

Father David C. Sicoli

In 1999, Fr. David C. Sicoli had in his Secret Archives file a long history of abusive and manipulative relationships with adolescents, as well as numerous reports from other priests about these relationships. Cardinal Bevilacqua, Secretary for Clergy William J. Lynn, and other members of the Cardinal's Priest Personnel Board were considering where Fr. Sicoli should be assigned, and some of them were concerned, but not because of the threat he posed to children. They worried aloud that Fr. Sicoli would be disappointed if his parish did not include a school. According to notes of their meeting, they also believed that Fr. Sicoli should be in a parish that had no other priests--even though that meant he would run all the youth programs and would avoid any other priests' observing him. Accordingly, Cardinal Bevilacqua appointed Fr. Sicoli pastor at Holy Spirit Church in South Philadelphia.

Four witnesses testified before the Grand Jury that Fr. Sicoli had sexually abused them as teenagers when he was assigned to Immaculate Conception parish in Levittown in the 1980s. The abuse included oral sex and mutual masturbation. Father Sicoli had been transferred to Immaculate Conception because of possible scandal resulting from complaints made by three boys at his previous parish – Saint Martin of Tours in Philadelphia. At Immaculate Conception, fellow priests expressed concerns about Fr. Sicoli's behavior from the start. One specifically warned Archdiocese officials of his unhealthy relationships with the four victims who eventually testified. The Church officials knew the identity of at least one boy while he was still being abused, and possibly before the abuse occurred – while he was being “groomed.” Even after being told that this victim was “suicidal,” Archdiocese officials did nothing to intervene. They questioned none of the named victims. Instead, they transferred Fr. Sicoli to another parish and permitted him access to a whole new pool of potential victims. They also named him Associate Director of the CCD youth program for the entire Philadelphia area.

With uninvestigated allegations involving at least nine boys in Fr. Sicoli's file, Cardinal Bevilacqua in 1990 promoted him to pastor at Our Lady of Holy Souls in North Philadelphia. The Cardinal would reassign him as pastor to three more parishes between 1991 and 1999, despite several more reports to the Archdiocese of intense, exclusive, and suspicious relationships with teenaged boys. In 2002, after complaints from parish staff that the priest kept boys living with him at rectories, but no investigations, Cardinal Bevilacqua left Fr. Sicoli as pastor of Holy Spirit Church, living in the rectory with the boys and no other priests. Father Sicoli was still its pastor, with a new favorite boy, in 2003, when Cardinal Bevilacqua resigned. The Cardinal never even asked the Archdiocese Review Board to investigate the numerous complaints against Fr. Sicoli.

Only in May 2004, after having been questioned about Fr. Sicoli before the Grand Jury, did now-Bishop Joseph Cistone initiate an investigation of the allegations against the still active pastor. An investigator for the Review Board became the first person to question on behalf of the Archdiocese victims whose names were provided to it in 1983. After finding “multiple substantiated allegations involving a total of 11 minors over an

extensive period of time beginning in 1977 and proceeding to 2002,” the Review Board recommended Fr. Sicoli’s removal from ministry. (Appendix D-13)

From the start of Father Sicoli’s career the Archdiocese receives complaints about his contact with boys but fails to act.

Father David Sicoli began his first assignment as an assistant pastor at Saint Joseph, Ambler, in June 1975. Memos from Vice Chancellor Francis J. Clemins reflect that by the beginning of September, both Fr. Sicoli and his pastor were asking that he be transferred. Father Sicoli complained that the pastor, Father James Gallagher, was interfering with what Fr. Sicoli believed should be his total control of the altar boys. Father Gallagher questioned Fr. Sicoli’s interest in the priesthood. The pastor said that he had consulted Fr. Sicoli’s supervisors from seminary and that they thought the young priest was mentally ill.

A week after meeting with Chancery officials, Fr. Sicoli was transferred to Saint Martin of Tours Church in Northeast Philadelphia. There he threw himself into the work of the Catholic Youth Organization (“CYO”), neglecting other duties. In December 1977, three teenage officers of the CYO – “Nick,” his cousin “Jeffrey,” and “Adam” – complained to the Chancery that Fr. Sicoli’s frequent attempts to have physical contact with them over the preceding two years made them uncomfortable. The three boys had been directed to speak to Vice Chancellor Clemins by their pastor, Msgr. Michael Marley, and by another priest, Fr. John Sharkey, who had become suspicious of Fr. Sicoli’s behavior with the boys. All three boys were seniors at Cardinal Dougherty High School when they came to Chancery.

Nick told Msgr. Clemins of a trip to Florida with Fr. Sicoli, Adam, and another boy after the boys’ sophomore year of high school. For the entire trip, Fr. Sicoli insisted that Nick sit in the front seat of the car and sleep in the priest’s bed. Nick insisted, in front of his friends, that “no overt sexual acts” took place, but he said that in bed Fr. Sicoli edged toward the boy “to the point of body contact more than would be expected,” as the Archdiocese official put it.

Father Sicoli manipulated Nick into another trip – to California the next summer – telling the boy he had been chosen by the downtown CYO office to represent the diocese, when, in fact, Fr. Sicoli planned and paid for the trip. The priest had intended to go alone with Nick, but the boy refused to go unless his cousin Jeffrey could accompany them. Even with Jeffrey present, Fr. Sicoli insisted that Nick sleep in the priest's bed.

According to Msgr. Clemins' notes, Nick reported that, on the trip to California, Fr. Sicoli took the boys to see a stripper perform. He took them to a bar in Tijuana, Mexico, described by Msgr. Clemins as "an habitu e for prostitutes," and offered the boys \$15 so that they could pay to "go with a B-girl to a back-room."

Adam told how, in October 1977, Fr. Sicoli made Nick and him stay " til the wee hours of the morning to count money," in Fr. Sicoli's bedroom following a CYO-sponsored "Beef and Beer Party." When the boys said they wanted to leave, Fr. Sicoli took Nick home, but pressured Adam to come back to the rectory. Feeling uncomfortable, the boy pretended to be sick. The priest encouraged the teen to sip beer and lie down on the sofa. The priest then sat beside him and put his arms around the teenager. When Adam stood up to leave, Fr. Sicoli asked whether he could give the boy a hug. Adam said no.

Nick confided to Msgr. Clemins that "Father acts like he is in love with me." According to the Monsignor's handwritten note of December 30, 1977, Fr. Sharkey confirmed that, because of Fr. Sicoli's "unnatural" attentions, "[Nick] has suffered in silence" the verbal abuse of his peers. The priest said Nick did not criticize Fr. Sicoli to the other kids "because he doesn't want the priest's reputation tarnished publicly."

When interviewed by Msgr. Clemins, Fr. Sharkey said that he had become suspicious of Fr. Sicoli about five or six weeks earlier when he overheard a "violent argument with some youths in his bedroom." He also told the Vice Chancellor that a psychiatrist he had consulted advised him that Fr. Sicoli needed treatment.

Archdiocese documents reflect that on January 3, 1978, Msgr. Clemins interviewed Fr. Sicoli. The priest admitted sleeping "rather consistently" in the same bed with Nick on trips to Florida and California. He admitted taking the teens to bars, but insisted that he had not done so "for any immoral purposes." He denied trying to hug Adam, but did not deny having the boy in his rectory bedroom at 4:00 a.m. He claimed that the boys' report was

false, and that Jeffrey and Adam were “jealous” of Nick because of his leadership position in the CYO. Monsignor Clemins, clearly, did not accept this explanation, writing in his memo of the conversation: “This would fail to explain why all three would come to Chancery to make the accusations in the presence of Father Sharkey.” Monsignor Clemins further noted that “Monsignor Marley told Msgr. Statkus that the 3 boys were credible.”

A few days after Msgr. Clemins informed Fr. Sicoli of the charges against him, his pastor, Msgr. Marley, brought a letter to Vice Chancellor Clemins “on behalf of Father Sicoli.” The letter, from Nick, purported to recant the allegations of all three, although it was signed only by Nick. Moreover, as it alleged that the other two victims had a vendetta against Fr. Sicoli and that they were merely jealous of Nick, it is highly unlikely that the other two victims had any part in authoring the letter; thus, it is equally unlikely that either of the other victims used the letter to “recant” their statements. Indeed, there is strong evidence that Fr. Sicoli himself had coached Nick into writing the letter: Nick had demonstrated his willingness to protect Fr. Sicoli at his own expense; and the letter’s claim that the other victims had a vendetta against Fr. Sicoli because they were jealous of Nick was one of the same excuses Fr. Sicoli had himself made to Msgr. Clemins. Monsignor Marley made it clear to Msgr. Clemins that he did not reject the boys’ allegations and thought that Fr. Sicoli should be transferred.

Nick also called Msgr. Clemins, according to notes kept by the Vice Chancellor, “to express his continued concern for Fr. Sicoli as well as his own guilt feelings.” When pressed, however, Nick “could not deny” – despite what Vice Chancellor Clemins perceived to be guilt feelings stemming from the realization that Nick might “be hurting a priest’s reputation” – that the reports he and his friends had made against Fr. Sicoli were true.

In a January 5, 1978, memo to Cardinal Krol, the Vice Chancellor advised the Cardinal that he had received reports from Fr. Sicoli’s pastor that three boys were alleging that Fr. Sicoli was “either bordering on homosexuality or has had homosexual acts with them.” He related their allegations and noted that Fr. Sicoli “has given scandal by his behavior.” Monsignor Clemins wrote that it was “because some of the parents of these boys also knew in varying degrees about the situation” that he suggested Fr. Sicoli seek

treatment at Villa Saint John Vianney Hospital, a suggestion Fr. Sicoli refused to follow. Monsignor Clemins also related that he had told Fr. Sicoli he would very likely be transferred. The reason for the transfer, given to Fr. Sicoli and recorded by Msgr. Clemins on January 3, was that “the element of scandal is too evident in regard to his associations at St. Martin’s.”

Father Sicoli refuses to be evaluated at Saint John Vianney Hospital.

On January 3, 1978, when Fr. Sicoli refused to go to Saint John Vianney, Vice Chancellor Clemins instructed him to have a psychological evaluation on his own. On February 6, 1978, Chancery received from a psychologist, Donald E. D’Orazio, a two-and-a-half-page narrative of a conversation with Fr. Sicoli. Although there was a heading labeled “Test Findings,” no tests or results were mentioned. However, even as a result of their apparently brief interaction, D’Orazio detected problems. He stated that his “clinical evaluation does not show any hard signs of homosexuality,” but did reveal problems with impulse control and social adjustment. Father Sicoli had, in any case, already been reassigned.

On January 6, 1978, three days after Vice Chancellor Clemins had recorded in his handwritten notes that “there persists a grave suspicion that Fr. Sicoli is at least emotionally unbalanced,” Cardinal Krol reassigned Fr. Sicoli as associate pastor at Immaculate Conception B.V.M. Church in Levittown. There he sexually abused four victims who later testified before the Grand Jury.

Archdiocese officials record restrictions on Father Sicoli’s access to youth, but fail to implement or enforce them.

Aware of Fr. Sicoli’s troubled relationships with adolescents, Chancellor Francis Statkus wrote in a memo to the file that he had forbidden Fr. Sicoli to supervise youth in his new parish. Yet when the Chancellor learned almost immediately of concerns that Fr. Sicoli was once again intimately involved with the parish’s youth programs, he did nothing to intervene.

In a memo for the official record, dated January 12, 1978, six days after Fr. Sicoli had been assigned to Immaculate Conception B.V.M., Chancellor Statkus described a conversation with the pastor there:

I telephoned Father John Campbell directing him not to place Father Sicoli into any position as moderator or director of any youth groups. I included the direction of the altar boys in this restriction.

I did not explain in any way the reason for this restriction. I indicated simply that, in the past, Father Sicoli's experiences with the youth have not been favorable.
(Appendix D-14)

Right from the start, fellow priests, who lived with Fr. Sicoli in the rectory of Immaculate Conception, made it clear to the Archdiocese that Fr. Sicoli's behavior was continuing. In March 1978, Chancellor Statkus wrote that Fr. Frederick K. Schmitt "registered annoyance and apprehension about Father David Sicoli." The Chancellor's memo of a meeting with Fr. Schmitt noted obliquely that Fr. Schmitt and another priest at the parish, Fr. Arnholt, had seen some "shortcomings" in Fr. Sicoli. Monsignor Statkus wrote that Fr. Schmitt told him that "unless he learn[ed] more about Fr. Sicoli from us or if Fr. Sicoli's patterns do not improve, Father Schmitt would have difficulty continuing to be assigned with him."

On July 10, 1978, Fr. Schmitt returned to Chancery "distraught and upset." According to Chancellor Statkus's notes, the priest reported that Fr. Sicoli only performed the duties that interested him – specifically, those supposedly banned by Msgr. Statkus – the youth program, Confraternity of Christian Doctrine ("CCD"), and the grade school. Father Arnholt, who spoke to the Chancellor by telephone, confirmed that Fr. Sicoli was a problem and that he generally spent seven hours – 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. – at the parish school. Both priests recommended that Fr. Sicoli be moved.

Instead, Chancellor Statkus recommended that *Fr. Schmitt* be reassigned. In a July 21, 1978, memo recording an interview with Fr. Sicoli and his pastor, Fr. John Campbell, the Chancellor explained that he probably should have transferred Fr. Sicoli, but he decided not to "considering the number of transfers he already had had." Monsignor Statkus recorded that at their interview he reviewed the "unfavorable observations which

have been made concerning him since his first appointment.” The Chancellor noted that the pastors from all three previous assignments had reported “shortcomings.”

Unless covered under the topic of “shortcomings,” the Chancellor’s notes from the meeting record no admonishment of Fr. Sicoli, or Father Campbell, for the inordinate amount of time Fr. Sicoli was spending on youth activities and in the parish school. Chancellor Statkus recorded no mention of his previous recorded instructions to keep Fr. Sicoli away from youth activities.

Father Sicoli abuses numerous boys at Immaculate Conception.

- **“Frederick**

“Shortcomings” did not really adequately describe what Fr. Sicoli was doing at Immaculate Conception. In the summer of 1978, when Fr. Sicoli’s fellow priests were registering their disregarded concerns, Frederick was a 13-year-old altar boy who worked in the rectory answering phones and helping the four priests. Father Sicoli began to invite him on outings – to swim at Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary, to movies, and to his house at the New Jersey Shore. Sometimes other boys who worked at the rectory were included, but sometimes only Frederick accompanied Fr. Sicoli.

Frederick told the Grand Jury that at first he was delighted about the outings. He was one of ten children and his parents rarely took him anywhere. He did not object when Fr. Sicoli took him and other boys to a bar in North Wildwood – the “Red Garter” – and let them drink pitchers of beer, or when the priest let the underage boy drive the priest’s car home from the bar. What became an unwelcome part of the routine, however, was that, while the intoxicated boy drove, the priest feigned sickness and asked the teen to rub his stomach. Invariably, Fr. Sicoli had the boy rub his crotch as well. Frederick testified that he was 14 or 15 years old when this began.

Another regular feature of trips to the shore was sleeping in the same bedroom with Fr. Sicoli and being sexually assaulted by him. Frederick said that he often went to bed intoxicated and awoke to find Fr. Sicoli either performing oral sex on him or masturbating him. Father Sicoli then asked to be masturbated. On one occasion, the priest asked Frederick to perform oral sex on him but the boy refused. Frederick said that he sometimes

went to bed with clothes on and awoke nude. He said that Fr. Sicoli asked to be masturbated “numerous, numerous times.” One time he remembered, in particular, was in the fall of 1980 (the year the Phillies won the World Series). Frederick was 15. He was at the priest’s house in Sea Isle City, New Jersey, drinking alcohol, when tickets went on sale for Phillies’ playoff games. He said that he and Fr. Sicoli immediately jumped in the priest’s car and headed for Veterans Stadium. The underage teen drove the car. Father Sicoli masturbated him and had the teen masturbate him all the way along the drive to Philadelphia.

Frederick testified that his abuse continued from 7th grade into high school. He recalled that it ended before he turned 16. A cook in the rectory, Barbara Walsh, helped end Fr. Sicoli’s abuse. Frederick told the cook that he did not want to go to the shore anymore, but he knew Fr. Sicoli would get angry with him. Frederick testified that it was “warped,” but that Fr. Sicoli acted as if the two of them had a “boyfriend-girlfriend relationship” and became very emotional and screamed when he did not get his way. The cook told Frederick to tell Fr. Sicoli he was not going to the shore anymore. When Fr. Sicoli blew up and tried to fire Frederick from his rectory job, Walsh said that she would “go to the pastor.” Frederick was able to keep his job, which he needed to help his family financially, but, he said, he was ostracized by Fr. Sicoli.

- **“Jake” and “Robert”**

Jake and Robert were a year younger than Frederick. Like Frederick, they were members of the church’s youth group and worked at the rectory. They told the Grand Jury of experiences with Fr. Sicoli very similar to Frederick’s. On separate occasions, Fr. Sicoli took both to the “Red Garter” in North Wildwood and plied them with beer. Both drove the priest home from the bar in his car, though neither boy was old enough to drive. Father Sicoli told both boys on those occasions that he felt sick and asked them to rub his stomach, urging both to go “lower, lower.”

Jake testified that one night he awoke in the middle of the night, after drinking at the bar, to find Fr. Sicoli standing over him. The priest had been rubbing the boy’s genitals and his “crotch was wet.” When he asked the priest what happened, Fr. Sicoli answered

that the boy must have had a wet dream. Later that night, 14-year-old Jake looked over at the priest, who was on a separate bed in the same room. Father Sicoli was lying naked on top of his covers, looking at him and masturbating. The next day, Jake's parents stopped by the priest's beach house on their way to visit relatives. Jake begged his mother to take him with her when she left, but she refused, not wanting to insult the priest.

When Jake announced to Fr. Sicoli that he no longer wanted to go to the shore, the priest threatened to, and then did, tell his parents that the teen had been smoking. The priest tried to enlist the mother's help to persuade Jake to continue his beach trips. This time, Jake's mother told the priest to give her son some "space."

Robert testified that he accompanied Fr. Sicoli to his beach house and drank with the priest on many occasions. Often, he said, he was too intoxicated to remember what happened when he went to bed in the same bedroom with the priest. On one occasion, another parish boy came into the bedroom to wake Robert up and found Robert lying on top of Fr. Sicoli. Robert said that he did not know how he had gotten there. Father Sicoli fired Robert from his rectory job and kicked him out of the CYO when Robert refused once to go to the shore with him.

- **"Hugh"**

Hugh told the Grand Jury that he came onto "Father Sicoli's radar screen" in 6th grade, when he broke a rectory window while playing ball and rang the rectory bell to confess. Father Sicoli, he said, recruited him to become an altar boy. The priest later hired him to work in the rectory and, according to Hugh, paid him "top dollar." The grooming process continued with favorable treatment, trips, invitations to the priest's shore house, assignments to leadership positions in the youth group, and lucrative funeral and wedding jobs. He was 12 years old when he was put "in charge of" the other altar boys. Father Sicoli regularly took Hugh out of his classes at Immaculate Conception's grade school.

Hugh told the Grand Jurors that one day, while he was doing his homework at the rectory, Fr. Sicoli came up to him and said, "Let's wrestle." The priest then wrestled the boy to the floor and climbed on top of him. He challenged the boy to try to get away and, according to Hugh, called him something like a "pussy" for not fighting back. Hugh

testified: “I saw that he was getting more into it, and he was grinding all over me, and I recognized that he had an erection, and I certainly wanted no part of that”

Hugh said that similar “wrestling” incidents happened at Fr. Sicoli’s beach house. Hugh testified that Fr. Sicoli gave him Margaritas and other alcohol while at the shore and that he often went to bed too intoxicated to remember the next morning what had happened. He said that he remembered a part of one night when he awoke to find Fr. Sicoli standing, watching him. He described vivid images he recalled from that night and said that he felt strongly that something happened that “my brain’s not letting me see.”

Hugh tried to explain to the Grand Jurors how he emotionally dealt with Fr. Sicoli’s abusive behavior. He told them:

If you’ve ever heard the term “out of body experience,” I can tell you that it actually happens, and it’s terrifying because it is – it’s a way to escape. And I remember sitting in the rectory one time, and I was sitting on the couch, and he was awfully close, and he was saying some things about my parents, and the stress just was – it was on me like an anvil, on my chest. I couldn’t, and I remember distinctly my body and soul lifting out, going up in the top corner in the room. I was just looking down on myself, and I could see this day. It’s just the most bizarre picture. And I was yelling, “Get up and run.” And my brain is not letting me see the other side of it. There’s something that’s really – it’s dark. I can’t – it’s like a light, the light goes dim when I’m trying to explore it and see what happened.

Hugh described the emotional toll that Fr. Sicoli imposed on him. Like the other victims, he noted Fr. Sicoli’s immaturity, his controlling and manipulative nature, and his temper. Like the others, he recalled tantrums whenever he associated with, or even talked to girls. Hugh illustrated how “mentally taxing” it was to deal with Fr. Sicoli, testifying: “every time you dealt with him, you felt like you just came out of surgery.”

Hugh told the Grand Jury that his abuse by Fr. Sicoli ended when he backed out of a trip to Disney World that Fr. Sicoli had planned for the two of them. Hugh’s father, apparently sensing reluctance from his son, pressed the boy on whether he really wanted to go on the trip. Hugh said he admitted to his father that he was afraid “something really bad is going to happen down there.” When Hugh’s father informed Fr. Sicoli that Hugh would

not be going, the priest yelled and swore at Hugh's father. When Hugh showed up for work at the rectory the next week, Fr. Sicoli had replaced him with another boy.

The Archdiocese is made aware of the improper relationships between Father Sicoli and his victims while they are taking place, but ignores the reports.

Had the Archdiocese heeded, or even investigated, Fr. Schmitt's warnings about Fr. Sicoli and acted appropriately, the victims would have been spared life-altering sexual abuse. Frederick, Jake, and Robert all testified that they were angered to discover in 2004 not only that Fr. Schmitt had warned of Fr. Sicoli's behavior, but that their abuser had been transferred to Immaculate Conception because boys at his previous assignment had brought sexual abuse allegations to the Archdiocese. They were further amazed to learn that Fr. John Graf, then an assistant pastor at Immaculate Conception, had in 1983 provided their names to the Chancellor and warned him of Fr. Sicoli's suspicious and unhealthy relationships with the teens. The three victims were angry that no one from the Archdiocese had sought them out for 20 years. If nothing else, they believed that harm to future victims could have been prevented.

But Archdiocese managers demonstrated no interest in protecting children they knew were at risk. Chancellor Statkus was well aware, throughout Fr. Sicoli's tenure at Immaculate Conception, that the priest was extremely involved with the parish youth, as Fr. Sicoli himself boasted. On May 1, 1982, Fr. Sicoli wrote to the Chancellor requesting a high school teaching job. In his letter he enumerated his extensive work with children, including: developing a summer religious education program for 130 students, teaching 7th and 8th grade religion daily, and starting a "parish based high school retreat program for which [the] high school students are released from school."

On August 3, 1982, in his write-up of a five-year review routinely performed with priests, Msgr. Statkus noted that Fr. Sicoli "moderate[d] the altar boys and the CYO (high school students)." Ignoring the fact that all of these activities were in complete disregard of his purported directive that Fr. Sicoli not be involved with youth, Msgr. Statkus wrote: "his experiences in his first assignments are considered a closed matter."

In October 1982, the Chancellor appointed Fr. Sicoli associate director of the youth program, CCD, in Bucks County. The priest also remained associate pastor at Immaculate Conception B.V.M. Church.

On May 2, 1983, Chancellor Statkus learned from Fr. Graf that considering Fr. Sicoli's prior abuse "a closed matter" was a mistake. On that day, Fr. Graf told Msgr. Statkus of Fr. Sicoli's unnaturally close and unhealthy relationships with six adolescent boys, including the four that testified before the Grand Jury. (Appendix D-15)

The six named by Fr. Graf were: Jake, Frederick, Robert, "Henry," "Brandon," and Hugh. Chancellor Statkus recorded that Fr. Sicoli had "befriended" and tutored Jake from his 8th-grade year at the parish grade school to his sophomore year at Bishop Egan High School. Frederick, whom Fr. Sicoli had also "befriended," had since moved to Florida. Father Sicoli tutored both Robert, a junior at Bishop Egan, and Henry, a freshman, who had been "his recent friend." Brandon and Hugh were both 8th-graders at the parish school whose "friendships" with Father Sicoli were four or five months old.

Father Graf explained that these associations followed a "usual routine." Father Sicoli hired the boys to work in the rectory. He became close to their families. He took several of the boys on trips to his beach house at the New Jersey Shore. When his "associations" ended, Fr. Sicoli fired the boys from their rectory jobs. Father Graf told Msgr. Statkus that Fr. Sicoli's most recent "friends" – Hugh and Brandon – came from troubled homes. Although Chancellor Statkus, in his memo recording Fr. Graf's report, labeled Fr. Sicoli's relationships with these boys "friendships," Fr. Graf testified before the Grand Jury that he "had the deep feeling" that Fr. Sicoli was sexually interested in these boys.

Father Graf also reported to Msgr. Statkus that others suspected Fr. Sicoli of misconduct. The teachers and principal at the parish school, according to Fr. Graf, were extremely upset and thought Fr. Sicoli needed "professional help or attention." He was known to excuse his favorites from their classes. The school principal asked Fr. Graf to communicate to Chancery that she was willing to be interviewed. Father Sicoli was scheduled to be transferred in June 1983 in any event, so on May 2, 1983, Chancellor Statkus told Fr. Graf to "assure the sisters and other members of the faculty that there

would be a due review and that truly there was no need for them to be interviewed.” It is clear from Msgr. Statkus’ response that he thought the problem posed by Fr. Sicoli would be “solved” simply by transferring him to another parish; such would have been true only if the “problem” perceived was that of the scandal resulting from the priest’s actions, and not the priest’s actions themselves.

Father Sicoli is transferred to Saint Athanasius and is named Associate Director of the CCD youth program for the entire Philadelphia area; he continues abusing Hugh.

On June 1, 1983, Fr. Sicoli became associate pastor at Saint Athanasius, a predominantly black parish in West Oak Lane. By mid-June, it was apparent to the principal and faculty at the Immaculate Conception B.V.M. grade school that the Archdiocese was not protecting its parish children. Father Sicoli had written several vengeful letters to his former colleagues, bitter that they had tried to curtail his involvement with their students. In his letters, Fr. Sicoli indicated that, despite his transfer, he was still in contact with Hugh. Sister Elaine Anthony, a religion teacher at Immaculate Conception B.V.M., wrote to Chancellor Statkus on June 21, 1983:

[Hugh] was in my class. I watched [Hugh] go from a happy mischievous kid to a tension-filled, confused state of mind. Father has had him down the Shore on weekends. We had hoped this would have discontinued when Father was changed. Father had had a controlled grip on this young fellow that is unhealthy for a thirteen year old.

What concerned the principal and teachers most was that Fr. Sicoli informed them how involved he was already in the school at Saint Athanasius. The Immaculate Conception principal, Sister William Anthony, told the Chancellor in a letter received June 20, 1983, that she was “very much concerned with the fact that Fr. Sicoli intends to teach in the elementary school at his new parish, and he has already begun to pass judgment on the faculty there.”

“It is not fair to the people of St. Athanasius nor Father himself,” the principal went on, “to let this go by. . . . The poor man needs help and apparently cannot see that need in himself. I don’t know what you can do about him, but please Msgr., do not allow him to

get involved in that school I just want to keep him from hurting anyone else – or himself.”

Sister Elaine Anthony made the same plea on June 21, 1983. She tried to impress on the Archdiocese official the enormity of the harm Fr. Sicoli was doing to these children:

I have not only seen, but have experienced, first hand, the inner emotional stress and strain of my students whom Father has singled out as his favorites. I have watched the other students resent them and pressure them through verbal uncharitableness.

She described graffiti in both the boys’ and girls’ bathrooms. The graffiti depicted Hugh (his name was written) performing an “obscene sexual act.” In the boys’ bathroom, she reported, he was performing the act on “Father.”

In their letters to Chancellor Statkus, both the principal and Sister Elaine mentioned Fr. Graf’s report to the Archdiocese, nearly two months earlier, of the problems with Fr. Sicoli. Up until the time they wrote, however, nothing had been put in Fr. Sicoli’s file – either the personnel or Secret Archives file – to record the information, including the names of the six boys, that Fr. Graf had provided to Msgr. Statkus. On June 22, 1983, two days after receiving the principal’s letter, the Chancellor wrote a memo summarizing his meeting of May 2 with Father Graf.

Still the Archdiocese response was negligible. Monsignor Statkus met with Fr. Sicoli, but according to the Chancellor’s June 24, 1983, notes from the meeting, Fr. Sicoli was not restricted in activities at Saint Athanasius’ school. He was not sent for evaluation, or treatment, or counseling. He was not confronted with the names of the boys he had “befriended” or questioned about his continuing contact with Hugh. Instead, he was simply “cautioned . . . not to form particular friendships because these lessen the effectiveness of his ministry.” Instead of being banned from the school, he was encouraged “to maintain a favorable rapport with the teachers of the parish school.”

Other than a noted intention to speak to Fr. Sicoli’s new pastor, there is nothing in the Archdiocese files to indicate any action taken. The boys named by Fr. Graf were not interviewed. The Archdiocese apparently ignored altogether Fr. Sicoli’s ongoing relationship with Hugh, even though Fr. Sicoli had told Msgr. Statkus, as recorded in the

June 24, 1983, memo, that he feared the boy might commit suicide. The Chancellor received a copy of a letter written by Fr. Sicoli to Sister Elaine on June 15, 1983, in which the priest wrote: “last week [Hugh] said to me that all he had to do to end the difficulties he was having was simply to break with me. But he felt that would be wrong.” The Archdiocese did nothing to protect Hugh. Sadly, no one from the Archdiocese showed any interest in what Fr. Sicoli was doing to the boy until another twenty years had passed, after the Grand Jury questioned Archdiocese managers in 2004.

During Fr. Sicoli’s tenure at Saint Athanasius, on October 1, 1984, Chancellor Samuel Shoemaker appointed him associate director of the CCD youth program for the entire Philadelphia area. The Chancellor made the appointment even though the priest’s file clearly showed that he used the Church’s youth groups to reward, groom, and manipulate his targeted boys.

Despite Father Sicoli’s record, Archbishop Bevilacqua promotes him to pastor of Our Lady of the Holy Souls Church.

In January 1990, Fr. Sicoli’s Secret Archives file contained multiple reports of improper behavior with adolescent boys, a history of failed assignments, and pleas from co-workers to help this sick man and protect the youth of the Church. Despite all this, Archbishop Bevilacqua promoted Fr. Sicoli to a pastorate, appointing him to be pastor of Our Lady of the Holy Souls Church. There is no indication that Archbishop Bevilacqua requested a psychological evaluation or that any of the many allegations in the file were investigated before making the assignment. (When the Archdiocesan Review Board finally investigated these allegations in 2004, it concluded unanimously that there were “five victims of multiple substantiated allegations of sexual abuse” and “three victims of multiple substantiated allegations of sexual exploitation.”) Father Sicoli’s request to return to a black parish was honored by the transfer to North Philadelphia.

Grand Jury testimony from Sister Ann Provost, the Director of Religious Education while Fr. Sicoli was at Holy Souls, established that, once again, Fr. Sicoli focused his attention on the church’s youth group – and on one boy in particular, “Adrian.” When Fr. Sicoli joined Holy Souls, Adrian was not, according to Sister Ann, one of the leaders of the then-thriving youth group. But Fr. Sicoli’s immediate favoritism toward Adrian, and his

elevation of Adrian to a leadership position, drove other participants away. Sister Ann said she heard other students talking and saying that Adrian and Fr. Sicoli had a sexual relationship.

Sister Ann said that the rumors were widespread among the mothers of teens. She even received a call from the former pastor at Holy Souls, Fr. Charles Vance, asking her whether what he was hearing – that Fr. Sicoli was taking Adrian overnight to his beach house on Friday nights – was true. She later learned from Fr. Sicoli that it was true.

Sister Ann said that Adrian was a high school junior when Fr. Sicoli's relationship with him began. After Adrian graduated, Fr. Sicoli gave him a job as a part-time youth minister and asked the teen to move into the rectory. Sister Ann thought that the job might have something to do with financial assistance Fr. Sicoli was helping to arrange for Adrian to attend LaSalle College. As a high school graduation present, Fr. Sicoli took Adrian to Africa for two weeks.

Sister Ann also told the Grand Jury that, after Adrian moved into the rectory, his relationship with Fr. Sicoli became very tumultuous, even violent. She learned this from the youth minister, "Diane." Sister Ann said that it was with great reluctance that Diane confided that Fr. Sicoli had called her and her husband in the middle of the night more than once to break up physical fights between the priest and Adrian.

In September 1992, according to Sister Ann, Diane called her to the scene of one midday fight, telling Sister Ann to hurry because Adrian was "after [Fr. Sicoli] with a baseball bat." By the time Sister Ann arrived, Adrian was gone, but she saw Fr. Sicoli, looking disheveled, with a cut on his face. After hours of talking to Fr. Sicoli and Adrian, who had returned, Sister Ann concluded that they were both "too engrossed" emotionally and that the situation was unhealthy. Sister Ann was instrumental in getting Adrian to move out of the rectory and back home with his mother. Father Sicoli, she said, was "irate" that Adrian had moved out and started packing his bags and threatening to resign.

The next morning, Fr. Sicoli called Sister Ann at 6:30 a.m. She told the Grand Jury: "He said he was in Sea Isle and another young man had come down in the middle of the night to be with him. . . . He said he would be up in a couple of days." He returned to the

parish, but Adrian did not. A month later, Fr. Sicoli fired Diane. He stopped talking to Sister Ann.

Sister Ann told the Grand Jurors of two other boys in whom Fr. Sicoli took a particular interest. One was a 6th-grader who worked in the rectory and whose mother “pulled him right out,” as Sister Ann put it, “as soon as anything started.” The other boy was an 8th-grader named “Ben,” who was not Catholic, but who attended the grade school associated with Saint Stephen parish. That parish was scheduled to merge the next summer with Holy Souls and the youth of the parishes were beginning to engage in joint activities.

Ben, Sister Ann learned later, was the boy whom Fr. Sicoli went to see immediately after the incident that caused Adrian to move out of the rectory. She testified that he largely replaced Adrian, becoming a regular around the rectory at all hours, even though he continued to live at home with his father.

Cardinal Bevilacqua names Father Sicoli pastor of a newly consolidated parish, Our Lady of Hope, where the priest targets an eighth-grader.

Despite the notoriety of Fr. Sicoli’s behavior with Adrian, not to mention his extensive Secret Archives file, Cardinal Bevilacqua chose Fr. Sicoli to be the pastor of the newly consolidated North Philadelphia parish, Our Lady of Hope, formed in June 1993 by the merger of Our Lady of the Holy Souls and two other parishes. Serving on Cardinal Bevilacqua’s Priest Personnel Board, the group he charged with advising him on assignments, was Fr. John Graf, the same priest who had reported Fr. Sicoli’s sick behavior to the Archdiocese in 1983. Father Graf had also served as Assistant Chancellor from 1984 through 1989 and was familiar with Fr. Sicoli’s Secret Archives file.

Father Graf testified before the Grand Jury that he felt uncomfortable bringing up sensitive issues before the large Priest Personnel Board, but that he did express his concerns privately to Cardinal Bevilacqua and his Secretary for Clergy, William J. Lynn. Father Graf said that in March or April of 1993, before Fr. Sicoli’s appointment, he told Cardinal Bevilacqua and Msgr. Lynn that Fr. Sicoli was ill and needed help. Father Graf said there was no “real reaction” to his warning, other than the Cardinal’s saying, “He’ll

get help. He's getting help." The Cardinal did not ask what Fr. Graf meant by "ill." There is no record in the file that Cardinal Bevilacqua ever ordered such "help."

Father Anthony Bozeman was hired by Fr. Sicoli as the youth minister (this was a lay position and Fr. Bozeman was not ordained at that time) at Our Lady of Hope. Father Bozeman testified that, at some level, he sensed something strange when Fr. Sicoli brought a 13- or 14-year-old boy, Ben, along to interview Bozeman for the job. He began work in June 1993, and soon noticed that Fr. Sicoli called a 13-year-old girl (whom Bozeman thought a "sweetheart") a "tart." He said that Fr. Sicoli refused to give the girl's mother the "Sign of Peace" at Mass. His suspicions that something was wrong deepened when he learned that the "tart" was Ben's girlfriend. Bozeman began to see Fr. Sicoli's affection for Ben and another 8th-grade boy, "Howard," in a different light.

Father Bozeman testified that Fr. Sicoli took him to Disney World on a trip that Fr. Sicoli had planned for himself, Ben, and Howard. Father Sicoli invited Bozeman because Howard's mother forbade him from going and Ben refused to go alone with Fr. Sicoli. The youth minister said that he did not observe any abuse on the trip, but thought it odd that Fr. Sicoli and Ben went out to play tennis at 3:00 a.m. He noted that Fr. Sicoli said he was feeling sick most of the time.

By August 1993, Fr. Bozeman said, he and all of the priests – there were three others living at the rectory – had concluded that something needed to be done about the unnatural relationship between Fr. Sicoli and Ben. While absolute evidence of sexual abuse is nearly impossible for any third party to obtain, the priests and Bozeman began documenting the suspicious behaviors they witnessed. They noted the trips, the long hours Ben spent in the rectory, including eating dinner with the priest, the thousands of dollars Fr. Sicoli spent on computer equipment for Ben to use, Fr. Sicoli's absolute dependence on Ben, the fact that Fr. Sicoli's mood was governed entirely by the state of his relations with Ben, the total access that Ben had to the pastor's private quarters, and an overheard conversation in which the priest told the 14-year-old, "You make me feel like a cheap whore." They also noted that Fr. Sicoli expedited the process to convert Ben to Catholicism and baptize him so that he could become head of the youth group.

Father Bozeman told the Grand Jury that the priests – Fr. William Murphy, Fr. Timothy Judge, and Fr. Michael Hennelly – took their observations to Secretary for Clergy Lynn in late August or September 1993 (although no record of this meeting was provided to the Grand Jury). They told him of their concerns, said that the whole church staff had noticed the behavior, and said that they could not work with Fr. Sicoli. Father Bozeman said that Fr. Sicoli later told him that Msgr. Lynn had spoken to him. Fr. Sicoli, according to Fr. Bozeman, said that Msgr. Lynn was going to look into the situation. Since there is no evidence, either by way of memo or testimony from Msgr. Lynn or anyone else, that the Secretary for Clergy tried to talk to Ben, any of the church staff members, or any of Fr. Sicoli’s previous victims, it is, at best, not clear to the Grand Jury how Msgr. Lynn was “looking into it.”

Father Bozeman further told the Grand Jury that Msgr. Lynn came to the rectory shortly thereafter and announced that Fr. Sicoli was to be sent for a psychological evaluation. Bozeman felt that Msgr. Lynn was trying to tell the staff that their perceptions were mistaken, and that if an evaluation showed no problem, Fr. Sicoli would probably be returned. Father Bozeman did say, however, that Msgr. Lynn assured the staff that “Father Sicoli is not to have any more involvement with children.”

Monsignor Lynn provides Saint John Vianney Hospital with false or incomplete information leading to Father Sicoli’s misdiagnosis.

On October 11, 1993, Fr. Sicoli began a four-day outpatient evaluation at Saint John Vianney Hospital. On the referral form explaining why an evaluation was sought, Msgr. Lynn listed complaints from associates of emotional attachment to parish boys and petty arguments. Monsignor Lynn stated that no “immorality” was alleged, when that was precisely what the complaints suggested. He completely discounted what he called “sexual misconduct allegations” of the three victims from Fr. Sicoli’s assignment at Saint Martin of Tours. The Secretary for Clergy wrote that the boys had retracted the allegations when, in fact, only one boy, in a letter that sounded coached and unconvincing, purported to retract the accusations of all of them and thereafter admitted that they were true. Monsignor Lynn said on the referral form that Fr. Sicoli’s relations with peers were good,

even though the Secretary for Clergy had been told by Fr. Sicoli's co-workers that they could not work with him. Indeed, Fr. Sicoli's file contained numerous references, from several sets of co-workers at various locations, to Fr. Sicoli's inability to get along with fellow priests. Nevertheless, Msgr. Lynn informed the Archdiocese-owned treatment facility that the hope was to have Fr. Sicoli continue in his present assignment.

Given the information with which the treatment facility was provided, it was unsurprising that, at the conclusion of his evaluation, Fr. Sicoli announced (according to Father Bozeman) that the diagnosis was that he fixated on problems and that he needed more exercise. He assured the staff that everything was fine now.

Following the evaluation, Msgr. Lynn was informed repeatedly that Fr. Sicoli's relationship with Ben was continuing. Father Hennelly, one of the priests living in the rectory, informed him one week after Fr. Sicoli returned from his evaluation announcing that everything was fine. Charles Devlin, Vicar for North Philadelphia, informed him in January 1994, when he forwarded to the Secretary for Clergy a letter from Fr. Murphy (another priest living in the rectory) to Fr. Sicoli, explicitly criticizing his continuing "unhealthy and destructive relationship with [Ben]." In February 1994, Msgr. Lynn recorded Fr. Hennelly reporting that he was still "suspicious of his pastor [Sicoli] and the pastor's relationship with the young men of the parish." On April 5, 1994, Msgr. Lynn met with Fr. Judge, the third priest living at the rectory, and recorded being told: "Father Sicoli's relationship with the young man named Ben who works at the rectory has not changed."

On April 15, 1994, Cardinal Bevilacqua received a six-page letter from Diane and her husband detailing the story of Fr. Sicoli's intense and violent relationship with Adrian at Our Lady of the Holy Souls. They also alerted the Cardinal that Fr. Sicoli was now obsessively involved with another boy, referring to Ben.

Cardinal Bevilacqua responds to complaints against Father Sicoli by transferring him to another parish, where he attaches to a new boy.

Cardinal Bevilacqua's response to the overwhelming opinion of the staff from Fr. Sicoli's last two assignments – that Fr. Sicoli had sick and improper relationships with

adolescent boys – was to offer the priest another pastorate in a different part of town. On May 7, 1994, Fr. Sicoli wrote to Msgr. Lynn:

I have given much thought to the options that you and Msgr. Devlin discussed with me at our May 6th meeting concerning my next assignment.

I wish to accept Cardinal Bevilacqua's offer to be named Pastor of Saint Anthony's parish.

There is no indication in Archdiocese files how Cardinal Bevilacqua reached his decision to offer Fr. Sicoli another pastorate. At least three members of the Priest Personnel Board – the Cardinal, Msgr. Lynn, and the North Philadelphia Vicar, Charles Devlin – were quite familiar with Fr. Sicoli's problem with adolescent boys.

Now-Bishop Joseph Cistone told the Grand Jury that because Fr. Sicoli was the only priest assigned to Saint Anthony, a South Philadelphia parish, this meant that, by necessity, Fr. Sicoli be in charge of any youth programs and altar boys. It also meant there were no assistant priests to observe and report any improper relationships or behavior.

Father Sicoli's behavior had become so notorious among priests and Catholic lay staff, however, that Bozeman soon had people asking and informing him about Fr. Sicoli's actions. He told the Grand Jury that Linda Love, the Director of the Office of Black Catholics, approached him and told him that she had heard stories about what had happened at Our Lady of Hope and was concerned because she knew he was involved with youth again at Saint Anthony. She told Bozeman that Fr. Sicoli had started a chastity program at his new parish, similar to one he ran at Our Lady of Hope. She said that Ben was now a part of this group at Saint Anthony. Love also told Bozeman that Fr. Sicoli had "picked up another kid" at Saint Anthony, a boy named "Allen," and that Allen's mother was worried about the situation. Linda Love told Bozeman that she intended to report Fr. Sicoli's continued involvement with teens to "the proper authorities." If Love did complain to the Office for Clergy, there is no record of it and no action resulted.

Cardinal Bevilacqua gives Father Sicoli a third pastorate; complaints again come in immediately, and are ignored.

Saint Anthony closed in 1999. On January 13, 1999, Msgr. Lynn met with Fr. Sicoli and the Vicar for South Philadelphia, Msgr. John Conway, to discuss possible next assignments for the priest. Monsignor Lynn wrote in a memo of that date that he and Msgr. Conway “questioned whether Father Sicoli should be in North Philadelphia” given “his experience in leaving Our Lady of Hope Parish.” They apparently did not question whether Fr. Sicoli should be ministering to children at all. Instead, Msgr. Lynn wrote that both he and Msgr. Conway believed Fr. Sicoli “would probably be better off in a one-man parish.” The implication of this decision was that Fr. Sicoli, once again, would have exclusive charge of all youth activities, with no supervision and no fellow priests to observe, and possibly question, his relationships.

In accordance with this view, Msgr. Lynn recommended to the Priest Personnel Board that Fr. Sicoli be appointed pastor at Holy Spirit, another South Philadelphia parish. According to minutes from a March 16, 1999, Personnel Board meeting, the only reservation anyone expressed about the appointment was the possibility that Fr. Sicoli would not have access to parish children: “It also was noted that the parish school seems to be in a precarious situation and that it would be difficult for Father Sicoli if the school has to be closed.”

This time, in 1999, the Priest Personnel Board included at least four priests who knew of Fr. Sicoli’s history of improper relationships with adolescent boys – the Cardinal, Msgr. Lynn, and the vicars for North and South Philadelphia, Msgrs. Devlin and Conway. In testifying before the Grand Jury, now-Bishop Joseph Cistone, who was then Bevilacqua’s Vicar for Administration, admitted that Fr. Sicoli should never have even been recommended to the Priest Personnel Board.

Although Secretary for Clergy Lynn intended for Fr. Sicoli to be alone at his new parish, a visiting priest from India, Fr. Vilayakumar Chithalan, was stationed at Holy Spirit for a time in 2001. He, like most priests who lived with Fr. Sicoli, noticed and came to suspect the improper nature of Fr. Sicoli’s relationships with adolescent boys. On

November 21, 2001, he met with Msgr. Lynn and his assistant, Vincent F. Welsh, to share his concerns.

According to Fr. Welsh's notes of the meeting, Fr. Chithalan told the Archdiocese managers that Fr. Sicoli gave a "disproportionate amount of attention to the teenagers of the parish." More troubling still, he reported that two teenage brothers, one in 8th grade and one in 10th, had been living at the rectory over the past year. Father Welsh noted that the boys were of Filipino origin, but did not record their names. Father Chithalan also told the Archdiocese managers that Fr. Sicoli had removed a deacon from the pastoral council and replaced him with three teenagers; that Fr. Chithalan believed Fr. Sicoli spent his days off and his vacation time with teenagers; and that Fr. Sicoli hosted youth group sleepovers at the rectory.

Monsignor Lynn apparently did nothing with this information. Five months later, on April 26, 2002, Msgr. John Conway, the Vicar for South Philadelphia, told him that the two teenage brothers were still living in the rectory with Fr. Sicoli. Monsignor Conway conveyed information from Brother Richard Kessler, the President at West Catholic High School, who had visited the rectory at Holy Spirit in response to a complaint from the boys' mother that Fr. Sicoli was causing division in her family. Father Sicoli showed Brother Kessler a suite of rooms in which the teenage brothers lived. In a telephone call with Fr. Welsh and Msgr. Lynn also on April 26, 2002, Fr. Sicoli said that he did not, and had never had teenage boys living at the rectory. It did not appear from Fr. Welsh's memo of that call that Msgr. Lynn had ever acted on Fr. Chithalan's report five months before about the boys. Monsignor Lynn and Fr. Welsh went to the rectory a half hour after the call. Father Sicoli again falsely claimed that no boys had been living with him. When pushed, he claimed that two boys had stayed briefly, that they lived on the first floor, and that their mother lived there with them. Father Welsh's memo states that, contrary to Fr. Sicoli's claim, the boys' mother never stayed overnight at the rectory.

Father Welsh wrote that Msgr. Lynn told Fr. Sicoli his actions were "incredibly stupid" not only "because of the current climate but because of Father Sicoli's imprudence in his relating to youths." According to Fr. Welsh's memo, Msgr. Lynn told the priest not to have children or teenagers stay at the rectory and "put [Fr. Sicoli] on notice" that, if he

disobeyed, “Cardinal Bevilacqua will take strong action against him.” Father Welsh recorded Fr. Sicoli’s assurance that he “would pull away from the family situation.” Monsignor Lynn made no effort to interview the boys or their mother. One of the boys, “Joseph,” later told the Grand Jury that he and his younger brother, “Anthony,” did not sleep on the first floor, but on the second floor in Fr. Sicoli’s private quarters, in a room next to the priest.

Despite the fact that the Archdiocese had caught Fr. Sicoli lying about his involvement with the teenage brothers, and despite a long history demonstrating that he was incapable of obeying instructions to stay away from children and adolescent boys, Msgr. Lynn and Cardinal Bevilacqua nevertheless left Fr. Sicoli as pastor and sole priest at Holy Spirit. Within a few weeks, the managers learned that Fr. Sicoli was continuing to disobey their orders concerning the two brothers.

On June 6, 2002, Marguerite DiMattia, who worked with an intervention program for at-risk kids at West Catholic High, called Msgr. Lynn to tell him that Fr. Sicoli’s relationship with the boys was continuing. DiMattia told the Grand Jury that she informed Msgr. Lynn that Fr. Sicoli had planned a trip to his beach house with the two boys, and that he was planning on driving the older brother, Joseph, to South Bend, Indiana, to look at Notre Dame University. Monsignor Lynn’s notes of his phone call with DiMattia confirm her testimony. DiMattia also testified that she was very concerned because of the way Joseph hesitated when she asked whether Fr. Sicoli had touched him sexually.

DiMattia’s complaint apparently had as little effect on the Archdiocese as did the others. Cardinal Bevilacqua and Msgr. Lynn left Fr. Sicoli as pastor at Holy Spirit.

Joseph, in his appearance before the Grand Jury, testified that Fr. Sicoli was extensively involved in his life as his employer while he lived at the rectory, and also his mentor. He said that Fr. Sicoli had taken him to visit approximately twenty colleges, often on overnight trips. He said that Fr. Sicoli had contributed \$5,000 toward his tuition at Notre Dame for 2003-2004, and that he expected him to help again in 2004-2005. He denied having sexual relations with the priest.

When asked in June 2004 before the Grand Jury whether there were any adolescents at Holy Spirit that the District Attorney’s office should be worried about or

that could be harmed, Joseph, at first, failed to respond. He then said: “I’m trying to think. No. I don’t think so.” He did testify, though, that his brother Anthony had told him that Fr. Sicoli had turned his attentions to another boy in the church youth group – “James.” Another boy, Joseph said, told him that James was the “new you.”

Father Sicoli resigns.

With 25 years of complaints and suspicions about Fr. Sicoli’s behavior with boys in the priest’s file, Cardinal Bevilacqua never removed Fr. Sicoli from ministry. He never restricted his faculties or tried to supervise his behavior. He never had his Secretary for Clergy question a single named or suspected victim, either to ascertain the nature of Fr. Sicoli’s attentions or to protect the child. He and Msgr. Lynn did not even include Fr. Sicoli’s name on the list of priests the Review Board should investigate.

The Archdiocese finally ordered an investigation after Vicar for Administration Joseph Cistone was questioned before the Grand Jury about Fr. Sicoli in May 2004. The Review Board’s investigator quickly located several victims who confirmed that Fr. Sicoli had sexually abused them. These victims included Frederick, Jake, Robert, and Hugh. Had the Archdiocese conducted even a minimal inquiry years earlier and denied the priest continued access to parish youth, untold numbers of victims might have been spared sexual and emotional abuse.

On July 1, 2004, Fr. Sicoli requested a leave of absence from his assignment as pastor of Holy Spirit. His “voluntary leave” was explained to parishioners as the “result of recent allegations of sexual abuse against him.” By Decree of October 28, 2004, the Archdiocese, declaring that allegations made against the priest – some dating to 1977 – had been “found credible,” formally removed Fr. Sicoli from ministry and forbade him from presenting himself as a priest or wearing clerical garb. His case has been referred to the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith in Rome, which must approve any involuntary laicization. According to the last records presented to the Grand Jury, as of December 2004, Fr. Sicoli was living in Sea Isle City, New Jersey.

Father Sicoli was subpoenaed to appear before the Grand Jury and was given an opportunity to answer questions concerning the allegations against him. He chose not to do so.