

This is a conversation between Father Ray Gredert
[redacted] when he called her on [redacted]
Tuesday November 11, ¹⁹⁸⁶ at approximately 11:15 a.m.

Fr. introduced himself as the new Vicar of Priests for the diocese of Chicago, having taken over for Fr. Ventura. I asked, "Fr. Ventura's not Vicar any more?" He said I sounded surprised. I said I was - I hadn't heard there was a change and asked what happened. He explained that a Vicar's appointment lasts four years; Fr. Ventura's term was up last year and he (Fr. Gredert) was then appointed. Fr. Ventura has been on sabbatical in the Holy Land since and is expected to return next week. I told him I had respect for Fr. Ventura - that he knew how to get things done in that position, and get it done pastorally.

Gredert said that the Archdiocese had received a call from James Serritella - The reason was that Judge O'Brien had called Serritella as an ethical courtesy to notify opposing counsel that he (the judge) and I had ordered transcripts of the settlement hearing in the Mayer case. The judge relayed to Serritella upon questioning that he had spoken with me and it seemed I was not satisfied with the settlement and that I

was concerned that the Archdiocese had not and was not living up to its settlement agreement. Gredert said he met with Ferritella yesterday and also with the Cardinal in separate meetings.

I told Gredert that indeed we were never satisfied with the agreement because it had not included any indication that Mayer would receive professional counseling or therapy nor be restricted from contact with young people which were our primary concerns. No one in the Archdiocese would commit that on paper and we never knew what - if anything was being done about his problem. Everyone from Vels to Kiating to the Cardinal told us "trust us" and to just "forgive, forget and go on with your lives". So, I said, there really wasn't much to live up to in the agreement - we got a check for half the attorney's fees and the Cardinal saw us for an hour - simple! The obligations were complete. I told Gredert what I am concerned about, always have been and always will be, is the possibility that Mayer could further harm young people because, as far as I could see from other instances I'd known about at St. Stephen's Mayer remains unrestricted. I said I had

visited or called Fr. Ventura a couple times after the case was settled to report what I was hearing. It was no skin off our nose if the Archdiocese chose to do nothing - our kids were out of it - but I made a promise to the judge, the Cardinal and myself that if this man ever hurt another child I would be there for that family with our records in hand to support that family. And, I said, I would have to bring my records because the records at Sully Center are pretty sparse.

I told Goedert that, for various reasons, I had gone into the Sully Center records and found that many people have been through the file in past years - most recently, an attorney for the Des Plaines Police Department which alarmed me because Mayer's in Des Plaines.

Yes, Goedert said, he'd already spoken with the Chief of Police there to find out what that was about. The Chief told Goedert that was prompted by an anonymous call he had received regarding Mayer. The police tried to look into it, but it was anonymous, so it was difficult to investigate or track.

Other calls that came into the station were only rumors and hearsay, mostly based on his past. Goedert said he asked Mayer if he was "doing it" and Mayer said no.

Goedert said he told Mayer that he would unfortunately have to live with rumor for the rest of his life because of the case publicity. I commented on 3 things here:

- 1) "Rumor" - with this man, Mayer, and his kinds of problems the Archdiocese couldn't afford not to investigate any and all rumors. Archdiocesan officials said our incident was rumor, hearsay, irrelevant, couldn't be proven...
- 2) Mayer's denial - he denied our boys' incident too
- 3) Mayer's "unfortunate" circumstance of having to "live with it" - so do we all, including our boys for whom the Archdiocese did nothing, not even ask how they are.

Well, you've accomplished quite a bit, Goedert said. Because of you the Archdiocese is treating these cases differently. I've had

to deal with some. The system has changed, he said. Now, the first thing we do is call the family and inquire about the boy, try to get them into counseling. Gredert says he has a case right now where they've offered counseling to the boy.

As a matter of fact, Gredert explained, ^{psycho} priests and bishops are meeting in Oakbrook this week to discuss the problem. He said it's like alcoholism 10 years ago - then there was a stigma and nobody wanted to talk about it. This problem always existed, but now it is trying to be understood and taken care of. I said it was nice they were meeting, but one element was still missing - families' input of what happens in these instances.

Gredert said he had met with Sorritella and the Cardinal to try and find out what he could reveal to me. He said he couldn't tell me results, but that Mayer's been under psychological counseling and is currently undergoing a battery of psychological tests. The Archbishop is writing for the psych's recommendations. He said Mayer is under mandate of the Archbishop, which means that he is not allowed to have unsupervised

contact with minor children. But, Guedert said, there's little they can do if children choose to follow him. He said Meyer has a sort of charisma with young people - they follow him and admire him. There's one young man who is a priest today because of Fr. Tse. He has nothing but the deepest admiration for him.

I said that, of course, children follow him, his "Charisma" comes from supplying young people with alcohol and letting them, giving permission for them, to do what their parents don't allow them to do. I said I knew of a specific case at St Stephen's where his "initiation process" was put into play with one young boy (8th grade) and the family chose to make out of the parish as a result. I had reported this to Fr. Ventura

I told Fr. ^{parent} that I thought it was nice that Meyer was getting counselling, but this man has major problems which need long-term, in-depth, clinical help. He should not have been put back in a parish, in the same environment - and only miles away where he is accessible to the boys of his previous parishes. His "Counselling" sessions

more as ludicrous as lecturing an alcoholic and sitting him back up at a bar and saying "now, don't drink any more." It doesn't work.

Grudet assured me that the pastor is trained in psychology, is aware of Mayer's problems and is observing him. I said I understood that the pastor is ill and resides four floors away from Mayer.

He spoke some more in general about psychiatry. He said I could be a help to him in this new position of his - and he believed a parent's point of view would be good to have. The set & meeting date for Sat 1:30 at [redacted]'s.

11/15/86

[REDACTED] invitation to dinner
Talk about where to meet

Record breakfast
mtg w/ [REDACTED]