

Reverend John David Crowley

Biographical Information

YEAR OF BIRTH:	1929
YEAR OF DEATH:	2006
ORDINATION:	May 29, 1954

Employment/Assignment History

6/10/1954-6/9/1968	St. Elizabeth, Pleasant Hills, PA
6/10/1968-3/27/1969	St. Margaret, Green Tree, PA
3/28/1969-1/17/2003	Holy Angels, Hay, PA
1/10/2003	Resigned

Summary

Subpoenaed Diocesan records indicate that, at the time of his release from seminary in 1954, there were reports that Father John David Crowley would need “*constant supervision*” because he was “*inclined to look for ‘loop-holes,’ special privileges, etc.*”

In 1992, a complaint was made by a mother and her twin adult daughters, one of whom was 16 years old at the time of victimization. Crowley was presented with the allegations in June 1992 and a referral for a mental health evaluation at St. Michael’s Community was made in September 1992. In the interim, Crowley remained in his assigned parish. Evaluators at St. Michael’s opined that Crowley was being truthful in his denials regarding the sexual abuse of the mother and her twin daughters and recommended outpatient therapeutic support to address insecurities, low self-esteem and obsessive-compulsive tendencies. Upon his discharge from St. Michael’s following the one week evaluation period, Crowley was returned to his parish.

In late-2001, the mother and twin daughters renewed their complaint with the Diocese. The 2002 *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* triggered a report of this allegation on August 30, 2002, to the Allegheny County District Attorney’s Office. Additionally, the allegation was presented to the Diocesan Review Board. The Board found the victims’ allegations to be credible and rejected Crowley’s testimony. On December 9, 2002, the Board recommended that Crowley be asked to resign his position as pastor and should he refuse, that he be removed according to the norms of Canon Law. They further recommended that Crowley be requested to retire from active ministry, that his faculties be withdrawn and that he be asked to begin intensive counseling.

Following the recommendations, Bishop Donald Wuerl gave Crowley an option to voluntarily resign and withdraw from active ministry, or undergo a judicial canonical process. Crowley chose resignation and submitted the same on January 7, 2003. Wuerl permitted him to announce to his parish that he was “*voluntarily accepting an earlier retirement since he was only two years away from submitting a mandatory letter of retirement at age 75.*” This was

Summary

permitted, according to Wuerl, to “*protect his [Crowley’s] reputation in the widespread community.*” Wuerl faced great scrutiny regarding Crowley’s departure by members of the parish and the media who loved Crowley and thought there was more to the story (they believed that Wuerl had forced Crowley out). Wuerl maintained that “*Father Crowley, for reasons of his own, asked to retire.*”

Crowley was notified by Wuerl on May 30, 2003, that his ministerial faculties had been withdrawn. On June 9, 2004, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith confirmed Wuerl’s decision that Crowley remain in retirement and that he not exercise any public ministry

Crowley died in 2006.

On July 24, 2008, Rita Flaherty, Diocesan Assistance Coordinator, prepared a memorandum to Crowley’s file that documented a meeting with an adult male who stated that he was sexually abused by Crowley in the 1970s when he was 11 to 12 years old. The Diocese reported this complaint to the Allegheny County District Attorney’s Office on August 13, 2009.