

[REDACTED]  
Franklin, Mass. 02038  
March 25, 1984

Most Rev. Bernard F. Law  
Archbishop of Boston  
Chancery  
Archdiocese of Boston  
2121 Commonwealth Avenue  
Brighton, Mass. 02135

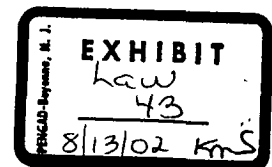
Your Excellency:

I write to you with hope, yet with sadness that I must burden you with an unhappy story in this time that should be a positive and joyful new beginning for our Archdiocese.

My family has been deeply hurt by the actions of a priest of this Archdiocese, Rev. Anthony J. Rebeiro. We have further been hurt, perhaps even more seriously, by the response (and lack of response) of our Pastor, Rev. Henry P. Boivin of St. Mary's in Franklin, and of the Regional Bishop of Brockton, Bishop Daniel Hart.

My wife, [REDACTED], was the victim of two sexually graphic and degrading actions by Father Rebeiro. In May, 1983 when she was in a St. Mary's rectory office to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, he blocked the only exit door, exposed himself, and masturbated in front of her. In seeking confidential advice from another priest outside of the parish, she was told that it was in her best interest to tell no one of the incident, avoid Fr. Rebeiro, and try to forget about it. Imagine the difficulties. [REDACTED] was active in the parish as a CCD teacher, prayer group member, scripture class attendee -- and Fr. Rebeiro was an Associate Pastor. Several months later, my wife felt she could keep her horrible experience to herself no longer, and she told me about it. We discussed it and decided to try not to judge, to try to forgive, to try to suppress our outrage. Imagine going to mass and trying to concentrate on the homilies preached by this man. Imagine receiving the Eucharist from this man, trying not to judge, trying to forgive, trying to forget. Nevertheless, we managed to carry on through last fall and winter.

My father died of cancer at his home in Florida two days after Christmas. His children and grandchildren were all with him at the end. My wife and three young children were forced to return to Franklin while I remained in Florida to help with funeral arrangements. [REDACTED] called St. Mary's to inquire about a memorial mass. Fr. Rebeiro learned of this inquiry and called [REDACTED] to offer the parish's condolences. He also said that he would be coming by our house to offer comfort. [REDACTED] was in a panic. She called a woman in the parish, who had been a confidant, to express her anxiety. While she was in the bedroom



on the telephone, Fr. Rebeiro arrived and was admitted by one of the children. ██████ spent two hours fighting off his pawing and pathetic pleas for her to give in to him while the children (ages 3, 7 and 9) were watching TV in another room. She didn't want to alarm them and sour them to our Church by drawing their attention to this sick man's activities.

I returned home the next evening after my father's funeral services. When I learned of the previous day's incident we had to reassess our decision made after the last incident. We knew it would be ██████'s word against the priest's. We guessed we faced great difficulties. We also felt that we could no longer ignore this man's problem. We determined that I should go to the Pastor and reveal the incidents. I saw Fr. Boivin on January 1, 1984. I told him the whole story as I knew it. He questioned me in great detail about my wife's sexual and psychological history. He implied that, if any of what I said was true, she must bear some of the responsibility. He asked to see ██████ in private the next day. She saw him and was subjected to the same line of questioning and innuendo. At the end of their conference I was called in and we were asked to agree to the following plan:

1. We all pray about the matter
2. My family avoid Fr. Rebeiro
3. ██████ seek psychological counselling (Fr. Boivin agreed that the parish would pay for all counselling fees that were not paid by our medical insurance)
4. Fr. Boivin would discuss the matter with Fr. Rebeiro later in the week
5. Fr. Rebeiro would be told to avoid my family.

As agreed, ██████ made an appointment for the following week with a licensed psychologist, Dr. Kenneth Broker. Meanwhile, as we thought about the above plan, and as we sought advice from a close friend and ██████'s uncle (both priests) it became clear that we were being cut-off from the parish. Fr. Rebeiro was still on the staff. To avoid him, as agreed, CCD was out for ██████ and the children, prayer group was out, scripture class was out, mass was out. We also learned that week from our priest friend that Fr. Rebeiro had a history. He had been dismissed from Wellesley College as chaplain for sexual misconduct. He had been transferred from St. Linus parish in Natick after incidents involving sex and character assassination. Given the level of response we were given at the parish level, we were advised to go to the regional bishop.

We arranged to see Bishop Daniel Hart during the second week in January. We drove over thirty miles in a blizzard to see him. We told him our story. He indicated that he had not been made aware of the situation by the pastor. He denied any knowledge of Fr. Rebeiro's 'alleged' problem history. He told us "I don't know you from Adam".

Imagine going to see a bishop of your Church, being deeply troubled, expecting some acknowledgement of your pain, some sympathy, and being told "I don't know you from Adam". We understood that he had only heard our side of the story. In all justice he could not commit to any action without investigating for himself. He could have shown us some compassion. He could have assured us that if his investigation bore out our story something would be done. He did not. We were advised that we must demand that Fr. Rebeiro be removed from St. Mary's parish. We had a moral obligation to make this demand to protect ourselves and any other women in the parish. We also had a Christian duty to demand that Fr. Rebeiro be sent somewhere where he could not continue to harm people and that he be given psychological help for his illness. We made these demands. I asked Bishop Hart when we might expect to hear from him with a resolution. He replied that he did not see himself in the role of getting back to us at all. We told him that we did not expect to be able to return to St. Mary's parish, given Fr. Boivin's attitude. We asked him if he would help us find another parish that would satisfy our needs. He refused, saying that different people had different ideas about what a satisfactory parish might be. We went to the bishop seeking help, we left feeling even more isolated from our Church.

When we called Fr. Boivin to tell him of our arrangements with Dr. Broker, he avoided our calls. When he finally called back, he would only say that he had been advised not to discuss the matter further. The whole matter had been turned over to the office of the Administrator, Bishop Thomas Daily.

We have never heard from anyone in the Archdiocese. We understand that Fr. Rebeiro left St. Mary's (awaiting assignment) the week after we saw Bishop Hart. We attend Sunday mass here and there, inside and outside the Archdiocese. Our eight year old son, who was to receive First Communion this year is no longer in the CCD program. Our nine year old son cannot receive the religion award with the rest of his Cub Scout den because he doesn't have a parish. [REDACTED], whose social life revolved around her 'friends' and activities in the parish is an outcast. It has been made clear to us that we are not welcome at St. Mary's. [REDACTED] and I have both been deeply depressed. I spent two full non-productive months at work, unable to concentrate. My internist found it necessary to prescribe medications to deal with the physical symptoms associated with this ordeal. We are both receiving counselling. I have been fortunate to be able to get to the Paulist Center in Boston for daily masses and to receive support from a Franciscan Friar at St. Anthony's Shrine. [REDACTED], however, remains isolated at home in Franklin.

Our experience with the Archdiocese has been deeply troubling. It has reminded us of one of those large corporate entities which silently closes ranks to protect one of its own. We would like to think that we are one of the Church's own, That we should be protected. It is also uncomfortably reminiscent of the rape victims who traditionally have been raked over the coals, who have been victimized a second time by being made to feel responsible, who have been ostracized by their own. We must expect much better of our Church. We do.

We try to tell ourselves that some good, some growth must come out of this devastating experience. We have come to hope, from reading about you, and from hearing and seeing you on television that the 'shepherd's heart' will bring us reconciliation and justice in this Archdiocese. We pray that the promise generated by your appointment as our Archbishop will be fulfilled for all of us.

We would be grateful if you would see us, help us. These clumsy words on paper cannot begin to tell all there is to tell. Thank you for the implicit hope that your installation has provided us.

For [redacted] and our children, [redacted], I am

Sincerely yours,

[redacted signature block]