

Hierarchical cover-up of the crimes of pedophile bishop Anthony J. O'Connell

Synopsis: The diocese of Knoxville, Tennessee, is the center of a decades-old cover-up of the crimes of pedophile Bishop Anthony J. O'Connell, first bishop of Knoxville. Patterns of behavior of a cardinal, an archbishop, two bishops and a monsignor highlight failure to report to police and wanton disregard for the safety of children. Evidence shows the cover-up began at least in 1994 and continues today.

1963 – Anthony J. O'Connell is ordained in Diocese of Jefferson City, MO. Become teacher at St. Thomas Aquinas Preparatory Seminary in Hannibal, MO. Was here for 25 years as teacher and then rector/principal.

1988 – O'Connell is appointed first bishop of the Diocese of Knoxville, Tennessee.

1993 – Matt Cosby tells counselor and 2 faculty members at Kenrick Seminary operated by the Archdiocese of St. Louis, MO, that O'Connell molested him at STAS. None of these faculty members and the counselor reported O'Connell.

1994 – T.L. tells Bishop Lawrence Boland of Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph about abuse by O'Connell at STAS. Also Boland tells T.L. that the dioceses “like to keep these things quiet.”
<https://10afqfuiq4lj512k.vistaprintdigital.com/article-2-phillip-o'connor>

http://www.bishop-accountability.org/news3/2002_04_19_Stearns_SuitSays_John_Tulipana_2.htm

1994 – In May 1994, Christopher Dixon tells Bishop Michael McAuliffe of Diocese of Jefferson City, MO, of O'Connell's molestation at STAS. The diocese wants to give Dixon \$65,000. Dixon hires a lawyer. In November 1994, (five months later) Dixon settles with the Diocese for \$125,000 and signs a “mutual” silencing agreement. Police were not notified. O'Connell remains bishop of Knoxville despite the allegations.

1994 – On January 25, 1994, Justin Francis Rigali is appointed Archbishop of the Archdiocese (Metropolitan See) of St. Louis, MO. Archbishop Rigali is installed on March 16, 1994, as Archbishop of St. Louis. The Archdiocese of St. Louis contains three dioceses: Jefferson City, Springfield-Cape Girardeau, and Kansas City-St. Joseph. Archbishop Rigali is the supervisor, the person accountable for each of these dioceses and for the actions of each of the bishops of these three dioceses. Rigali was one step above McAuliffe and Boland on the supervisory chart of the Catholic church. He is in charge of Kendrick Glennon Seminary. Father Richard F. Stika is Rigali's Chancellor of the Archdiocese of St. Louis and Rigali's personal secretary at the time of the reports against O'Connell.

Note: Is it not reasonable that McAuliffe and Boland would report to Rigali, their supervisor, about the allegations against O'Connell, the \$125,000 payoff (over \$300,000 in today's currency), and the silencing agreement? No police report or investigation.

Rigali and Stika cover up the abuse by Anthony J. O'Connell, who is the sitting bishop of Knoxville, Tennessee. He will remain bishop of Knoxville for 4 more years.

1998 – O'Connell is appointed bishop of Palm Beach, FL, taking over for Bishop Keith Symons who is forced to resign after admitting molesting boys. A pedophile takes over for a pedophile. O'Connell remains in Knoxville from 1995-1998 without Rigali or McAuliffe reporting to police and is allowed to be promoted once again to the larger diocese of Palm Beach.

2002 – Following the Boston abuse revelations, Dixon says he can no longer remain silent and goes public. Anthony J. O'Connell resigns as bishop of Palm Beach saying that he molested “one, maybe two” boys when at STAS in Hannibal. He goes quickly to Mepkin Abbey in Monck's Corner, SC, lives there ten more years and dies in May 2012. He retains his priestly faculties despite being an admitted pedophile and dies as bishop emeritus of Palm Beach.

Note: Was this quick get-away to Mepkin Abbey previously planned by the hierarchy in case O'Connell's status as a pedophile was outed to the public?

2002 – Joseph Edward Kurtz is the 2nd bishop of Knoxville. His vicar general Father Xavier Mankel and his chancellor Father James Vann Johnston aid Kurtz in minimizing the crimes of O'Connell, rebranding him as a “good man misunderstood.”

1. Allows O'Connell's name to remain on a school building. A year passes before name is removed.
2. Allows O'Connell's portraits to remain on display in churches and schools of the diocese..
3. Allows Council of Catholic Women to celebrate O'Connell's 40th anniversary as a priest in 2003 after admission of pedophila and exile to Mepkin Abbey.
4. Allows revisionist history of O'Connell that takes over the diocese, resulting in the re-Oconnellization of the Knoxville diocese.

2009 – Monsignor Richard Frank Stika becomes 3rd bishop of Knoxville, completing the St. Louis circle to keep the cover-up contained. Rigali retires to live with Stika which bolsters the cover-up potential.

Conclusion: A cardinal, an archbishop, two bishops and a monsignor orchestrated a complicated cover-up which continues today. They have been rewarded with promotions in a pattern protecting St. Louis and Knoxville which are the central areas key to the cover-up.

1. Kurtz from Knoxville to the Archbishop of Louisville (2008) which puts him in charge of all of Tennessee and Kentucky.
2. Johnston from Knoxville as a priest to Bishop of Springfield-Cape Girardeau (2008) and then bishop of Kansas City-St. Joseph (2015). Both of these are suffragan or subordinate dioceses of the Archdiocese of St. Louis along with the diocese of Jefferson City where the cover-up began.
3. Stika from Monsignor in the Archdiocese of St. Louis to Bishop of the diocese of Knoxville. (2009)
4. Rigali as cardinal from Archdiocese of Philadelphia to retirement and with Stika in the diocese of Knoxville (2011).
5. Mankel to Monsignor (2006) Vicar of Knoxville diocese for three bishops: O'Connell, Kurtz and Stika.

There is no coincidence here. All the actions point to a cover-up aimed at protecting the public image of the Church so that the truth that the hierarchy knowingly kept a pedophile in the office of bishop even though there was every indication that he was dangerous to children would remain hidden. Deliberate evasion of civil law and failure to report to authorities is evident. What started with Rigali and Stika in St. Louis has come full circle with Rigali and Stika now in Knoxville to manage any loose ends of the cover-up. When victims of O'Connell in Knoxville come forward, this cover-up will be a monumental story.