

THE SERVANTS OF THE PARACLETE
VIA COELI MONASTERY

MONTHLY REPORT

Guest-Priest: Rev. JAMES PORTER Age: 35 (1/2/35)
 Diocese or Community: Fall River Date arrived Via Coeli 8/23/67
2/21/69
 Length of current stay at Via Coeli: one week

REPORT MADE IN TERMS OF RESPONSE TO VIA COELI PROGRAM - Please note additional remarks

SPIRITUAL: (fidelity to the community exercises) At this writing Fr. Porter has been at Regina Mundi Retreat only a few days; he is regular at religious exercises and participates in the daily concelebrated Mass, taking his turn as principal concelebrant; it appears he needs a deeper interior life if he is to come to some calm and stable spiritual life.

PHYSICAL: (well-being; any current illnesses) highly nervous and over-active; will have to learn self-control and emotional stability; is out-going (to a fault), thoughtful, and generous with others. Apparently in good physical health.

SOCIAL: (ability to relate to brother-priests; use of leisure time; the willingness to serve) Is ready and willing to be service to the community; mixes well, but offends some by his lack of priestly control in regard to choice of language. There is a basic emotional immaturity which accounts for most of his short-comings now and during his previous stay at Regina Mundi.

THERAPY: (Psychiatric care; AA; Recovery, Inc.) attends Recovery, Inc.

ADDITIONAL REMARKS: (Incidents, favorable or not, worth reporting; outlook for this man at this time) Fr. Porter is a generous and willing priest who suffers from emotional immaturity and possibly an over-active and nervous nature. If he can learn emotional stability and self-control, he could have a fine future ahead of him.

lapsed into former; failing on recent assignment in Houston, Texas; undergoing psychiatric treatment on out-patient basis here.

(Handwritten signature)

Pro Christo Sacerdote

CABLE: PARACLETE - ALBUQUERQUE
PHONE: AREA CODE 505
829-2941
829-2951

Hia Oppli

MONASTERY OF THE SERVANTS OF THE PARACLETE

JEMEZ SPRINGS, NEW MEXICO 87025

August 24, 1967

Most Rev. James L. Connolly, D.D.
Bishop of Fall River
Chancery Office
Fall River, Mass.

Most Reverend and dear Bishop Connolly,

I wish herewith to give official notification of the arrival here of Father James Porter. Contact was made with this office last Sunday by Fr. Paul Shanley, diocese of Boston.

Fr. Shanley indicated that prompt action was necessary, and that he had not cleared the matter with your office. I told Fr. Shanley to send Fr. Porter on and that I would clear the matter with you following his arrival.

Fr. Porter has given me a summary outline of his problem. May we ask, Your Excellency, for an indication of your wishes with regard to Fr. Porter. If he is to remain here, we are prepared to put him into the hands of competent medical authorities to continue the therapy he stands in need of.

old folk!

It will be our hope to help Fr. Porter reach, if that is possible, a cure for his problem. Failing that, we would hope to be given clear outlines of the fields of his safe priestly activity. Armed with this information, we may be of some assistance in finding priestly work for this young priest.

We await your instructions about the disposition of this case.

Respectfully in Christ,



M. E. Swans, S.F. - Sup.

000146

September 1, 1967

Reverend William B. Swanson, S.P.
Via Coeli
Jemez Springs, New Mexico

My Dear Father Swanson:

Thank you for your communication of August 24, 1967, in reference to Reverend James Porter.

I had earlier discouraged Father Porter from going all the way to the Southwest, feeling that he would get therapy in Boston; even though, I ~~was~~ admit, he has worn out his welcome in one of the institutions to which I had assigned him two or more years ago.

Now he is with you. I hope and pray that you may be able to help him, but if my experience means anything, it may not be easy. Above all things, I think he should be shielded from anyone, old or young, troubled with his weakness. He has long expressed an interest in helping old people. Perhaps this may be the key to his cure. He is a highly sympathetic man, kind by nature, who with your help and God's grace might succeed in being all things to old people, at least, for the sake of Christ.

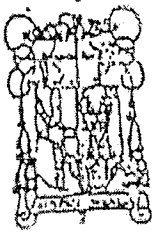
Believe me, with deep appreciation of Father Gerald's work and all the traditions of Via Coeli, I remain,

Devotedly yours in Christ,

(Most Reverend) James L. Connolly
Bishop of Fall River

JLC:tjh

P.S. I make myself responsible for his expenses.



BISHOP'S HOUSE
304 HIGHLAND AVENUE
FALL RIVER, MASSACHUSETTS

October 9th., 1968

His Excellency, Most Rev. James F. Davis, D.D.,
Archbishop of Santa Fe,
New Mexico.

Excellency:

Reverend James E. Porter, of the Fall River Diocese has been resident at Via Coeli, and Villa Pius XII for two years or more. He advises me that he wishes to appeal to you for assignment in your jurisdiction. He will no doubt have recommendation from some of the Fathers of the Paraclete.

I ordained Father Porter on April 2nd., 1960. Within six years, he had three appointments. He has a great deal of kindness; was well appreciated by sick and aged people. He was faithful to duties. His trouble was boys. With considerable athletic prowess, he appealed to the young, but it proved his downfall. After warnings and transfers felt short of correcting him, I sent him to Via Coeli, where, as far as I can ascertain, he has conducted himself well. As far as I am concerned, it need be no question of an incarceration. We continue to regard him as one of our diocesan priests. However, if he can be helpful to the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, and I believe he might, I cheerfully endorse his application. As far as I can judge he has improved much, since he went to Via Coeli.

Believe me, with every good and kind wish,

Sincerely yours, *[Signature]*

Bishop of Fall River

Via Copli

MONASTERY OF THE SERVANTS OF THE PARACLETE

JEMEZ SPRINGS, NEW MEXICO 87025

re: REV. JAMES R. PORTER

Rt. Rev. Reginald M. Barrette
Chancellor
Diocese of Fall River
Fall River, Mass. 02722

Aug. 6, 1969

Right Reverend and Dear Monsignor:

Thank you for yours of Aug. 1, in which you direct a check in the amount of sixty dollars for the professional services of Dr. John F. McCarthy, M.D., psychiatrist, for professional services rendered Fr. James Porter.

To supply you with a recent report on Fr. Porter's activities is relatively simple. He has been a very active young priest. We receive a large number of requests for supply work during the summer, and I have not hesitated to call upon Fr. Porter in each of these instances. As of this writing he has turned in satisfactory work in Alamogordo, N.M., Mountainair, N.M., Questa, N.M. and Truth or Consequences, N.M. When the Superior of our house in Nevis, Minn. called to ask for help for that house (they have a large amount of tourist trade in the area during the summer) I sent Fr. Porter, because he is a willing worker, and gets along well with pastors and people wherever he goes. Thus far there has been no occurrence of the problem which plagued Fr. Porter in the past.

I wish that all of these favorable circumstances could give me leave to write Fr. Porter off as "cured," but that is the domain of the professional, not myself. I can say that he is improved so far as obvious anxiety, nervousness, etc., so apparent when he first came to us. However, even to the casual lay observer it is apparent that Fr. Porter is still a restless young man, and while I cannot give the textbook names for them his nervous symptoms are evident; viz., biting of nails, constant brushing of hair, chain smoking etc. He is better equipped to talk about his problems at this time, and has obviously derived benefit from his therapy with Dr. McCarthy. However, I would not wish to make any long range forecast at this time.

I enclose copy of Fr. Porter's last letter to me, to give you some idea of his present plans and hopes for the future.

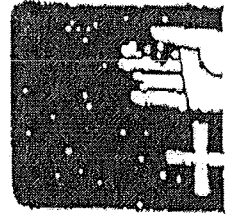
With every best wish, I remain

Sincerely in Christ Priest,
Rev. John B. Feit, S.P.
Rev. John B. Feit, S.P.
Superior

000140

CONFIDENTIAL

AUG 23 1969



August 22, 1969

His Excellency
The Most Rev. Laurence A. Glenn, D.D.
Bishop of Crookston
1200 Memorial Drive
Crookston, Minn.

Rev. James Porter

Your Excellency:

Following upon our telephone conversation, I am happy to report favorably in the case of the above priest.

Father Porter is 34 years of age, a priest of the Diocese of Fall River, in good health. He has been stationed here for the past two months. Several years ago he suffered a nervous breakdown, but shows every sign of having recovered remarkably. During the throes of his illness, he did have some moral problems which were from all appearances the result of his illness, something for which he was not really responsible. Now, having recovered, he gives every sign of having former problems under control. Before coming here, he took care of parishes in Santa Fe Diocese while the respective pastors were on vacation, and I am told he did very well.

From my personal experience I note three very worthwhile qualities in Father Porter: He adheres steadfastly to sound theology, he is very obedient, and he is an energetic and zealous worker.

We shall be most grateful to Your Excellency for giving this priest a chance, and we believe he will prove an asset to the Diocese.

With every best regard.

Your Excellency's obedient son in Christ,

Peter C. Burwell, S.P.
(Rev.) Peter C. Burwell, S.P.
Superior

August 22, 1969

Reverend James Porter
Our Lady of the Snow Retreat House
Route #2
Nevis, Minnesota 56467

My dear Father Porter:

I understand that you have been assisting Very Reverend W. Francis Lemen, St. Philip's Church, Bemidji, on weekends for several months and he has been pleased with your spirit of helpfulness and cooperation. I understand also you have been happy to work there under him. So I am therefore glad to make your assignment as Father Lemen's assistant full-time and for an indefinite period. I hereby do so, as of September 2, granting you whatever facilities are necessary.

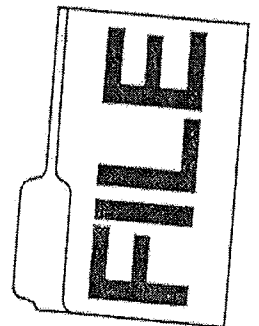
Assuring you of my prayers, I am

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Bishop of Crookston

LAG:vk

cc: Rev. W. F. Lemen



Aug. 20, 1969

CLERGY RETREAT HOUSE

AUG 28 1969

Your Excellency:

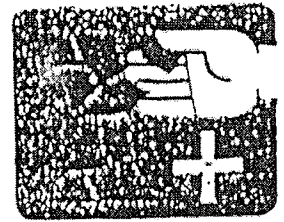
I received your letter of appointment yesterday and want to express my sincere thanks to you for this generous offer.

I am only too happy to accept this assignment and I pray that with God's grace I will be a benefit to you and Father Leman. I pray that I will serve in the Church's best interest and do all I can to be of assistance to the people of St. Philips.

Again thank you for your kindness to me and please pray for me. I will remember you daily in my prayers.

Yours sincerely in Christ

Fr. James Porter



September 12, 1969

Rt. Rev. Msgr. Reginald M. Barrette,
Chancellor, Diocese of Fall River
362 Highland Avenue
Box 30
Fall River, Mass., 01722

Re: Rev. James Porter

Rt. Rev. and dear Monsignor,

This is to inform you that Father Porter came here in June from our New Mexico house to do supply work in the surrounding parishes. He did so well and was so well liked that the Diocese of Crookston has given him a trial appointment at St. Phillip's Church, Bemidji, Minn. As the matter came up suddenly, and Father Porter had a letter from the Bishop giving him permission to take an appointment in a diocese, we did not contact you before allowing him to accept as we did not wish to put any obstacle in the way of this opportunity.

We ask you to inform His Excellency of these developments, and we sincerely hope Father Porter will make good.

We are taking the liberty of sending Father Porter's account for the time he was here at Nevis.

With every best regard.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Peter C. Burwell, S.P.".

(Rev.) Peter C. Burwell, S.P.

September 21, 1970

Reverend Peter C. Burwell, S.P.
Servants of the Holy Paraclete
13270 Maple Drive
St. Louis, Missouri 63127

My dear Father Burwell:

Very Reverend W. F. Lemen phoned me several days ago that it was necessary for him to tell Father Porter to leave immediately. His old problem recurred and because of complaints from the parishioners Father Lemen had no choice. Father Porter planned on proceeding to your house and left yesterday, Sunday, September 20th.

I am very sorry that this developed, as Father Porter seemed to be active and interested and friendly with everyone and it appeared that he was doing well. We hope that a period of recollection and retreat will help him orientate himself again. As you probably know, my term of office ceases here on September 29th so I am not in a position to offer to take him again.

I would like to take the occasion to thank yourself and the other Paraclete Fathers who have been so helpful to us during our term of office here. Several of your men made great progress and are doing very well.

Assuring yourself and the Community of my prayers, I am

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Apostolic Administrator

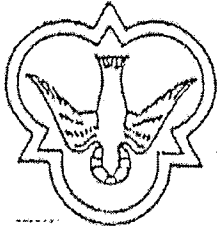
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SERVANTS



of the

PARACLETE

October 12, 1970

The Most Reverend James L. Connolly
Chancery Office
362 Highland Avenue
Fall River, Mass. 02722

Your Excellency,

Four weeks ago Father James Porter arrived here at St. Michael's for what we thought was his annual vacation. A few days ago we were informed by his Pastor, Monsignor Lemen of Bemidji, Minn, that Father Porter had lapsed into his old problem and that the 'heat' was on so Father was directed to seek the help of the Paracletes again.

Father Fred Bennett, S.P. has spoken with Father Porter and you will find his report enclosed. I have personally been aware of Father's problem for a number of years and agree wholeheartedly with Father Bennett's observations. We must not only consider the good of the priest but those he is to serve. Many young men have in some degree or other been hurt by Father's actions. Parents place their complete trust in a priest and this trust so easily sets young people up to be hurt by a priest with such a problem.

We will give all the help possible to Father if he feels he can go along with the program outlined in Father Bennett's report. We would certainly not recommend him for priestly work -- just offers too many occasions to stumble back into his problem.

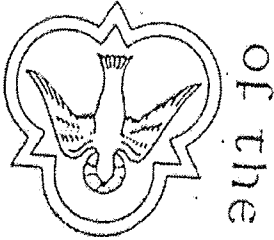
Enclosed you will find our monthly support statement for Father Porter. When and if Father begins to work at a secular job we hope he will then carry his own support.

With every best wish, I remain,

Sincerely in Spiritu,

Claude Buchanan
Father Claude Buchanan, S.P.
Father Superior

SERVANTS



PARACLETE

#136

November 3, 1970

Rt. Rev. Msgr. Reginald M. Barrette
362 Highland Avenue
Fall River, Massachusetts

Dear Msgr. Barrette:

Fr. James Porter is writing to you requesting a year's leave of absence. This is not in accord with my recommendation to him. I believe, quite strongly, that he should apply for laicization and should never again function as a priest. Fr. Porter has the idea in his mind that after a year he may be able to return to the priesthood if he succeeds during that year in avoiding a recurrence of his problem with young boys.

He may well be able to avoid such a recurrence during a year outside of the active ministry. Nonetheless, I believe that a return to the priesthood would again place him in circumstances that would make it extremely unlikely for him to remain without trouble. Some of the contributing circumstances are the easy access to boys that is open to a priest, the lack of surveillance by parents who instinctively trust priests, his athletic abilities which are attractive to boys, and especially, a pattern of behavior over many years in which he has learned how to appeal to boys and to seduce them while functioning as a priest.

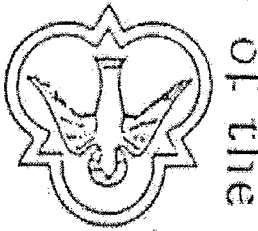
If Fr. Porter does seek to return again to the active priesthood after the year's leave of absence, he will probably suggest that he would be willing to accept an assignment at a hospital or other institution where he would have little opportunity to be with boys. I feel that even if he were to receive such an assignment, it would only be a matter of time before he had again managed to work his way into some form of parochial life, at least on a part time basis. He is able to function too easily in a parish and finds it too rewarding to be able to resist the urge to get involved again at that level.

In conclusion, I am opposed to Fr. Porter seeking only a leave of absence. Since he seems determined to do so, I strongly urge that at the conclusion of that year, he not be given faculties for any priestly activities under any circumstances whatsoever.

I have informed Fr. Porter of my feelings in this matter and that I am making my opinions known to you.

Sincerely in Christ,
Frederick Bennett, S.P.
Frederick Bennett, S.P.
Clinical Psychologist

SERVANTS



OF THE

PARACLETE

October 12, 1970

Fr. James Porter was referred to me for consultation after he had been sent away from his most recent parish when it was discovered that he had been committing sexual acts with young boys. Fr. Porter has been removed from parishes "at least" four times previously for similar actions. In the most recent incident there were "at least" ten to twelve boys involved.

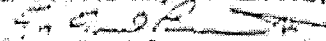
Fr. Porter is a very likeable person. He claims to have much natural athletic ability of the type that young boys always find appealing. He also is a basically immature person. He does not seem to be aware of the psychological harm that he may have caused the youths. Moreover, when he is entangled in these sexual situations, he apparently fails to see the inevitability of discovery with such a large number of youths involved. This could probably be considered another manifestation of his fundamental immaturity.

After interviewing Fr. Porter, I recommended most strongly to him that he find employment in a secular occupation and leave the priesthood. My primary reasons for suggesting this step were as follows:

1. His history of repeated instances of the same problem is evidence of a deeply ingrained habit that would most likely be triggered once more if he were again to enter a parish situation where there would be many cues familiar to him.
2. The priesthood, especially at the parish level, almost invariably involves some work with youth. Moreover, a priest is able to form relationships with youths while parents and other adults have no suspicion that anything is amiss simply because the man involved is a priest.
3. Even if he were to return to the active priesthood in some other capacity such as a hospital chaplain, his interests would most likely bring him back to some type of parish work once again.
4. People often suffer psychological difficulties later in life whose origins seem to be found in sexual approaches made to them during their childhood by adults of the same sex. I have reason to believe that the trauma of such experiences may be further intensified when the adult involved as a priest.

If Fr. Porter agrees to seek secular employment as a prelude to leaving the priesthood, I will be happy to work with him in a professional capacity and give him what help I am able with his psychological problems. I would expect him to remain here at the house in St. Louis for approximately two months of intensive treatment during which time he could be working or at least looking for employment.

Respectfully submitted,


Rev. Fred Bennett, S.P.
Clinical Psychologist


DATE 10-14-70

THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS

140 Summit Avenue
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102

April 24, 1973

Case: PORTER, James Robert
Pr. Num.: LAICIZATION

Bishop Daniel A. Cronin,
The Diocese of Fall River,
327 Second Street, Box 30,
Fall River, Massachusetts 02722

Dear Bishop Cronin:

I hope that this letter will offer a response to you, encouragement to James Porter, and a verification to Archbishop Byrne that we will offer our best efforts in James' behalf. Archbishop Byrne has asked me to respond to your letter of April 12, 1973, to him, seeking our assistance in facilitating the petition for laicization which James wishes to submit to the Doctrinal Congregation.

On April 18, 1973, Archbishop Byrne forwarded your correspondence to me, as the one who assists in these petitions in this Archdiocese; in turn, I am pleased to reassure you of our fraternal concern for the Petitioner, and of our best efforts in his behalf.

With this letter, I am asking James to telephonic to at this office, 127-1900, to arrange a time at his convenience when we might meet here to initiate the procedure. I should add a word of encouragement that also be done as soon as convenient: in my opinion, and from reports coming from other Dioceses, there seems to be some indication that the Holy See is growingly reluctant to grant these dispensations.

I am pleased to forward a word of personal greeting to a Diocese from which Saint Paul has drawn so many of its youth and strength.

Sincerely yours, in Christ,

(The Rev. Msgr.) JOHN J. SHEEHAN, Archbishop
of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

cc: [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

T H E C O U R T A
THE ARCHBISHOP OF FALL RIVER, MASSACHUSETTS

IN CAUSA

Pr. Num.: S.P.A.N. 740/73

Ordinationis Sacrae

PORTER, James Robert

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ORDINARY OR CHANCELLOR OF PETITIONER

BISHOP JAMES L. CONNOLLY,
399 Highland Avenue,
Fall River, Massachusetts 02722.

1. What is your full name?

Most Reverend James L. Connolly.

2. What is your present Diocese or position?

Retired Bishop of Fall River.

b. When were you assigned to this position?

Since December of 1970.

3. How and about when, did you first come into official contact with James Robert Porter, hereafter known as "the petitioner"?

He came as a seminarian in the mid-50's, and was assigned to Saint Mary's Seminary, Baltimore. He was ordained in April of 1960.

b. Could you recall what your early impressions were of the petitioner, as a man and as a priest? Did these impressions subsequently change?

He had a pleasant personality; people liked him. He worked zealously in some areas. He was a good athlete.

His pastors were not in accord as his ministry was exercised. Monsignor Childs certainly did not think he was helpful.

He was in difficulty with boys in various assignments. Once he was picked up by the New Hampshire State Police in an embarrassing situation. At the North Attleboro assignment, he was involved with a number of boys, perhaps as many as 40.

4. Please describe how the petitioner, in general, conducted his priesthood while within your jurisdiction.

Answered above.

5. Would you please describe the circumstances that led up to the Petitioner's departure from your jurisdiction, or his seeking a dispensation from the obligations of the priesthood, and "laicization?"

He was dropped for his constant repeated victimization of young boys.

6. What was the general report, so far as you could gather it, from the priests of your Diocese regarding the petitioner's priestly activities?

Other priests knew of the difficulty.

b. What is the general lay attitude now, towards the petitioner?

Lately were considerably distressed. I received letters. Now, the matter has largely been forgotten, due to his long absence.

7. Were attempts made to modify the attitude of the petitioner, and to deter him seeking this dispensation? (Please describe).

He was sent to make a retreat, and subsequently was sent to Via Costi.

8. Do you recommend to the Most Holy Father the granting of this petition. Please indicate your reasons for answering as you do.

Instantaneous.

b. To what extent do you think that there will be detriment to the Church or to the faithful, should the petition be granted?

None whatever.

c. What do you think will be the future of this petitioner, should the petition be granted?

He should be protected, and kept away from youth, especially early teenagers. He should not be given any teaching responsibility, even laicized.

9. Are there any further factors which you feel will be of help to the Special Commission of the Diocesan Congregation, in answering this petition?

I would simply say that he presents a character of acute weakness in/from a moral standpoint; he is stubborn, persistent in his evil conduct. His promises mean nothing, meant nothing.

10.

Do you solemnly swear before God to the truth of the replies that you have given, and to your intention to keep those matters within your confidence?

I do.

/s/ James L. Conolly
Signature of Deponent

/s/ Thomas J. Hurlockton, Chancellor
Witness to Signature

May 30, 1923.
Date of Signature

Chowrey, Fall River, Massachusetts
Place of Signature

