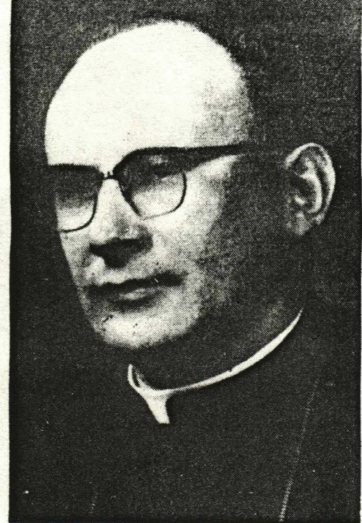


SEX-CHANGE PRIEST GIVES CHURCH A PROBLEM

Why Father William became a woman



SHE'S an attractive soft-spoken woman, pink lipstick and nail polish emphasising her femininity. Yet Nancy Ledins was once Father William Griglak, a Roman Catholic priest, whose sex-change makes her—technically—the first-ever woman priest.

It was because William Griglak never officially asked to be released from the Church when he left in 1969 that this strange position becomes possible.

The Church in turn never officially notified him that he was no longer a member of the priesthood.

After a disastrous marriage William finally decided to follow his instincts and become a woman. "But," Nancy says, "the official position of the church is I'm still a priest and still a 'he'. And they consider me a rotten priest. I'm not in good standing with the church."

As a novice priest, William tried to come to terms with his longing to be a woman.

"I would talk to my spiritual advisers about it

and they would always tell me to forget it.

"One of them told me, 'If God meant you to fly he'd have given you wings. You're a male. All you've got to do is take a look and see.'

"The last time I mentioned it I was told never to bring it up again."

But Father Griglak still joined the Society of Most Precious Blood and went to work as a missionary in various parts of America.

"I did rather well as a priest in Colorado.

"But I did feel that this need to be a woman was going to break loose in me."

It was 10 years after joining that he finally decided to face the problem. A year after leaving the Society he married.

"When you're desperate, you're desperate. I figured a good sexual relationship would answer all the questions about who I was. It didn't of course, even though the woman I married is a wonderful person. She knew about my problem but I assured her marriage would be the answer."

The couple split up after

eight years and William began his preparations to become a woman.

"I wrote a letter saying what I was doing and why, and had 300 copies made. I sent these to people I knew. Most of them remained my friends. But the priests who were my colleagues were disappointed and angry.

"My mother's reaction was concern over the suffering she knew I must have endured before reaching my decision."

His preparations included undergoing testing, counselling, hormone injections and living as a woman for two years.

Now, at 49, Nancy divides her time between two jobs. Under a research grant from a private foundation she interviews transsexuals, taking them into their past lives through hypnosis. She hopes to determine if the sex people usually were in the lives they lived before has any influence on their sex in this life.

Her second job is working in a beauty salon.

She's hoping her findings will suggest ways of establishing a more satisfying life for transsexuals without having to resort to sex-change surgery. But, even here, she's run into problems.

"When word got out about

Before . . . the Catholic priest and missionary

what I was doing I got some very angry reactions from transsexuals and church people. Some transsexuals were afraid my research findings might result in their not getting sex-change surgery.

"I got obscene phone calls, my tyres slashed and someone poured dirt down my petrol tank."

There were also angry calls from church people.

But the official view is still confused. A spokesman for the Roman Catholic Archdiocese in Los Angeles,

where she lives, says: "To say that this person is now a female priest is technically correct, and yet completely out of the boundaries of the thinking of the church. The intention of the church which ordained her is that the priesthood shall be a male priesthood. Yet, ordination is forever. In her case there's an anatomical female, but a real theological problem."

And as for Nancy, she misses her work as a priest. "I always wanted to be a priest and still do."

News Bits

Haggerston swimming baths in Whiston Road, Hackney, but only for members of the North London Naturists Swimming and Social Club, on the understanding that no sightseers are to be allowed in.

London Evening Standard.

CHIP-SHOP manager Bob Hillier, of Wimborne, Dorset, found a grenade in his potato peeler after loading it with French spuds.

The Sun.

THE owner of an Australian cockatoo stolen in Hutton, Weston-super-Mare, is withholding its name in the hope that the thief will return it. The bird bites anybody who doesn't address it by name.

Daily Express.

WOMEN are nearly twice as likely as men to buy themselves an ice-cream, according to a survey. The figures for last year were 20.9 per cent of women and 12.5 per cent of men.

Daily Mail.

THE wives of 40 soldiers from the Staffordshire Regiment are expecting to become mums soon. Nine months ago the regiment—and wives—returned from duty in Northern Ireland for a holiday near Blackpool.

Sunday Mirror.

PARACHUTIST Lewis Mosley, of Sheffield, who dropped his wallet from 7000 ft 10 months ago, has been given it back by somebody who found it in long grass near Bridlington Parachute Centre. It still contained his £50 worth of 'chuting vouchers.

Daily Star.

NEWLYWED Carla Buckle, 19, of Brixham, Devon, has become step-mother to a man twice her age. He is her 62-year-old husband's son by a previous marriage.

Daily Mirror.

NUDE mixed bathing has been given the go-ahead by Hackney Council at its



After . . . Nancy Ledins, the 49-year-old trans-sexual now helps those who want to change their sex