

Father James J. Brzyski

Father James Brzyski was one of the Archdiocese's most brutal abusers – emotionally as well as physically. The 6'5" 220-pound priest convinced a 12-year-old devout boy whom, beginning in 1983, he repeatedly anally raped, that the boy's mother had sanctioned the acts. Father Brzyski's words were lies, but it took the boy 20 years to learn that; alienated from his mother all that time because of this lie, the victim only recently began repairing a two-decades old estrangement. Another victim testified that Fr. Brzyski told him too as a 7th-grader that his parents had made "a deal" with Fr. Brzyski to allow the priest to sexually abuse him. He said the lie had isolated him from all that he loved and had destroyed his life.

By one estimate, Fr. Brzyski, who was ordained in 1977, sexually abused a hundred young victims during just seven years he spent in two parishes of the Philadelphia Archdiocese. The victims were, as described by another priest, "shy, docile, bright, and intelligent." The ones who testified before the Grand Jury could remember a time when they were happy, loving, and deeply religious. That all changed when Fr. Brzyski chose them as altar boys and began his unrelenting abuse, including fondling, oral sex, and anal rape. Father Brzyski abused some of his victims over a seven- or eight-year period.

Had they cared, Archdiocesan managers could have acted to stop Fr. Brzyski from ruining the lives of innumerable children. In 1984, Fr. Brzyski admitted to a Church official that he was a child molester. Archdiocese leaders knew the names of many of his victims, and could have known the identities of many more had they simply followed up on reports they received. A concerned counselor at Bishop Egan High School, a non-diocesan priest named Fr. James Gigliotti, T.O.R., persistently reported victims' names to Church officials and sought help for the victims, in the face of Archdiocesan managers' indifference and even hostility. He informed them that Fr. Brzyski was still involved with many of the boys and their families. He told them that the parents of some of the boys had come to him concerned about changes in their children's personalities and behavior. The high school counselor and a school psychiatrist told Archdiocese officials that it was therapeutically important to inform the parents about their sons' abuse and counsel the victims.

Archdiocese managers, however, chose to turn their backs on Fr. Brzyski's victims and their families. They directed the school psychiatrist not to initiate counseling for the boys about their abuse. Rather than encourage Fr. Gigliotti to inform the victims' parents about the source of their children's troubled behavior, they advised the counselor of the need for "confidentiality." Although Fr. Brzyski admitted "several acts of sexual misconduct" involving minors, Archdiocese officials chose not to end their priest's criminal rampage by reporting his offenses to the police.

This was not a neglectful lapse but a calculated decision, a reflection of Archdiocese policy. Parents even of known victims — including those whose abuse may have been continuing — were not to be informed. And, as a 1986 memo by Vice Chancellor Donald F. Walker spelled out, "we could not actively seek further names of persons who may have been involved with Father Brzyski." The policy shielded the Church from scandal and legal liability. It also consigned Fr. Brzyski's victims to continued abuse.

Father Brzyski preys on many children while assigned to Saint Cecilia from 1981 to 1984.

Father James Brzyski spent only seven years in two assignments with the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. In that short time, he had possibly over a hundred victims. The young priest was in his second assignment – as an associate pastor at Saint Cecilia Church, in Fox Chase – when the Archdiocese first recorded knowing that he had sexually abused boys in his previous assignment. At Saint Cecilia, one of his victims estimated, Fr. Brzyski sexually abused nearly a hundred children. Three of those victims described to the Grand Jury their years of abuse – beginning when they were 10 or 11 years old – and the broken lives they have lived ever since.

- **“Billy”**

Billy told the Grand Jury that his deepest wish was to return to who he was before Fr. Brzyski began sticking his hands inside Billy’s pants when he was an 11-year-old altar boy. He wanted God back, and his parents, and the joy of celebrating Easter and Christmas. He wanted to believe in Heaven and morality. He wanted to be able to get out of bed – to live every day. He wanted to believe in God, in part, so he could get past the first steps of his twelve-step program to end his addictions to drugs and alcohol.

Billy told the Grand Jury that, when he became acquainted with Fr. Brzyski in 1981, he was in 5th grade at Saint Cecilia’s parish school. He was the second oldest in a family of five boys and one girl. His parents were extremely devout, and each of their boys served as an altar boy at Saint Cecilia’s. When the new assistant pastor befriended the family – stopping by for coffee and meals -- Billy’s mother was honored. She encouraged Billy to spend time with the priest.

Billy described how Fr. Brzyski began molesting him in 5th grade in the sacristy as the 11-year-old altar boy dressed for Mass. The priest cornered the boy in a secluded corner of the dressing room, slid his hands inside the boy’s pants and fondled his genitals. Billy told the Grand Jury that the priest did this even while other altar boys were dressing in the same room. He named three other altar boys he believed had had the same experience with Fr. Brzyski – “Kirk,” “Wesley,” and “Sean.”

Billy said that other priests at Saint Cecilia, as well as other boys, knew of Fr. Brzyski's constant sexual predations upon the parish youth. One, Fr. William Joseph (who has himself been accused of sexually abusing boys), walked into the sacristy on one occasion and saw Fr. Brzyski fondling the boy's naked genitals as the boy sat on the priest's lap. Father Joseph, according to Billy, did not appear surprised by what he saw, and certainly did nothing to help the boy. Another priest, Fr. Robert E. Brennan (not the Fr. Robert L. Brennan discussed elsewhere in this report), also knew what Fr. Brzyski was doing to Billy. The victim said Fr. Brennan never told the boy's parents, who considered Fr. Brennan a close friend.

Among the altar boys, Billy testified, Fr. Brzyski "became known for this and feared for this." While Billy estimated that Fr. Brzyski had "nearly a hundred" victims at Saint Cecilia, the boy considered himself particularly unfortunate because he seemed to be a "favorite molestee." Father Brzyski pulled him out of classes and took him to the rectory and on outings – always with the same sexual purpose. His abuse continued from 5th grade through 8th, when the priest suddenly disappeared and parishioners were told he had had a nervous breakdown.

The psychological damage to Billy long outlasted the physical abuse. Billy told the Grand Jury that he was devastated by his helplessness in the face of the constant and repeated humiliation of being dragged out of class, having his pants pulled down, being placed on Fr. Brzyski's lap, and having his genitals fondled. The effect of the abuse was to take from Billy everything he loved in his life. He said he felt like he lost God and his belief in Heaven, and that was "the scariest thing you want to go through being a kid . . ."

Worse still was what happened when the boy finally decided he would not put up with the abuse anymore and he announced to the priest that he was going to tell his parents. Billy told the Grand Jury that upon hearing this, Fr. Brzyski "looked and laughed at me and said, '[Billy].' He said, 'If you don't know,' you know, 'your parents know what goes on. We have a deal.' You know, 'Don't think that they don't know.'" Billy told the Grand Jury, "After that, I walked back to the classroom devastated, like scared to death to even go home or – never look at my parents again . . ."

Billy began to wonder whether his parents needed money so badly that they had accepted money from Fr. Brzyski in exchange for permission to abuse their son. His fears, he said, were confirmed in his mind one day when he begged his mother not to make him go with Fr. Brzyski to the Mummers parade. He recalled his mother yelling at him, telling him he had no choice – he was going. On the way to the parade, in the front seat of Fr. Brzyski’s car, the priest fondled the boy’s genitals. In the back seat were two of Billy’s brothers.

For nearly 20 years, Billy believed that his parents were complicit in his abuse. Doubly wounded by Fr. Brzyski’s sexual molestation and by the belief, fostered in him by Fr. Brzyski, that his parents had abandoned him to this abuse, Billy fell into drinking and drug abuse. He lost all respect for the things he once loved – his parents, his church, his God. His mother could not understand why he turned against everything she had brought him up to believe in. Even when he finally told his mother, in 2001, about his abuse, he could not bring himself to tell her the lie that Fr. Brzyski had told him. Billy explained to the Grand Jury, “I didn’t want her heart broken thinking that I believed this for all those years.”

Billy also felt as though he had lost himself – or the person he used to be – as a result of Fr. Brzyski’s abuse. He described what the priest had done as “turn[ing] this good kid into this monster.” He began to think of himself as two different people. He told the Jurors:

I had no God to turn to, no family, and it just went from having one person in me to having two people inside me.

This nice [Billy] that used to live, and then this evil, this darkness [Billy] that had to have no morals and no conscience in order to get by day by day and, you know, not to care about anything or have no feelings and to bury them feelings so that you could live every day and not be laying on the couch with a depression problem so bad that, you know, four days later you’d be in the same spot.

Though he considered Christmas the “most wonderful time of the year,” Billy spent four consecutive Christmases unable to get out of bed. All the things he had loved most –

“going to church as a family and stuff like that” – were ruined for him, he said, by Fr. Brzyski.

The priest ruined even Billy’s “most precious spot as a kid” – his grandmother’s fishing shack in Forked River on the New Jersey Shore. There, as a youngster, he had spent time with her fishing, hanging out, and cooking crabs. The site was ruined for him when he learned that Fr. Brzyski and another priest owned a house a couple of blocks away. According to Billy, on weekends Fr. Brzyski and priest friends brought anywhere from five to ten boys to the house. Billy saw Kirk and Wesley at the house and several other boys whose names he could not remember. Seeing, as he put it, “this psycho’s down there just killed me and I didn’t even want to go down there no more.”

- **Sean**

Sean was Billy’s cousin and best friend. He, too, was an altar boy at Saint Cecilia. He was 12 years old and weighed just over 80 pounds when Fr. Brzyski – 6’5” and 220 pounds – anally raped him in the rectory. His abuse had started at an even younger age – when he was 10 or 11 – in the corner of the sacristy, where Fr. Brzyski forcibly fondled his genitals and rubbed up against the boy.

Sean testified that he was scared, but he was devout. He believed that to say anything bad about a priest was a mortal sin and that he would go to Hell if he told. So he said nothing at first, and continued to suffer the abuse even as its severity increased. He went on to be named “altar boy of the year” by the Archdiocese, and he was chosen to serve Mass with Pope John Paul II.

Sean tried to take his altar boy uniform home with him, and changed his clothes in the church parking lot to avoid Fr. Brzyski’s attacks. He tried to serve Masses only when other priests were on duty. But Fr. Brzyski still found ways to abuse the boy. The priest became a regular at his family’s dinners. He invited the parents to dine at the rectory – a special honor complete with fancy china and crystal. He invited Sean to dinner and movies. The boy’s parents expressed pleasure that he was spending time with the priest.

Sean estimated for the Grand Jury that Fr. Brzyski molested him “a couple of hundred times.” The abuse progressed from fondling, to the priest fondling his own genitals, to performing oral sex on the boy, to anal rape.

The first time Fr. Brzyski raped the boy was in his rectory bedroom after giving the 11-year-old an alcoholic drink. Sean testified that he passed out. When he awoke, he was on the priest’s bed. His pants and underpants were pulled down around his knees. Father Brzyski, sitting in a chair in the bedroom, asked him, “How are you doing, Boy?” Sean said he knew immediately that something had happened. He got up, pulled his pants up and ran home. He said he hurt all over and had trouble walking.

When he got home, Sean said, he showered a long time. Sore everywhere, he was bleeding from his rectum. But, more than the blood, it was the “nasty dirty feeling” he was trying, unsuccessfully, to shower away.

Sean told the Grand Jury that he did try once to tell his father what Fr. Brzyski was doing to him. The result was disbelief and physical abuse: “I got back-handed across the room, and I got told how dare I make up a lie about a priest And so that was the first and last time I ever opened my mouth about it.”

As he had done to Billy, Fr. Brzyski told Sean that his mother knew what was going on, so it would do no good to tell her. As for the boy’s father – actually his stepfather – Fr. Brzyski told Sean that the man he had always considered his father could never love the boy because he wasn’t his “real” son. And, like Billy, Sean believed Fr. Brzyski. The priest’s cruel strategy to isolate and control the boy for his own sexual purposes again destroyed a family and permanently damaged an innocent life – a devastation abetted by Archdiocese officials’ strategy of looking the other way.

Having no one to turn to for help, Sean resigned himself to his situation. He dealt with his despair by abusing drugs and alcohol. In order to get through Masses where he served with Fr. Brzyski, Sean got high. He used marijuana and cocaine so he “didn’t have to think about it.” Although Fr. Brzyski left the priesthood in 1985, he continued to abuse Sean – including anally raping him – for four more years, until the victim was 18 years old.

When he appeared before the first Grand Jury in October 2002, Sean was 31. Three days earlier, he had talked for the first time about his abuse to his mother, from whom he had long been estranged. He told the Jurors:

I've harbored this feeling towards my mom for going on twenty years and to come to find out the other night that it's not – you know, it was – it wasn't true. She had no idea. She had absolutely no idea.

So you know, I've been dealing with this. I've been hating her for twenty years for no reason whatsoever, and that's not right. That's my mom.

Like his cousin, Billy, Sean spent Christmases, Easters, Thanksgivings alone. He has been alienated from his family. He cannot maintain a stable, intimate relationship. Both men have fathered children whom they are incapable of supporting emotionally. They have battled alcohol and drugs and have beaten themselves up for not being able to live up to their potential.

Like Billy, Sean witnessed Fr. Brzyski abusing other altar boys. He had sometimes tried to come to their rescue. He saw as many as a hundred photographs of boys, ages 13 to 16, many of them nude, which Fr. Brzyski kept in a box in his bedroom. Sean said that the priest had a photograph of him, and that he recognized several of the other boys.

- **“Ryan”**

Ryan did not use drugs and alcohol to block out what Fr. Brzyski did to him when he was 11, 12, and 13 years old. At age 32, he told the Grand Jury that he still thinks about what happened every day. At times, he said, it seemed as if he had lost his mind.

Ryan told the Grand Jury that he had episodes – every Sunday in one period, he said – during which he believed he was in Hell. He said it was strange because he had always thought, as a child, that Hell – or Heaven – was a place you went after you died. But during these episodes he believed he had ended up in Hell by making all the wrong decisions, each time he was given a choice to do the right thing in his life. He said it seemed as if his soul had died and he had somehow ended up in eternal damnation. These episodes could be so real that, when around other people, he would see them as demons and would run from the room.

Because of episodes like these, he sought psychiatric help in 1997, more than 15 years after his abuse. While acknowledging that he might still appear quite disturbed, he told the Grand Jurors that he was, actually, much better since having finally talked to someone about what Fr. Brzyski had done to him. Like Fr. Brzyski's other victims, Ryan had felt he had no one in whom he could confide. It was clear from his testimony that it never even occurred to him that he could tell anyone. Believing as he did that "priests were the direct link to God," Ryan explained, "this was God . . . there's nobody to tell."

"What I did," Ryan told the Grand Jury, "was I found a way for twenty years to carry this around without telling it, and what you have to do is you have to learn to put it away." So, to save himself "from going nuts," he had to walk away from "everything that I had been brought up in."

Ryan could not care about school, when all he could think about was his abuse by Fr. Brzyski in that same building. The boy who once thought he had a vocation as a priest had to sit in the back of the church at weddings because he could not bear even seeing one. His whole life had revolved around Saint Cecilia, and Fr. Brzyski had taken that from him.

As an adult, he found he had to avoid intimate and caring relationships as well. He described his unsuccessful attempts to be close to someone:

I couldn't have sex without crying afterwards. I would go to bed with my girlfriends and wake up in the middle of the night and like think that they were dead regularly, and . . . if, God forbid, one of them should reach from behind me and like put their hand on my waist.

I used to tear rooms apart . . . and then to think about that, you know, having someone in your life that you love, who didn't sign on to have a boyfriend who's a complete basket case on any given moment, who can't go to bed with you without turning into some kind of lunatic.

So Ryan had to walk away from love, too. He stopped getting involved, assuming that "as soon as we get in bed, I'm going to end up scaring the shit out of this person." He decided, "I'm not going down that road It was awful."

It was apparent from his testimony that there were some details of Ryan's abuse that were still "put away." But he did refer to the priest's assaults as, at times, "intense" and "violent." One incident, he said, he recalled "kind of up until the point that I was on

the floor with this guy on top of me, and then I was half way to my house, you know, and that's when I remember; and if . . . if there's something further, I'm not certain that I care to know what happened.”

Ryan stopped showing up for Mass after that incident, and was fired as an altar boy. He continued to believe it had been God's will to make him suffer Fr. Brzyski's violent abuse. He probably never suspected that he continued to suffer the consequences of that abuse in silence because of a willful decision by the Archdiocese.

Between 1984 and 1986, the Archdiocese learns of 11 victims.

The Archdiocese began recording reports about Fr. Brzyski's abuses in 1984, when he was at Saint Cecilia. Within a year and a half, officials had learned from a fellow priest the names of at least 11 victims from the priest's previous assignment, at Saint John the Evangelist parish, in Lower Makefield. Their abuse began when Fr. Brzyski was the parish's assistant pastor, from June 1977 to August 1981, and continued, in some cases, for many years after he was transferred to Saint Cecilia.

It was a counselor at Bishop Egan High School, Fr. James J. Gigliotti, T.O.R., who brought the allegations to Assistant Chancellor John W. Graf, beginning on June 25, 1984. Father Gigliotti called Fr. Graf because the parents of one boy – “Mark,” then a student at Bishop Egan – had reported to the counselor that their son had been molested by Fr. Brzyski during the student's 5th- and 6th-grade years at Saint Cecilia's grade school.

In a June 27, 1984, interview, Mark's mother and father detailed for Fr. Graf not only their son's abuse, which included Fr. Brzyski's fondling the boy's genitals and trying to make the boy do the same in return, but also the priest's involvement with many other boys. Father Graf's memo recording his meeting with Mark's parents described the pattern of Fr. Brzyski's behavior: “Father would take up with a particular boy and then drop this boy and move on to other friendships.” Father Graf noted these “particular friendships” included “rather young boys, 10, 11 and 12 years old.”

Mark's parents told Fr. Graf how embarrassed their son was by his encounters with Fr. Brzyski. They said he had suffered from nightmares and emotional stress and that they had taken him for professional counseling.

Mark's parents provided the names of five other boys – “Richard,” “Anthony,” “Steve,” “Darryl,” and “Philip,” who were, in the language of the Archdiocese, also “involved in these friendships” with Fr. Brzyski. All of these boys, according to the parents, were having “family problems when Father befriended them.”

On June 28, 1984, Fr. Gigliotti provided Fr. Graf with the names of two more boys whom he had heard were being abused – “Raymond” and “Paul.” He confirmed the names given by Mark's parents, and he told Fr. Graf that all of these boys were “shy, docile, bright and intelligent and that they were all physically attractive.” He told Fr. Graf that the parents of two of these boys – Raymond and Steve – had come to him for counseling “concerning unusual anger and withdrawal in both their sons.”

Confronted with allegations, Father Brzyski offers to resign, but Archdiocese officials persuade him not to.

Father Graf informed Cardinal Krol of the allegations in a memo dated July 10, 1984. That memo provides an insight into the way the Chancery Office handled sexual abuse allegations. Despite a detailed account by parents of their own son's molestation, and clear indications that many other boys were being abused as well, Fr. Graf was unclear whether he should investigate further because, he said, the information was “indirect.” Thus, he asked the Cardinal: “Should Father Brzyski be confronted with this information even though the information is indirect, thus affording Father Brzyski the possibility of denial?” This language suggests that if Fr. Brzyski denied the allegation, the normal procedure would be to do nothing more. Father Graf went on to advise the Cardinal, however, that doing nothing might be unwise in this case where “scandal” seemed likely. He wrote: “On the other hand, it becomes evident that scandal could easily arise in this case if action is not taken.”

In response, Cardinal Krol instructed the Assistant Chancellor to confront Fr. Brzyski and to “impress on him the gravity of the situation in the words of Jesus about those who scandalize the young.” Cardinal Krol wrote in the margin of Fr. Graf's memo: “His alleged conduct suggests a wolf in sheep's clothing – who serves as Satan's agent for

perdition and not Christ's alter ego for salvation." This depiction did not prevent the Cardinal's aides from later trying to persuade Fr. Brzyski to remain in ministry.

When confronted, the priest was, according to Fr. Graf's notes, "confused as to the details" concerning Mark. But he readily admitted to "several acts of sexual misconduct." He named only two of the boys he had molested – Darryl, who, according to Fr. Brzyski, would have been in 10th grade at the time of the abuse, and Richard, who would have been in 7th grade. The priest admitted that on "several occasions he had sexual contact with [Richard]." He announced he wanted to quit the priesthood.

Archdiocese officials instead persuaded Fr. Brzyski to go to Saint Luke Institute in Suitland, Maryland, for an evaluation. According to a memo by Vice Chancellor Donald F. Walker dated July 27, 1984, the director of Saint Luke, Fr. Michael Peterson, reported that Fr. Brzyski demonstrated "a repressed personality with chronic immaturity manifested in . . . pedophilia." Father Peterson warned that "there is a definite concern for possible legal liability." He recommended that Fr. Brzyski remain at Saint Luke for treatment and that he not be permitted to return to Philadelphia even to pick up clothes. Characteristically, the Archdiocese's response centered on its own interest, not children's: on July 30, 1984, Fr. Walker wrote to Cardinal Krol that "Father Peterson is of the opinion that our criminal liability is minimized by the fact that Father would be admitted to an intensive program."

Father Brzyski continues to be a danger and refuses to participate in therapy.

By August 27, 1984, Archdiocese managers knew for sure that Fr. Brzyski was still a danger to his young victims. In a memo of that date, Fr. Graf recorded being told by Fr. Gigliotti that Fr. Brzyski had called several of his victims, including Richard, and invited them down to Suitland.

Father Brzyski remained at Saint Luke Institute until January 17, 1985, leaving on that date supposedly to visit Philadelphia and the New Jersey Shore, after agreeing to return to Saint Luke by February 11, 1985, to resume outpatient therapy. He never returned. The institute's director made it clear that the priest could not be considered cured.

Father Peterson reported being “very disheartened” by Fr. Brzyski’s immaturity and said the priest was acting “like an eighteen year old.”

Archdiocese officials tried to persuade Fr. Brzyski to remain in therapy. They also tried to persuade him to remain in ministry. Fr. Brzyski decided not to continue either.

Despite Father Brzyski’s continuing threat to parishioners, the Archdiocese is concerned only with its liability.

Over the next two years, the Chancery Office received reports that Fr. Brzyski was still visiting victims from his previous parish in Lower Makefield, and that he had taken a high school teaching job in the Archdiocese of Metuchen, New Jersey. Father Gigliotti provided the names of at least three more victims – “Matthew,” “Mike,” and a boy with the last name of “Gibbs.”

Vice Chancellor Walker wrote on January 8, 1986: “Father Gigliotti has a grave concern that more names will surface and that the influence of Father Brzyski was more extensive than first imagined or known.” Father Gigliotti told Fr. Walker that Fr. Brzyski still visited Lower Makefield often.

Archdiocese officials showed no concern, however, that Fr. Brzyski was almost certainly continuing to sexually abuse boys from his parish assignments. Instead, they worried about the Church’s liability. In a February 7, 1986, memo to Cardinal Krol, Fr. Graf reported Saint Luke Director Peterson’s opinion that “unilateral withdrawal from the ministry or even suspension does not insure the Archdiocese that it is no longer responsible for the actions of one of its priests.” Father Graf went on to suggest: “In light of the possibility that there are more instances of misconduct which may, for all I know, be continuing at the present time, I wonder if it would not be wise for us to review this entire case once again with legal counsel.”

Cardinal Krol directed Fr. Graf to try to persuade Fr. Brzyski to voluntarily seek laicization, a step designed to absolve the Archdiocese of liability. Father Graf also notified the high school in Metuchen of the situation and Fr. Brzyski’s employment was terminated. Nothing, however, was done to protect the known victims who, Fr. Graf

conceded, might still be suffering abuse. No families were informed or warned. No pastoral care was offered to those already damaged.

In order to evade responsibility, Archdiocese officials choose not to help or find additional victims.

Archdiocesan managers apparently never considered contacting law enforcement authorities. Still, because Fr. Gigliotti was pressing the Archdiocese about known victims who needed help, Church leaders had no choice but to make a decision. They could grant permission to professionals to help the victims and their families, which would require revealing what they knew about Fr. Brzyski's abuses, or they could conceal that knowledge and block the counselors from providing assistance. In the case of unknown victims, Archdiocese officials could try to find them to offer counseling and prevent further abuse, which would show that they knew about Fr. Brzyski's criminality, or they could avoid learning about any new victims in an attempt to evade responsibility. In both cases, Church leaders chose not to help or protect the victims.

Some of the boys from Saint John the Evangelist parish harmed by the Archdiocese's policy of neglect were Richard, Matthew, Mike, Raymond, and Steve. Also harmed were all the victims from Saint Cecilia parish whose names the Church officials made an effort not to learn.

- **Richard**

On June 27, 1984, Mark's parents told Assistant Chancellor Graf that, a few years before, Fr. Brzyski had taken their son, Mark, and several other 12- and 13-year-old boys to a shore house that the priest owned in Forked River, New Jersey. There, Mark had observed Fr. Brzyski in bed with one of the boys, Richard. Mark would not describe what he saw, but he and the other boys characterized the priest's relationship with Richard as "extreme."

Richard was one of the boys Fr. Brzyski confessed to abusing when questioned on July 18, 1984. The priest told Fr. Graf that on "several occasions he had sexual contact with [Richard]." He said the boy would have been in 7th grade at the time of the abuse. He told Fr. Graf that he was still friendly with the family.

In handwritten notes of his June 27, 1984, meeting with Mark's parents, Fr. Graf wrote that Fr. Brzyski still visited Richard and his family, three years after his 1981 transfer to Saint Cecilia. Father Graf did not include this information in his typed report. Father Peterson, the director of Saint Luke, told Fr. Graf on July 27, 1984, that Fr. Brzyski's abuse of Richard was more serious than first thought and that it involved "many episodes."

On August 27 of that year, Fr. Gigliotti told Fr. Graf that Fr. Brzyski had called Richard's house and invited the boy down to Suitland, Maryland, where he had gone for treatment. Father Graf claimed in an official memo that he had contacted Fr. Gigliotti to ask the counselor to watch for signs of "any peculiar psychological change in [Richard] and to let us know so that we could be of help to [Richard] and his family if necessary." However, when Fr. Gigliotti agreed that the Archdiocese should help Richard and his family, and proceeded to tell Fr. Graf that Richard's mother had already noticed strange behavior and had asked the school counselor for advice and help, none was given.

Richard's mother had come to Fr. Gigliotti because she could not understand her son's angry reaction when Fr. Brzyski invited him down to Saint Luke. According to Fr. Brzyski's testimony before the Grand Jury, the priest had become close to Richard's family when another of their sons had been tragically killed. Father Brzyski testified that Richard's brother, the family's second son, had also been an altar boy at Saint Cecilia, and that "after leaving an altar boy rehearsal for Easter, [he] crossed the street and got run over by a tow truck and he was killed." (It is possible that Fr. Brzyski confused Richard with Mike – another victim. Father Gigliotti told Fr. Graf that it was Mike's family that Fr. Brzyski became close to when one of their sons died. In either case, Fr. Brzyski recalled involving himself with a family when an altar boy died after leaving a church rehearsal.)

When Richard's mother contacted Fr. Gigliotti, Archdiocese officials knew that Fr. Brzyski had sexually abused her son and was still pursuing him – even from Saint Luke. The mother, confused, was asking for help. She received none.

Father Graf wrote on August 27, 1984:

The mother did not understand her son's reaction and went to Father Gigliotti for advice. Father Gigliotti did not tell her

the possible reason for the boy's reaction. He wanted us to be aware of the situation.

On October 25, 1985, Fr. Gigliotti tried again to get help for the troubled boy. This time he consulted a psychiatrist, Dr. Thomas Daniels, who had been hired by the Catholic School system to provide counseling in the high schools. Father Gigliotti told Dr. Daniels about Richard's situation. The psychiatrist, according to a memo from Fr. Graf to Cardinal Krol, told Fr. Gigliotti "that it is important in matters of abuse, physical or sexual, that the victims be confronted openly and that they be allowed to ventilate their fears and feelings." Father Graf added: "The doctor only wanted us to consider that possibility and offered his assistance." The Assistant Chancellor went on to inform Cardinal Krol: "I expressed to the doctor that we were grateful for his concern, however, because of the sensitivity of the situation, we would ask him to do nothing until we get back to him and we hoped he would respect our wishes, especially in regard to the confidentiality of the issue." (Appendix D-12)

Father Graf wrote to the Cardinal that he next consulted with Fr. Peterson at Saint Luke Institute. While Fr. Peterson agreed that confronting a victim could be beneficial, Fr. Graf wrote that Fr. Peterson "made a perhaps more important suggestion for us to consider." Father Peterson's actual suggestion was redacted from the copy of the memo provided to the Grand Jury, suggesting that it must have been some sort of legal, rather than psychological, advice. Whatever it was, it appears to have disinclined the Archdiocesan managers from behaving with humanity. According to their own records, they did not permit either Fr. Gigliotti or Dr. Daniels to offer counsel to Richard or even to inform his mother that Fr. Brzyski had admitted sexually abusing him. It would be difficult to imagine greater heartlessness.

- **Matthew**

Another victim whom Fr. Gigliotti tried to help was Matthew, the son of friends. In addition to being a friend of the parents', Fr. Gigliotti served as the father's spiritual director as he prepared to become a deacon of the church. Both the parents and son had approached Fr. Gigliotti for help. The parents asked for the priest's advice because their

son's behavior had become disruptive, he was using drugs, and his personality seemed to have changed. The boy, now 19 years old, told Fr. Gigliotti that he had a serious problem, but then was unable to discuss it.

Father Gigliotti told Vice Chancellor Walker that he knew from a third party, unrelated to Matthew's family, that the boy had been molested by Fr. Brzyski from the age of 12 until he was 14 years old. Father Walker wrote in a memo dated January 8, 1986, that Fr. Gigliotti felt it was "very important for the therapeutic process" that he share his knowledge of the boy's abuse with both Matthew and his parents.

Father Gigliotti presented his "quandary" to Fr. Walker. The Vice Chancellor wrote that he then discussed the matter with Chancellor Samuel Shoemaker and that "it was decided" that Fr. Gigliotti should not reveal what he knew. He could continue to counsel the boy about current problems, but could not initiate a discussion of the boy's relationship with Fr. Brzyski. Father Walker noted: "This approach is taken in order to avail [Matthew] of some pastoral assistance *while still maintaining the position taken by the Chancery Office that we could not actively seek further names of persons who may have been involved with Father Brzyski*" (emphasis supplied).

In simple terms, then, the Archdiocesan managers decided that in order to lessen the Archdiocese's possible exposure to civil suit, they would withhold information crucial to the psychological healing of a boy sexually abused by an Archdiocesan priest. The further decision not to seek out other parishioners injured by this same priest was also made to minimize the Archdiocese's possible exposure to lawsuits. The Archdiocese weighed the harm that "scandal" would do to it against the health and well-being of parishioners injured by one of its priests – parishioners injured because they had been placed in particularly vulnerable positions due to the unique role and power of the priest.

- **Mike**

On January 10, 1986, a year and a half after Fr. Brzyski had admitted to abusing at least two boys, Fr. Gigliotti told Vice Chancellor Walker that another boy said to be a victim of Fr. Brzyski's was Mike. The priest was long known to have visited his house. In July 1980, the pastor at Saint John in Lower Makefield had reported to the Archdiocese

that Fr. Brzyski was seen visiting Mike's house as often as two to three times a day. Six years later Fr. Walker wrote of Mike:

The family lives in Lower Makefield Parish and Father Brzyski still visits the family on a regular basis. Father Gigliotti stated that it is common knowledge that Father Brzyski still seeks the company of this young man who may now be nineteen or twenty years of age.

Even though the Archdiocese was well aware of Fr. Brzyski's admitted abuse, and even though the attention Fr. Brzyski was giving to Mike was extraordinary, there is no indication that the Archdiocese took any steps to determine whether Fr. Brzyski was still abusing the boy or to intervene in any way in the situation.

- **Raymond and Steve**

In June 1984, Fr. Gigliotti told Fr. Graf of reports of two more victims of Fr. Brzyski from Lower Makefield – Raymond and Steve. Father Gigliotti also informed the Assistant Chancellor that the mother of Raymond and the father of Steve had consulted him, in his capacity as a counselor at Bishop Egan High School. The parents had sought advice “concerning unusual anger and withdrawal in both their sons.”

Rather than advise the counselor to do his job and help these parents protect their children from a sexual offender or mitigate the damage already done, the Assistant Chancellor noted in a memo that Fr. Gigliotti understood the “confidentiality of this matter and is willing to assist us in any way.” By invoking the protection of the abuser's confidentiality as an excuse not to inform parents that their children were being sexually abused, the Archdiocese aided Fr. Brzyski in his crimes. A year and a half later, on January 10, 1986, Fr. Gigliotti told Vice Chancellor Walker that “Father Brzyski is still a frequent visitor to [Steve's family's] home.”

Archdiocese leaders explicitly decide not to seek out victims from Saint Cecilia parish.

Given what they knew about how many boys Fr. Brzyski had preyed upon and molested in serial fashion at Saint John the Evangelist, Archdiocese officials had excellent

reason to believe he would have many additional victims from Saint Cecilia, where he was assigned from August 1981 until August 1984. The victims from Saint Cecilia who testified before the Grand Jury said his abusive behavior there was blatant and notorious. Billy and Sean both said they were sure the other priests at Saint Cecilia knew. Yet, rather than try to find these victims and help them, the Chancery office established a policy, cited by Vice Chancellor Donald Walker in a 1986 memo, “that we could not actively seek further names of persons who may have been involved with Father Brzyski.”

Father Brzyski’s crimes continue after Bevilacqua becomes Archbishop of Philadelphia.

When Anthony J. Bevilacqua became Archbishop of Philadelphia in February 1988, Fr. Brzyski was still a priest in the Archdiocese, though he had chosen to withdraw from active ministry. Cardinal Krol had decided not to seek an involuntary laicization of the priest. Such a procedure could have required the Archdiocese to document what it knew of Fr. Brzyski’s criminal behavior and present it to a tribunal as true. It might also have required testimony from victims – victims whom the Archdiocese had not acknowledged.

Cardinal Krol chose to keep Fr. Brzyski as a priest even though Archdiocese records clearly indicated his criminal sexual abuse of boys and included warnings in 1986 and 1987 that this serial abuse could be ongoing. Archbishop Bevilacqua, possessing the same information, followed the same course – allowing Fr. Brzyski to remain a priest in the Archdiocese throughout his tenure as Archbishop.

Archbishop Bevilacqua, who presumably would have asked or been told why one of his younger priests was without an assignment, did nothing to protect the Philadelphia community or past parishioners from this dangerous, untreated, and unsupervised sexual offender. Anyone who gave even a cursory look at Fr. Brzyski’s Secret Archives file would know he was extremely dangerous to young boys. They would know that there were many known and named victims who needed psychological or pastoral care. They would know that the priest was likely still involved with known victims and their unsuspecting families. They would know that there had to be a multitude of victims from Saint Cecilia

who were unknown to the Archdiocese only because there was no Father Gigliotti there to care about those children.

Archbishop Bevilacqua's initial Chancellor, Samuel Shoemaker, was well acquainted with Fr. Brzyski's history and the Archdiocese's policy of trying to avoid knowing about the priest's victims. As a result of this policy, Fr. Brzyski's victims from Saint Cecilia went undiscovered, or at least unrecorded, despite the priest's blatant behavior and his notoriety.

During Archbishop Bevilacqua's early years, Sean was 16, then 17 years old, and still being anally raped by Fr. Brzyski. Father Brzyski was also still associating with another former altar boy from Saint Cecilia, "Wayne." According to "Julian," a witness who testified before the Grand Jury, Fr. Brzyski described to him in "graphic detail" his sexual relations with Wayne, beginning when the priest was still at Saint Cecilia and continuing at least until the late 1980s. Julian, who was a friend of Fr. Brzyski's in the late 1980s and early 1990s, named other minors, who had not been parishioners, whom Fr. Brzyski sexually assaulted after leaving active ministry.

In addition to the victims who continued to suffer actual abuse, there were others who suffered a world of torment because their abuse remained secret and they were left to cope with its devastating consequences alone. Victims such as Billy and Ryan, and the boys Fr. Gigliotti was prevented from helping, have led broken lives filled with despair and unfulfilled potential. Children had been estranged from mothers and fathers for decades because no one ever told them that their parents had not made deals with their tormenter.

Because law enforcement was denied a chance to apprehend or deter Fr. Brzyski, there may have been new victims – such as a boy Fr. Brzyski was accused of molesting in May 2002, in his new hometown of Chesapeake, Virginia. There will likely be future victims of this serial molester and child rapist, who remains a priest, albeit without active ministry, free and unsupervised thanks to the Archdiocese's concealment of his crime spree under its auspices.

The Archdiocese seeks forced laicization 20 years after Father Brzyski admitted sexually abusing altar boys.

On February 11, 2004, after allegations made by at least five victims against Fr. Brzyski were found credible, the Archdiocese referred the case to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in Rome, requesting that the priest be forcibly laicized.

Father Brzyski appeared before the Grand Jury and was given an opportunity to answer questions concerning the allegations against him. He chose not to do so, although he did answer questions relating to various residences and jobs.