

Reverend David F. Dzermejko

Biographical Information

YEAR OF BIRTH:	1948
YEAR OF DEATH:	N/A
ORDINATION:	May 4, 1974

Employment/Assignment History

5/30/1974-6/10/1979	Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament, Natrona Heights, PA
6/11/1979-6/03/1984	St. Teresa of Avila, Pittsburgh, PA
6/04/1984-6/10/1991	St. Susanna, Penn Hills, PA
6/10/1991-10/26/1992	St. Jerome, Charleroi, PA
10/26/1992-6/15/2009	Mary, Mother of the Church, Charleroi, PA
6/15/2009	Leave of Absence
6/15/2009-1/18/2013	Resides at St. John Vianney Manor, Pittsburgh, PA
10/2015	Laicized

Summary

Files obtained by subpoena from the Diocese of Pittsburgh, including a confidential report from the Diocesan Review Board, as well as personnel, confidential and victim files, reflected that Father David Dzermejko was reported to have had inappropriate contact with several young boys, conduct which included anal and oral sexual assaults of young minors.

In June 2009, the Diocese first received a report that Dzermejko had sexually abused a minor child. A woman called to report that prior to her husband's suicide in April, 2009, he told her that he had been sexually abused by Dzermejko. It occurred sometime between 1979 and 1984. The first incident took place in Dzermejko's car where the victim "*had been pushed back in the seat of the car and Dzermejko touched his chest and did other things to him that he would not detail.*" The second incident occurred when the victim was on a ferris wheel ride with Dzermejko during a church festival. During this incident, Dzermejko "*fondled*" the victim and the victim wrote in a journal he was keeping at the time that, "*I wasn't raped or sodomized just fondled.*" The victim went on to add that Dzermejko had warned him, "*You can't tell anyone. I'll tell your mother.*" The victim also stated in the journal that he could not get off of the ride because Dzermejko told the operator to keep the ride going three times longer than it should have. The victim wrote, "*I was trapped and couldn't get off.*" After meeting with representatives from the Diocese, it was decided that this victim's family would be provided with funds for counseling.

On June 19, 2009, counsel for the Diocese received a telephone call from a second victim. The victim had previously contacted the Allegheny County District Attorney's office and was encouraged to make an "official report" to the Diocese. The victim stated that he was an altar boy at St. Teresa of Avila while he was a student at the school. This was during the

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time period of 1979-1982, while he was in the fifth, sixth and seventh grades. He said that “Father Dave” (Dzermejko) was very friendly with his family and they “*went on picnics and spent time at each other’s homes.*” This victim also said that:

Numerous times he stayed overnight at the rectory and his parents never had a problem with him doing so. Dave had attractive things to young people such as a video console and a CB radio among other things.

This victim reported that he was “*raped, had anal and oral sex and performed oral sex with Dave over a course of three years.*” He feared Dave because his parents were friendly with him and they drank and shared meals together. The victim stated that the last abuse occurred in the summertime when his father was working the night shift. His mother and Dave were on the porch drinking and the victim was with them. Dave became intoxicated and the victim’s mom encouraged Dzermejko to stay the night. After his mother went to bed, he and Dave performed oral sex on each other and then the victim got scared and ran away and hid in the basement.

On January 31, 2012, a third victim contacted the Diocese. This adult male reported that he was sexually abused by Dzermejko in the late 1980’s when he was 15 to 16 years of age. In correspondence to the Assistant Prosecuting Attorney in Ohio County, West Virginia, it was noted by Diocesan counsel that the victim had called the Diocese several times in the past but did not leave his name. Only after speaking with the prosecutor’s office did the victim decide to give more complete information.

The third victim reported that he was initially introduced to Dzermejko by one of his friends. At the time, he was living in Cambridge, Ohio. He had stated that Dzermejko would take him to bars in Wheeling, West Virginia and in Pittsburgh. The victim advised that he had been on Dzermejko’s boat “*The Seaman,*” and had been to the rectory in Charleroi. He was also in Dzermejko’s various cars.

The victim advised that when he initially met Dzermejko, he did not know that Dzermejko was a priest. Dzermejko had told this victim that he was a “*hospital administrator*” and had a “*teddy bear strapped in the backseat of his car that wore a doctor outfit.*” This victim had said that “*when he first met Dzermejko, he did not do anything sexually to him.*” He said there “*were other boys ages to 14-16.*”

The victim reported that “*eventually Dzermejko had oral sex with him but he never performed oral sex on Dzermejko and never had intercourse with him.*” The victim gave the following locations as the places where he had “*sexual encounters*” with Dzermejko: 1) Outside the “*True Colors*” bar in Elm Grove, West Virginia (the victim stated he was 15 to 16 years old at the time); 2) Outside the Lamont restaurant (the victim stated he was about 15 to 16 years old at the time); 3) On Dzermejko’s boat somewhere between Charleroi and Pittsburgh (the victim stated that he was 15 to 16 years old); 4) In Dzermejko’s rectory in Charleroi (though the victim said that he was 15 to 16, based on the date when Dzermejko first arrived in Charleroi, he would have been 18. The victim further reported that he went to the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Columbus with Dzermejko but he could not recall if oral sex occurred there.

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By letter dated June 15, 2009, Dzermejko was notified that he was being placed on administrative leave “[i]n light of an allegation made against [him] involving the sexual abuse of a minor” That correspondence also directed Dzermejko “to take up residence at St. John Vianney Manor . . . , effective immediately.”

On January 11, 2013, law enforcement officers executed a warrant to search Dzermejko’s rooms at St. John Vianney Manor. They seized child pornography, located on his computer and also found firearms and illegal drugs. He was arrested in April 2013 for possession of child pornography. When Dzermejko spoke with law enforcement, he admitted: That he had been viewing child pornography for in excess of 10 years; that he had historically travelled to Thailand to have sexual encounters with teen boys; and, that he had gone there as recently as the same calendar year.

In November 2013, Dzermejko pled guilty to possession of child pornography in federal court. He was sentenced to three years in prison. He began serving that sentence in June, 2014.

On September 11, 2015, Zubik wrote to Vatican authorities requesting that Dzermejko “be dismissed from the clerical state in the most expedient manner possible.” The official decree dismissing Dzermejko from the clerical state was issued on October 31, 2015 and the Diocese received it on November 16, 2015.

Records subpoenaed from the Diocese reflected that financial assistance to Dzermejko was not suspended upon his incarceration, but appear to have continued for approximately one year after he went to prison. On March 1, 2016, Dzermejko wrote to Zubik indicating that the \$350 a month he had been receiving for prison commissary expenses and to pay home bills had stopped and requested financial assistance. In response to Dzermejko’s letter, on March 11, 2016, Zubik wrote:

Having just received your heartfelt-letter, please know that I am quickly following up on your request for financial assistance. I have asked Bishop William J. Waltersheid to make this a top priority. Please know that you will be hearing from him very shortly.

The records received from the Diocese do not reflect what, if any, action was taken to provide Dzermejko with financial assistance.