

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM

file

TO: Rev. Charles Higgins ✓
FROM: Sister Rita McCarthy, CSJ R/M
DATE: August 16, 2001
RE: [REDACTED] (Rev. Joseph Birmingham)
DOB: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

GT REDACTION

[REDACTED] (his wishes) came to the Chancery today for an interview. I had spoken with him on Memorial Day, May 28, regarding an allegation against Father Birmingham. At that time we set up an appointment for him to meet with me on Tuesday, June 5. I mailed him directions to the Chancery; however, he was unable to keep that appointment due to a change in his work schedule. [REDACTED] works with the [REDACTED] Fire Department.

I found [REDACTED] to be an extremely personable and likeable man. He is one of 12 children, one of whom has Down's syndrome and leukemia. His parents are alive and very active. His father still does coaching. [REDACTED] expressed a deep love and fondness for his parents and his siblings. The family support one another and celebrate on many occasions. He revealed his long held secret to them three years ago and they have been very understanding.

The first incident with Father Birmingham occurred when [REDACTED] was about 10 or 11 years old. He and his brother were on a ski trip with Father. That night when his older brother was taking a shower, [REDACTED] was alone in the bedroom with Father. He exposed himself before [REDACTED] and asked him to touch him. Father, in turn, began to touch [REDACTED]'s genitals. [REDACTED] recalls being very uncomfortable and confused. When Father left, he began to cry. His brother found him this way and asked him what was wrong. He remembers telling his brother that he was lonesome, and brushed it off. Thereafter, whenever he met Father at the Youth Center or the rectory, Father would put his arm around him and touch him inappropriately.

He never told his parents. He knows that his father would have accosted Father and his mother would have felt guilty for putting him in harms way. She had arranged for Father Birmingham to help [REDACTED] because he had told her that he wanted to be a priest.

[REDACTED] was married until three and a half years ago when his wife, [REDACTED] filed for divorce. They have two girls, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] is on a 14-day rotation at work so he has the girls for 6 days each time period. He and Jennifer do not allow the divorce to upset the children. They remain close to both families.

[REDACTED] has been hospitalized three times, always in October. The first time he was almost in an accident. He seemingly lost his way and was confused. Two years ago he was hospitalized for eight days for depression. He neglected to explain the third time. However, he has been seeing Dr. Robert Demeo in Chelmsford and Dr. Ronald Winfield for medication. He is taking Zoloft and another medication, the spelling of which he could not recall (something beginning with zy—).

We then discussed his therapy. [REDACTED] asked if I knew of a therapist who specializes in his problem. He feels that Dr. Demeo skirts the issue. He said that he would have more confidence in someone with whom we deal. His insurance is about to run out, so this would be a good time to make a change. Dr. Demeo was a fill-in for a woman doctor he previously had. I suggested Diana Villegas, Ph.D. She would be excellent for him and convenient distance wise. [REDACTED] signed a waiver, expressed his thanks, and left stating that he felt much better.