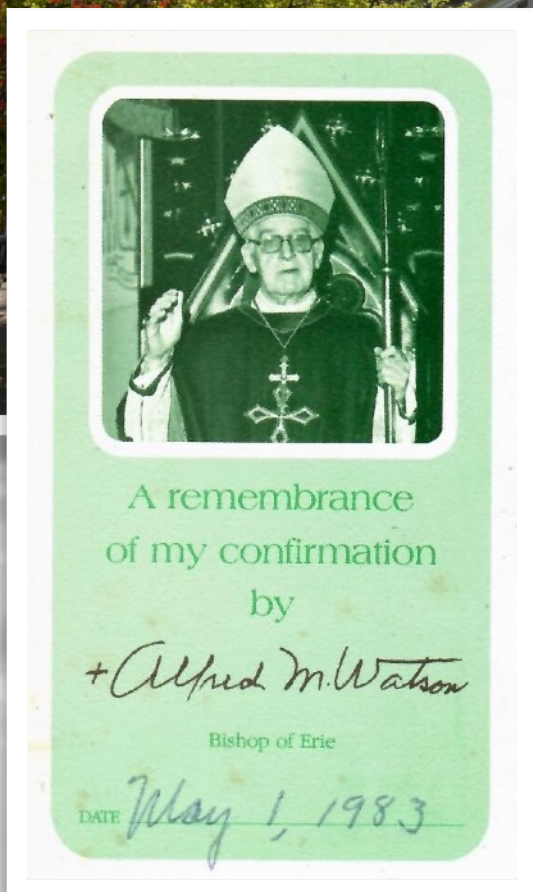


Portfolio Artifacts:

Caregiver
Bishop Alfred M. Watson

#1. As a Father of the Second Vatican Council, it is ironic that Alfred M. Watson's tenure as Bishop of Erie was cut short by priests who criticized him as an obstacle to the reforms he voted to enact. While in retirement he resided with Bishop Michael J. Murphy and Msgr. Robert J. Smith. He would later be criticized by Bishop Donald Trautman for not keeping records of abuser priests, and named by Bishop Lawrence Persico as a bishop who covered up abuse in spite of credible complaints. Watson is reprobate for that, as are every one of his successor bishops who did the same but are not on public lists for having "failed our children".



A personal friend of Msgr. Daniel J. Martin, Watson came out of retirement to offer the Sacrament of Confirmation to the 8th grade class of St. George Church in 1983.

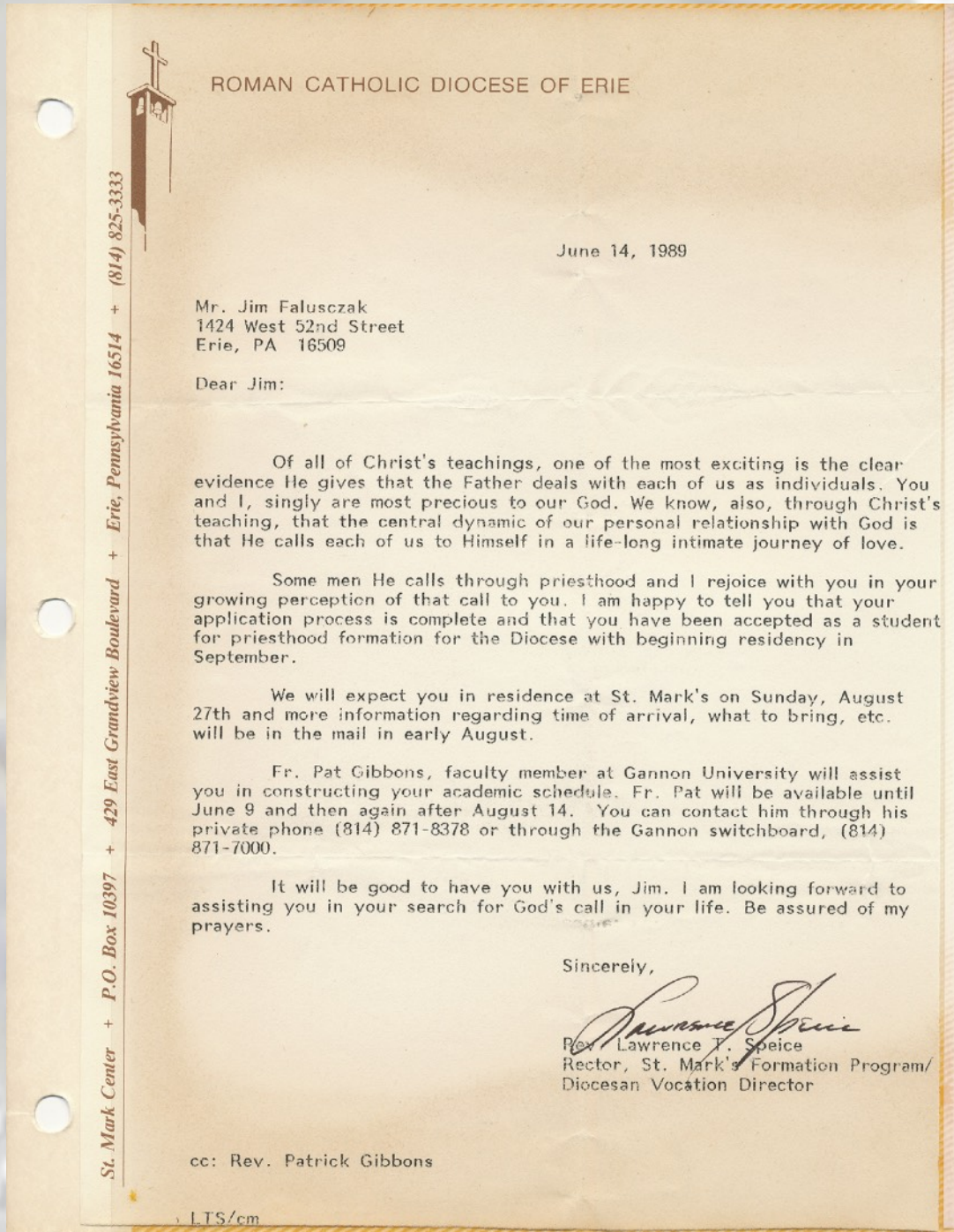
Diocese of Erie Chancellor Msgr. Robert Smith hired me as a caregiver to Bishop Emeritus Watson for the Summer of 1989. It felt like such an honor to be one of Watson's caregivers.

Bishop Watson died a few months after I entered seminary, although not in the manner suggested by an official history of the Diocese of Erie.

Portfolio Artifacts:

Caregiver
Bishop Alfred M. Watson

#2. This was the summer that I prepared to enter the seminary. Fr. Lawrence T. Speice had, by this point intervened with the Pennsylvania State Police to protect his friend Fr. Michael Amy from being charged with child sexual assault. Two decades subsequent to that intervention, Speice allowed Amy to stay in the penthouse of the seminary, where a seminarian and I witnessed him traffic a child in the summer of 1989.



Fr. Speice was my Rector for two years, and Director of Seminarians and Vocation Director until my priesthood ordination. An earlier friend of Msgr. Daniel J. Martin, he is featured on page 392 (et alii) of the 2018 PA Grand Jury Report in reference to his involvement with Fr. Michael Amy, Fr. Salvatore Luzzi, and Fr. Leon Muroski.

Portfolio Artifacts:

Caregiver
Bishop Alfred M. Watson



Holy Spirit medal given to me at Confirmation, blessed by Watson

The path from Confirmation to the priesthood seemed like a logical one. Watson and I would talk frequently about what it meant to be a priest, and it was clear that he preferred that vocation over being a bishop.

I was very much in thrall of the Emeritus Bishop, his successor, and the life in the bishop's residence that I was around for that time. I had been an altar boy since fifth grade, but it felt like rarefied air to be helping the bishop say mass, being joined many times by the sitting bishop and the Chancellor of the diocese. I was 20 years old.

As a pre-seminarian, Bishop Watson shared stories from priesthood, and the materials he still received from the United States Catholic Conference and National Conference of Catholic Bishops. While most of the work was mundane I took everything in, and the access I had made it easy to ignore and forget questionable events unfolding around me.

The experience had gone to my head, and apart from the legitimate discernment for priesthood I undertook in the seminary, I carried a torch for Bishop Watson into priesthood, to a point where I was blackballed by his detractors who became my supervisors.

Bishop Watson had a steady stream of visitors, regularly including Msgr. Jack Slater, the Cathedral Rector and close friend, and Msgr. Lawrence Brandt, diocesan vice-chancellor, and once-member of the Vatican Diplomatic Corps.

One of his family's cherished memories is Fr. Watson pacing the lakefront of their west Erie County cottage, saying his prayers, with his nephews in tow imitating him.

I am grateful to them for giving me the lions share of Watson's books when he passed.



Bishop Watson's family cottage

Portfolio Artifacts:

Caregiver
Bishop Alfred M. Watson

Cardinal John Krol, Archbishop of Philadelphia, leads the committal prayers for the priest he ordained bishop:



L-R vested: (Now Fr.) John Malthaner, Bishop Michael J. Murphy, Cardinal Krol, (later bishop) Joseph P. McFadden, Deacon James Weiss, Fr. Gregory Kirsch, (now Fr.) Rob Horgas, (now Fr.) Gerald Priscaro, & me as a new seminarian.

Murphy of the Diocese of Erie, Krol of Philadelphia, and McFadden for both Philadelphia and Harrisburg dioceses are featured prominently in the respective grand juries that investigated them.

Portfolio Artifacts:

Caregiver
Bishop Alfred M. Watson

I wrote a spiritual testament to Watson in my journal of the time, which I now mostly disavow; not so much because I say I was enchanted by church life, as I was in the grips of a type of Stockholm Syndrome writ corporately. Bishop Watson was an icon of implied backroom ideals. That he was a product of his times doesn't excuse his brazen unwillingness to address the crimes of a brother priest. That type of bishop still exists, and bodies still lay in their wake.

Of all the things we talked about, Watson never brought up his friend Msgr. Daniel J. Martin.

Funeral prayer card



- and the last day this summer
when you called me your friend.

The most important lesson you taught
me over the summer was that even
though "growing old is hell" (ie "life is hell")
that indeed is where we find Christ -
in our struggles with illness and
finally

Jan 4, 1990 2:30 p.m.

Lord
Please
eternal
in loved
memory

P.S.

† Bishop Watson died at 2:30 p.m. today while he
was playing the organ at St. George's.

"Only this I want - but to know the Lord,
and to bear his cross, so to wear
the crown he wore."

Lord, please don't let me forget the things
we talked about this past summer.

I won't forget the first day we met this
summer when you yelled at me for forgetting
to give you your pills.

I went to mass at the Cathedral today. Bishop
Krautman, bishop Murphy, and eight priests
had the mass. Bp. Watson's nephews were
there. Bp. Krautman said at the end of
mass that Bp. Watson's memory can be
preserved by praying for vocations. He said
that we need priests who will live
out Bp. Watson's witness. I felt that
he was speaking to me. I was the
only seminarian there.

On the one year anniversary of Watson's death