

## **William O'Brien**

### **Raped a Nun in 1977**

#### **Finally removed from ministry in 2005, but seen entering parish in 2008**

Rape allegations against William O'Brien date back to the 1970s, soon after he was ordained a priest. O'Brien was alleged to have raped a nun in 1977 and was having a sexual affairs with women, including with a married woman in the 1980's. O'Brien also abused multiple minors during the 1970's and 1980s. By 1991, Bishop Raymond Goedert considered O'Brien a serious case, fearing that if the allegations against him and evidence of his indiscretions go public, O'Brien's career would be destroyed. Goedert defended O'Brien's stating that demoting O'Brien to a low-profile position would be "demoralizing" for the priest. O'Brien was allowed to remain pastor at Queen of Angels parish.

O'Brien was finally removed in 2005, after the Review Board reviewed O'Brien's file. In the months following, more allegations against O'Brien came to light. In 2008 witnesses reported that O'Brien was seen entering Queen of Angels parish.

O'Brien's current whereabouts are unknown.

#### **TIMELINE OF DOCUMENTS– WILLIAM O'BRIEN**

5/9/73 – Ordained

5/9/73 – Assistant Pastor, Saint Jude the Apostle, South Holland, IL

1975            According to a 2005 report O'Brien abused a seminarian who was about 17 years old in about 1975. (AOC 004241)

8/19/76 – Associate Chaplain, South Suburban Serra Club

12/10/76 – Advocate, Metropolitan Tribunal

6/9/78 – Associate Pastor, St. Symphorosa Church, Chicago, IL

1981            According to a 2005 report O'Brien abused a minor at St. Cajetan's parish rectory. (AOC 004242)

Mid-1980s      According to a 2005 memo the Archdiocese received reports that O'Brien had affairs with married women. (AOC 004245- AOC 004244)

10/28/88        Memo to the file from Bishop Goedert discussing the possibility of a financial settlement with (redacted) regarding an allegation against O'Brien. The memo discusses possibly placing O'Brien in a lower profile position, but this might be demoralizing for him. (AOC 004299)

- 9/15/90** **Memo to Bishop Goedert relaying a conversation the author had with Jay Finno. Jay is on the personnel board and at a recent meeting they discussed O'Brien. Jay kept his mouth shut at the time, but is now sharing information about O'Brien. Jay said that about 11 years ago, in about 1989, O'Brien raped a woman. (AOC 004285- AOC 004286)**
- 9/28/91 Memo from Bishop Goedert to Cardinal Bernardin discussing their earlier meeting in which they reviewed "all of the more serious cases" and O'Brien's case in particular. The memo also mentions new information that recently came to light about O'Brien. Also says that if someone (redacted) goes public, O'Brien's reputation and priesthood would be destroyed. (AOC 004295)
- 10/10/91 Memo to Vicar for Priests Office regarding O'Brien. Cardinal Bernardin wants a summary of O'Brien's "situation" and notes that O'Brien "is not out of the woods yet in terms of liability." (AOC 004292)
- 4/26/93** **Memo to Cardinal Bernardin regarding O'Brien. Memo states that O'Brien needs to look into a lengthy spiritual retreat with an after-care program and a spiritual director. It also says he needs to confront his past behavior. (AOC 004283)**
- 11/16/93** **Memo to O'Brien's file saying that O'Brien assured them that he would not "act out" again like he has in the past. He has taken precautions in his personal life and those situations would be handled properly the next time around. (AOC 004276 – AOC 004277)**
- 6/17/94 Memo to O'Brien's file saying that there may be an outcry from (redacted) if O'Brien gets a parish. (AOC 004274)
- 7/1/95 – Administrator, Queen of Angels
- 2/28/95 Memo to O'Brien's file stating that they need to talk to O'Brien about his relationship with (redacted). (AOC 004265)
- 5/29/96 – Pastor, Queen of Angels
- 5/29/02 – Pastor, Queen of Angels
- 5/26/05 Memo from McCluskey, the Professional Responsibility Administrator to the Review Board members summarizing O'Brien's file and the allegations against him. Beginning in the mid-1980s there were allegations of O'Brien engaging in affairs with adult females. In 1990 the Archdiocese received a report that O'Brien sexually assaulted a nun in about 1977. Other notes include O'Brien needing a monitor with him while on sabbatical in 1994. (AOC 004243- AOC 004244)

6/6/05 – Removed from Queen of Angels

- 6/21/05 Individual Specific Protocols pertaining to William O'Brien. He is to reside at Cardinal Stritch Retreat House, refrain from wearing his collar or any clerical garb. (AOC 004252- AOC 004253)
- 7/16/05 Minutes from Professional Responsibility Review Board detail sexual abuse allegation against O'Brien. The abuse consisted of kissing, oral sex and sexual intercourse. The board determined there was reasonable cause to suspect the misconduct occurred. (AOC 004218- AOC 004222)
- 10/15/05 Minutes from Professional Responsibility Review Board detail sexual abuse allegation against O'Brien. The abuse consisted of kissing and O'Brien masturbating on the survivor. The Board determined the allegation warranted additional investigation. (AOC 004213- AOC 004217)
- 10/17/05 Report of sexual abuse by O'Brien in Europe sometime prior to 1983. (AOC 004239)
- 10/21/06 Minutes from Professional Responsibility Review Board detail sexual abuse allegation against O'Brien. The abuse consisted of fondling, oral sex and masturbation. The Board determined there was reasonable cause to suspect the misconduct occurred. (AOC 004223- AOC 004229)

4/21/06 – Resigned from the priesthood

- 11/10/08 Anonymous letter from parents of students at Queen of Angels in Chicago saying that they saw O'Brien delivering food to Queen of Angels parish and was greeted at the door and ushered inside even though he was removed from ministry because of allegations of abuse of children. (AOC 004322)