

Most Reverend Francis Mugavero  
Bishop - R.C. Diocese of Brooklyn  
75 Greene Avenue  
Brooklyn, New York, 11238

Sunday, July 1, 1973  
Fst. of SS Peter and Paul

Dear Bishop,

You are remembered, as always, in my constant prayers.

More than a month ago, probably more than six weeks ago, I wrote to you requesting a transfer, hopefully, I wrote, to an Italian parish. Despite the circumstances surrounding the letter, the request was a genuine one, since I do have a great appreciation for my heritage. That letter was never answered. It had been written with the advice, I might add, of Msgr. King.

As you well know, some unfortunate difficulty had arisen in the parish for which I had, prior to writing my letter, been to see a psychologist, suggested to me by Father Rau, on a weekly basis.

In my letter I asked, if it were possible, than an Italian parish (if it desired) pay for the Italian course that was to be given at the seminary. That course was convenient in several ways; I could leave St. Rose for a "reason" and with some honor...thus giving the diocese sufficient<sup>to</sup> consider the situation surrounding myself, and finally to prepare well for a possible reassignment. When I received no answer, and being left no other alternative, I presumed to attend the course. I do fully understand and appreciate Fr. Bevilaqua's situation with regard to funding, and so am left with this status, that, if there is hope of reassignment, I shall, with your permission, finish the course with the knowledge that I will then have funds to pay for the entire course. It's an excellent program for which I would not mind paying personally. I do have sufficient funds saved at present to do so, but they would then be depleted. Lest you think ill of me for being so seemingly foolish as to leave myself with so little savings let me point out that I have given most of what I had to my family members in their needs. If, however, I am not to be reassigned, I shall have to leave the course after this week, and will, of course, pay for the part I have already attended.

As to the possibility of reassignment, I know the anxiety that must be yours with regard to a fellow priest and possible embarrassment to the diocese and church. I can only say that I am now taking those measures which I did not have the insight to know I needed more than two years ago, namely working with a psychologist and a confessor on a regular basis. I see these as the most and best I can naturally and super-naturally do to amend the present situation. If I had the slightest doubt as to my vocation in life, I would ask you for a leave of absence to search for answers, but I do not. I feel a sense of complete worthlessness when I am not "about my Father's business." For this reason I beg to be permitted to continue with the abovementioned assistance while still working in a parish. I'm sure you will understand Bishop, what mean when I say that I do not come to you as a "prodigal" son, because I am not at all convinced of "sin", but rather as a fellow priest struggling for survival. Even in our national sport a man isn't out until he has made three strikes. I have already made two bad swings. Please allow me this additional chance to show that I can yet get a hit. You can rest assured that if, with the assistance of the psychologist, we should sense any danger to myself and the diocese if I continue in priestly work, I shall contact you immediately and ask your permission to withdraw in whatever manner you deem best.

I have, unfortunately, not been to see the doctor in the past few weeks, simply because of finances; working again, in priestly duties will afford what is necessary. It would not leave very much over for my private needs, but I simply do not worry about that.

Fr. Bevilaqua was right in saying that if I had a cancer I would certainly find a way to obtain the funds necessary to deal with it, but that comparison was not fully justified with regard to my present psychological situation: I would not in the least hesitate to let my family know of the cancer....and besides, our hospitalization plan would help greatly in the matter of physical illness.

Please Bishop, I have prayed to the Holy Spirit to bring you to that decision which would be in accord with the Will of God. I know you will, as you always do, think carefully on this matter and see if it is not possible to reassign me. I shall have, I feel, a much better chance to overcome the present difficulty, in, than out.

No matter what your decision, I will remain ever,

Faithfully yours in Christ,

*Romano J. Ferraro*

Rev. Romano J. Ferraro

P.S. It will be most advantageous to answer this letter by either summoning me to the Chancery or writing to either of the two following addresses: The Seminary at Douglaston, or: (my brother's home)

Received 1/7/74

December 30, 1973

EDMUND J. ELBERT, PH.D.

921-8187

842-6107

Dear John:

I have been seeing Romano Ferraro on a reasonably regular basis since his referral last summer. Romano has been extremely frank about his history and his basic problem.

I have every intention of continuing to work with Romano in the future but I thought that a brief report and suggestion might be appropriate at this time.

Romano has a definite sexual identity difficulty and we presently are working at building up constructive controls which apparently are taking effective hold at this time. I would not recommend that he receive at this time, however, a permanent or full time assignment in a parish. I would think that an assignment that would enable him to participate and assist in weekend work in a particular parish where he also might have a residence but not in any sense of being involved in parochial activities as a curate might be a safe and encouraging course of action at this time. I was wondering, for example, whether he might have the opportunity to finish up some graduate work for the coming months, which he has already started or to be assigned to some other similiar type of involvement but other than full time parochial work. The main objective now would be to avoid any assignment of work that would engage Romano intimately with the people on a full time scale and especially with young boys or teenagers.

I am sorry to have to return unsigned the enclosed insurance form. It is impossible to sign such a form for counseling services, and Dr. Barbara with whom I work will not sign it under the guise of psychotherapeutic services. This also is the main reason why the fee has been kept down to twenty dollars.

Very sincerely yours,  
*Edmund J. Elbert*  
Edmund J. Elbert, Ph. D.



Romano J. Ferraro

Conversation by phone with Fr. Francis  
M<sup>c</sup> Cormack, Pastor of St Joseph's, Kings Park  
on January 7, 1977 provides the following  
information.

He has been working in St Joseph's full time  
for 1 1/2 yrs - receiving full salary and  
automobile allowance. Fr. M<sup>c</sup> Cormack also  
loaned him \$4400 to purchase a new car  
(\$3000 has since been paid back). There was  
no official check with our Chancery in his  
status. Fr. M<sup>c</sup> Cormack did speak with Frs.  
Martin Bannon + John Mahoney about  
him. Both Fr. Bannon + Mahoney advised  
Fr. M<sup>c</sup> Cormack of his difficulties. Fr.  
Mahoney indicated that according to  
Dr. Elbert, Fr. Ferraro's condition was  
curable + the Brooklyn diocese was  
considering reassignment upon Elbert's  
recommendation. Fr. Mahoney also indicated  
that since Fr. Ferraro was doing so  
well there it might be good for him  
to remain at St Joseph's. Fr.

offered him the hospitality of St Joseph as well as his own help + support should Fr. Ferraro feel the need.

Fr. Ferraro was told that he could not have youngsters in the rectory.

The prohibition was violated on a number of occasions & he was confronted by Fr. McCormack.

While he was very popular in the parish & worked very hard, there were areas of irresponsibility (failure to lock doors, carelessness with money etc.)

The incident leading to the discharge of Fr. Ferraro took place following a home mass celebrated by Fr. Ferraro. After mass Fr. Ferraro, according to the accusation, grabbed one of the young boys twice and then tried to engage 2 of the other boys in a conversation & discussion on their masturbatory practices.

This was reported to Frs. McCormack & Freeman.

Upon confrontation by Frs. McCormack & Freeman

be brought to the attention of Fr. Brown.  
Fr. Ferraro was dismissed from  
St. Joseph's on January 5<sup>th</sup> 1977 with the  
recommendation by Fr. McCormack that  
he call Fr. Brown.

Fr. Ferraro called Fr. Brown on  
Jan 6, 1977 and arranged an appointment  
for Jan 10, 1977 at 10 AM in the  
Personnel Office.

Copy to Msgr. Bendiguer

MEMORANDUM

To: Father Brown  
From: Monsignor Bevilacqua *MB*  
Date: December 13, 1979  
Re: Father Romano Ferraro

Father Romano Ferraro has been hospitalized at St. Vincent's Hospital Psychiatric Center as of Tuesday, December 11. At the present time, it seems he will not be able to be active in the Diocese for an indefinite period of time.

MEMORANDUM


TO: Bishop Mugavero  
FROM: Bishop-Elect Bevilacqua  
DATE: October 8, 1980  
RE: Father Romano Ferraro

First of all, I was greatly impressed with the sincerity of Father Ferraro's letter requesting a return to the active ministry in the Diocese of Brooklyn. Before responding to his letter, may I suggest the following procedure:

1. That I speak to Dr. Gannon and have him read the evaluations on Father Ferraro sent to us by the House of Affirmation. Dr. Gannon would then be asked to present his recommendations.
2. After receiving the report of Dr. Gannon, that I discuss the matter with Father Brown.
3. That your response be based on the above two consultations.
4. That the response to the letter of Dr. Roger Gennari await the conclusion of the above consultations.

OTK

10-9-80





MEMORANDUM

**TO:** The File of Father Ferraro  
**FROM:** Bishop Bevilacqua  
**DATE:** December 30, 1980  
**RE:** Assignment of Father Ferraro in St. Louis

Today I received a return telephone call from Bishop Wurm of the Archdiocese of St. Louis concerning our request about the possibility of Father Ferraro being given an assignment in St. Louis while he remains under therapy at the Affirmation House.

Bishop Wurm told me that Archbishop May had agreed to assist us in this program. Bishop Wurm informed me of the following arrangement that would be most suitable:

1. Father Ferraro would reside at the Church of St. Joan of Arc, 5800 Oleatha Street, St. Louis 63139 - telephone (314) 832-2838).

Father Ferraro would then assist as a Chaplain at two hospitals which are part of one complex, that is, Jewish and Barnes Hospital in St. Louis. These hospitals are about three miles from the Church of St. Joan of Arc.

Bishop Wurm stated that Monsignor James Pieper was informed of the situation and is most willing to be of help.

Bishop Wurm also stated that room is not available at St. Joan of Arc until January 19. I told him that this would not present any difficulty.

I also told Bishop Wurm that I would be in touch with Father Ferraro and Affirmation House and as soon as I received their acceptance of this arrangement, I would return a call to him.

File: Rev. Romano Ferraro

MEMORANDUM

TO: Father Brown  
FROM: Bishop Bevilacqua *CJB*  
DATE: January 26, 1981  
RE: Father Romano Ferraro

It has been arranged with the Archdiocese of St. Louis, that Father Romano Ferraro will be resident at St. Joan of Arc Rectory in St. Louis. At the same time he will act as Assistant Chaplain at Jewish and Barnes Hospital in St. Louis.

His assignment is to be effective as of January 19, 1981. As of this date, we have not received any word from Father Ferraro that he has arrived at his assignment.

File: Rev. Romano Ferraro

THE CHANCERY • DIOCESE OF BROOKLYN  
75 GREENE AVENUE, POST OFFICE BOX C, BROOKLYN, N.Y. 11202 • (AREA CODE 212) 638-3500

MEMORANDUM

TO: Father Brown  
FROM: Bishop Bevilacqua *aqB*  
DATE: March 16, 1982  
RE: Father Romano Ferraro

As I have already indicated to you some while ago, Father Romano Ferraro, presently in the Archdiocese of St. Louis, has requested an assignment back in the Diocese of Brooklyn. He would hope to have such an assignment possibly in July of this year.

When I first received this request and informed you, we both agreed that we would have to await the report from the House of Affirmation. This report finally arrived.

The report from the House of Affirmation concerning Father Ferraro is generally a very positive one. The following would represent a summary of the positive evaluation of Father Ferraro:

1. He has been very good about his attendance and participation in therapy.
2. He has successfully worked out as a hospital chaplain and as a resident in a parish in St. Louis. In fact, he did so well as a part-time chaplain at Jewish Hospital that he was invited to be head chaplain of the same hospital. Since he has taken that position he has done very well.
3. He has done well in the parish at which he resides. He has taken on many duties at the parish and has performed well. He is well liked and the parishioners reportedly have asked him to stay there permanently and not return to Brooklyn.
4. He has tried to establish friendships with other priests in the Archdiocese though the priests there are known to be slow in warming up to outsiders. In spite of their cruel behavior at times, he continues to attend priest meetings and makes himself available for social gatherings.
5. He has been faithful to his therapy sessions and has shown great improvement in his feelings of anger. He continues to examine the causes of his difficulties and seems to have a good grasp of the dynamics involved.
6. He has spent a great deal of time examining his vocation to the priesthood. He does not wish to leave the

March 16, 1982  
Rev. Romano Ferraro

-2-

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priesthood and sees fulfillment only in the life of the priest.

7. The therapist recommends that he return to Brooklyn and resume full time ministry here. At the same time, the therapist feels he should continue his psychotherapy after his return.

This positive evaluation from House of Affirmation puts the decision on the return of Father Ferraro into the lap of the Diocese. Because of our experience with Father Ferraro in several assignments of the past where he has consistently created problems, it becomes difficult to abstract oneself from the memory of those unfortunate incidents.

At the same time, it is also difficult to disregard or give little credence to the very positive evaluation from the House of Affirmation.

My recommendation to you is that before Father Ferraro is considered by the Personnel Board and the Bishop for reassignment in the Diocese of Brooklyn, this report from the House of Affirmation be evaluated by one of our psychiatrists. While Dr. Gannon is not looked upon favorably by Father Ferraro, he is the psychiatrist who knows him best. He has seen him in sessions and also he and I went out to St. Louis to evaluate him at the House of Affirmation. Perhaps the evaluation of a psychiatrist here will shed further light that might be of help in considering Father Ferraro's request for reassignment in the Diocese.



M E M O R A N D U M

June 17, 1983

TO: Bishop Mugavero  
FROM: Monsignor Brown  
RE: Father Romano Ferraro

As you requested, I spoke with Bishop Bevilacqua regarding Father Ferraro's request for an assignment in the diocese. Bishop Bevilacqua also consulted with Dr. Gannon. We are in agreement that an assignment in the diocese would be too much of a risk. Bishop Bevilacqua recommends that you write to him as follows:

"It would not be appropriate for you to be assigned in the diocese of Brooklyn. I urge you to seek an assignment outside the diocese."

*you spoke once about  
this.  
Please ask Bp Bevilacqua  
to prepare letter -  
w/ copy of canonical  
aspects.*

DLE/cmf

cc: Bishop Bevilacqua

*6-20-83 JMB*

MEMORANDUM

TO: File of Father Romano Ferraro  
FROM: Bishop Bevilacqua *GB*  
DATE: September 3, 1983  
RE: Telephone Call from Father Ferraro

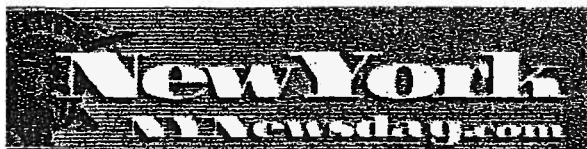
In response to a message from him, I telephoned Father Ferraro who wanted an appointment with me. He told me that the nature of the appointment was to discuss an offer given to him by a Father Barrett of the Archdiocese of New York.

Father Ferraro told me that Father Barrett had a possible assignment for him and wanted to have permission from the Diocese. Father Barrett told Father Ferraro that he would be in touch with me.

I told Father Ferraro that I had not received any word from Father Barrett but at the present time we would not be adverse to having him take an assignment in the Archdiocese. I wanted to wait for a call or letter from Father Barrett.

I also told Father Ferraro that it was not necessary for him to come in for an interview on this. However, I felt it would be well if he sent me a letter summarizing what he told me in the phone conversation of this date. He promised he would.

The telephone number at which I reached Father Ferraro was: 649-3695.



Saturday, May 8, 2004, 12:29 PM EDT

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Table with columns: Stock, Last, Change. Rows: DOW (10,117, -124), NSDQ (1,918, -20)

Priest convicted of raping boy in 1970s

BY STEPHANIE SAUL Staff Writer

May 7, 2004, 7:49 PM EDT

A Roman Catholic priest who once served in Queens and Brooklyn was convicted Friday of sexually abusing a young Massachusetts boy decades ago.

The Rev. Romano Ferraro, 70, admitted during his trial that he was a pedophile who left a trail of pre-pubescent victims. But he swore he never molested the child in the criminal case, the son of a boyhood friend from Brooklyn.

The jury in Cambridge believed the charges, however, finding Ferraro guilty of one count of rape and three counts of indecent assault and battery.

Ferraro's victim, now 37 and a New Hampshire resident, testified that, as a child, he dreaded Ferraro's annual visits in the 1970s to the boy's home in Massachusetts. That was when the sexual abuse occurred, beginning when the boy was 7 and continuing until he was 13.

The Diocese of Brooklyn ordained Ferraro in 1960 but has barred him from active ministry since the late 1980s. His suspension followed an unrelated sexual-abuse allegation. At the time of his arrest in 2002, he was living at Parsons Manor, a Jamaica residence for priests.

"These are always painful stories for everyone involved," said diocesan spokesman Frank DeRosa, reacting to Friday's jury verdict. "We cooperated fully with the investigation. We accept the decision and respect the work of the jury. And, of course, we're concerned for the victim."

Ferraro will be sentenced May 20. The criminal case against him was possible because he did not live in Massachusetts, and therefore the statute of limitations had not run.

Local parishes where Ferraro served during the 1960s and 1970s included Holy Family Church in Canarsie and St. Joseph's in Astoria.

Ferraro, a defendant in three civil cases alleging sex abuse, is probably best known for a 1986 uproar. While ministering to a Colonia, N.J., parish, he told children that Santa Claus was dead, there was no North Pole toy factory and no Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer. He was granted a leave of absence

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Photos



Roman Catholic priest Romano Ferraro (AP Photo/Michael Dwyer) May 7, 2004

Video

WB11: Priest convicted (WB11) May 7, 2004 (RealVideo)

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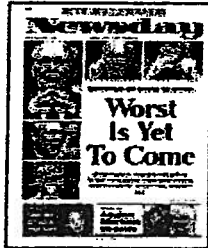
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