

Reverend Mauro James Cautela

Biographical Information

YEAR OF BIRTH:	1948
YEAR OF DEATH:	2005
ORDINATION:	May 4, 1974

Employment/Assignment History

5/1974-5/1979	Our Lady of Joy, Pittsburgh, PA
6/1979-8/1983	St. Vitus, New Castle, PA
8/1983-5/1984	St. James, Sewickley, PA
5/1984-1/1989	Mother of Good Counsel, Pittsburgh, PA
1/1989-10/1992	St. Norbert, Pittsburgh, PA
10/1992-2/2000	Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Ellwood City, PA
7/1998-2-2000	St. Agatha, Ellwood City, PA
2/2000-8/2005	Holy Redeemer, Ellwood City, PA

Summary

According to records subpoenaed from the Diocese of Pittsburgh, Father Mauro Cautela was alleged to have inappropriately touched three young boys during the times that he respectively served as pastor of Our Lady of Joy, St. Norbert, Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and Holy Redeemer. Additionally, Cautela is alleged to have used church donations and other funds to further some of his relationships with young boys as well as to purchase homosexual pornography on church computers.

In a confidential memorandum dated August 9, 2006, Rita Flaherty, Diocesan Assistance Coordinator, detailed a telephone call she had with an adult male who reported that Cautela had abused him. He stated that between 1975 and 1981, when he was about 14 years of age, Cautela molested him multiple times while on church property and at Bear Lake in Seven Springs. The victim alleged that he was provided alcohol on some occasions as well. The victim reportedly brought these allegations up directly to Cautela in a voice-mail message in November 2003. Cautela claimed that the victim asked for \$20,000 in exchange for not exposing him as a pedophile. Cautela claimed that he deleted the message because he was upset by the allegation but reported the voicemail to Father James Young. Young said that the allegations had been forwarded to the Lawrence County District Attorney's Office. The records revealed that an Ellwood City Police Officer advised that a case number was never assigned to the matter out of respect for Cautela.

On July 7, 2005, Flaherty prepared a confidential memorandum regarding a telephone call she received from an attorney concerning possible sex abuse allegations against Cautela.

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Flaherty indicated that she and other representatives would want to meet with this potential victim.

On August 17, 2005, Diocesan officials met with the victim about whom the attorney had called on July 7, 2005 and his parents. This adult male alleged that Cautela sexually abused him between 1998 and 2005 when he was between 12 and 19 years old. He explained that Cautela had befriended him during a very difficult time in his life. He reported that he was inappropriately touched repeatedly by Cautela. This victim said that Cautela first encouraged him to begin lifting weights at a nearby gym. There Cautela would “massage” the boy to keep him loose, touching around his body including his upper buttocks and upper leg. While lifting weights, Cautela constantly touched the boy’s muscles commenting how much progress he was making. The victim also reported that on two different trips to Hilton Head, Cautela set up lodging to have the victim share a room and a bed with him. On one such occasion, the victim reported that Cautela began rubbing him down as he often did but ran his hands into the waistline of his shorts touching the top of his buttocks. The victim also reported that while on these trips Cautela was very insistent on applying sunscreen to the victim, partially exposing his buttocks in one instance while doing so. The victim further alleged that after he had suffered a staph infection, Cautela insisted on checking the boy for other abscesses on his leg. While pulling up his pant leg the victim incidentally revealed his scrotum to Cautela. After a football injury, the victim reported that Cautela came over his house while his parents were not home. Cautela began rubbing his leg, eventually sliding his hand up his shorts and further rubbing his groin.

The victim alleged that there were other males that Cautela was “helping” lift weights, massaging them in the same way as him. On August 23, 2005, he sent a 10-page letter to the Diocese in which he detailed his abuse.

The victim claimed that Cautela had purchased weight sets, a gym membership, a necklace, and a cellular telephone for him, gave the victim his car and paid for the insurance.

After the allegations were made, Cautela resigned from his position as pastor in August 2005 and was placed on administrative leave by the Diocese shortly thereafter in the same month. The Diocese advised the victim and his family that the allegations were forwarded to the Lawrence County District Attorney’s Office.

On August 23, 2005, Trooper Janice Wilson of the Pennsylvania State Police (“PSP”) took the initial information from the victim, and ultimately wrote a 24-page report of investigation detailing the abuse. The report of investigation included a number of allegations previously detailed above. Wilson noted the following in the narrative of the report:

- *In the fall of 1998 when the victim was approximately 12 years old, Cautela and the victim developed a close, friendly relationship after Cautela suggested that the victim begin lifting*

Summary

weights as a form of discipline while his parents went through a divorce.

- *Prior to working out, Cautela massaged the victim's thighs and buttocks to "loosen" the victim.*
- *Cautela exposed the victim to homosexual pornography.*
- *In the summer of 1999, the victim began to work at the rectory (unspecified) on a volunteer basis.*
- *Cautela requested the victim's help with one of the computers, and had the victim sit on his lap while he worked. Cautela would then massage the victim's legs, arms, shoulders, back, neck and buttocks.*
- *When the victim turned 14 in 2000, Cautela provided the victim alcohol and gave him two fifty dollar bills for his birthday.*
 - *The victim noted that Cautela would never give the victim gifts in front of anyone else.*
- *In August of 2001, Cautela took the victim and two additional minors to Hilton Head, South Carolina.*
 - *Prior to the trip, Cautela promised the victim that he would have his own room, however when they got to the condominium, they had to share a king size bed.*
 - *When the victim went to sleep in the same bed as Cautela, he began to rub the victim's back and proceeded to fondle the victim's genitals and buttocks under the victim's underwear.*
 - *The victim claims to have left, and slept on the couch for the remainder of the trip.*
- *In the fall of 2001, the victim injured his leg, and "Cautela would rub his leg, continuing up under his shorts, and rubbing his groin"*
- *The victim noted that Cautela had an extensive amount of homosexual pornography on his computer in the rectory, and would often have the victim delete Cautela's internet history.*

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- *On August 25, 2005, the New Castle Police Department received a complaint of unauthorized dumping in their dumpster. The trash contained VHS tapes and DVDs of nude wrestling and homosexual pornography, at least 23 envelopes addressed to Cautela and a framed photograph of the victim and his two siblings.*

In addition, Wilson contacted an individual regarding his two sons. According to the father, his two sons did not want to speak with the trooper, stating:

he could see no advantage to his sons to speak with me. He stated that what happened was thirteen or fourteen years ago, and they didn't want to talk about it.

Wilson also interviewed the first victim, mentioned above. According to the first victim, Cautela took him and a friend to a cabin that belonged to a friend of Cautela's at Bear Lake near Seven Springs. All three of them slept in the same bed because the other room was "*mice infested*." The victim stated that Cautela provided them beer. When they went to bed, the victim reported that Cautela "*pulled his shorts aside and was performing oral sex on [the victim]*." The victim then rolled over, pretended to wake up and went to sleep on a lounge in the room.

Wilson also interviewed the cook/housekeeper of the St. Agatha rectory regarding Cautela. The housekeeper stated that Cautela "*often had young men up in his room even though that was against the rules*." According to the housekeeper, Cautela told her that the young men needed to use his computer. The housekeeper also noted that the young man noted above frequently came to the rectory in 1998 and/or 1999.

Based on Wilson's report, PSP noted three potential charges: Endangering the welfare of children; corruption of minors; and indecent assault.

Between October and November 2005, Cautela wrote letters to the Diocese requesting that it postpone both his evaluation at St. Luke Institute and the Diocesan Review Board process. The Diocese accepted the proposal to defer the church-based proceedings.

According to Wilson, on December 9, 2005, the Federal Bureau of Investigation agreed to file federal charges against Cautela for the incidents that occurred outside the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Cautela suffered a heart attack and died in 2005, however, thus concluding the criminal investigation.

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On June 1, 2006, the second victim's attorney filed a civil lawsuit. The civil complaint stated:

Although aware of Cautela's history of sexually abusing children, including the plaintiff, the Diocesan defendants nevertheless made deliberate decisions:

- a. Not to notify police;*
- b. Not to notify Children and Youth Services or other civil authorities;*
- c. Not to suspend Cautela from his priestly duties and/or contact with children;*
- d. Not to warn parishioners at Holy Redeemer Church that Cautela posed a serious risk to children; and*
- e. Not to conduct an investigation to determine the identity of other children sexually abused."*

Ultimately, the second victim signed a "Full and Final Release" document on November 2, 2006, which released the Diocese of Pittsburgh of responsibility for the abuse. As part of the settlement, the Diocese of Pittsburgh agreed to pay the victim a total amount of \$250,000.