



## SAINT PATRICK CHURCH

44 East Central Street, Natick, MA 01760

(508) 653-1093

April 19, 2001

Rev. Charles J. Higgins  
Archdiocese of Boston  
2121 Commonwealth Avenue  
Brighton, Massachusetts 02135

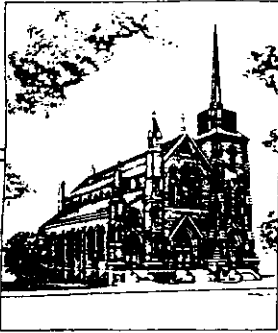
Dear Father Higgins:

Thank you for your letter of April 11, 2001, responding in the name of his Eminence, Cardinal Law, to my recent letters to him seeking reinstatement. While you have made it clear that reinstatement from the Cardinal's perspective restricts me in light of the Archdiocesan Policy Concerning Sexual Misconduct (a policy you have often described as "zero-tolerant" of priests accused of sexual misconduct) and of the accusation that [REDACTED] has reportedly lodged against me, it is quite unclear to me how this accusation *per se* can be construed as proof of guilt of sexual misconduct.

So that I may better understand this specific archdiocesan policy and to inspect for myself the accusation lodged against me, I would ask you to forward me 1) a copy of the archdiocesan policy in its entirety including a copy of the Cardinal's signed decree as Archbishop of Boston publishing and promulgating the policy and 2) a copy of [REDACTED] signed and sworn deposition and 3) the Cardinal's signed statement restricting me from active ministry.

As for [REDACTED] reported recent refusal to meet with me about the accusation that he has lodged against me, please know that I find such refusal most regrettable and unfortunate inasmuch as [REDACTED] unproved accusation has directly lead to the disruption of my life and to my suspension as a priest in good standing and to the unjust transgression of my right as a member of the Christian Faithful, who, until this accusation was made, was in possession of a good reputation, that is, a reputation that no one has the right to harm illegitimately. Moreover, [REDACTED] refusal frustrates any attempts on my part to vindicate my reputation in a legitimate forum governed by canonical process.

If it is the Archdiocese's understanding of canon law that an unproved accusation is equivalent to a lawful conviction calling for the imposition of a grave expiatory penalty, namely, indefinite suspension from active priestly ministry, then I am left with no alternative but to have recourse to the Holy See on the grounds not only that I have been judged without a legitimate hearing but also that the very policy by which I have been so rashly judged is seriously flawed and not in accord with the Code of Canon Law.



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Please do not misunderstand me, Father Higgins. I deeply love the Church and the ordained priesthood, in which I share, and the Archdiocese of Boston, which I have so faithfully served as a priest for the last twenty-three years. It is precisely because of this deep love and faithful service that I will not allow anyone or anything to ignore or obstruct my legitimate procedural rights to defend myself against what I know to be an untrue and insidious allegation about me personally and against what has for more than nineteen months been impeding me from exercising my ministry as a lawfully ordained and incardinated priest of the Church at Boston.

I can clearly appreciate the Archdiocese's determination to protect itself as well as the Christian Faithful it serves from whatever harm that has, in fact, been perpetrated by those who serve the Church in official ministry, but the Archdiocese cannot do so while ignoring the rights of the accused to a legitimate canonical process. As a member of the Christian Faithful as well as a priest, I too deserve protection and justice from the Archdiocese and the Church.

Respectfully yours in Christ,

Rev. James J. Foley