

December 11, 1992

TO: Reverend Bernard J. Breen
FROM: Reverend William F. Medley

SEXUAL ABUSE COMPLAINT

This memo is to document a report of sexual abuse regarding the late Father Arthur Wood which we have previously discussed.

Mr. MS-10 called and asked to meet with me to discuss the ongoing repercussions of inappropriate sexual contact with Father Art Wood when he was a pre-adolescent boy at St. Elizabeth's grade school in the early 1960's. Mr. MS-10 is now a man in his mid-40's, a member of Our Mother of Sorrows Parish and has recently experienced a second failed marriage. In May of this year he was hospitalized for ten days at Our Lady of Peace and subsequent to that participated in their outpatient program for survivors of sexual abuse. Mr. MS-10, at this moment in his life, traces much of his failure to adapt as an adult and to form healthy, trusting relationships with other adults to incidents of sexual abuse when he was a child.

Mr. MS-10 began our dialogue by expressing the presumption that sexual abuse on the part of the late Father Wood would be common knowledge to me. I assured him that it was not and that Father Wood had been deceased since shortly after my ordination and long before I was involved in any way in Priest Personnel. He related that he was personally aware of more than a dozen victims of Father Wood's abuse of young boys when he was at Saint Elizabeth. He said he was quite explicit in this and not terribly subtle within the confines of himself and young boys. All the incidences involving Mr. MS-10 occurred in the sacristy of the church, usually when he was assigned as a server for an early morning Mass.

Mr. MS-10 also relates that at that time as a child he heard that another young boy and his parents went to the rectory to lodge a complaint and the boy's accusations were disbelieved. However, in retrospect, Mr. MS-10 said that it was not long after that that Father Wood was reassigned and he presumed that perhaps he was reassigned for this reason. He expresses regret with his new-found insight that the Church did not, at that time, reach out to identify and help the victims of Father Wood.

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Mr. MS-10 and I had a good conversation about the increased awareness on the part of church people regarding this problem and of society in general. It was discussed that in the 60's this would have been seen as a moral problem and if Father Wood was confronted it would have been to deal with this as a moral problem rather than as a psychological problem. Mr. MS-10 accepts that but acknowledges that that does little for the more than thirty years of pain he has beared because of this.

I might note that I found Mr. MS-10 very believable. He recounts problems dealing with authority because the abuse of authority which he experienced in Father Wood. He also recounts that it is very difficult for him to participate actively in the Church though he firmly believes in God and objectively, at least, understands that the Church as an institution was not responsible for what happened to him and that there exists blocks which prohibit him from the Church involvement that he might desire.

Mr. MS-10 was also candid about the fact that he can recall that by today's standards what might be called physical abuse at the hands of his father who was a strict disciplinarian. He acknowledges that some of his own mistrust of authority can no doubt be traced to this relationship as well. Mr. MS-10 is a Viet Nam Veteran and has sought counseling from the Viet Nam Veterans' Center at times to deal with issues related to that part of his life as well.

Because of his recent divorce and the limitations of his income, Mr. MS-10 has had to discontinue his outpatient counseling. He would like to continue that and would hope that the archdiocese would offer some form of financial support. This counseling program is available through Our Lady of Peace Hospital where, Mr. MS-10 related, that Sister Rose Eleanor Perry was very gracious and kind to him during his time there.

I proposed to Mr. MS-10 that I would contact Sister Rose Eleanor to arrange for him to return to the outpatient counseling program for survivors of sexual abuse and that through her we could make arrangements for the billing of this to be taken care of by the archdiocese. Mr. MS-10 volunteered that at least a portion of this service would be taken care of by his medical insurance. I thanked him for that information and said that I would advise Sister Rose Eleanor of that and any balance which the insurance would not cover could be forwarded to the Chancery to Father Breen's attention.

I have a call into Sister Rose Eleanor Perry and when this is in place I will report to you again.

cc: Archbishop Thomas C. Kelly, O.P.

A 7-92 Up to now Mr. MS-10 Medical insurance has met any expense related to his counseling/therapy. However - this may change & I have directed him to direct billing to the Archdiocese via Sr. Rose Perry.

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