

Thomas Swade

The king of second chances

In 1992, Thomas Swade was removed from ministry because of several credible reports of child sex abuse, none of which appear to have been reported to the police. Swade's restrictions, however, were non-existent. Even though he admitted to having children apply lotion to his genitals, Swade was allowed to work in a rectory with children and teens and traveled without his chaperone.

By 1996, Cardinal Bernardin was doing "everything possible" to return Swade to ministry. Swade was almost reinstated in 1997, against the recommendation of the Personnel Board. After Swade admitted to more abuse, six parishes refused to take him. Instead of reporting the latest admissions, the Archdiocese interviewed a focus group of parishioners and posed the Swade problem to them (without using Swade's name). Because of the focus group's disgust, Swade was sent to work in an administrative position at the Archdiocese

In 2003, the Archdiocese began a canonical trial. Swade was found guilty in 2006. He was laicized in 2009.

TIMELINE OF DOCUMENTS –THOMAS SWADE

1956 According to a 2002 report, Swade makes survivor touch his genitals and masturbates in front of the survivor. Swade denies this allegation. (AOC 005657)

5/1/61 - Ordained

4/5/61- Associate Pastor, St. Bernadine's, Forest Park, IL

5/10/66 – June 14, 1972 - Associate Pastor, Holy Angels, Chicago, IL

6/14/72 - Associate Pastor, St. Dorothy, Chicago, IL

1977 According to a 1992 report by the survivor's mother, the survivor was waiting for Swade in the rectory and Swade came out of the bathroom in front of her without any clothes on. (AOC 005658)

1978 According to 1992 report of allegations, which was not formalized by the Archdiocese until 2002, Swade abuses survivor by touching and rubbing survivor's genitals through his clothes. (AOC 005654)

1979 According 1992 report and 3/29/97 memorandum summarizing allegations against Swade, Swade began abusing 12-13 year old minor; continues for one and a half to two more years. The abuse consisted of taking showers together; mutual administration of lotion all over their bodies, including genitals; grabbing of genitals during swim lessons; the minor being

scantily clad in Swade's room; and Swade lying on top of survivor during a retreat and Swade ejaculating. (AOC 005652-AOC 005653; AOC 005684)

- Late 1970's According to 3/29/97 memorandum summarizing allegations against Swade, minor went to Swade's room at St. Dorothy's for counseling and Swade had minor lay across his lap while Swade rubbed minor's chest and had an erection. (AOC 005685)
- 1982 According to 1992 report and 3/29/97 memorandum summarizing allegations against Swade, Swade abuses minor by fondling minor's genitals while in Swade's office at St. Dorothy's. (AOC 005656; AOC 005685)
- 1983 According to a 1993 report and 3/29/97 memorandum summarizing allegations against Swade, Swade fondled and digitally penetrated survivor's vagina underneath her bathing suit, and had survivor hold Swade's genitals. The abuse occurred on more than one occasion and continued on until 1984. Swade also hugged survivor in 1986 while he was wearing bikini briefs in his room at St. Dorothy's, and in 1987, Swade lifted up her blouse and bra to touch a scar of hers. (AOC 005659; AOC 005686)
- 1983 According to 2002 report, Swade abuses survivor by kissing him, rubbing his body, and touching and grabbing his genitals under his clothing. The abuse continued through 1984. (AOC 005655)
- 1988 According to 1992 report and 3/29/97 memorandum summarizing allegations against Swade, Swade abuses same individual as he did in 1982 by grabbing minor's penis while changing swimsuits, and while both were naked. (AOC 005656; AOC 005685)
- 6/92 Swade removed from ministry after several credible allegations of sexual misconduct with minors. Swade sent to live at Stritch Retreat House, Mundelein, IL with several other withdrawn priests.**
- 8/7/92 Swade signs and agrees to certain restrictions, including that no one under age of 18 is permitted at his residence without prior approval, and that he cannot meet with minors without an approved chaperone present. (AOC 005705- AOC 005706)
- 2/3/93 Review Board determines that there is reasonable cause to suspect that Swade engaged in sexual misconduct with minors given allegations against him, and Swade's acknowledgment of the allegations. (AOC 005610)

- 7/24/93** According to written report, Review Board determines that it is not reasonable to return Swade to ministry because Swade continues to minimize his sexual misconduct with minors by refusing recommended therapy. Review Board notes that Swade is also being given “tremendous leeway,” is rarely at his retreat house, and spends his days at the LINK office at St. Dorothy’s (where the abuse occurred) from 7 AM to 11 PM five nights a week, even though the Swade is not permitted ministerial assignment with access to minors. The Review Board notes that Swade is not always in the presence of his approved chaperone and continues to have unsupervised access to minors on a daily basis. Report also notes that Swade admitted to allowing children to see him naked and asking them to put lotion on his body, including his genitals. (AOC 005605; AOC 005708-005711)
- 9/18/93 Review Board reiterates recommendation that Swade should not be allowed to continue ministry with LINK and should not be present in any way within the St. Dorothy Parish (where the abuse occurred). (AOC 005602)
- 10/14/93** Letter from Swade to Cardinal Bernadin asking that he be allowed back into ministry and thanking the Cardinal for allowing Swade to work in the background with the LINK program and spend his days at St. Dorothy’s. (AOC 005700-AOC 005702)
- 1/29/96** Letter from Cardinal Bernadin to St. Dorothy’s parishioner stating that the allegations against Swade were taken seriously and dealt with, but that he will do everything in his power to see that Swade will return to ministry. (AOC 005539)
- 10/2/96** Notes on a meeting with Cardinal Bernadin and a reconvened Commission on Clerical Sexual Misconduct with Minors state that the Commission was concerned that if the Cardinal had previously allowed Fr. Calicott to return to parish ministry, that Swade should also be permitted to do so and the Cardinal should make an exception “for pastoral reasons.” The Commission also did not want Swade returned to the LINK Unlimited program because he would be held up as a model and hero for youth. (AOC 005540-AOC 005541)
- 11/16/96** Letter from Fr. Dan Coughlin and Fr. Larry McBrady to Professional Fitness Review Board regarding Swade’s request for return to ministry. Letter states that proposed parish for Swade’s return (Saints Faith, Hope and Charity parish) has a grade school, but was chosen after seven parishes without schools refused to accept Swade into ministry. (AOC 005556-AOC 005557)

- 11/16/96 Review Board recommends that Swade be reinstated for ministry at Saints Faith, Hope and Charity parish in Winnetka, Illinois subject to certain restrictions, including never being in the presence of a minor without another responsible adult present, and not being allowed to be active with youth groups organizations. (AOC 005575-AOC 005576)
- 12/6/96 Letter from Fr. Lawrence McBrady to Bishop Raymond Goedert stating that he received a call from Cardinal Bernadin on 8/21/96 and that the Cardinal wanted Swade to return to ministry and had promised Swade on several occasions that he would be returned to ministry, possibly before hearing back from the Commission. McBrady stated that he urged the Cardinal not to return Swade to ministry before hearing back from the Commission and the Fitness Review Board. (AOC 005554)**
- 12/9/96 While denying some of the allegations, Swade admits that many of the allegations are true, including that a minor applied lotion to Swade's genitals, and that he would touch students on their abdomen during swimming lessons and may have touched them on their genitals. (AOC 0056860)
- 12/19/96 Letter from Cardinal's Reconvened Commission to Bishop Goedert stating that they do not agree to reassignment of a priest accused of sexual abuse into a parish, even if the priest will only be a resident. Swade is among the priests who the Commission considers a risk to children. (AOC 005544-AOC 005545)

1997 -Reinstated to ministry

- 1/7/97 Fr. Paprocki's makes remarks to principal, school board, and religious education board of Saints Faith, Hope and Charity parish, stating that Swade was withdrawn from parish ministry in 1992 following allegations of sexual misconduct with six teenagers, male and female. Fr. Paprocki then stated that the Review Board does not consider Swade a risk to children. (AOC 005548)
- 2/26/97 Archdiocese releases statement that Swade will be permitted to return to ministry at the Archdiocese of Chicago Pastoral Center and reside at Saints Faith, Hope and Charity parish in Winnetka. The statement acknowledges that Swade was placed on administrative leave in June 1992 following allegations of sexual misconduct with minors, and that Cardinal Bernadin expressed hope that Swade could return to ministry. (AOC 005549-AOC 005550)**
- 2/26/97 Letter to parishioners of Saints Faith, Hope and Charity from Fr. Tom Ventura stating that Cardinal Bernadin wanted to give Swade a "second

chance” after Swade was accused of improperly touching a minor when the minor was 14 years old. Ventura states that five people came forward with accusations against Swade, including allegations of inappropriate hugging, touching, and nudity. The letter states that Swade will be returning to ministry but with some restrictions. (AOC 005551-AOC 005552)

- 8/24/98 Memo to file from Fr. Larry McBrady regarding his and the Cardinal’s efforts to put Swade back into public ministry after failed attempt to get Swade into ministry at Faith, Hope and Charity parish. (AOC 005683)
- 3/7/99 Ralph Bonaccorsi and Fr. Larry McBrady conduct a focus group where they anonymously presented Swade’s case to parishioners. The parishioners felt that the risk of allowing the priest back into assignment in any parish was too great, even though the focus group was told that the priest “never engaged in any kind of overtly sexual act.” (AOC 005677)
- 10/20/01 Memo to file from Rev. Thomas J. Paprocki regarding efforts of some people to appoint Swade as pastor of Holy Family Parish in Chicago. The Review Board suggested that doing so would not be prudent because of the negative public reaction.
- 3/14/02 Review by Professional Fitness Review Office regarding allegations against Swade. Allegations include Swade being partially nude and hugging and kissing a teen and college-aged female, and two other allegations by males between 12-16 years old. The allegations span from 1972 to 1982. (AOC 005569)
- 6/15/02 Review Board determines that there was reasonable cause to suspect that Swade engaged in sexual misconduct with a minor. Abuse consisted of Swade placing his hands under the minor’s swim trunks and touching his genitals for 2 minutes. Swade admitted to possibly accidentally touching the minor’s genitals, but denied sexual intent. (AOC 005671)
- 9/21/02 Review Board looked into allegations against Swade that he kissed a minor boy, rubbed his body, and touched and grabbed the boy’s genitals under his clothing. A second allegation was that Swade touched and rubbed a minor boy’s genitals through his clothes. The Review Board determined that there was reasonable cause to suspect that the alleged misconduct occurred and recommended that Swade be immediately withdrawn from ministry. (AOC 005614)

7/26/03- Reinstated

- 2/15/04 Office of Professional Responsibility writes Swade to reduce his salary because he is failing to meet his monitoring protocol requirements that he

submit daily logs and travel forms for when he goes outside of his retreat house for overnight visits. (AOC 005665)

- 2/2/06 Swade found guilty in canonical court of several grave violations of the Sixth Commandment of the Decalogue with minors.
- 7/5/06 Archdiocese receives phone call from Fr. Michael Knotek, pastor at St. John De LaSalle parish reporting that parishioner approached him to report abuse by Swade when survivor was a minor in the 1980's. (AOC 005533)
- 12/19/06 Decree from John Canary, Vicar General stating that in 1992, the Review Board found that the allegations against Swade for sexual misconduct with minors were credible and removed Swade from ministry, and that Swade was found guilty in canonical court in 2006. Also stating that Swade is often absent from his supervised residence for long period of times and not in contact with his chaperone. Imposes restriction that Swade must be with a chaperone for all overnight stays outside of his retreat house. (AOC 005663).
- 2/16/08 Review Board learns that Swade was found guilty in a canonical court of appeals and was sentenced to a life of prayer and penance. Swade is told that if he violates the decrees related to his sentence, he will be laicized. (AOC 005647)
- 5/26/09 According to a report, Swade abused ninth grader in St. Dorothy's parish rectory. The abuse consisted of hugging, caressing, and anal penetration. It is unclear from the report when the abuse took place. (AOC 005770)
- 9/21/09 Review Board investigates allegations that Swade disrobed, forced the survivor to disrobe, and then sodomized the survivor. The alleged abuse occurred more than once but less than 10 times. It is unclear when the abuse took place. (AOC 005650)