

Ex-Priest Pleads Guilty to Sodomy

Court Records Show He Admits Abusing 7 Boys

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A former priest who later worked as a basketball coach at Sacred Heart Catholic School in Northwest Washington has pleaded guilty to four counts of sodomizing a minor and has told police he sexually abused six other boys more than 50 times in the past six years, according to court documents, police sources and other law enforcement officials.

Many of the boys, who ranged in age from 10 to 16 when the incidents occurred, were associated with the Sacred Heart parish basketball team and met the man, Timothy Slevin, through athletic activities in the elementary school's gymnasium, court documents state. Some of the boys were abused as many as 20 times, according to the court documents.

Slevin, 47, was ordained a priest in 1965, took an extended leave of absence from the church in 1974 and was formally separated from the priesthood later that year. He subsequently worked as a personnel management specialist with the D.C. Office of Personnel and was a volunteer basketball coach at Sacred Heart when he was arrested last August.

On Dec. 2, before D.C. Superior Court Judge Bruce Mencher, he pleaded guilty to four counts of sodomizing a minor. On Feb. 19 he received a preliminary sentence of three to nine years in prison on one of the counts, pending a psychiatric evaluation.

He is to appear April 29 for final sentencing on the other three counts, each of which carries a prison term of up to 20 years and a \$1,000 fine. All the charges involve a single youth. Slevin is being held at the federal prison in Butner, N.C.

In exchange for his preindictment guilty plea, Slevin received immunity from prosecution for allegedly abusing the six other boys on many occasions since 1980. Slevin identified the boys in an Oct. 22 interview with D.C. police, according to a police report filed in court.

According to a sentencing memorandum filed with the court by the U.S. attorney's office, "Mr. Slevin has engaged in repeated, constant and calculated pedophilia [sexual child abuse] for 20 years." The memorandum, quoting from a presentencing report filed with the court, states that, while still a priest, "Slevin went through 'treatment' once before in 1972 following the discovery that he had been 'fondling children' connected with the Nativity Catholic Church" at 6000 Georgia Ave. NW.

Brady Johnson, Slevin's lawyer, said that about 15 years ago his client "was in therapy for other problems . . . but he had never received treatment" for pedophilia until recently. He said there was no evidence that Slevin's problem dates back 20 years.

He said that Slevin's pedophilia is compounded by alcoholism and that Slevin is receiving counseling and undergoing drug therapy for both.

The U.S. attorney's sentencing memo states that the boy Slevin pleaded guilty to abusing was a student at Sacred Heart, that the boy's family is "unable to comprehend how the church could not have known about Slevin's long history of pedophilia," and that if the church did know, how could it "still interpose him with young boys in a church-sanctioned activity?"

Asked if the church had been aware of the 1972 allegations, and, if so, what actions had been taken, Barrett McGurn, communications director for the Archdiocese of Washington, said, "In any case of that sort, you can be sure the archdiocese reacted in a responsible manner, but I would not have anything more for you on that."

Msgr. Joaquin Bazan, who was pastor of Sacred Heart Church, 16th Street and Park Road NW, from 1976 to 1984, said that Slevin's involvement with children "comes as a complete surprise . . . I had no idea there was a problem.

"What I find so difficult to understand is why nobody has said anything" about the incidents and Slevin's guilty plea, he said.

Sister Dorothy Victor, principal of Sacred Heart School, said that she had been unaware that more than one child had been sexually abused by Slevin. She said the school had not notified parents of the incidents.

Court documents state that the boy Slevin pleaded guilty to abusing first met Slevin in the fall of 1983, that the incidents took place at Slevin's apartment, and that at times he paid the boy money. The boy's grades suffered and he became increasingly morose, the sentencing memo states, adding that the boy has enrolled in another school and is receiving therapy.