

# **Father Carroll Howlin**

## **A Congregation Was Misled**

Father Carroll Howlin was a risk before he was ordained in 1961. In a letter to Bishop McNamara two months before taking his priestly vows, Howlin promised to abstain from all intoxicants for five years. While there is no evidence that this promise was broken, Howlin was soon abusing boys, taking them on camping trips in order to get them alone.

By 1976, Howlin was working as a mission priest in Lexington, Kentucky. In 1995, the first written records of allegations against Howlin were made. Bishop Kaffer said there were no previous allegations against Howlin, but the Diocese of Lexington was informed. Howlin was sent to the St. Luke Institute, but a memo from Kaffer to Bishop Imesch stated that Howlin's parish will be told that Howlin "is not feeling well."

In the meantime, Howlin was sexually abusing boys in Kentucky. An internal investigation stalled because the lay review board could not find conclusive evidence of abuse.

Howlin was not put on any kind of administrative leave in Lexington until 2002. Joliet hired a private investigator to investigate allegations of abuse, but nothing was done to inform parishioners. Reports back to Joliet stated that Howlin was saying mass and writing a newspaper column in the local paper as a priest. In 2004, the lay review board finally determined that the allegations against Howlin are credible.

In 2010, Howlin was convicted of molesting two of the four victims with allegations in a canonical trial. Howlin appealed the decision to Rome.

Howlin is currently living unsupervised in Whitley City, Kentucky.

## **TIMELINE OF DOCUMENTS – CARROLL HOWLIN**

- 5/8/58 Letter from Howlin to Bp. McNamara asking to be received in the Diocese of Joliet from the Archdiocese of Chicago (13)
- 6/13/60 Letter from McNamara to Howlin assigning him as pastor of Sts. Peter and Paul effective 8/20/1960 (106)
- 3/30/61 Letter from Howlin to McNamara that he will abstain from all intoxicants for five years from ordination (113)

5/27/61 – Ordained

6/17/61 – Assistant pastor, Sts. Peter and Paul, Naperville

6/12/65 – Assistant pastor, Holy Trinity Parish, Westmont

6/17/67 – Professor, St. Charles Borromeo Seminary

- 1972 According to a 1995 report, Howlin sexually abused a 14-year-old minor seminarian (241, 965). The abuse occurred on a camping trip.

1975 According to a 2002 memo of Imesch, Howlin sexually abused a 16 year old in his quarters and on a camping trip. (329, 965)

1975 According to a 1995 report, Howlin sexually abused a minor during a seminarian camping trip to Wisconsin (965). The allegation was found to be not credible by the diocesan review committee.

6/16/75 – Associate pastor, St. Pius X, Lombard

1/27/76 – Associate pastor, St. Paul the Apostle, Joliet

10/22/76 Letter from Howlin to Archbishop of Louisville asking if he can be of service to that Diocese and requesting a meeting (156-157)

10/26/76 Letter from Archbishop of Louisville inviting Howlin to work in the area (159)

2/11/77 Letter from Howlin to Blanchette that he has agreed to a three-year trial period in Louisville (161)

5/5/77 – Leave of absence in Kentucky – Pastor, Good Shepard Mission, Whitley City

5/5/77 Howlin will be at Good Shepard Catholic Service Center in Whitley City, Kentucky. (167)

11/22/95 Letter from Kaffer that he “never had heard of allegations about Howlin” and expressing concern and apologies (223)

11/27/95 Memo from Chancellor to Kaffer that the bishop should notify Howlin of charges and remove his faculties and Lexington diocese would follow (225)

**11/28/95 Memo from Chancellor to Kaffer that Imesch told Howlin of the allegation and Howlin denies (230)**

11/30/95 Memo from Chancellor to Imesch that Diocese of Lexington will take action regarding Howlin after receiving a copy of letter to Howlin notifying him in writing that he is not to function as a priest or have contact with children (232)

**12/1/95 Memo from Kaffer to Imesch that Howlin’s parish in Lexington will be told that he “is not feeling well – which is certainly true!” (233-234)**

1996 According to a 2003 report, Howlin sexually abused a minor in Whitley City, Kentucky. (965)

Approx. 1996 According to a 2003 report, Howlin sexually abused a minor in his truck and while Howlin was buying him school supplies.

12/4/96 Memo that St. Luke’s Institute called re: Howlin and wanted more background (279)

- 12/9/96 Memo from Kaffer to Imesch that St. Luke's report does not indicate a diagnosable psychological problem and cannot determine whether the allegation is true or not. (1077)
- 5/2/97 Diocesan review committee unable to corroborate 1975 allegations. (293)  
Investigation concluded. (966)
- 4/12/02 Imesch received an allegation of sexual abuse and contacts Bp. of Lexington to place Howlin on administrative leave. Howlin denies the abuse. (329)
- 4/14/02 – Administrative leave
- 4/15/02 Letter from Imesch to Howlin regarding allegation and putting him on administrative leave after Sunday mass on 4/14/2002 (332)
- 6/11/02 Memo from Imesch that Howlin remains on leave and there needs to be movement in determining whether the allegation is true (399)
- 8/15/02 Letter from Imesch to Diocesan administrator in Lexington that he is concerned that Howlin has to remain in limbo for so long (433)
- 9/16/02 Email that Howlin is not restricted as the Joliet Diocese represents and is still hearing confessions at Good Shepard (463)
- 2003 Diocese hires a private investigating company to conduct the preliminary investigation (966)
- 5/23/03 Letter from Imesch to Howlin that the review committee still has not reached resolution. (494)
- 7/23/03 Howlin continues to say mass but refers sacraments to others. (518)
- 4/15/04 Letter from Bishop of Lexington that Howlin has been writing in the local newspaper as a Catholic priest despite being on leave. (542)
- 7/6/04 Letter from Imesch to Howlin that allegation has been found credible and case will be sent to Rome (557)
- 7/13/04 Letter from Imesch that Diocesan Review Committee concluded that persons under 18 should not participate in missions to Kentucky but if recipient wants to go with his parents, the concern is that people under the age of 18 might be there without parents present. (561)
- 4/3/06 Howlin listed on website as priest who have had credible/substantiated allegation made against them (615)
- 8/30/10 Canonical trial tribunal make affirmative finding on two of the four accusations and decides that Howlin be permanently removed from all ecclesiastical ministry but not dismissed from clerical state (668, 1956)

9/3/10

Howlin appeals the decision to the Congregation for the Doctrine of faith (1972)





