

Reverend John Herber

Biographical Information

YEAR OF BIRTH:	1939
YEAR OF DEATH:	N/A
ORDINATION:	N/A

Employment/Assignment History

7/10/1980-7/29/1982	St. Joseph Convent & School, Columbia, PA
8/01/1995-2/18/1998	St. Ann Home, Columbia, PA

Summary

A memorandum dated April 29, 1997, provided that a priest stationed in Lancaster received a disturbing report of sexual misconduct from a parishioner. The parishioner attended one Mass that was celebrated by a visiting priest, Father John Herber. The parishioner recognized the priest. The parishioner was aware of an abuse allegation made against Herber in 1990. Bishop Nicholas Dattilo issued a Decree authorizing an investigation.

According to a handwritten memorandum dated July 30, 1997 by [REDACTED], a woman called the Diocese of Harrisburg and reported that Herber abused her when she was seven years. In a report dated July 30, 1997, [REDACTED] wrote: *“at the age of 7 she was molested by a religious priest. [REDACTED].”* The molestation occurred between 1981 and 1982. The victim told her father in 1990 when she was 15 years old. Her father then reported the molestation to the Missionaries of the Precious Blood Order.

Father Paul Helwig searched Herber’s file and found a statement from the Superior of the Precious Blood Order that was dated March 13, 1995. The statement provided: *“to the best of my knowledge in the external forum, I am of the opinion that Father Herber is of good character and reputation. I believe that he is qualified to perform his ministerial duties in an effective and suitable manner. More specifically, I have not been made aware of any pattern of sexual abuse.”*

In a memorandum from 1997, Helwig contacted the Missionaries of the Precious Blood Order and requested a statement about Herber. The Provincial of the Order stated he recalled a report about inappropriate touching of a young girl and that Herber was sent for treatment. The report provided that the victim rode in a car and Herber touched her genitals.

On August 1, 1997, the Order sent a statement outlining that Herber was sent for an evaluation and received treatment in 1991. He received aftercare treatment from 1991 to 1993. As of 1997, he had attended AA (alcoholics anonymous) and SA (sexaholics anonymous) meetings for approximately four years.

Summary

Memorandums are contained in the Diocese's records that outline discussions with the Provincial for the Precious Blood Order and Helwig regarding when to remove Herber from ministry in the Diocese of Harrisburg. The Diocese requested the Provincial recall Herber. They allowed Herber to remain in active ministry until February 18, 1998, when he was transferred by his order.

According to Diocesan documents, in 2012, a woman called the Diocese of Harrisburg to report she was molested by Herber (the woman's sister has also alleged that Herber had abused her). The woman was four years old and alleged Herber digitally penetrated her. This occurred between 1982 and 1983. She wanted to know what happened to Herber. The Diocese contacted the Missionaries of the Precious Blood Order and determined that Herber was living as a "lay brother." Herber had no sacramental ministry and was on a safety plan, monitored, and was repentant and compliant.

Bishop Joseph McFadden sent a letter to the Provincial in 2012 informing him that Herber does not have any faculties in the Diocese of Harrisburg. The Provincial responded to McFadden and stated, "*with the announcement of the Charter for the Protection of Children in May of 2002, John was removed from all ministry.*" This letter also mentioned a third victim reporting that Herber abused her. This allegation was made by another sister of the original victimized family. The Order allowed Herber to remain in active ministry from the time of the 1997 report until 2002.