

Father Salvatore “Sal” Vincent Formusa

A predator priest becomes the criminal therapist

He admitted abusing in 1962, arrested in 1968, but Bishop Blanchette begged for silence

By 1976, Formusa was a “priest therapist” at Catholic Charities

At least six victims have come forward

The file of Salvatore “Sal” Formusa is a tale of ultimate cover-up at the hands of former Bishop Romeo Blanchette. As early as 1962, then-Vicar General Blanchette knew that parish priest Fr. Formusa was sexually abusing young teenage girls. Even after Formusa admitted to abuse, Blanchette begged for Formusa’s silence to “avoid scandal.”

That silence didn’t last. Formusa was arrested in 1968 for abusing another child. Instead of reaching out to other victims, Formusa was quietly removed from his parish and put on leave. Formusa used the time wisely, earning enough credits to become a therapist.

In 1976—believing that enough time had passed—Blanchette, now bishop of Joliet, gave Formusa a job as a therapist for Catholic Charities and a home in a local parish. Within a year, Formusa was abusing again, this time using his role as a priest AND a therapist to control and molest victims. Formusa worked as a therapist for Catholic Charities for nine years until he retired in 1985.

Although the Diocese of Joliet had extensive knowledge of Formusa’s crimes as a priest and a therapist, they only disclosed documents after numerous complaints and civil suits.

Formusa died in 2006.

TIMELINE OF DOCUMENTS- SALVATORE VINCENT FORMUSA

4/27/35 – Ordained

7/2/35 – Assistant Pastor, St. John Boeco

7/5/41 – St. Charles, IL

5/5/45 – Assistant, St. Anthony, Joliet IL

10/11/50 – Assistant, Immaculate Conception, Elmhurst IL

6/23/53 – Pastor, St. Lawrence, South Wilmington

4/14/58 – Pastor, Holy Trinity, Westmont, IL

10/11/62 Letter from Vicar General Romeo Blanchette details inappropriate activity between Formusa and victim. Formusa admits that he was inappropriate with young girl. Blanchette discusses avoiding scandal and asking people not to talk about the incident.

12/8/62 Formusa writes letter to Bishop McNamara of Joliet stating that the incident with the victim was a “moment of weakness.” The letter also states how there has been no scandal because no one knows about the incident.

5/2/63 – Pastor, Immaculate Conception, Braidwood, IL

5/28/64 Memo from Blanchette indicates that Formusa sat on 15 year old girl’s lap, offered her a beer, tried to dance with her, showed her a sex book, and asked her other inappropriate questions

6/1/64 – Resigned/Granted Leave of Absence

11/30/64 –Assistant, St. John the Baptist, Winfield, IL

11/30/64 Vicar General Romeo Blanchette and Pastor Vincent Cloos (at Winfield) are aware of restrictions placed on Formusa’s pastoral work.

11/15/67 – Chaplain, Central DuPage Hospital, Winfield, IL

11/15/67 – Resident and Assistant, St. Luke Parish, Carol Stream, IL

6/26/68 Formusa charged with taking indecent liberties with a child, specifically fondling and touching a young girl under the age of 16

7/1/68 –Leave of Absence from Diocese of Joliet

7/1/76 – Resident, St. Anthony’s Parish, Frankfort, IL

January 1977 Father Formusa begins abusing female patient who he is treating as a therapist. Abuse continued until September 1977 and occurred in Catholic Charities Office and at Victim’s home. Abuse consisted of inappropriate touching, tickling, and discussion of inappropriate topics.

1/19/85 – Temporary Parochial Administrator, St. Mark’s Parish, Wheaton, IL

2/19/85 Lawyers for victim contact Catholic Charities to resolve situation where Formusa had become sexually involved with woman while he was her therapist.

4/22/85 – Retired

11/30/02 Report made to Sister Judith Davies by victim regarding abuse by Formusa from January to September 1977 while he was her therapist.