

September 15, 1997

Reverend Richard G. Lennon
2121 Commonwealth Avenue
Brighton, MA 02135

Dear Father Lennon,

I am writing in regard to the sexual misconduct to which Reverend Gary E. Balcom has admitted.

Within the Archdiocese, I am responsible for managing the ministry and treatment of those priests accused of sexual misconduct. Two priests have preceded me since this office was created in 1991: John B. McCormack and Brian M. Flatley. The information I will convey in this letter is drawn from our collected experience, reports by members of the staff, and reports from licensed mental health professionals.

Father Balcom was born in 1946. He is the youngest of three sons. Both brothers were considerably older than he. He was shy around his peers and somewhat overweight. He was also set apart because of his intellect, which is in the superior range. His childhood was relatively free of trauma, except for two incidents. When he was five, molten lead fell on his face and hands. He was hospitalized as a result. The accident left no noticeable scars. When he was six, a fifteen year old cousin exposed himself to him. He reported this to his own mother.

Father Balcom entered the seminary college in 1964. He was ordained in 1972.

By his own report, Father Balcom first noticed a sexual interest in men while he was in the seminary. He says he had sexual contact with another seminarian while a student. While a Transitional Deacon, he had a sexual encounter with a lay man. Since 1973, Father Balcom reports he has had sexual relations with eight or nine adolescents, all but one having gone through puberty. He says he was abusing alcohol at the time, which made it easier for him to approach the boys.

These incidents came to light because one of the young men had begun to ask Father Balcom for money. Over the course of a year, Father Balcom gave \$6-8,000 to the man (now in his mid-thirties) rather than be exposed. This exhausted his savings.

The priest was sent for psychological evaluation in late 1992. He was open about his past activities. It was recommended that he undergo residential treatment, which he did, for a period of fourteen months. The period was especially lengthy because Father Balcom attempted suicide seven months into his stay. During the stay he became comfortable with his homosexual orientation and seriously addressed his dependence on alcohol.

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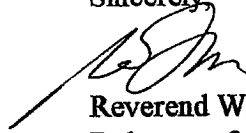
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From the time of his discharge in April, 1994, Father Balcom has been living in a religious community West of Boston. He has been involved in psychotherapy and secular employment. When he was asked to consider residing in the monitored setting offered by the Archdiocese, his resolve to seek laicization was strengthened. He said he had considered the application before, but that illness had delayed him.

Father Balcom has accepted responsibility for his actions and cooperated in treatment. He sees no future in priestly ministry and is firm in his decision to seek laicization.

If I can be of further service to you in this matter, please let me know.

Sincerely,



Reverend William F. Murphy
Delegate of the Archbishop

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