

TO: Fr. Higgins

FROM: Neil Hegarty

RE: Fr. James F.

DATE: September 28, 2000

(Encl)

This is a review of the conference call with Southdown at the conclusion of Fr. F's completion of the Southdown Connection review that took place on Monday, September 25, 2000.

The areas reviewed included:

1. Individual psychotherapy. Fr. F. is following through successfully with this recommendation. He is engaged with Dr. Vincent Lynch and is now seeing Dr. Lynch twice weekly for a period of time.

2. Spiritual Direction. There has not been progress in this area. Fr. F. mentioned that he sometimes covers areas of spirituality with Dr. Lynch but Southdown recommended that he not mix the two issues, i.e., therapy is not spiritual direction. It was recommended that he seek out a spiritual director and that it not be a 'buddy', namely a priest friend. I suggested that Fr. Higgins would be a resource in making suggestions for Fr. F. The only reference Fr. F. suggested was a center in Nebraska.

3. Self-help involvement. Fr. F. has not participated in the recommended self-help programs. He felt that his life was too scattered at this time. He felt that his ministry and living arrangements have not been clarified and therefore finds it difficult to seek out the appropriate self-help meetings. During the conversation, I inadvertently referred to "AA" and Fr. F. corrected this adding that he was not alcoholic. I corrected this and said that I was really referring to 'self-help' groups. Southdown suggested that he find a way to follow-through on this recommendation and also felt that this was something that he could do at present despite the circumstances of ministry and housing.

4. Medical care. There was also a lag in follow-through in this area. There are regular blood tests that he requires and Southdown suggested that he find a way to work on this issue. It was suggested that if he cannot get the care from his "G.P." that he should seek care at a less expensive clinic. Fr. F. felt that he could not afford care at this point and that he has some work done very informally by a physician friend. It was strongly recommended that he seek out proper medical follow-up.

Discussion:

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Questions were raised about the type of ministry in which Fr. F. might be involved. Southdown understands the policy of the Archdiocese but wondered about a community of elder religious

women. I commented that this was not easy to accommodate and that any community would need to be aware of the case and would have the final decision in the matter. I was not encouraging in this area. Fr. F. is very angry about his circumstances. He feels that his issues are:

\* Housing. Mentions that there are 382 rectories in the Archdiocese and a variety of convents, hospitals and other facilities and finds it difficult to understand that there is no place for him. He describes his present arrangement intolerable. He is living with a brother and his family and is dealing with questions from his brothers young children about the reasons for his stay with them.

\* Ministry. "I'll do anything, study, chaplain, anything". Asked if another diocese was an option. I said that I could not speak definitively on this but that if it were considered, all of the facts of the situation would be openly shared with others.

\* Communication. Feels that communication has not been good. "No one gets back to me". Mentioned that I was involved in the telephone conference but that "I've never met you". (I explained Fr. Higgins' absence and my role).

Fr. F. expressed a good deal of anger and frustration which I feel is easier for him to do than face or express his fear and concern about his future.

Although he has approached the subject of laization with his therapist, he did not bring this up as an option during this discussion. He also did not go into any detail about his feelings of being falsely accused, although he did mention it once but without any intensity.

Fr. F. referred to a "decision" being made by December. When I mentioned that Review Board decision, he became quite upset and said that "Decisions have already been made and I didn't know about it". I clarified that the Review Board decision was in July but that the other 'decision' that he was discussing probably had something to do with his future within the restraints of the Policy.

I said that I would be discussing the conference call with Fr. Higgins and would highlight the following areas of concern:

Housing and what his future situation might be.

Future ministry and the limitations of the Policy.

Excardination and whether or not this would be considered even with all of the facts of the case being shared with another diocese.

Southdown suggested that clarification would be essential for Fr. F in these areas.

His anger and frustration are intense and anything that can be done to clarify his restrictions would be important. He should also know that there is concern about the three areas of the Covenant in which he is remiss.

*Ex cardination*

*Foley*