such groups under its well-developed program on alcoholism.

**PIUS XII SUPPORTED RIPLEY**

The second objection encountered by Ripley came from the local bishop (and some other hierarchs) who felt a special treatment facility for priests—especially one that was not under ecclesiastical control—would give unfavorable publicity to an already “shameful” problem. Bishop Treacy, of La Crosse, locked Ripley’s first institution, ordered him off diocesan property, and forbade priests to participate in the program. Ripley persuaded a canon lawyer to represent his case to Pope Pius XII in Rome by whom he was vindicated. According to Ripley’s memoirs, the Holy Father personally requested Cardinal Stritch of Chicago and Cardinal Mooney to support Ripley and Guest House.

The Detroit Cardinal invited Ripley to establish the Guest House in his archdiocese, endorsed his concept of lay ownership and management, gave him financial support and later loaned him funds to purchase the Scripps estate at Lake Orion, Michigan. Ripley dissolved the previous Guest House corporations in Minnesota and Wisconsin, and together with two other A. A. lay persons formed a new Michigan non-profit corporation. He opened the doors of Guest House in May, 1956, and broke ground for a second facility in 1967 at Rochester, Minnesota, in the shadow of the Mayo Clinic. From the time of his retirement, due to illness in 1968, until his death in 1974, he spent much of his limited energy trying to promote interest in a treatment facility for alcoholic religious sisters. He did not succeed.

Between Father Pfau’s National Clergy Council on Alcoholism and Austin Ripley’s Guest House, there developed a growing conviction among Catholics that something should, and could, be done about alcoholic priests. This “hidden” problem has been brought more and more into open discussion. A stream of literature about alcoholism is being produced, and it is unfair to say with Arthur Cain that “few fields of inquiry in the entire human endeavor have had so much written about them—with so little to say.” Vander Veldt and McAllister remarked in 1962 that “earlier publications related specifically to the problems of alcoholism in a group of clergymen have not come to our attention.”

More recently Sorensen did a doctoral dissertation at Yale on a small sample of Catholic and Episcopal alcoholic priests.

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22 There are many anecdotes, not yet published, of Ripley’s struggles with some members of the hierarchy. As his work proved successful he received various forms of recognition, like the Insignia Medal of Fordham University in 1966. See Henry Hammett, “Austin Ripley and Alcoholic Priests,” _America_ December 24–31, 1966, p. 831.


25 Andrew A. Sorensen, _The Development of Alcoholism Among Roman Catholic and Protestant Episcopal Clergymen_ (Yale University dissertation, 1971).