

Saint Peter Claver Catholic Church

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9 May 2011

Memo To: Tim Rourke

From: Father Kevin McDonough

Re: Father Curtis Wehmeyer and Disclosure

Tim, I have taken some time to think about the question of whether there is some sort of disclosure that would be needed or useful in his regard. My conclusion is that I would recommend against any disclosure in his workplace, but that I would like to know that he has disclosed his history with responsible priest friends. Let me lay out my thinking.

Disclosure in the church-rectory-office setting is aimed at preventing a priest from misusing his position as a priest to obtain impermissible favors (sex, money, information) from those to whom he ministers. With Father Wehmeyer, that has never been a question. His troublesome behavior has been to drive his car to "cruise" places that are known settings for anonymous same-sex sexual encounters. On one occasion, he also engaged a man in a suggestive conversation in a Borders bookstore. His priesthood came up in the conversation when he tried to use the fact that he is a priest as a way to deny that his ambiguous comments were meant to start something sexual. In fact, I think that you share with me the opinion that he really was not all that interested in an actual sexual encounter, but rather was obtaining some stimulation by "playing with fire". This sort of behavior would not show up in the workplace. I agree with Father Curtis that disclosure there would only serve to out his sexual identity questions (which, by the way, would be unlikely to surprise any observant person in the parish!).

On the other hand, disclosure to a group of peers is meant to help a priest to remain accountable for the spiritual and psychological work needed to maintain and improve his trustworthiness. I do not recall: has he done so? In fact, I do not remember whether he has a priest support group of any sort. I think that he would do well to have some real friends who can challenge him about how he is doing in living his priestly vocation with integrity.

My recommendation is that we would encourage (or even require) Father Wehmeyer to disclose his pattern of self-destructive behavior to a small circle of trusted friends. I am sending a copy of this memo to Father Laird, so that he can weigh in on the matter as well.

Cc: Father Peter Laird