

Reverend Joseph A. Zmijewski, D.D.

Biographical Information

YEAR OF BIRTH:	1910
YEAR OF DEATH:	1968
ORDINATION:	December 6, 1936

Employment/Assignment History

8/18/1938 – 7/8/1942	Assistant, St. Ladislaus, Philadelphia, PA
7/8/1942 – 5/8/1961	Chaplain, Bernardine Sisters, Reading, PA
5/8/1961 – 10/27/1961	Defender of the Bond
10/27/1961 – 1/27/1964	Administrator Pro Tempore, St. Mary's, Reading, PA
1/27/1964 – 8/4/1967	Member, Diocesan Liturgical Commission
8/4/1967	Promoter of Justice, The Tribunal

Summary

On October 26, 2004, an adult woman reported to the Diocese of Allentown that she was a victim of child sexual abuse at the hands of a Diocesan priest. The victim grew up in Reading and had been a member of the St. Mary Greek church. She also attended St. Peter school on South Fifth Street in Reading. In 1950, while in the ninth grade, the victim met Father Joseph A. Zmijewski. She was in a new school and was experiencing unhappiness mixed with missing her friends at her previous school. The victim began regular counseling sessions with Zmijewski. Zmijewski was a registered psychologist and had been recommended by another priest.

Zmijewski proposed a course of alternative treatment. He directed the victim to come to his personal residence where he could help the victim through hypnosis. The victim complied and attended four hypnosis sessions with Zmijewski at his residence.

The victim became increasingly frustrated with this routine. After the first three attempts by Zmijewski to hypnotize her, she agreed to a fourth session. In an effort to expedite her "treatment," she feigned hypnosis during her fourth session. While she pretended to be hypnotized, Zmijewski instructed her to take off one piece of clothing after another. The victim was scared and complied until she was nude. Zmijewski then left the room for a short period of time. Upon his return, he instructed the victim to get dressed. The victim never returned for any further "treatment" and kept the incident to herself into adulthood.

Upon receiving the victim's report, the Diocese noted that the abuse would have occurred prior to the formation of the Allentown Diocese from within the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The Allentown Diocese referred the complaint to the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Zmijewski died in 1968.