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FOR IDENTIFICATION

DATE 6-14-96 RPTR: ay

Notes on My Conversation with Reverend Laurence F. X. Brett  
November 16, 1992

In response to the accusation of misconduct by Mr. Ray Romero about which we are informed on November 4, 1992, by Reverend Ron Wolf, J.C.L., Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, Fr. Brett indicated that he does not remember the name of the alleged victim and accuser, Ray Romero, and that he has never been sexually attracted to pre-pubescent children. The incidents in the Diocese of Bridgeport involved young men of College age.

However, Fr. Brett admits his homosexuality. He did admit to sexual misconduct in the Saint Therese of the Infant Jesus Parish rectory, 300 Mildred N.W., Albuquerque, with a 16 or 17 year old young man; he recalls that the young man was a friend of a member of the parish Folk Group. He also remembers sexual involvement with an older gay man, a barber, who had come to the rectory to cut his hair.

Fr. Brett was sent to New Mexico in 1964, first to the Via Caeli facility, located in Jemez Springs, and operated by the Paraclete Order. He compares Via Caeli to a prison, and says that it was anything but a treatment center for priests although priests from all over the country were sent there for alcohol, drug, and sex addictions. It did not have a psychiatrist or a psychologist on its staff. The program was primarily spiritual in nature. He was allowed to celebrate private Mass each day. All mail was censored. Apparently he and other "inmates" in the locked compound where he lived regularly attended talks given by Fr. Fitzgerald, the Director of the facility. He recalls one talk in which Fr. Fitzgerald spoke of how wonderful it would be to climb up Mary's virginal vagina to touch the place where Christ was born, and said that convinced him that he was in the wrong place and that Fr. Fitzgerald was crazy. Fr. Brett became the organist for liturgical celebrations as well as the cook and dishwasher for the community in his own compound consisting of 59 inmates and 1 Paraclete staff member. The Paracletes who staffed the facility were all former inmates themselves.

The situation at Via Caeli finally came to a head, and Fr. Brett was forced to go to Nazareth Hospital, a sanitarium located at 310 Alameda Road, N.E., Albuquerque. He had refused to cooperate with the Via Caeli program and had refused to tell his story, that is, to relate the incidents that had taken place in the Diocese of Bridgeport that had caused him to be sent there, and his refusal was based on advice received from other Via Caeli inmates.

Nazareth was not much of an improvement. He recalls meeting with a psychiatrist, Dr. Alan Jacobson, M.D., only twice during his stay there. He does recall "fooling around" with another young male patient at the Sanitarium, but insists that there was no sexual activity. There was no individual or group therapy offered to him at Nazareth. Fr. Brett in retrospect feels that he never received from either Via Caeli or Nazareth the professional treatment he needed at the time.

In 1965 and 1966, after being discharged from Nazareth Hospital he was assigned to Saint Charles Parish in the Sante Fe Archdiocese where he recalls two sexual relationships, both with males over 20 years of age.

Fr. Brett was assigned to Saint Therese Parish in Albuquerque in June of 1966 and remained there through September of 1967 to the best of his recollection. Msgr. Bernard Burns was the Pastor at the time. At Saint Therese Parish, he did regular fulltime priestly work. He did not have any special responsibility for the altar boys and related to them as any other priest would. The parish had a school and he did on occasion go over to the school. He remembers being called over to the school one day by the Sister Principal who asked Fr. Brett to help her deal with a young male student who, she thought, had been masturbating, but who, after further investigation by Fr. Brett and the Principal, was suffering from swelling in the genital area. The young male student remained dressed throughout the time that Fr. Brett was present. Later, however, a member of the parish council, probably related to the child, accused Fr. Brett of wanting to "touch children." However Fr. Brett feels that the accusation was connected to a controversy raging at the time in the parish over the first communions of public and parochial school children. Fr. Brett also recalls that young altar boys and teenagers might have entered his room at various times since the rectory was a single floor dwelling with rooms off one central corridor. Altar boys and teenagers would often come for keys or on other errands.

From 1969 through 1972/73 Fr Brett served first as Chaplain to the Brothers' Community (1969-1970) of Calvert Hall High School and eventually as a high school religion teacher (1970-1972/73). He admits to 2 sexual relationships at Calvert Hall, both with high school age students, that is, young men of 17, possibly 18 years of age. The second of the two Fr. Brett claims tried to seduce him. The incident was reported to the Principal who reported it to Fr. Murphy (now Auxiliary Bishop Murphy), then Secretary to Cardinal Shehan, Archbishop of Baltimore. The Archdiocese did not ask him to leave the Archdiocese, but his high school work was terminated.

Fr. Brett stayed on in Baltimore, eventually working for Share the Word which has employed him for the past 13 years. He also became the host of a very successful weekly television program (1984-1991). Currently he is a very popular retreat master for retreats offered at Malvern Retreat House in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. He enjoys his retreat work very much. He lives in a small house by himself; his address is 651 North Paca Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201.

*Msgr. Frank*