

Redacted April 2014
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Released April 2014

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CONFIDENTIAL FILE MEMORANDUM

December 20, 2005

FROM: Sister Judith A. Davies, OSF

RE: Allegation


This afternoon, I spoke with Sister [REDACTED], OSF, Director of Religious Education at St. Joseph Parish in Lockport. Sister [REDACTED] contacted me because she received an allegation against one of our priests last night and knew she had to make a report.

The gentleman who spoke with Sister [REDACTED] said he was giving her the information "in confidence." Sister stated that he had called her three times yesterday. The second time he called, Sister was just sitting down to dinner so she told the gentleman to call back later. During the next call, the man alleged that while he was in second grade at St. Mary School in Mokena, Father James Burnett had abused him in the confessional. The man said that when he entered the confessional, Father told him to pull his pants down, then touched his penis.

The man told Sister [REDACTED] that afterwards, Father Burnett was his "champion." Father protected him from playground bullies and defended him whenever he got in trouble with any of the teachers.

Because he had asked that the matter remain confidential, Sister [REDACTED] said she could not reveal the man's name but unknowingly gave me his first name when she said that on the second call she had asked [REDACTED] to call back later. When questioned, Sister gave the priest's name. She said that the man (who lives out of state) said that Sister was the first person he had ever told about the abuse. The man told her that he was not after money, did not want Father removed from ministry, did not want the matter to be made public, but was only concerned that no one else be hurt because if Father abused him it was likely others had been abused also. When I asked about counseling, Sister said something similar to 'he had his life together.'

Sister [REDACTED] said that she was going to provide the man with a copy of our policy. I told her to tell him that he was certainly welcome to speak with Bishop Imesch or me at the Chancery, or with Sister [REDACTED] the Victim Assistance Coordinator. I then provided Sister's phone number to Sister [REDACTED]


Sister Judith A. Davies, OSF
Chancellor