

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

Reverend Robert Burns  
St. Mary's, Charlestown  
March 18, 1991

Attorney Warren O'Brien, a neighbor of the [REDACTED] family in Jamaica Plain, called to speak with me about the misconduct of a former priest at St. Thomas Parish, Jamaica Plain.

The priest's name is Reverend Robert Burns. The misconduct was sexual abuse of a fourteen year old boy who worked in the rectory at the time. The boy's name is [REDACTED]. He is age twenty and is a student at Boston College.

Father Burns is a priest of the Diocese of Youngstown, Ohio. He came to the Archdiocese in 1983 and served in Jamaica Plain for three years.

The specific reports regarding sexual abuse are:

[REDACTED] served as an altar boy in the parish as well as working in the rectory during his grammar school years. The abuse began by Father Burns giving him massages. This went on for about a year. Then he began touching his genitals after a face-to-face confession when he was about age thirteen or fourteen; this continued when he would see him in the rectory. Eventually, there were sins of masturbation, sodomy and oral sex on one or two occasions. He would tell Father Burns that he didn't want to do this and Father Burns would stop, but then it would pick up again. This went on for a period of less than a year.

Recently, [REDACTED] became angry and told a friend. At the advice of his friend he went to a counselor who sent him to therapy at Beth Israel. ~~The purpose of the therapy was to help him regarding his feeling tense and anxious when men came near him or touched him.~~

I met with Father Burns on March 21 and I presented to him the complaints of Attorney O'Brien. Father Burns has been in a doctoral program at Boston College. It is not finished. He was a resident at the House of Affirmation previous to coming to ministry here in Boston.

At present he is living with a cousin at 5 Garvey Road, Framingham, MA 01701, telephone number 1-508-877-4645. He left St. Mary's Parish, Charlestown on Saturday, March 23.

My plans are to remain in contact with him and to help him resettle once we have word from Bishop Malone what he would like Father Burns to do. Father Burns continues to be in therapy. He spoke to me about having suicidal thoughts but that he was handling them okay. He is thinking of leaving ministry and seeking a teaching post at Northeastern University.

My recommendation is that I continue to be in contact with him until his situation is more stable.

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