

Father Robert L. Brennan

Father Robert L. Brennan, ordained in 1964, was made a pastor by Archbishop Bevilacqua in 1988. Since that time, the Archdiocese has learned of inappropriate or suspicious behavior by Fr. Brennan with more than 20 boys from four different parishes. He was psychologically evaluated or “treated” four times. Depending on the level of scandal threatened by various incidents, Cardinal Bevilacqua either transferred Fr. Brennan to another parish with unsuspecting families or ignored the reports and left the priest in the parish with his current victims. The Cardinal’s managers advised Fr. Brennan to “keep a low profile,” but never restricted or supervised his access to the youth of his various parishes.

When Cardinal Bevilacqua retired, Fr. Brennan was still a parochial vicar at Resurrection parish in Philadelphia, despite reports from parish staff that he had inappropriate contact with several students from Resurrection’s grade school. In June 2004, Fr. Brennan was appointed Chaplain at Camilla Hall, a retirement home for nuns.

Cardinal Bevilacqua responds to parental pressure while ignoring children whose parents remain unaware.

Archbishop Bevilacqua made Fr. Robert L. Brennan a pastor, appointing him in June 1988 to Saint Ignatius Parish in Yardley. In November of that year, the assistant pastor, Fr. John C. Marine, reported his concerns about Fr. Brennan to then-Chancellor Samuel E. Shoemaker. According to Msgr. Shoemaker’s notes, “from the first day Father Brennan appeared as pastor, his actions with young boys and teenagers caused Father Marine to feel very ill at ease.” The Archdiocese’s response to these reports, and far more explicit ones, was to measure whether the reports would lead to scandal, not to take action against Fr. Brennan.

Testifying before the Grand Jury, Msgr. Marine, now Regional Vicar for Montgomery County, claimed that the behavior he reported to Chancery in 1988 was that Fr. Brennan was occasionally “very warm and welcoming of [the altar servers] and basically giving them a hug” when they came into the sacristy. He added that Fr. Brennan was just “always warm and affectionate with all the parishioners,” and that his behavior with children was no different.

Monsignor Marine’s Grand Jury testimony is undermined by documentary evidence in the Archdiocese’s files. In 1988, according to Msgr. Shoemaker, Fr. Marine described Fr. Brennan’s interest in boys as “extreme.” Father Marine told the Chancellor

how “Father Brennan touched, rubbed the boys front and back, hugged them and kissed them in an inappropriate manner.” Father Marine told the Assistant Chancellor, John W. Graf, that Fr. Brennan forced the grade-school boys who worked in the rectory to sit on his lap. He was seen kissing one boy “on the face.” Father Marine said boys from Fr. Brennan’s prior assignment at Saint Helena’s were frequent visitors at the rectory, and he confirmed reports from the rectory cook and secretary that a college-age youth and a 13-year-old boy spent nights at the rectory.

Father Marine told Msgr. Shoemaker that he had observed this behavior since the beginning of Fr. Brennan’s assignment, that he was concerned something more might be happening, and that he had expressed his concerns to his friends, Msgrs. William J. Lynn and Alexander J. Palmieri, yet “he kept denying the obvious until Mrs. [M] confronted [him] on the issue concerning her son and insisted on some action.”

Mrs. M’s son, “Luke,” was a 13-year-old 8th grader at the parish school. Described by Fr. Marine as quiet and “handsome,” Luke was an altar boy and worked at the rectory answering phones in the evenings. Father Marine told the Chancery officials that Fr. Brennan had been observed engaging in “extreme hugging and forcing [Luke] to sit on his lap.” The cook, Ruth Wilson, had seen the boy “very embarrassed” with his head held down while Fr. Brennan held him tightly on his lap. Father Marine said that Luke was frightened of Fr. Brennan and asked not to work in the rectory when the priest was present.

Notes made by Chancellor Shoemaker of a November 13, 1988, meeting with Luke and his parents record that Luke told Msgr. Shoemaker that Fr. Brennan regularly held him tightly on his lap, so that the boy could not escape, and rubbed his “belly” and touched his “butt.” Luke said that this happened every time he worked at the rectory, and that it happened to other boys who worked there as well.

In response to the parents’ complaint, the Archdiocese sent Fr. Brennan for psychological evaluation. From their interviews with Luke’s parents, Fr. Marine, the rectory secretary, and the cook, the Archdiocese managers learned the names of six boys from Saint Ignatius with whom Fr. Brennan had been acting, at the very least, “inappropriately” (to use Fr. Marine’s term) — Luke, “Will,” “Jonathan,” “Colin,” “Archie,” and “Micky.” In addition, there were the two unnamed boys — the college

(Ursinus) student and the 13-year-old – who spent nights at the rectory. Father Marine mentioned a Cardinal Dougherty High School student who went out to dinner alone with Fr. Brennan when the priest was supposed to be at an important parish meeting. Father Marine also noted there were many families with boys that Fr. Brennan visited often – including a family named “Quinn,” with two teen-aged boys, who invited Fr. Brennan to stay at the shore. Three or four boys from Saint Helena’s parish were also known to be frequent visitors at the rectory.

Father Marine made a point of telling Msgr. Shoemaker that, aside from Luke’s, “the parents of the boys are unaware of Father’s behavior and no contact has been made by the parish to inform them.” The concern, then, was in keeping the information away from parishioners, not with protecting them.

On December 13, 1988, six months into his new job, Archbishop Bevilacqua met with Luke’s parents. According to notes kept by Msgr. Shoemaker, the Archbishop gave Luke’s parents an autographed photograph of himself and told them “several times that the welfare of their son was paramount in his mind.” The Chancellor also noted that the parents “intend no publicity or financial remuneration for damages.”

Archbishop Bevilacqua offered to pay for counseling for their son. There is no evidence in the Secret Archives file or elsewhere that he did anything about the boys whose parents were unaware of the harm Fr. Brennan was doing to their children.

Father Brennan resigns from Saint Ignatius; the Archdiocese sends him for treatment, but fails to provide his therapist with information necessary to assess the danger he presents to children.

On November 12, 1988, the day after Luke’s mother came forward and demanded action of Fr. Marine, Fr. Brennan was sent to Saint John Vianney Hospital in Downingtown. He remained there for 30 days. The Archdiocese instructed Fr. Marine to tell the parishioners of Saint Ignatius that Fr. Brennan was “on retreat.” Monsignor Edward P. Cullen, the Archdiocese’s Vicar for Administration, testified that Cardinal Bevilacqua was firm that, in all cases involving sexual abuse, parishioners were not to be told the true reason for removal.

On December 24, 1988, Fr. Brennan tendered his resignation as pastor of Saint Ignatius. He was living at that time at Saint Eleanor Church in Collegeville, where he remained as resident priest, with full faculties, until September 1989.

During the nine months Fr. Brennan was without formal assignment, Msgr. Shoemaker arranged for a second psychological evaluation by a therapist. The results of that outpatient evaluation were sent to Archbishop Bevilacqua on May 5, 1989. In stating that his “evaluation of Fr. Brennan does not indicate any history of sexual acting out or homosexuality,” The therapist relied on Fr. Brennan’s denials of any improper behavior, even having a child sit on his lap. Archdiocese managers, however, knew from Fr. Marine that such denials were suspect. Several people from the Saint Ignatius rectory told of Fr. Brennan’s habit of forcing young boys to sit on his lap. The therapist did not know any of this, however, because Fr. Marine refused to talk to the therapist. The therapist, therefore, qualified his opinion, stating: “However, I have not had an opportunity to talk to those who have made the allegations. . . .”

After getting the therapist’s report on the record, Archbishop Bevilacqua met on July 17, 1989, with Fr. Brennan to discuss his future. In a memo to the Secretary for Clergy, John J. Jagodzinski, Archbishop Bevilacqua wrote: “I assured him that he would be given a pastorate. I told him, however, that it might take several months before a parish adequate for his abilities would be available.”

Cardinal Bevilacqua appoints Father Brennan pastor of Saint Mary’s Parish – and begins receiving new complaints.

In September 1989, Archbishop Bevilacqua appointed Fr. Brennan the parochial administrator of Saint Mary’s parish in Schwenksville. In June 1990, he became the parish pastor.

From the start at Saint Mary’s, Fr. Brennan continued his inappropriate behavior with boys, often at Saint Pius X, a high school associated with the parish. On December 13, 1990, Fr. Gerald J. Hoffman, the principal at Saint Pius X, contacted Msgr. James E. Molloy, an assistant to the Vicar for Administration, to report that Fr. Brennan was, against rules, taking students out of classes. Although Fr. Hoffman had been told nothing of Fr. Brennan’s history, he was suspicious because all of the students were boys and

because the priest was arranging meetings with them furtively rather than following established procedure. The principal also reported that faculty members were concerned because a “cult” of students would “flock around” Fr. Brennan when he came to the school.

On March 18, 1991, five 7th-grade boys from Saint Mary’s grade school went to their principal, Karen Coldwell, to tell her they were having problems with Fr. Brennan touching them in inappropriate ways. The youths were altar boys or worked in the rectory answering the phone. Coldwell told the Grand Jury that she was unsure how to handle a sexual-abuse complaint against a priest and whether she was required by law to report it to civil authorities. The principal called the Archdiocese Office for Clergy for guidance. Monsignor Molloy assured her that she had done the right thing in bringing the information to the Archdiocese and proceeded to listen to her account of the meeting with the boys.

Monsignor Molloy recorded, third-hand, that the boys complained of Fr. Brennan’s “wrestling them in some fashion.” One boy, “Geoff,” reportedly was visibly upset and told of an occasion when Fr. Brennan had grabbed the boy’s hands and forced them toward his genitals (in a report sent to Archbishop Bevilacqua, Msgr. Molloy said that it was unclear whose genitals). Another boy reported fainting and waking to find Fr. Brennan rubbing his leg “up high” on the thigh.

Had Archdiocese managers questioned Geoff or any of the other students, they could have learned more alarming information. Geoff testified before the Grand Jury that, in addition to what he reported to the principal, Fr. Brennan touched his genitals sometimes when the priest “wrestled” with him. Fr. Brennan also once summoned the boy into the rectory sitting room where the priest was watching a pornographic movie on television.

Geoff also testified that high school boys from Saint Pius X were all over the rectory, including upstairs where Fr. Brennan’s bedroom was. The high school students were at the rectory when the boy arrived to work at 5:00 p.m. and were still there when he left at 9:00 p.m. He knew the names of two of the high school boys — “Ray” and “Graham.”

Geoff told the Grand Jury that another boy, “Conner,” had been so “freaked out” by what Fr. Brennan had done to him (Geoff could not remember specifically what the priest was said to have done), that he left the rectory and never came back. Geoff also provided to the Grand Jury the names of other 7th graders who he knew had complained among friends about Fr. Brennan’s behavior — “Bob,” “Arnold,” “Gus,” “Dimitri,” and “Josh.”

Immediately after hearing the principal’s report, Msgr. Molloy informed Msgr. Cullen as the Vicar General headed to a meeting with Archbishop Bevilacqua on March 18, 1991. Monsignor Molloy also called Fr. Joseph F. Rymdeika, a teacher at Saint Pius X High School who, months before, had complained to the principal about Fr. Brennan’s suspect behavior with students. Father Rymdeika testified before the Grand Jury that in their phone conversation he told Msgr. Molloy about behavior he found “very alarming.” Monsignor Molloy’s reaction, according to Fr. Rymdeika, was disgust.

Church officials fail to probe new allegations or monitor Father Brennan.

Yet, after hearing from both the high school and the grade school, the Archdiocese took no action either to investigate the new allegations or to remove Fr. Brennan. Church officials did track the progress of a report that Geoff’s parents made to the Montgomery County Office of Children and Youth, but the Grand Jury finds no evidence of Archdiocese concern for the welfare of the five 7th-grade boys or curiosity about what one of its priests had done to them. Monsignor Molloy’s reports do not record the boys’ names, other than Geoff’s. Monsignor Molloy notified both Msgr. Cullen and Archbishop Bevilacqua about the grade-school boys on March 18, 1991, when the principal came forward. He sent another memo to them on April 3, 1991, including a report about the complaints from the principal at Saint Pius X. Still the Archbishop ordered no action.

There is nothing in the files to suggest that Archdiocesan managers shared what they knew about Fr. Brennan’s behavior at Saint Ignatius, which he had been forced to leave in 1989, with either the grade school and high school principals or the civil authorities investigating Geoff’s family’s complaint. Working without benefit of what the Archdiocese knew – that Fr. Brennan had reportedly inappropriately touched numerous

boys, some of whom he invited to stay overnight with him at the rectory – the Montgomery County officials found the behavior toward Geoff alone insufficient to pursue charges.

Once the threat of legal action subsided, nothing more appears in the Archdiocese file. According to the Saint Mary’s principal, Karen Coldwell, Fr. Brennan continued with full access to the altar boys and those who worked in the rectory. She could not understand why the Archdiocese did nothing to supervise Fr. Brennan and said she took it upon herself to go over to the rectory occasionally to check on him. She was surprised that no one ever came to interview the boys.

Principal Coldwell explained that, rather than report to the civil authorities herself, she accepted Msgr. Molloy’s assurance that she had brought the allegations to the right place. She assumed the Archdiocese would report to the authorities.

Principal Coldwell testified that she was exasperated with the Church hierarchy in 1992 when she learned that, because of its inaction, another boy from her school, “Hal,” was subjected to Fr. Brennan’s unwelcome and inappropriate touches. Hal was a 7th-grade student and altar boy at Saint Mary’s when his mother complained to Archdiocese managers. On June 10, 1992, the boy told Msgrs. Molloy and Lynn that Fr. Brennan, while offering “private lessons” on serving First Communion, hugged Hal, “put his hand on [the boy’s] butt,” and forced Hal onto his lap. The boy also described how Fr. Brennan caressed his fingers as he held the sacramentary book during Mass. Hal said he knew Fr. Brennan did these things to other boys as well. His mother, who accompanied him to the interview, reported that Fr. Brennan took high school boys out to dinner and movies.

Hal told Church managers that Geoff had been victimized by Fr. Brennan and said that, even after Geoff’s molestation had been reported to civil authorities the year before, Fr. Brennan had tried to “touch” the boy again. Hal described what Fr. Brennan had done to Geoff as “weird things . . . touching him and stuff.”

After talking with Hal and his mother, Msgr. Molloy spoke to a nun who worked at Saint Mary’s rectory. She confirmed that Fr. Brennan grabbed at and wrestled with altar boys and high school students. She said he had “special ones,” including one whom she described as a “disturbed” boy named “Ricky” in the youth education program,

“CCD” (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine). She told Msgr. Molloy she had seen Fr. Brennan with his hand up Ricky’s back, underneath his shirt.

On June 10, 1992, Msgrs. Lynn and Molloy questioned Fr. Brennan about Hal’s and his mother’s allegations. He denied the allegations and suggested that Hal’s mother was angry that she had not been chosen as a soloist for Saturday Masses. The Archdiocese managers advised Fr. Brennan to “keep a low profile in the parish” where he was pastor until they “receive[d] further direction on the matter.”

Pressured by complaints and gossip, the Archdiocese again sends Father Brennan for treatment and, despite therapists’ warnings, Cardinal Bevilacqua reassigns him to a parish with a grade school.

On July 22, 1992, a month and a half after Hal’s mother brought allegations to the Archdiocese, Cardinal Bevilacqua removed Fr. Brennan from his parish and sent him for a third psychological evaluation. Father Brennan began a four-day outpatient evaluation at Saint John Vianney on July 27, 1992. One of the questions Msgr. Lynn asked the treatment center to answer was: “Should Father remain in his present assignment since there seems to be much gossip throughout the parish about his behavior?” This question is remarkable: its focus is on the alleged gossip rather than on the serious allegations that Fr. Brennan was having inappropriate physical contact with pubescent boys. Monsignor Lynn’s focus suggests that the protection of children was subservient to other interests, notwithstanding the Archdiocese’s claims to the contrary.

The therapists at Saint John Vianney recommended inpatient treatment. On August 6, 1992, Fr. Brennan resigned as pastor of Saint Mary’s, citing “reasons of health.” (One parishioner remembers being told to pray for Fr. Brennan, who was “being treated for Lyme Disease.”) On August 25, 1992, he returned to Saint John Vianney for treatment for the second time. This time, he stayed in treatment for nearly 10 months. The therapists at Saint John Vianney, while praising his hard work and personal growth, warned that Fr. Brennan, like “anyone with a recurring problematic behavior pattern presents future risk.” The therapists did not opine as to whether he could be safely returned to ministry, but said that if he was reassigned, it was important to have a strong

accountability system in place. They recommended that a ministry supervision team include the pastor of the rectory where Fr. Brennan would reside.

In the months following Fr. Brennan's June 14, 1993, release from Saint John Vianney, but before he received a permanent assignment, the Archdiocese managers placed no restrictions on Fr. Brennan's faculties to minister throughout the diocese. They received a letter from a parishioner reporting that he was engaged in ministry. In November 1993, five months after Fr. Brennan was released, one of the therapists from Saint John Vianney wrote to Msgr. Lynn that "it is a grave concern to the treatment team that Fr. Brennan does not have a functional ministry supervision team."

On November 23, 1993, Msgr. Lynn sent a memo to Cardinal Bevilacqua recommending that Fr. Brennan be assigned as assistant pastor at Resurrection of Our Lord Parish in Philadelphia. In recommending Fr. Brennan for an assignment to a parish with a grade school attached, Msgr. Lynn stated carefully that "Father Brennan is not clinically diagnosed as a pedophile or a homosexual." Monsignor Lynn never talked to 10 of the 11 boys whose names were registered in the Archdiocese's files as victims of Fr. Brennan. (He could have had the names of nine more had he asked rectory staff or the principal at Saint Mary's.) Yet Msgr. Lynn stated: "It should be noted there was never any genital contact between Fr. Brennan and the adolescents." The Secretary for Clergy named members of a "ministry supervision team," some of whom would never know they were on such a team.

Monsignor Molloy told the Grand Jury that he disagreed with Msgr. Lynn's recommendation. In an effort to fully inform the Cardinal of the risk that he believed Fr. Brennan's reassignment would present to teenaged boys, Msgr. Molloy forwarded four reports on the priest's mental health to the Cardinal. He also sent copies to Msgr. Cullen. Included in the packet was the Assessment Report from Saint John Vianney (July 27-30, 1992) from which Msgr. Lynn had reported that Fr. Brennan was "not diagnosed" a pedophile. The oddly worded diagnosis in the report was "rule out pedophilia"; what this diagnosis actually meant, as the Assessment indicated and as Msgr. Molloy explained, was that there were *in fact* indications of pedophilia, but that the therapists could not come to a *conclusive* determination on the diagnosis. Nowhere did they conclude that he was not a pedophile. Monsignor Molloy included a May 26, 1993, letter from another of

Fr. Brennan's therapists at Saint John Vianney, which noted that "anyone with a recurring problematic behavior pattern presents future risk."

Monsignor Molloy also included a letter, dated August 20, 1992, to Msgr. Cullen from the therapist who had evaluated Fr. Brennan in 1989 for the Archdiocese. The therapist wrote that at the time he had only "scanty historical information." The allegations, he said, "as far as [he] knew, were limited solely to having children sit on his [Fr. Brennan's] lap." The therapist said that after he submitted his evaluation, he "called Msgr. Father Jagodzinski and told him that I had strong suspicions that Fr. Brennan might have significant problems but that I had no clinical proof." His letter said that he had spoken recently with Msgr. Lynn "and informed him also of the limitations of my evaluation, my views, and conversations with Msgr. Father Jagodzinski."

The therapist in his letter warned Msgr. Cullen that in view of the recent allegations, his clinical opinion was that Fr. Brennan has very serious problems which might predispose this Archdiocese to major scandal and, possibly, litigation in the future. He also asserted that he believed that had he had the opportunity to speak to the parents of the children from Yardley [St. Ignatius parishioners] or with the associate pastor that the conclusions he reached in 1991 would have been very different.

This letter, too, was given to Cardinal Bevilacqua. Yet, despite one therapist's assessment that Fr. Brennan "presents future risk" and another's dire predictions, Cardinal Bevilacqua appointed Fr. Brennan assistant pastor at Resurrection parish, effective December 15, 1993. In approving the appointment, Cardinal Bevilacqua created an extraordinary series of instructions that he directed Msgr. Lynn to pass on to Fr. Brennan, confirming that the Cardinal was well aware of the danger posed by the priest.

According to the Cardinal's instructions recorded in Archdiocese files, Msgr. Lynn was to inform the pastor at Resurrection, Fr. Thomas C. Scanlon, of Fr. Brennan's background and direct the pastor to supervise the priest closely, and to report any suspicious incident. Father Brennan, moreover, was to "be kept as much as possible away from youth." Most strikingly, Fr. Brennan was "to be told to keep his hands off everyone.... He is not even to put his hand on someone's shoulder as a sign of congratulations or anything."

Finally, Msgr. Lynn was to check with legal counsel and ask, in the event of a “public relations crisis in this case, can we say that Fr. Brennan had been sent away and can we have a statement that he is not a pedophile?” The expression of such a concern and the advance plans to minimize liability for Fr. Brennan’s anticipated future misconduct speak for themselves about whether the Cardinal himself saw a risk in returning Fr. Brennan to active ministry.

Father Brennan remains an assistant pastor with full and unsupervised access to children for more than 10 years despite continuing complaints of inappropriate touching of boys.

Father Brennan began as assistant pastor at Resurrection on December 15, 1993. Despite the strict-sounding instructions officially recorded in the Archdiocese files, none of the restrictions was implemented. Monsignor Lynn did not make the pastor, Fr. Scanlon, aware of Fr. Brennan’s history. Nor was the pastor asked to supervise carefully or report suspicious behavior. Father Scanlon was never told to keep Fr. Brennan away from youth. And so, as assistant pastor, Fr. Brennan did all the usual things. He celebrated Mass, visited schools, provided counseling, and heard confession – even in the grade school – all the while socializing as a priest with the parish’s children.

Father Scanlon was never told he was a member of a “ministry supervision team.” He was not even aware there was supposed to be such a team. The “team” apparently never met, despite the therapists’ insistence that a supervisory group was crucial if Fr. Brennan was to continue ministering. Even the therapists’ repeated entreaties to Msgr. Lynn (in letters by one therapist in May and June 1994, and by another in November 1994) to meet just once with the alleged team, in order to explain each member’s role, went unheeded.

In the absence of any instruction to report suspicious behavior immediately, Fr. Scanlon ignored, for months, reports of Fr. Brennan’s inappropriate and sexual behavior with adolescent boys. The social minister at Resurrection, Marie McGuirl, testified that she repeatedly reported the priest’s inappropriate actions to the pastor and begged him to do something. Her entreaties were so persistent, she said, that the usually polite and gentlemanly pastor told her to “shut up” more than once. McGuirl told the Grand Jury

what she had reported to Fr. Scanlon. At least as early as the fall of 1995, McGuirl began to observe Fr. Brennan's improper, and sometimes bizarre, behavior. That fall, she saw Fr. Brennan grabbing a 15-year-old boy from behind and "wrestling" with him. The boy, "Stuart," was a sophomore at Father Judge High School and worked in the rectory. McGuirl described another occasion when she overheard Fr. Brennan speaking to Stuart in a "very seductive" manner, "like how a woman would flirt with a man."

McGuirl testified that Fr. Brennan had two 8th-grade boys – "Walt" and "Robbie" – in the rectory with him at times when they should have been in school. She said he took them on outings – to the mall, for ice cream, to a bookstore. She described in particular Fr. Brennan's enthusiasm as he prepared to take boys out in his car.

McGuirl also testified that she thought the church organist, Tina Nase, had reported to Fr. Scanlon that she had seen Fr. Brennan on top of a boy in the sacristy.

Father Scanlon finally reported these incidents to Msgr. Lynn and his assistant, Msgr. Michael T. McCulken, on June 11, 1996. The pastor said he was aware that Fr. Brennan had had some difficulties in the past, but was unaware exactly what they were. Even at this point, when it had become clear that Fr. Brennan was acting out again and that Fr. Scanlon did not know what he was dealing with, Msgr. Lynn was not forthcoming with information that might have helped protect the children he was being warned were at risk.

Monsignor Lynn began the meeting with Fr. Scanlon by describing Fr. Brennan's problems as merely "boundary issues." The Secretary for Clergy reiterated his carefully worded assurance that Fr. Brennan was "not diagnosed" a pedophile. Monsignor Lynn told Fr. Scanlon that the accusation of inappropriate behavior at Saint Mary's — which included at least seven children Msgr. Lynn knew of and multiple complaints — "was simply that he touched the altar boy's hand who was holding the book during Mass." Even after this meeting, Fr. Scanlon said he did not fully understand the extent of Fr. Brennan's problems or the danger that he posed to the children of the parish.

Although Msgr. McCulken's handwritten notes from the meeting include Walt's last name next to the description "very vulnerable," the typewritten memo to the official Archdiocese file omitted this. Also omitted was Msgr. McCulken's handwritten recording of Msgr. Lynn's comments: "may want to move but maybe shouldn't" and "powder-keg

situation I believe.” Father Scanlon reassured the Archdiocese managers that he did not believe there was “any parish-wide concern, just among rectory staff.”

Perhaps because of this assurance that parishioners were not aware of the priest’s continuing misconduct with boys, Fr. Brennan was never moved or sent for another evaluation. Monsignors Lynn and McCulken met with Frs. Brennan and Scanlon on June 13, 1996. At this meeting, Msgr. Lynn belatedly passed on the Cardinal’s instructions to Fr. Brennan never to touch a child. Monsignor Lynn acknowledged that he had never “fully” informed Fr. Scanlon about Fr. Brennan’s history. But Msgr. Lynn still did not tell Fr. Brennan or his pastor that Fr. Brennan was not to work with the youth of the parish.

Monsignor McCulken’s handwritten notes from the meeting used the initials “BC” to identify another boy whom Fr. Brennan was seen “touching” in the sacristy. Again, this identifying information was excluded from the typed memo to the official file.

A week after Fr. Scanlon’s allegations were brought to the Archdiocese, Fr. Brennan’s therapist reported to Msgr. Lynn, as he’d been doing for years, on Fr. Brennan’s supposed progress in therapy. In his letter, the therapist stated that Fr. Brennan had “shown positive growth in being able to establish and maintain boundaries.” Monsignor Lynn, a member of the phantom “ministry supervision team,” wrote back on June 28, 1996, thanking the therapist for his report, never mentioning the many “boundary” violations of which Msgr. Lynn had recently learned.

Cardinal Bevilacqua allowed Fr. Brennan to remain at Resurrection with no restrictions on his ministry or his access to children. Father Scanlon and Marie McGuirl, both of whom had complained to the Archdiocese about Fr. Brennan’s misconduct with boys, however, were both removed. The pastor appointed by Cardinal Bevilacqua to replace Fr. Scanlon, Fr. Michael J. Ryan, told the Grand Jury that he was told nothing about Fr. Brennan’s history. The new pastor further said that, as a result, he permitted Fr. Brennan full access to the parish youth.

Ignoring the therapists’ warnings of “risk,” of “serious problems which might predispose [the] Archdiocese to major scandal,” and of indications of pedophilia, Cardinal Bevilacqua told the Grand Jury that he viewed Fr. Brennan’s problems as

innocuous-sounding “boundary issues,” which “he has to take up with . . . himself.” The Cardinal expressed satisfaction with his administration’s actions that left Fr. Brennan in place with full faculties and access to parish youth despite complaints about his behavior with more than 20 boys from four parishes.

The Cardinal testified he did not recall being told of the 1996 complaints from Resurrection, and would not be concerned, in any case, if he had not been notified. He explained that only “serious matters” needed to come to his attention. Father Brennan’s behavior, including being caught on top of a boy in the sacristy, was merely a matter of “boundary issues.”

Monsignor Cullen told the Grand Jury that assigning Fr. Brennan to Resurrection and leaving him there, without restrictions, endangered the children of the parish. Nevertheless, Fr. Brennan remained an assistant pastor at the parish until June 2004.

Father Brennan is appointed Chaplain at Camilla Hall, a retirement home for nuns.

On June 28, 2004, Fr. Brennan was appointed Chaplain at Camilla Hall, a retirement home for the Sister Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The reassignment followed a finding by the Archdiocesan Review Board that Fr. Brennan’s actions did not violate the “Essential Norms” defining sexual abuse of a minor contained in the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* adopted in 2002 by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Despite this finding, Msgr. Lynn acknowledged in a letter to Fr. Brennan on June 10, 2004, that “there is convincing evidence that over a number of years, you have engaged in behavior that is entirely inappropriate and unacceptable for a priest.”

According to a September 23, 2004, memo from Msgr. Timothy Senior, who succeeded Msgr. Lynn as Secretary for Clergy in July 2004, Fr. Brennan does not now minister outside of the retirement home “on any regular basis,” although he is not precluded from doing so in the future. Monsignor Senior wrote that Fr. Brennan’s supervisor is aware of his situation. The priest has been warned that if his inappropriate behavior is ever repeated, he will be removed from ministry.

Father Brennan appeared before the Grand Jury and was given an opportunity to answer questions concerning the allegations against him. He chose not to do so.