

Reverend David Connell
Reverend Timothy Johnson
Jim Gross

Summary

David Connell and Timothy Johnson were Carmelite priests and Jim Gross was a lay person. No additional assignments could be located within Diocesan files. A record received from the Diocese in form of a memorandum written by the Victim Assistance Coordinator indicates that, in September 2007, a known victim reported he had been sexually abused by Gross, a basketball coach at St. Patrick's in Pottsville. He reported that the abuse began in the 1970's while he was in sixth grade. Information provided by the Diocese indicates Gross was employed at St. Patrick's in 1972. The victim did not provide any further details as to the abuse he endured from Gross.

In the summer of 1984, Gross resigned from teaching at St. Francis School in Minersville, Schuylkill County. In the narrative of his last evaluation from June 1984 is written, "He had too familiar relationships with his pupils." The victim reported that he knew Gross had later been charged for sexual abuse of a child but was acquitted. The victim stated he spoke with Gross' attorney, who confided in the victim that Gross was certainly guilty and he was only doing his job. The victim did not report where or when Gross stood trial.

The victim also reported that he was sexually abused by a Carmelite priest named Father David Connell and physically abused by a Carmelite brother named Timothy Johnson while attending Nativity High School. The abuse was reported to the Provincial of the Carmelites, Father Michael Kissane, in October 2007. The victim stated that his family's house had burned down and the Carmelites took him and his brother in and had them live in a priory. During the time he was living in the priory, the victim was sexually abused by Connell. The victim remembered drinking juice that Connell gave him and the next memory the victim had was waking up in his own bed naked, with Connell in the room. The victim had no memory of the prior evening but, on waking, he was bleeding from his rectum. On another occasion, Connell made him tea and after drinking it he began to get a bad headache. The victim reported he was then sexually abused by Connell. The victim gave no further details about the abuse but stated that, even though he was strong and athletic, he could not stop Connell from abusing him because he was drugged.

The victim went on to report to Kissane that he went to Brother Johnson for help and told Johnson about the abuse he endured at the hands of Connell and his former basketball coach Gross. The victim told Johnson he was going to also report the abuse to the police. Johnson told the victim not to report the abuse to the police but the victim insisted on reporting. At this point Johnson began to severely beat the victim with a big leather belt and told the victim that, if he reported the abuse to the police, he would beat him even worse. The victim reported to Kissane that the victim's brother was also abused by Connell but that his brother never spoke about it.

Summary

Kissane informed the victim that other allegations of sexual abuse had been made against Connell. A “Confidential Report,” presumably written by Chancellor Anthony D. Muntone, indicated that, in May 1976, it was reported to Muntone that Connell made a sexual advance on a male high school student while on a camping trip. While camping, Connell convinced the student that they sleep together to stay warm. The student reported that Connell “made a pass at him” while they were sleeping together. The student was able to rebuff the advance and Connell stopped. It was reported that the student was very upset over the incident and was a “reliable and trustworthy” individual. No further information exists as to any additional steps taken in regards to the sexual advance by Connell.

Kissane informed the victim that Connell was no longer with the Carmelite priests. Kissane told the victim that, after his time in Pottsville, Connell was assigned to a diocese in Texas but Kissane believed he was removed from ministry and no longer active. Kissane said he had no idea where Connell was. Kissane stated that Johnson had been ordained a priest and was living in retirement in Florida. Kissane indicated he would confront Johnson in the near future since he would soon be making a trip to Florida. No other information exists indicating whether Kissane followed through with confronting Johnson about the victim’s allegations. Other records show the Diocese and the Carmelite priests split a cost of \$4,500 for therapy for the victim.

Johnson died in 2016.