to suggest that Dr. Afield even knew of Fr. Leneweaver's deviant sexual history or problems. Rather, Dr. Afield addressed problems arising from Fr. Leneweaver's dealings with his aging parents and "some difficulty with his career in terms of his relationship with authority." Dr. Afield concluded that Fr. Leneweaver needed more therapy but could work in any setting where he would be most useful. The doctor stressed that it was "most important" that Fr. Leneweaver's next therapist be Catholic. He did not explain why.

The Archdiocese did not receive Dr. Afield's report until September 3, 1975, several days after Cardinal Krol had already assigned Fr. Leneweaver to Saint Agnes Parish in West Chester. Although too late to influence the Cardinal's decision about Fr. Leneweaver's placement, the report proved useful two months later, when Edward's mother complained because Fr. Leneweaver had been reassigned as a priest and was visiting his old parishioners at Saint Monica's as well. Monsignor Statkus wrote in a November 10, 1975, memo that he "assured her that truly Father Leneweaver was appointed in accord with medical advice, and that he [had] undergone therapy and medical attention." Monsignor Statkus gave these assurances and brushed off the mother's concerns even as he noted in the same memo that Fr. Leneweaver was not pursuing the recommended follow-up therapy and was having serious problems with authority in his new assignment. In a June 23, 1976, memo, Msgr. Statkus wrote that Fr. Leneweaver was "not close to a favorable resolution of his problems. . . . It seems to me that if he remains in the priesthood, he will constantly need the help of a professional."

Father Leneweaver saw a psychiatrist, Anthony Panzetta, nine times in seven months after he returned from Florida. However, as Msgr. Statkus noted in his June 23, 1976, memo to the file, when Dr. Panzetta referred Fr. Leneweaver to another doctor, Alan Goldstein, Msgr. Statkus became concerned about Fr. Leneweaver's therapy. He warned the priest to "be alert in his consultations with Dr. Goldstein – that Dr. Goldstein's care, advice and directives would not run counter to the ideals of the priesthood and his

membership in the Church.” When Fr. Leneweaver failed to pursue treatment with Dr. Goldstein, the Archdiocese did not object. Within months, Fr. Leneweaver was abusing Andy.

Four years later, in June 1980, when Andy’s father threatened to report Fr. Leneweaver’s criminal abuse to the police, Cardinal Krol ordered Fr. Leneweaver to undergo psychological testing at the church-owned hospital, Villa Saint John Vianney, in Downingtown. The Cardinal did this, Msgr. Statkus noted in a July 18, 1980, memo to the file, so that “the faithful of West Chester” would be reassured “that the case of Father Leneweaver is being carefully studied and that he was not being reassigned routinely.”

On July 18, 1980, Fr. Leneweaver entered Villa Saint John for evaluation. In a letter dated July 31, 1980, Msgr. Kelly, the pastor of Saint Agnes, wrote to Msgr. Statkus to inform him that even though Fr. Leneweaver was at Villa Saint John, he seemed “to have freedom to continue his sick ways.” Monsignor Kelly told Msgr. Statkus that Fr. Leneweaver was visiting parishioners’ homes, including that of the “Donnelly” family, where Fr. Leneweaver was “friendly” with two of the teenage sons. The pastor had received this information from a young man named “Lamar” who had known Fr. Leneweaver at Saint Monica’s and had received a letter from the priest suggesting a get-together while the priest was at Villa Saint John. Lamar warned Msgr. Kelly that “Father Leneweaver should never again be assigned where he would come into contact with boys.” Monsignor Kelly relayed this information to Msgr. Statkus, along with his own opinion that Lamar had come forward because he was sincerely concerned that boys were “in danger of being hurt.” He viewed Fr. Leneweaver “as taking advantage of his priesthood to get what he wants out of boys.”

Monsignor Kelly also recounted to the Chancellor a phone call he had received following Fr. Leneweaver’s departure from Saint Agnes from a parishioner inquiring about the priest’s health and praising his work with the youth. The pastor then boasted: “We have been able, certainly with your help, to keep suspicion from entering people’s minds.”

In accordance with the Archdiocese’s practice of keeping parishioners in the dark, Msgr. Statkus did not contact the Donnellys to warn them that an admitted sexual offender was visiting their sons. On August 13, 1980, while Fr. Leneweaver was still living at Villa

Saint John, it was Mrs. Donnelly who reported to Msgr. Statkus her suspicions that Fr. Leneweaver had been molesting her sons. One son had told her about his sexual advances; the other, a 15-year-old, had admitted only to “wrestling.” She also told Msgr. Statkus, who recorded his meeting with Mrs. Donnelly in an August 18, 1980, handwritten memo, that Fr. Leneweaver had invited the 15-year-old to play racquetball during the priest’s “stay” at Villa Saint John Vianney Hospital.

Monsignor Statkus told Mrs. Donnelly that Fr. Leneweaver “had undergone full-time psychiatric counseling and rehabilitation before being assigned to Saint Agnes; that he was declared fit for assignment, and that he was counseled to seek part time counseling while on assignment.” Monsignor Statkus neglected to tell her that “full-time psychiatric counseling” meant twice a week with a doctor whose declaration of fitness did not address the priest’s sexual issues; that Fr. Leneweaver had received no follow-up counseling for four years; and, that the chancellor had known for years that Fr. Leneweaver was “not close to a favorable resolution of his problems.”

Dr. Anthony L. Zanni at Villa Saint John diagnosed Fr. Leneweaver as afflicted with a “personality disorder – psychosexual immaturity.” He concluded that the priest was suffering from the very mental conditions – anxiety, depression, and frustration – that caused him to molest boys. Although Dr. Zanni suggested that Fr. Leneweaver’s prognosis might be favorable with “long term psychotherapy,” he did not conclude that Fr. Leneweaver was fit for an assignment at that time.

In an extremely frank memo to Cardinal Krol, dated September 11, 1980, following Fr. Leneweaver’s stay at Villa Saint John Vianney, Msgr. Statkus outlined Fr. Leneweaver’s long history of sexually abusing boys in several parishes. He recounted the repeated transfers made “in the hope of avoiding scandal,” and he lamented that “the latest incident eliminates his usefulness in his ministry in the area of Chester County.” The Chancellor pointed out that Fr. Leneweaver’s misbehavior was so widespread that there were only two areas of the diocese where he could still be assigned. He questioned the validity of psychological testing that repeatedly proved to be wrong. He reported that Fr. Leneweaver continued his contact with at least one victim even while at Villa Saint John Vianney. (Appendix D-4)

This was when Cardinal Krol assigned Fr. Leneweaver, once again, to a new parish at the opposite end of the Archdiocese – Saint Joseph the Worker, in Fallsington, Bucks County.

With the Archdiocese unwilling to remove him, Father Leneweaver removes himself from ministry, but the danger that he poses remains unknown to the community.

As it happened, Fr. Leneweaver's departure from the priesthood was at his own instigation, not the Archdiocese's. In December 1980, he asked for a permanent leave of absence. In a notation to a memo approving Fr. Leneweaver's leave, Cardinal Krol wrote:

His problem is not occupational or geographical & will follow him wherever he goes. He should be convinced that his orientation is an acquired preference for a particular method of satisfying a normal human appetite. – An appetite which is totally incompatible with vow of chastity + commitment to celibacy.

Otherwise phrased, Cardinal Krol believed that Fr. Leneweaver was an incurable pedophile. Thereafter, the Archdiocese loosed the sexual offender on children outside the church.

Over the next 20 years the Archdiocese denied various requests from Fr. Leneweaver to become active as a priest again – always, as one memo put it, because of “the risks for the diocese, for the bishop, for himself and the legal repercussions” While protecting themselves, however, the Archdiocese managers abdicated their responsibility to the community.

Cardinal Bevilacqua learns of Father Leneweaver's past crimes and his continued work with children, but takes no action.

In 1997, Fr. Leneweaver wrote directly to Cardinal Bevilacqua, expressing his interest in resuming active ministry. He sent the Cardinal what Vicar for Administration Joseph Cistone referred to as “a rather large packet of materials.” It contained the priest's resumé; several letters of reference for teaching positions, at least one written by an Archdiocese employee; a letter thanking the priest for his volunteer work at a homeless

shelter for youth; and a clean criminal history record obtained by Fr. Leneweaver when he applied for a teaching position in New Jersey in 1993. His resume showed that immediately after leaving active ministry in 1980, he had worked for 10 years as a “Residential Counselor and Instructor” for a Jesuit Program for Living and Learning. The resumé listed a job teaching Latin for a year and a half in the Millville, New Jersey, school district. (Appendix D-5)

According to notes from a December 15, 1997, issues meeting, the Cardinal “presented” the letter and asked that his Secretary for Clergy, Msgr. William Lynn, meet with Fr. Leneweaver to discuss his request. The Cardinal also asked that Msgr. Lynn inform him “under what circumstances Mr. Leneweaver left the active ministry.”

On February 16, 1998, after meeting with Fr. Leneweaver and reading through his Secret Archives file, Msgr. Lynn sent a memo answering the Cardinal’s question to Msgr. Cistone. The Secretary for Clergy attached a chronology of Fr. Leneweaver’s career, including his repeated admissions that, as a priest, he had sexually abused boys in his parishes. Monsignor Lynn wrote:

You will note that he has a history of acts of pedophilia/ephebophilia and I imagine by today’s standards, would be diagnosed as such. He really does not understand the climate of the times, nor the risks to himself or the church, should he be given ministry.

The Secretary for Clergy recommended that the Archdiocese write Fr. Leneweaver and explain that “for his own welfare and the welfare of the Church,” his request to return to ministry could not be granted. As usual, no mention was made of protecting children.

Monsignor Cistone forwarded Msgr. Lynn’s memo and chronology to Cardinal Bevilacqua, who approved the recommendation that Fr. Leneweaver not be given an assignment in the Archdiocese. But the Cardinal did nothing more. Despite knowing that Fr. Leneweaver had admitted sexually abusing many boys during his priesthood, that Msgr. Lynn considered the man a pedophile, and that he was still teaching boys, thanks to a clean criminal history resulting from the Archdiocese’s concealment of those crimes, Cardinal Bevilacqua did absolutely nothing to reduce the risk that Fr. Leneweaver posed to his students and other children.

Even though Cardinal Krol's earlier decisions not to report the priest's crimes inhibited prosecution of the offender in 1998, Cardinal Bevilacqua could have taken other actions. He could have reported the priest's crimes to law enforcement – as the Archdiocese now does – even though the statute of limitations might be deemed to have run. He could have used his authority to tell the priest that he should not be teaching children. The Cardinal could have protected many children simply by formalizing and publicizing the priest's removal from ministry and the reason for the decision. In December 2003, Cardinal Bevilacqua announced the removal of four priests due to allegations of sexual abuse of minors and provided their names to the public. Had he done the same with Fr. Leneweaver, it is unlikely the admitted child molester would have found employment in Philadelphia's suburban public schools.

On January 29, 2002, Msgrs. Lynn and Cistone were informed by memo that Fr. Leneweaver had been teaching Latin and History full-time for three years in the Philadelphia suburbs – in the North Penn and Central Bucks School Districts. Again they took no action. And so, on January 5, 2005, Fr. Leneweaver told this Grand Jury that, just last year, he was teaching Latin at Radnor Middle School in Montgomery County.

The Grand Jury finds that Cardinal Bevilacqua could have protected hundreds of students had he chosen to shield them instead of the Archdiocese and this sexually abusive priest.

Father Leneweaver was called to testify before the Grand Jury. He answered questions about his employment since leaving the Archdiocese, but when given the opportunity to answer the allegations against him, he chose not to do so.