

Father William Virtue

Priest used alcohol and parties to get access to kids

He even traveled hundreds of miles to get kids alone

As late as 2010, he was confronting victims to “clear his name”

After two decades of allegations, Virtue was left off of 2006 list of accused clerics

Father William Virtue was the stereotypical “party predator”: a priest who used alcohol, parties and “fun times with teens” to groom and isolate children in order to sexually abuse them.

Bishop Imesch had complaints against Virtue dating back to 1984, when parishioners were upset that the priest was drunk around teens and “blessing beer bottles while under the influence.” Other parishioners filed complaints about Virtue’s parties with “bikini-clad girls.”

In 1986, Virtue was transferred to Peoria, where the complaints continued. Less than a year after the move, Virtue was caught taking a 10-year-old boy more than 100 miles away to go swimming in a quarry. When a witness saw the priest carrying two six-packs of beer and taking the child to an isolated area, he called the cops. Virtue refused to confirm or deny the claims in Peoria or Joliet.

Father Virtue was removed from public ministry in Peoria in 2006, due to mounting complaints. But when the Diocese of Joliet posted a list of accused clerics, Virtue’s name was not included.

Despite this, in 2007, Virtue found a home in the Rockford Diocese, where he continued to work as a priest in unsuspecting parishes. By 2009, he was removed from all public ministry.

As late as 2010, Virtue was confronting victims in order to “clear his name.” At least one civil case against he priest has settled. He is currently in the process of being laicized.

Virtue currently lives in Batavia, Illinois.

TIMELINE OF DOCUMENTS - WILLIAM VIRTUE

3/7/73 Letter from Virtue to Bishop Blanchette petitioning for candidacy to the priesthood. (110)

3/24/75 – Ordained as Deacon

6/4/75 Memo of Chancellor that Virtue has negative aspects that need to be discussed with his counselor. (130)

11/29/75 - Ordained

11/29/75 - St. Mary Magdalene in Joliet

7/1/77 - St. Dominic in Bolingbrook, IL

7/15/77 Granted faculties in the Archdiocese of Chicago. (158)

7/18/80 – St. Mary Nativity in Joliet, IL

9/1/81 – St. Mary in Mokena, IL

1980 According to a 2005 report, Virtue sexually abused a minor boy by fondling the 8-9 year old boy under the guise of confession. (334)

4/26/82 – Administrator, Sacred Heart in Joliet, IL

11/14/82 Letter from Parish Council member to Virtue, copying Imesch, about complaints of Virtue with teens riding motorcycles and whistling at young girls, attending beer parties with teens, and blessing beer bottles while under the influence. (199)

11/17/82 Response from Virtue to Parish Council member that he “will not confirm or deny, or defend the items of a personal nature.” (201)

4/8/83 Letter from Parishioner to Bishop Ryan, copying Imesch, strongly protesting Virtue’s activities with bikini-clad girls. (231)

7/1/86 – Pastor, St. Mary’s Parish in Loretto and Sacred Heart Parish in Peoria Diocese

7/1/86 Granted faculties in Diocese of Peoria.

9/1/86 Virtue took a 10-year-old Peoria boy and traveled approx. 100 miles to Joliet to go swimming in an abandoned quarry. After getting out of the car, the two proceeded to a remote area of the quarry they were carrying a blanket and two six packs of beer. The owner of the property called the police. Before the police arrived, Virtue fled the area (413)

9/4/86 Letter from Will County Sherriff’s Dept. to Donnelly re: complaint of 9/1. (283)

4/18/88 – Incardinated into Diocese of Peoria

6/13/06 Removed from Diocese of Peoria public ministry.

2009 Letter from former parishioner that over 20 years ago, he was questioned by police after they observed him walking with Virtue around a lake and that nothing happened but it was reported to the bishop at that time. (384)

- 2/24/09 Request from Virtue to Jenky, Bishop of Peoria, to return to active ministry. Jenky denies. (391)
- 4/1/09 Request from Virtue to Saratin to be reincardinated in the Diocese of Joliet. Saratin declines. (388)
- 7/2/10 Letter from Canonical Advocate to Saratin requesting information regarding allegation for preliminary investigation of Virtue in the Diocese of Rockford (400)
- 11/29/10 Virtue showed up at victim's home to clear his name (405)
- 4/27/11 Settlement with victim made (407)