



Rev. Anthony Bevilacqua. (File photo)

Posted on Tue, Feb. 22, 2011

Documents: Bevilacqua tried to send abuser to another diocese

By David O'Reilly

INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

As an auxiliary bishop in the Diocese of Brooklyn, the Rev. Anthony Bevilacqua recommended decades ago that a sexually abusive priest who wanted to return to Brooklyn following treatment "seek an assignment outside the diocese," according to documents released today by an advocacy group.

"These documents raise the question of whether this was Bevilacqua's way of dealing with [abuser] priests when he was in Brooklyn and in Pittsburgh," said Barbara Blaine, president of the Survivors' Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP).

The letters concern the Rev. Romano J. Ferraro, starting in 1973 and continuing until 1983, shortly before Bevilacqua's relocation to the Diocese of Pittsburgh. Ferraro was convicted in 2004 of raping a seven-year-old boy. At his trial he admitted having abused many prepubescent boys.

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia did not immediately respond to The Inquirer's request for comment.

Standing outside the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul, Blaine called for the district attorneys in Brooklyn and Pittsburgh to investigate clergy sexual abuse of minors during Bevilacqua's time in the dioceses.

Bevilacqua, 87, served as the Roman Catholic archbishop of Philadelphia from 1988 until his retirement in 2003. In 2005, a Philadelphia grand jury accused him of a massive and "immoral" cover-up of priests known to have sexually abused minors.

Prior to Philadelphia, he was bishop of the Diocese of Pittsburgh from 1983 to 1988, and served as priest of the Brooklyn diocese starting in 1949. He was made an auxiliary bishop in 1980, after serving many years as an adviser to the diocesan bishop.

Copies of the documents can be found at lawyer Jessica Arbour's blog at <http://bit.ly/f5JxDT>.

Contact staff writer David O'Reilly at 215-854-5723 or doreilly@phillynews.com.

[A docile tradition protects the church](#)

[Archdiocese puts Lynn on leave](#)

[Still a sanctuary to them](#)

[Protesters demand changes](#)

[Bevilacqua role with pedophile priest bared](#)