

TIMELINE OF DOCUMENTS REGARDING MICHAEL BENHAM¹

5/28/76 – Ordination

5/28/76 Cousins letter to Benham appointing him Associate Pastor at St. John Nepomuk Parish, Racine, effective June 15, 1976. (11596)

6/15/76 – Associate Pastor, St. John Nepomuk Parish, Racine, WI

1/5/82 Hornacek letter to Benham informing him that he should expect to be transferred sometime in June 1982 as a result of reaching his 6th year at St. John's. (11545)

1/28/82 Kolanda letter to Priest Personnel Board requesting that Benham not be transferred from St. John's. (11546)

6/1/82 Janicki letter to Benham appointing him faculty at St. Joseph High School, Kenosha, effective July 13, 1982. (11544)

7/13/82 – Faculty, St. Joseph High School, Kenosha, WI

5/16/88 Weakland letter to Benham appointing him pastor of St. Charles Parish in Burlington effective June 16, 1988. (11539)

6/16/88 – Pastor, St. Charles Parish, Burlington, WI

2/20/96 Vicar Log Entry No. 68 (CCS). Indicates discussion with Benham regarding intervention he had with his four priest friends related to alcoholism. They thought he might work his alcoholism through alone with his doctor. Options are for Benham to attend Guest House or a doctor in Burlington for his alcohol problems. (11459) (11460)

2/23/96 Vicar Log Entry No. 70 (CCS). Indicates Benham does not wish to attend Guest House now, but will attend an evaluation after Easter. (11460)

10/28/96 Vicar Log Entry No. 249 (CCS). Indicates a parishioner called to report Benham's problem with alcohol. Attempting to arrange time at Guest House. (11460)

¹ This timeline was principally prepared by Jeff Anderson & Associates PA; Whyte Hirschboeck Dudek S.C. provided limited corrections to certain entries and assisted with redactions of abuse survivor information that could potentially have identified individual abuse survivors.

- 10/30/96 Vicar Entry No. 254 (CCS). Indicates Benham is at a treatment center in Waukesha for counseling. He has a smoking problem, alcoholism, depression and eating disorder. (11460; 11459)
- 11/7/96 Vicar Log Entry No. 1043. Sklba learned that that Benham had entered treatment in Waukesha related to ongoing concerns for Benham's health in terms of not eating, experiencing some toxic effects of alcohol abuse, and continuing to include in nicotine. Sklba concurred with the need to establish some dialogue with the doctor before Benham is allowed to return home to the parish in order to achieve some assurance that the issues are indeed being confronted by Benham.
- 7/28/97 Vicar Log Entry No. 588. Sklba clarified that Kerstein had full authority to insist on alcohol assessment and treatment at Guest House. (11459)
- 7/30/97 Intervention held on July 29, 1997. Benham has agreed to treatment for possible alcoholism; is going to Guest House August 13, 1997. (11459)
- 8/11/97 Vicar Log Entry No. 31 (TFK). Indicates Benham arrived back from Ireland and is ready for treatment for alcoholism at Guest House. (11458) (11459)

8/13/97 – Guest House

- 8/13/97 Physician letter to Kerstein thanking him for his referral of Benham to Guest House for treatment of alcoholism. (11523-11524)
- 8/17/97 Benham letter to Weakland regarding his arrival at Guest House on August 13. (27223)
- 8/20/97 Kerstein letter to physician at Guest House extending gratitude for the care of Benham and indicating Benham was involved in a brief treatment in 1996. (11522) Previous treatment appears to have been related to alcoholism, depression, an eating disorder, and smoking. (11460) (11459)
- 2/17/00 Benham letter to Weakland asking to extend Benham's term of office as pastor at St. Charles Borromeo in Burlington. (11621)
- 3/16/00 Weakland letter to Benham denying his request for an extension at St. Charles Borromeo. (11480)
- 4/19/00 Weakland letter to Benham asking him to become Pastor of St. Patrick Parish, Elkhorn, effective June 20, 2000. (11479)

6/20/00 – Pastor, St. Patrick Parish, Elkhorn, WI

- 8/1/02 Robertson (Diocese of Helena) letter to Cusack verifying whether Benham is a priest in good standing in the Archdiocese and if he is authorized for ministry at St. Patrick Parish in Elkhorn, WI. (27237)
- 8/8/02 Cusack letter verifying that Benham is incardinated and in good standing in the Archdiocese. (11624)
- 11/03 Report of abuse in November 2003 that occurred in 1976-1980 when individual was 11-14 years old. (39405-39406)
- 1/7/04 Barbara Reinke entry for file of [redacted] stating that they are waiting for Racine County DA to either take action or release the case so the Archdiocese can start an investigation. (37193)
- 1/13/04 Racine County Attorney letter to Cusack stating that they will most likely not prosecute because of the statute of limitations. (11637)
- 1/23/04 Dolan Precept placing upon Benham the following obligations: 1) refrain from contact w/ minors; 2) cease all public ministry; 3) avoid places of temptation of sexual morality; 4) cease relationships under pastoral counseling; 5) revoke ability to hear confession; and 6) refrain from clerical attire or identification in public. (11467)
- Strategies for Emergency Action/Intervention. Convening of emergency team by the Chancery upon notification from a reliable source that allegations are substantiated, allegations to be published, or other public attention to be given regarding a case of misconduct by a priest. (11573-11575)
- 1/26/04 Entry for file of [redacted] by Barbara Reinke stating that Benham acknowledged the abuse occurred as described by individual and indicating that Benham has been removed from ministry. (37192)
- 1/31/04 Dolan letter to members of the St. Patrick Community about the sexual abuse allegations and Benham no longer serving as their pastor. (11631)
- 2/1/04 Media release indicating that Benham substantiated the allegation of sexual abuse and was asked to step aside from active ministry on January 24, 2004. (11629-11630)
- Benham letter to Dolan asking him to accept his resignation as Pastor of St. Patrick's Parish, Elkhorn. (11466)
- 2/2/04 Dolan letter to Benham accepting his resignation from St. Patrick's, asking Benham to consider use of a canon lawyer, and formalizing restrictions on any ministry. (11465)

- 2/5/04 Reinke letter to [redacted] stating that Benham was immediately removed from all ministries and that the Archdiocese will help in healing him and his family. (37200-37201)
- 4/19/04 Dolan letter to Cardinal Ratzinger asking that Benham be dismissed *ex officio* from the clerical state and indicating that Benham is not willing to apply for voluntary laicization. (11464) (27270)
- 7/8/04 Dolan letter to parishioner stating that although he can forgive Benham, he cannot reassign him to a different parish. (11468)
- 8/10/04 Agreement and Mutual Release between the Archdiocese and [redacted] for the abuse he suffered by Benham. (56329-56332)
- 9/27/04 Dolan letter to Cardinal Ratzinger indicating that Benham will not voluntarily undergo laicization and that he celebrated a funeral mass, which he did not have permission to do. (11463)
- 7/19/05 Angelo Amato letter to Dolan stating that Dolan should give Benham one more opportunity to “request the grace of a dispensation from the obligations of the Priesthood.” Also, given the fact that no other accusations of abuse occurred since the 1980 incident, Dolan may want to consider giving Benham a limited form of ministry within the diocese. (11461)
- 10/20/05 Draft Dolan letter to Angelo Amato indicating they approached Benham one additional time to ask him to seek voluntary laicization, but he stated he is unwilling to do so. Given the seriousness of Benham’s offenses and the length of time over which they occurred, he does not see any way that Benham could be restored to any ministerial position without grave scandal. (39411)
- 12/6/06 Dolan memo to Sklba, Frederick, Cusack, and Zimprich regarding the most recent communication from CDF. Memo states that Benham will not seek voluntary laicization and that Dolan would never be willing to allow Benham to have some limited form of ministry in the Archdiocese, stating that Benham has true remorse for his actions, and asking advice with how address Benham’s future. (27303-27204)
- 12/7/06 Cusack letter to Dolan indicating that she advises limited use of prayer and penance and to re-submit a petition for laicization in addressing Benham. (27305)
- Zimprich memo to Dolan indicating that he would recommend in favor of laicization. (27302)

- 2/13/07 Dolan letter to Benham indicating that he has been in direct violation of the rescript that he is on occasion publically exercising his priestly ministry. (27315)
- 2/18/07 Benham letter to Dolan explaining why he was reading prayers in his clerical collar. (27265-27266)
- 2/22/07 Dolan letter to Angelo Amato renewing request to have Benham dismissed ex officio. (39412-39413)
- 3/1/07 Dolan letter to Benham renewing the rescript against him that he may not exercise any public ministry as a priest, nor present himself as one. (27294)
- 1/15/08 Dolan letter to Angelo Amato indicating that Benham refuses to seek voluntary laicization, violated penal precept by presiding at a Funeral Mass, further violations have been reported such as anointing of the sick and wake services. (39414-39415)
- 6/12/08 Support and Safety Plan for Benham. Continue to see physician for consultation and therapy as needed, meeting monthly with Zimprich, spiritual direction, continue with AA meetings and will not frequent places where young males hang out/congregate. (49018)
- 7/21/08 Dolan letter to Benham indicating the Archdiocese cannot send monthly sustenance check to him anymore. The Archdiocese is in serious financial difficulties, recently letting 20 lay employees go; main reason they are in such straits is, as they have publicly stated, because of the towering expense of dealing with the results of the crisis caused by the clergy sexual abuse scandal. (49019)
- 8/27/08 Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith declaring that Benham be dismissed from the presbyterate. (39419-39422) Latin translation. (39421-39422)
- 11/3/08 Luis F. Ladaria, Titular Arch. Of Thibica, letter to Dolan. On 27 August 2008 the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI decreed that Benham is dismissed ex officio et pro bono Ecclesiae from the clerical state and is, moreover, released from all obligations of the Sacred Priesthood, including that of celibacy. (39416)
- 12/2/08 P. Joseph Augustine Di Noia CDF letter to Dolan requesting the Archdiocese make a contribution of \$550 to support the work of the Dicastery. (39424)

1/12/09 Dolan letter to Luis Ladaria, Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith, informing him Benham refused to sign the decree, which he is now returning. (39426)

2/28/12 – Deceased

Undated Benham's assignment history, accusations against Benham, civil proceedings, measures adopted by the Archdiocese, sustenance provided by the Archdiocese, and response/recourse by the cleric. (11472-11473; 39408-39409)