News



by James Dearie

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More details about the handling of predatory priests in the Diocese of Buffalo, New York, are coming to light after a 52-year-old man came forward last week with allegations that he was abused by Fr. Norbert Orsolits, a now-retired priest of the diocese.

The Olean Times Herald reported March 2 that Orsolits, now 78, claims he was assigned to serve at multiple parishes and to teach at Archbishop Walsh High School in Olean, New York, after receiving treatment for his predatory behavior in the 1980s. Earlier that week, Orsolits had admitted to The Buffalo News that he had abused "probably dozens" of young boys during his career as a priest.

Some who knew Orsolits during his time as a pastor of a parish in Portville, New York, his next assignment after Olean, told The Buffalo News March 1 that Orsolits had worked extensively with children there, too, leading youth groups and ski trips, often as the only adult present.

When asked about Orsolits' claims regarding his post-treatment service, an attorney for the diocese said at a press conference March 1 that he was "not aware of that," but the diocese would "take a look and see if" the claims were true.

Orsolits also says that he did not molest any more victims after his release from treatment.

Today, The Buffalo News reported on an allegation involving a different priest. A mother claims that Fr. Stanley Idziak molested her two boys in the 1960s and '70s while they attended a Buffalo Diocese parish, then followed them when the family moved to the Atlanta area.

Janet Larango told the paper in a March 9 report that Idziak took an interest in the family, eventually becoming a close family friend. She said he began abusing her older son when he was 9, and her younger son when he was 5. When the family moved to Dunwoody, Georgia, Idziak left the Pallottine order to follow the family, living with them until he became an associate pastor at a local Catholic church. The abuse continued after the move, according to the report.

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An article about an unnamed child-abusing priest whom Larango recognized to be Idziak eventually tipped Larango off to the truth. The Atlanta Diocese laicized the priest in 1993 after paying $570,000 to another family who had sued, claiming he had abused their two sons as well. The Larangos first shared their story with The Atlanta Journal Constitution in 1992 when the other family brought their lawsuit, according to BishopAccountability.org's archive of articles related to clergy sex abuse.

Larango told The Buffalo News that she and her husband "dealt with [the case] in Atlanta," and did not file a complaint with either the Buffalo Diocese or the Pallottine order.

Idziak died in 2017. Orsolits still lives in the Buffalo area.

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