

OFFICE FOR CLERGY

FROM THE DESK OF: Reverend Michael T. McCulken ^{DJ7M}

TO: File

DATE: October 27, 1994

ITEM: Interview

RE: Reverend Thomas F. Shea [1964]

CONFIDENTIAL

Father Shea [TFS] was interviewed at the Office for Clergy by Reverend William J. Lynn [WJL] and Reverend Michael T. McCulken. The reason for the interview was to review with Father Shea allegations that had been received through the Archdiocesan attorney, Mr. John O'Dea.

WJL clarified with TFS that he was assigned to Saint Helena from 1969-75.

WJL stated that the claims included genital abuse at the Rectory and Cape May. He asked TFS if he had a home in Cape May. TJS stated that parents were in Stone Harbor and he was staying in a motel at Cape May. TFS picked up and a friend and they spent the weekend with him. After which time he drove them back home. WJL stated that another man was also making allegations and was going to put everything into writing to Mr. O'Dea. As soon as the letter is given to WJL, he will apprise TFS about what is alleged.

WJL then asked TFS if he knows and if it is true. TFS replied that he did know the man as a youngster and that "maybe it might be true, I don't know. What does it mean?" WJL asked again if anything did happen, saying that he had to know. TFS stated yes, it did happen. WJL asked how many times and if there was genital contact. TFS stated yes sometimes there was genital contact and that he did not know how many times. TFS admitted that

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A memo recording an interview of Fr. Shea by Secretary for Clergy Lynn and his assistant, Fr. Michael McCulken. Fr. Shea admits abusing at least two boys. Monsignor Lynn suggests the priest may have been "seduced into it" by an altar-boy victim. GJ-476

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it did occur in the motel and in the rectory.

WJL asked if he was involved with others and TFS stated that he was similarly involved with a but does not know if that is the other person is referring to. TFS stated that he does not remember any other kids. WJL asked if there was genital activity and TFS said that there was touching and that it happened twenty years ago.

TFS was rather emotional and his color changed quite a bit. WJL asked if he was alright and TFS said that he was. WJL asked TFS to leave the parish. TFS said that he takes care of his mother, who lives in Saint Barnabas. He asked if he should resign and that he was ready to resign. WJL told him that we are here to help and that we know it is overwhelming. TFS asked if was suing the Diocese and WJL said he did not yet know.

WJL explained that the policy is to have the priest immediately leave the parish setting if he has admitted guilt and go to Immaculate Conception parish until Cardinal Bevilacqua can review the situation. Usually there is treatment required. TFS asked what is he to do with his mother, since his sister works and he said that this will kill her. Then he asked if he needs to leave tonight and WJL explained that he should to protect himself and the parish. He will go to Immaculate Conception for a residence and that he can continue to take care of his mother.

TFS was very emotional. He asked about resigning or taking a leave of absence. WJL explained that normally treatment is requested and is he willing to do so? TFS asked if this will hit the papers. To which WJL replied that he hoped not but that there is cause for concern since this law firm is known for that.

TFS asked if he should tell Father John Cox, his pastor? He has been there six years with no problems. WJL asked TFS if anything else happened besides during his stay at Saint Helena. TFS replied that his father had lost a leg and that was about fifth or sixth grade and an altar boy. WJL asked how much TFS trusted Father Cox concerning the possibility of sharing the allegations with him. At first TFS seemed hesitant to share anything with Father Cox but later stated that he would share that allegations had been brought but did not involve Saint Clement parish.

TFS asked about staying at his mother's home tonight. WJL said that he could while arrangements are made at Immaculate Conception with the pastor. TFS wondered aloud why now, after twenty years. WJL indicated that sometimes it is for money but

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that the Archdiocese does not settle with claimants; although, the Archdiocese does pay for therapy for claimants if the priest has been guilty. He stated that usually claimants come into the office, but this one went to the lawyer. He indicated that Mr. O'Dea did not think, this was going to be a lawsuit.

TFS asked how long does treatment at Downingtown take. WJL explained anywhere from three months to one year. TFS inquired of the treatment offered. WJL explained that it involved group and individual therapy, going over the situations of life in order to help resolve issues, to see if risks are still present. The need for treatment right away rather than a leave of absence is to show responsibility by Father Shea and by the Church in this situation.

TFS continued by saying what will he tell his mother concerning Downingtown. WJL said that if he told her now that he was taking time off for personal problems such as depression then it would not be unreasonable to his mother to hear that he was going to Downingtown. WJL again stated that we were here to help and to affirm to TFS that he is supported. TFS said that he understood that. WJL told TFS not to do anything foolish, to which TFS replied that he doesn't have the guts to do something like that. TFS asked if he could take some things out of the rectory later in the evening and talk with Father Cox. WJL agreed and told him that Father Cox could call WJL if he had concerns.

TFS asked regarding the statute of limitations which is past and then about a civil suit which is still a possibility. TFS said that he has no money that they could get out of a civil suit. WJL told TFS that the Archdiocese does not make cash settlements but does pay for therapy, especially when the priest has admitted guilt as TFS has. He continued by saying that sometimes the claimant only wants an opportunity to meet with the priest and talk; although others do sue.

TFS asked when will he would know a course of action and WJL said that he would inform Cardinal Bevilacqua today. TFS was concerned about saying Mass, finances, directions to Front and Allen, how he was to get to Downingtown, and representation by an attorney if needed. WJL offered explanations to his questions and affirmed for TFS again that we are here to help and support him through this. In regards to other persons to help take care of his mother, TFS did say there were a few nephews besides his sister.

TFS wondered who within the Office for Clergy sees this information. He was told that within the Office for Clergy only the priests see it. He asked if he had a good record otherwise and was told yes. He stated that when he was changed from Saint Helena

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this situation stopped and that was it. He did not seek any help, he did not need it. He stated that was fooling around with other kids his own age and that TFS did not start him into anything like this. WJL said that it is possible TFS was seduced into it.

TFS said that he is not very outgoing, not a great conversationalist, and that he never had money to travel like many of his contemporaries in the priesthood. The kids were fun to be with, they looked up to you. TFS said that he kept a lot of things to himself, and has been taking care of his mother. When his father was dying he told TFS to take care of his mother and for ten years he has been doing that on his days off. He said that his sister has her problems, that she does visit, but the burden is on him. He said that at Saint Clement he was the priest who did most of the work and filled in for Father Cox. When at Saint Helena he was also always busy, taking on whatever needed to be done, not really knowing how to say no.

WJL said that maybe these are some of the issues to be addressed in treatment. WJL said that we would call TFS tomorrow with further direction.