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CONFIDENTIAL MEMORANDUM

FROM: Most Reverend William Murphy
DATE: March 20, 1997
SUBJECT: Reverend James Wilson

On Tuesday, March 18, 1997 Father James Wilson accompanied by Father Peter Gori visited me in my office. With me was Father Richard Lennon.

The purpose of the meeting was to explain to Father Wilson the planned move to a residence and what that would entail. I pointed out to him that he would be expected to be in residence five days a week, that he would have whatever supervision was appropriate for his therapy and that he would be receiving only \$524.00 per month as do the retired priests at Regina Cleri. I pointed out that there was an alternative which would be that he could request that he be relieved of his priestly obligations. If he chose that route Father Lennon was present to help him and that in addition to that the Archdiocese would help him with transitional assistance so that he would be able to move from his current status to an independent life without suffering unduly.

Father Wilson in his response thanked me for the meeting and for the honesty of it which he considers to be the most important element in this discussion. He said he wanted to "get things off his chest" and use this opportunity to raise questions about the adequacy of how the Archdiocese is dealing with this problem and preparing men for priesthood so that they would not fall into the same situation that he fell into. He said that this was the first time that he had been told ahead of time why he had to come to Chancery, that this was an important positive step, and that he did not know what further things the Archdiocese was doing but that he did think the Archdiocese needed to do a lot more than what they are doing. In addition he added that the priests who are resident with him in Weston all are waiting for the outcome of this meeting because they are eager to know how it would go and how the bishop would handle him. He has a number of people who are praying right now for this meeting and he is hopeful that this will have a positive effect.

I rehearsed with him the various possibilities, thanking him for his honesty and pointed out to him in fact that the Archdiocese is responding responsibly to these situations. I pointed out that there have been no new priests in two years with these kinds of allegations, that we have programs in effect at the seminary, and that the Pastoral Institute has done programs on boundaries, therefore I feel quite satisfied that the Archdiocese knows how to and does respond well. I said to him that he was only the first and that I intended to invite all of the priests in this situation to come to visit with me and that I intended to deal with them one by one and that therefore my concern is not so much with the group things but what each person needs in his life. I emphasized to him once again that if he voluntarily wished to seek a dispensation we would be happy to assist him in it and that in my judgment this would be something that would be very helpful for him given his age of thirty-six and the prospect of his spending the rest of his life in this residence.

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Father Wilson readily acknowledged that he knows that he is not going back to pastoral ministry, he wants to give this serious thought. He then will be back in touch with me. I suggested several days. He spoke of the Triduum as being a time of prayer and reflection.

He acknowledged that the ball is back in his court. He was thankful for the meeting. We left in a very cordial atmosphere.

Remarks:

I was frankly disappointed with this meeting. I had hoped that he was further along than this. I question what is happening in the therapy. That he could be, after four years, still in such an indeterminate state. It was clear that he wanted this meeting to vent somewhat an anger which I think is much deeper and more profound than he let show. I was disappointed that he made this the primary focus of his contribution. I was also disappointed that he saw himself as in some way a representative of "the group" who are waiting for him to come back and bring them the news. I did emphasize with him that each person is being dealt with individually, but I get the sense that he is finding some kind of protection by going into the group. I was disappointed that he did not ask more pointed questions about the process toward dispensation. This was not simply an oversight because Father Gori twice asked him to raise any questions he wanted as did I. Father Lennon indicated his willingness to be of any help he could be.

It seems to me that we have someone at a far less developed state of readiness than I had been led to believe before this.

If he does not call before Easter, I will call him immediately after Easter.

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