LELAND J. SMITH – TIMELINE

5/29/53 - Ordained

5/30/53 Letter from Bishop of Winona to Smith appointing him assistant pastor at Saints Peter and Paul in Blue Earth, MN. (LS000042)

6/12/53 – Assistant Pastor, Saints Peter and Paul, Blue Earth, MN

12/17/54 Letter from Bishop of Winona to Smith appointing him assistant pastor at Saint John in Rochester, MN and instructor at Lourdes High School, effective December 31, 1954. (LS000047)

12/31/54 – Assistant Pastor, Saint John, and instructor, Lourdes High School, Rochester, MN

8/1/55 Letter from Bishop appointing Smith assistant pastor at Saint Wenceslaus in Jackson, MN, effective August 17, 1955. (LS000048)

8/17/55 – Assistant Pastor, Saint Wenceslaus, Jackson, MN

8/15/60 Letter from Bishop appointing Smith assistant pastor at Saint Casimir in Wells, MN. (LS000049)

8/30/60 – Parochial Vicar, Saint Casimir, Wells, MN

4/24/61 Letter from Bishop of Winona to Smith appointing him administrator at Saint Casimir’s Parish. (LS000054)

4/24/61 - Administrator, Saint Casimir, Wells, MN

6/10/63 Letter from Bishop of Winona to Smith appointing him administrator of Saint Rose of Lima in Avoca, MN and Saint Mary in Lake Wilson, MN and also Assistant Pastor at St. Gabriel’s, Fulda, effective July 3, 1963. (LS000059)

7/3/63 – Administrator, Saint Rose of Lima, Avoca, MN, Saint Mary, Lake Wilson, MN; Administrator, St. Gabriel’s, Fulda, MN
7/30/63 Letter from Bishop of Winona to Smith appointing him area director of the Boys Scouts for the Western part of the Diocese of Winona. (LS000061)

3/23/64 Letter from Bishop of Winona to Smith appointing him pastor at Saint Rose of Lima in Avoca, MN and Saint Mary in Lake Wilson, MN. (LS000062)

8/9/67 Letter from Bishop of Winona to Smith appointing him pastor at Holy Trinity in Rollingstone, MN and Immaculate Conception in Oak Ridge, MN, effective August 16, 1967. (LS000068)

8/16/67 - Pastor, Holy Trinity, Rollingstone, MN and Immaculate Conception, Oak Ridge, MN


7/15/75 – Pastor, Saint Charles Borromeo, Saint Charles, MN

6/1/83 Letter from Bishop of Winona to Smith appointing him pastor at Saint Joseph in Rushford, MN and Saint Mary in Houston, MN, effective June 23, 1983. (LS000077)

6/23/83 – Pastor, Saint Joseph, Rushford, MN and Saint Mary, Houston, MN

6/24/87 Letter from Apostolic Administrator to Smith appointing him pastor at Immaculate Conception in Wilson, MN, effective July 3, 1987. (LS000082)

7/3/87 – Pastor, Immaculate Conception, Wilson, MN


6/30/89 – Pastor, Saint Joachim, Plainview, MN and Immaculate Conception, Kellogg, MN

7/1/91 – Pastor, Saint Agnes, Kellogg, MN

4/1/93 Smith signs that he received the Diocese Sexual Misconduct Policy. (LS000085)

5/3/94 Two women called Fr. McCauley to report that a relative was sexually abused by Smith. (LS000099)

5/4/94 A priest of the diocese (unknown) met with a survivor of abuse by Smith and took notes of the meeting. Abuse took place in approximately 1969-1970, when the survivor was in about 3rd or 4th grade. Abuse continued for a nine month period on about a weekly basis. (LS00100-102)
5/9/94  Memo from Fr. McGrath to Bishop Vlazny about their meeting with Smith addressing a report of sexual misconduct against Smith. Smith denied the allegations and recalls the victim as a “problem kid.” He also denied drinking heavily at the time. (LS000103)

5/13/94  Memo from Bishop Vlazny to placed Smith on administrative leave. (LS000105)

5/18/94  Memo from Bishop Vlazny to Saint Luke Institute staff, referring Smith for an evaluation because of an allegation of sexual misconduct with a minor. Vicar General Gerald Mahon met with a survivor of abuse by Smith on May 4, 1994. The survivor reported that Smith called students after class to stay with him and sexually abused them. The survivor’s brother was also sexually abused, as was another boy. The survivor wants Smith to get help. He says “everyone knew Smith was “queer.” Memo also says that one year ago (1993) there was a report from a previous pastor where Smith served about Smith’s sexual misconduct. Smith also denied those incidents. There have been other reports about Smith’s “touching adults inappropriately.” (LS000104-105)


8/30/95  Letter from Reverend Richard Thompson OSC to Bishop Vlazny. Thompson met with Smith about his recovery and public ministry. Thompson asked that Smith not say mass publicly before speaking with Thompson or Bishop Vlazny first. Thompson recommends limited ministry and sees potential for public ministry in the future. (LS000131)

5/15/96  Letter from Thompson to Bishop Vlazny saying that after speaking with Fr. McGrath, it does not seem advisable to expand Smith’s ministry. (LS000132)

7/1/96  Letter from Bishop Vlazny sending Smith to Saint Luke Institute for a continuing care workshop. (LS000133)

5/19/97  Letter from Thompson to Bishop Vlazny reflecting on Smith’s recovery. Smith had a difficult time accepting his alcoholism and sexual addiction. Once he started attending AA and SA meetings, Smith began making progress toward recovery and understanding. Smith is not pursuing expansion of his ministry. (LS000134-135)

3/9/99  Letter from Chancellor Ed McGrath to Smith outlining the scope of his faculties. Smith is to limit his ministry to nursing homes, not hear confessions of minors, not exercise public ministry, and never be alone with a minor. (LS000144)
Arrangement for Chaplain services at Saint Anne’s Hospice, Winona. Smith will be supervised by the Diocese of Winona and he wishes his name not be published. (LS00090-92)

Email from survivor of abuse by Smith asking who in the Diocese to contact to report Smith’s abuse. Smith showed up at his mother’s funeral a few years ago. (LS000146)

Email from Fr. McGrath to abuse survivor providing contact information and expressing willingness to meet. (LS00148)

Email from abuse survivor to Fr. McGrath saying he does not want to meet. He was abused by Smith at age 13 or 14, when Smith grabbed his hand and stuffed it down Smith’s pants, trying to get the survivor to masturbate Smith while driving to the rectory. (LS000147)

Email from Fr. McGrath to abuse survivor advising him that the Diocese responds to such reports by contacting the civil authorities, when necessary and by communicating with their attorney and insurance company. (LS00151)

Email from abuse survivor to Fr. McGrath. The abuse was in about 1966, possibly in late summer. (LS00152)

Memo from Fr. McGrath to Smith’s file. He and Mr. Thompson confronted Smith about an allegation of abuse against him. Smith initially denied the abuse but later acknowledged that the fondling was consistent with his modus procedendi. (LS00153)

Letter from Bishop Harrington to Smith. Smith is not to: 1) participate in public ministry; 2) present himself as a priest; 3) wear clerical garb. He may celebrate private mass only. He also has three options: 1) dispensation from clerical state; 2) retirement; or 3) a life of prayer and penance in a monastery. (LS000155)

Memo from Bishop Harrington to Fr. McGrath, Hoeppner and PJ Smith. Harrington met and reviewed restrictions with Smith, reiterating to him that he is not to say mass in nursing homes and he cannot present himself as a priest. (LS00156)

Letter from Bishop Harrington thanking Smith for his service to the Diocese on his 50th anniversary of Ordination. “You have enriched the lives of so many people, young and old.” (LS00094)
2/19/05 Letter from an abuse survivor to Bishop Harrington. The survivor says he was sexually abused by Smith many years ago and has not come forward out of shame and embarrassment. (LS000157)

1/17/07 Letter from Fr. Becker to Bishop Harrington. **Smith presented himself as a priest in roman collar at a funeral.** “Although no official statement has been given to us on Smith’s status, I seem to recall he is not to present himself as a priest.” (LS000095)

12/10/13 Emil from Msgr. Heiting to William Daniel- Bishop Quinn would like Smith to request laicization from the Pope but Quinn wants there to be a letter from him asking Smith to do so. He wants this letter out before the list of accused priests goes out on Monday.

12/10/13 Draft letter to Smith from Bishop Quinn asking him to seek laicization and saying he does not know why this process was not begun years ago. Also informs him that his name will be released as one of 13 with credible accusations against him and it will say his laicization is “in process.”

12/13/13 Email from Matt Vuorela to Joel Hennessy- Smith never received a request for donations to the campaign and would like to make a donation, as much as $20,000. Matt asks if they can quickly get an appeal letter to him since it is a “slam dunk gift/pledge” that could come in before years end.

12/27/13 Smith letter to Bishop Quinn, stating he reluctantly agreed to petition for laicization.

3/5/14 Rev. Frerichs memo to Msgr. Colletti re: Smith laicization petition. “The Handbook forCanonical Processes for the Resolution of Complaints of Clerical Sexual Abuse of Minors” states that a priest seeking laicization needs to clearly state his reasons and circumstances for doing so. If Smith fails to do this and does not appear sincere, will ask Bishop Quinn to decide how to proceed. If bishop proceeds with votum requesting Smith’s petition be granted, Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith may request additional evidence of Smith’s voluntary intent. If Smith refuses to readdress the Holy Father then, may need to begin involuntary dismissal from clerical state. Sample letter for Smith to submit attached.

3/21/14 E-mail from Rev. Frerichs to William Daniel, **attaching draft of Episcopi Votum (dated 3/25/14) from Bishop Quinn to Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith** in support of Smith’s voluntary petition for laicization. Summarizes Smith’s background and suspension from ministry. Smith’s laicization would minimize scandal in Diocese of Winona and Minnesota. Minnesota Legislature passed **so called** Child Victims Act (CVA). **Diocese of Winona** received no claims yet involving Smith, but has received several negligence claims regarding other offenders since CVA enacted, “anticipates several more, and **anticipates eventually bankruptcy as a result of these lawsuits.**” Negligence claims
difficult to overcome if accused priest retains clerical status, so Smith’s laicization would aid congregation “so that the goods and reputation of the Church may be protected.” “Past victims of abuse and the general public will receive this favor as one promoting a safe environment within the church.”

4/11/14 Document dismissing Smith from the clerical state by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.