

CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 17, 1987

TO: Father Michael O'Connell

FROM: Father William Kenney *WCK*

In late 1969 Archbishop Byrne informed me that Monsignor Gilligan reported that a married couple had come to see him, complaining of inappropriate touches on the part of Jerry Kern toward their young son who was about [REDACTED]. I don't recall if the boy had reported this, or if others had seen it happen.

When Msgr. Gilligan or the Archbishop (I don't recall who) confronted Jerry with these accusations, he defended himself by saying that he was wrestling with the boy on the floor, and there was nothing more to it than that. The parents were not convinced and demanded that Jerry leave [REDACTED].

I then went to Joe Baglio and Dick Jeub and confided in them about the situation. With some reluctance, they agreed to Jerry's going to Our Lady of Grace and Jeub going to St. Mark's.

I never met with Jerry regarding the above matter, nor did I ever hear of any more incidents.

ARCH-016571

Dear Monsignor Gilligan  
 Our life has not been an easy one the past [redacted] but because we have had faith a prayer we have been able to count our blessings in spite of the loss of [redacted] my four children have been comparatively easy to raise - they had a good start from their father. I am very proud of each one of them a their father must be too. It has been most disconcerting to me to have had a recent intrusion on our family life. I hope you can understand my feelings of incredulity. My instinct to protect my children has never been so challenged. At the time (insert of the incidents related in [redacted] letter) our main thought was that the best way to handle such a delicate subject, knowing full well how

Saturday Sept 13, '69

Copy

damaging a thing it could be  
 a what a mis-step could mean to  
 all concerned. I am sorry men  
 there has been so much delay  
 that we did not go to you,  
 Menigron, at once. Our concern  
 for someone else has led to every  
 more concern for our children  
 a for ourselves.  
 With the hope that the instigator  
 of our anxiety will receive help  
 he apparently so badly needs,  
 I am writing to ask that you  
 let us know at once of any  
 progress you may have made.  
 I have known our Public Safety  
 Commissioner William Carlson & his  
 Deputy Commissioner Roger Conway  
 well & personally for many years.  
 Would it be easier for you if  
 I were to seek advice from  
 the <sup>my</sup> insert - I have since talked to  
 Roger Conway on a strictly confidential  
 & unofficial basis because this  
 matter is moving so slowly - he  
 is ready to act should I ask

copy  
 @

him to.) The [redacted] & I feel  
 too much time has elapsed  
 because of circumstances & so  
 we feel this matter must be settled  
 as quickly as possible. It is  
 becoming increasingly difficult  
 to live with - I am concerned  
 for my son's safety as well as  
 the atmosphere of school (insert -  
 but has not returned  
 to those duties since the  
 incident with Kern in July  
 I have not influenced him  
 in any way but let him decide  
 with only the question "When is  
 the [redacted] ready from  
 [redacted] of church - if he  
 returns to the [redacted]

mind. Out of respect to your position  
 + experience I am writing for  
 the [redacted] + myself to tell  
 you that should you find the  
 task difficult we are ready to  
 go to Bill Carlson or Roger Conway  
 where we know cautious but  
 hurried steps will be taken  
 to protect our church from  
 scandal at the same time the  
 basic worry of this whole  
 matter will be taken care of  
 in a most experienced +  
 discreet manner.

Realizing that the mention  
 word is easily misinterpreted  
 I am trusting such will not be  
 the case with this letter. As a  
 mother I am deeply concerned  
 for my son as well as for other  
 vulnerable children. That you  
 may I please ask that you  
 let me know within a very few  
 days your progress or lack  
 of it + what your answers to

Your Excellency,  
 The foregoing is a copy of a letter mailed to Monsignor Gilligan (certified) about Sept. 15th. I had written one week after our initial meeting with Monsignor Gilligan concerning [redacted] Fr. Kern. The [redacted] have written a letter to you in which I concur just as they concurred when I wrote the above to Msgr. Gilligan. We have met with Monsignor Gilligan on Sept. 29. He said he had contacted you & is waiting to hear from you. We respect Monsignor immensely. We told him we need going to contact you ourselves, trusting we would not put him



my questions herein are to be?



in a difficult position by doing so. He said we are free to get as we think best & stressed the fact, which we appreciate of your many obligations & duties in these difficult times. To us, as parents, this is an urgent matter & thus we have gone ahead in this further attempt to have it resolved quickly. We have grown weary of waiting & trying to handle a delicate matter so carefully & are now beginning for your immediate consideration. With all respect due to those who have listened & been limited in their ability to help, would that we had gone to you at once. Had we anticipated the mental anguish brought on by delays, we surely would have done so.

Your Excellency:

It is late to be writing to you about an incident that happened in [redacted] - but back then we never thought it would become necessary to go this length -

We are members of [redacted] parish and have recounted the story to Monsignor Belligan, who expressed his regrets and said he would contact you in the matter, and may have done so by now, but we want to expedite it by putting it to paper. We hope not to offend Monsignor in writing you, but feel such a sense of urgency about it that we must be done with it.

About the last week in June of <sup>we were visited by</sup> Father Jerome Kern of [redacted]

[redacted] The visit seemed routine enough - Father had met [redacted] & some of our children a few Sundays previous, on the occasion of the leave-taking of Fathers Sexton & Gally. Father



7.

Kern expressed an interest in stopping to see us & was encouraged to do so.

He met our five children that day

[REDACTED] and we did some piano-playing & singing, which Father seemed to enjoy.

On a very hot Thursday or Friday of [REDACTED] Father Kern telephoned, & asked he [REDACTED]

and asked if he might take some of our children swimming with him.

My husband rounded up 2 of our children and 2 of their friends.

- our son [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

On returning home that evening, our daughter was gushing with enthusiasm, and our son was very quiet. Late in the evening, his older sister heard [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] talking & suggested to [REDACTED] that he should [REDACTED]

talk to [REDACTED] He did, and he heard, sadly, in bits & pieces, the following account of the afternoon:

Explaining that the 2 beaches with life guards were too crowded, Father took them to a private spot not marked for swimming at Lake Nokomis. The two girls were happily left to swim by themselves, largely ignored - and Father devoted most of the afternoon to wrestling with the boys. On land, he would straddle my son, dare him to "pin" him.

But in the water, it was another kind of wrestling - in the deep water Father's hand slipped under [REDACTED] suit and over his genital area - after which the boy spent most of his time trying to avoid him. Three or four other times, Father's hand slipped into the trunks onto the abdomen, but [REDACTED] said he'd squirm away, or, as he showed us, pluck. Father's arm

nearly 'pull it out'. He placed a coil  
 a hook to rest on the breast &  
 Father would drag him by the  
 neck out into the water again.  
 on a sudden loud. There was  
 one got by Father on the outside  
 of the tank, but [redacted] says that  
 really could have happened  
 accidentally as he thought there  
 was nothing wrong in that one  
 instance.  
 He said [redacted] - he took  
 one chance out in the water alone  
 to compare notes. [redacted] that  
 but the same thing happens to  
 him - he's making little gurgles  
 and his clothes get him tightly  
 - only [redacted] had on jeans.  
 cut off, a bit and undressing  
 for the cause of "swimming"  
 Father's hand took a bit of  
 inside a over [redacted] gentle  
 organs. He is a strong  
 person & he spent all his  
 time way out in deep water  
 after the incident trying to help

Do. [redacted] who wasn't a strong  
 swimmer, stayed on the beach  
 with his wife, said he couldn't  
 keep up with father's pace anymore  
 when he started him & thought  
 necessary of gathering his younger  
 brother & his grand & just walking  
 off.

The sister, who had to be told  
 something after that day, once  
 she said father had said after  
 his vacation the crowd take  
 them again, said out when we  
 told her something of the  
 problem, "Oh, mother, I only  
 said seen her [redacted] trying  
 to come in and father taking  
 him by the neck and carrying  
 him off into the water again!  
 She also said when [redacted] would  
 like or his towel & cover his  
 eyes, father would move  
 his towel over neck to him.  
 The family understood why  
 when they both came in the  
 house after being dropped

off, when she said "Want to see"

me?" "Oh, yes!"

do indeed an afternoon order

you can see and his grand

often had pointed it out to

us - our order began. The dis-

arrangement, the delivery of the

the matter, the position of the

man in the Church, the necessity

to be sure of what had happened

that day - we proceeded cautiously.

What followed is too

detailed to get into a letter.

An incident to our intelligence

- Father Kinn's attempt to

explain away the incident.

Will had a three week vacation

by then, and though his absence

you his special memory, it

failed him completely on the

events of that day.

and last of us, was made to

him; indignation and, in some,

offensive. He never took

anybody's name except

anybody you the boys, felt

nation that we would allow  
 ourselves to "get to know" him  
 + what he thinks, let the boys  
 go swimming again with him  
 he could make no understan-  
 d. He did not deny the incident.  
 He is a very strange man. Boyer  
 that evening, & there are reports  
 that he would be most regretful  
 and offer to ask help for himself  
 in the three long months  
 that followed, which carried this  
 great burden with us, to one  
 point, and another. We're nervous  
 negotio, advice, and, because of  
 the type of incident, a reluctance  
 to deal with it. It is a most  
 unpleasant matter. We would  
 leave him to Heaven, or call in  
 the civil authorities, and write  
 necessary statements later.  
 Eddie Kern has, in spite  
 of knowing our feelings, called  
 us once to invite to join his  
 Adult Education class + sent  
 us the enclosed letter, and

continues to behave as if our problem is insufficient knowledge of him. The truth is we have all the knowledge of him we want and more.

Our sensibilities are assaulted at the sight of him dispensing the Eucharist, we try to miss his arrogant sermons, his effrontery in badgering us to "get together" is becoming intolerable. Not the least consideration, to our minds, is the welfare of the children of the parish - we would not wish them to experience what our son has.

We know there is no redress for our son - but your earliest possible attention to the matter would give us some small solace.

Sincerely,

DATE: June 1, 1987

MEMO TO:

FROM: Fr. Michael O'Connell

SUBJECT: AN INCIDENT OF ALLEGED SEXUAL ABUSE OF MINORS  
BY FR. JEROME KERN

On May 4, 1987, Bishop Robert J. Carlson and Fr. Michael J. O'Connell met with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

The four of them related an incident that happened in the summer of [REDACTED] which follows:

In the summer [REDACTED] [REDACTED] were invited, along with two other minor girls, to go swimming by Fr. Jerome Kern at Lake Nokomis, Minneapolis. The two boys had cut-off jeans on at the time. They went to Lake Nokomis with Fr. Kern in one car. Shortly after they commenced swimming, a game of tag in the water began. Fr. Kern kept pushing the boys out into deeper water. At this point, he began to grab them, claiming that he would help them swim.

[REDACTED] indicated that he was picked up by Fr. Kern, allegedly to help him to swim, although [REDACTED] indicated that he could swim very well without assistance. [REDACTED] alleges that Fr. Kern slipped his hand inside his tight, cut-off jeans and in fact touched his genitals.

[REDACTED] indicated that on several occasions, possibly 4 or 5 occasions, Fr. Kern also, in forcing him into deeper water and claiming that he was helping [REDACTED] to swim, forced his hand into [REDACTED] cut-off jeans and touched his genitals on a number of occasions. (4-5)

When all of the swimmers got out of the water and went to the shore, Fr. Kern initiated a wrestling match and again, there was a great deal of touching through the clothes that commenced, even though [REDACTED] said that he indicated that he didn't feel well and didn't want to wrestle. Finally, Fr. Kern ceased in this game.

Later that day after the boys had returned to the [REDACTED] home, one of the older [REDACTED] daughters heard the boys describing the events that had happened at Lake Nokomis and she told her mother, who in turn talked to [REDACTED] and they, in turn, brought it to the attention of the Chancery and then to Msgr. Gilligan and ultimately to the St. Paul Police.

Fr. <sup>Fr. Kern</sup> Kern was made aware of this situation, probably by Msgr. Gilligan and he did come over to the [REDACTED] home and met with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. His attitude at the time was, in their words, "brazen." Fr. Kern did not deny that he did these things to the boys.



He said that this sort of thing was done all of the time in Europe and it was a common occurrence. Fr. Kern also said that this is the way things are in the world and they should not be disturbed by it. Both of the [REDACTED] were terribly offended by Fr. Kern's attitude and the fact that he did not seem to be sorry for what he did, nor did he feel that it was wrong, nor did he apologize to them.

Some time after this in the fall [REDACTED] the police investigated these accusations by interviewing each of the boys and subsequent to that, the Chief of Police of St. Paul at the time called [REDACTED] and assured her that Fr. Kern would no longer be assigned in St. Paul, nor would he be assigned in the St. Paul area in the future. Fr. Kern was moved.

J.K.

J.K. / R.C. / mac 6/5/87

Bill Kennedy mentioned [redacted] incident by the way Transferred

To O.L.G.

wedding of daughter was to be done by J.K. At last minute

Fam asked that Tim section have wedding. J.K. was down

to [redacted] to find out what was going on. + they

then read him [redacted] (K.D.S. I know what I said was -)

going out to O.L.G. for to

J.K. remember St. Paul Police came to look to College

but J.K. didn't know

J.K. met w/ Bill K. J.K. ST. Memo > "Have any of

the [redacted] letters to you yet?"

Following 5 items:

- while no print copies [redacted] see steps back of Serial Library

Issues > [redacted]

- prof. Ford, call to him

- [redacted] would be coming to ST den

w/ [redacted] J.K. [redacted] Comm. [redacted]

J.K. + his evaluation

[redacted]

Fr. Jerome Kern: "friendly w/ boys" Kern came to house + asked boy to go swimming - lake Calhoun - 2 hrs in afternoon - that eve [redacted] sister

ever heard 2 boys talking about what had happened - told father - He came to [redacted]

[redacted] Happened under water - "Hand under swimming trunks to both boys - under water. Boys said they were frightened on way home.

G. Kilgan

- [redacted] went to msgr. Gilligan:

He said "his hands were tied" - seemed very sad

nothing happened.

[redacted] went to Quinter Kennedy (friend of St. Marys):

- he was very sad: he said he would talk to Kern + have Kern come to

see [redacted]

- [redacted] took him down to rec. room in basmt - other kids

know [redacted]

- Kern said, it happens all over Europe; boys might as well learn about it, know rather than later" (Kern was to have married

to [redacted] their daughter soon family got some other)

He was not repentant

(Kilgan) →

[redacted] had 2 friends in police dept I. + got her got w/ chief M'Cauley

[redacted] wrote to Archbp Bink and got no reply > she asked (she was crushed; couldn't believe that they wouldn't reply to her letter)

[redacted] M'Cauley called [redacted] told her that Kern would leave the parish + not be allowed to return to city

- [redacted] heard later that Kern was in parish in Edine

ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS

226 Summit Avenue

Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102-2197

The Chancery

June 17, 1987

CONFIDENTIAL

Rev. Neil Seller  
Servants of the Paraclete  
Jemez Springs, New Mexico 87025

Dear Fr. Seller,

As you know, Fr. Jerome Kern of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis will be coming to Jemez Springs shortly for an evaluation.

Attached to this letter is a memo dated June 15, 1987 which summarizes the issues that compel us to ask Fr. Kern to be evaluated. (cf. blue memo)

I believe the June 15 memo is fairly self-explanatory, and I do feel free to allow you to show this memo to Fr. Kern while he is at Jemez Springs. It is substantially the same memo that he saw when he met with us here in St. Paul on June 5, 1987, except that I have added a concluding paragraph and I have added more to the first paragraph.

I would ask you not to share this cover letter with Fr. Kern. Both Bishop Carlson and I feel that he is not being completely disclosive of the exact nature of the event that happened in that summer of [redacted] and their two sons.

We have no reason to believe that the event did not happen exactly as they described it, that is, the complete invasion of both boys' very tight and cut-off shorts to the point of touching the genitals as was described. Bishop Carlson and I are not sure why Fr. Kern is denying this or whether in fact he has simply suppressed his memory of that event.

Bp. Carlson and I also have some reason to question whether or not he has been or continues to be an active homosexual based on the personal observation of Bp. Carlson seeing Fr. Kern enter this park area in the last five years. This particular park is infamous in the Twin City area as being a pick-up place for homosexual men and it is beyond the imagination of any reasonably intelligent person to be seen entering or around that particular park, especially in the area that Fr. Kern was observed to be and at the time of day he was observed to be there, and not believe that he was involved in some kind of homosexual solicitation.

I, Michael O'Connell, am a classmate of Fr. Kern's and I have observed him myself at the McCarthy Gymnasium at the St. Paul Seminary with young boys. I even believe my memory would recollect that I have seen him come in there with a singular young boy at some time in the past. However, I cannot swear to that.

Neil Seller  
June 17, 1987

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Knowing what we know now about pedophilia and about how it is rarely a singular act, we would have some reason to question Fr. Kern's insistence that the event of the summer of [REDACTED] was a singular event.

We look forward to your evaluation of Fr. Kern and hopefully to his openness and cooperation with that evaluation. He claims that he is sincerely looking forward to this himself and that he would like to do some closure on the events that happened [REDACTED]. Hopefully, it was a singular occurrence and we can do some closure to this.

I appreciate and thank all of you for all of the good work you have done and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Reverend Michael J. O'Connell  
Vicar General  
Moderator of the Curia

MJO:mrw  
Enclosure

ARCH-016589

R. Castaldo + mJoc 11/6/87

- J.K. will draw / pull male children into his lap and  
Tackle them on stomach. It occurs to R.C. that he, R.C.,  
respects people's space and if he were one of the children  
he <sup>probably</sup> would be comfortable w/ being pulled / drawn in.

J.K. does this only to boys, <sup>as far as R.C. can remember</sup> and boys between 6-11  
yrs. old. This behavior has been observed in the school  
lunch room when J.K. would be sitting w/ other staff

Before R.C. knew about J.K.'s Bkgd. he didn't think  
the behavior was unusual in any way and he also has never  
had anyone say anything to him directly or indirectly  
taken re: J.K.'s behavior; and R.C. does have the  
reputation of reporting confidentiality and does have  
people share a lot of confidential things w/ him.

R.C. has observed that J.K. does embrace + touch  
adult men + women spontaneously and does seem to  
initiate this kind of behavior as much as respond  
to it. It ~~is~~ seems spontaneous, natural and normal.

J.K.'s Time off is <sup>1</sup> day a week; goes to International Swim + 2. Truss Ltr.  
+ uses whirlpool, sauna, swimming; Both R.C. + J.K.  
have been members for 2-3 yrs. J.K. seems to take  
care of himself in a healthy way w/ friends and outside  
activities.

ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS

226 Summit Avenue  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102-2197

The Chancery

CONFIDENTIAL

November 30, 1987

Mr. Gary R. Schoener  
Executive Director  
Walk-In Counseling Center  
2421 Chicago Avenue So.  
Minneapolis, MN 55404

Dear Gary,

I am writing to you regarding the need of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis for a re-evaluation of the Jemez Springs' report on Father Jerome Kern and a recommended program of rehabilitation for Father Kern.

Father Jerome Kern is 46 years old, has been a priest for 20 years and is currently co-pastor of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Minnetonka, Minnesota.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] described the events of the [REDACTED] when Fr. Kern came to the [REDACTED] home and invited the two boys, then [REDACTED] to accompany him to swim at Lake Nokomis Beach. Two girls went along with the group.

The boys were wearing cut-off jeans at the time. When they got to the beach, a game of tag developed and they all got into the water. According to the two boys, Fr. Kern drove the game out into deeper water and at that point, he began to grasp each of the boys from behind and play as if he was saving them from drowning. The boys both described themselves as being good to excellent swimmers and had no need to be saved from drowning. Both boys are very clear and very exact in their memory that Fr. Kern invaded both of their cut-off jeans. [REDACTED] indicates that he remembers Fr. Kern invaded his shorts once and touched him on the genitals; [REDACTED] remembers that Fr. Kern invaded his shorts a number of times, possibly 4-5 times, and touched his genitals on each of those occasions.

When all of the swimmers got out of the water and went to the shore, Fr. Kern initiated a wrestling match and again there was a great deal of touching through the clothes that happened, even though [REDACTED] said he had advised he didn't feel well and didn't want to wrestle. Finally, Fr. Kern ceased in carrying out the game.

Later that day one of the older [redacted] daughters overheard the boys describing the events at Lake Nokomis and she told her mother, who in turn talked to [redacted]. The mothers in turn brought it to the attention of the pastor.

There is a great deal of confusion about who then talked to whom and how eventually Fr. Kern found out that people were concerned about the events at Lake Nokomis. In any case, Fr. Kern did come over to the [redacted] home and met with the [redacted] parents and the [redacted] parents. He was reported by [redacted] to have been "quite brazen and insensitive" when they shared with him their considerable distress at what they had heard about the events at Lake Nokomis. Apparently, Fr. Kern indicated that all he was doing was engaging in "Italian wrestling," which he learned in Italy when he was a student there and which was all about men wrestling with one another and grasping one another's genitals. Needless to say, the [redacted] were not impressed with this explanation.

In January, 1970, Fr. Kern was assigned to Our Lady of Grace Parish in Edina, and at that time, Fr. Joseph Baglio, the pastor, asked him why he was assigned there. Fr. Kern, according to Fr. Baglio, reported that this incident had happened and that again, as far as he (Fr. Kern) was concerned, it was "Italian wrestling" and he thought that the reason for his move was an over-reaction to what had happened. Fr. Baglio told me on the phone in October, 1987, that after Fr. Kern told him why he was moved from St. Mark's Fr. Baglio said that there was to be no activity like that at Our Lady of Grace as long as Fr. Kern would be there and Fr. Kern agreed to that. Fr. Baglio also informed me that during the period from 1970-1976 when he and Fr. Kern were together at St. Mark's, he observed nothing in Fr. Kern's behavior that could be questionable regarding the matters that we are concerned with.

Bishop Carlson and I met with Fr. Kern on June 5, 1987, and indicated to him that [redacted] had called the Chancery, concerned as to what the Church had done following the incidents of [redacted] with Fr. Kern. [redacted] indicated that they had been given no explanations of what the Church had done and because of the publicity around Fr. Adamson in the winter of 1987, they needed to know whether the Church had followed through and if so, how this was done.

We then reported to Fr. Kern the events that [redacted] and their sons had described and Fr. Kern admitted that the events happened as described except he indicated that he did not thoroughly invade the boys' cut-offs but that he had just gotten his hands inside the top of each set of shorts. Bishop Carlson and I told Fr. Kern that judging from our lengthy interviews with the two mothers and the two adult sons, we believed their report of what happened.

Bishop Carlson also related to Fr. Kern an occasion that happened a few years ago whereby he (Bishop Carlson) and another priest were driving by the southeast corner of Loring Park at around 8:30 p.m. on a weekday evening and saw Fr. Kern entering the park. Fr. Kern did not deny that,



Gary Schoener - Kern  
November 30, 1987

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in fact, he probably was entering the park. However, he did not agree with the opinion that the wide-open almost sexual trafficking that goes on at that particular part of Loring Park in the evening had anything to do with why he was there. In other words, he indirectly denied that he was homosexual and continues to deny that.

At a subsequent meeting, I shared with Fr. Kern that while I worked on the St. Paul Seminary Campus during the mid and late-1970's, I know that I observed him, at least on one occasion, entering the McCarthy Gym with a young boy, that to the best of my recollection, appeared to have been around [redacted] years old. However, I also told Fr. Kern that it was very difficult for me to be more specific about when I saw that or anything else more specific about my recall of it.

Fr. Kern went down to the Servants of the Paraclete at Jemez Springs, New Mexico this past June, 1987, for an evaluation. A copy of his week-long stay at Jemez Springs and their evaluation accompanies this letter along with the signed original release which Fr. Kern has authorized for the Servants of the Paraclete at Jemez Springs to release to you any and all pertinent testing and data regarding Fr. Kern.

Subsequent to Fr. Kern's return from Jemez Springs, I met with him again and we discussed the evaluation from Jemez Springs. Fr. Kern appears to be most willing to cooperate with any program of rehabilitation that will be recommended for him here in the local area.

I then, as you know, had an opportunity to visit with you, at which time you asked me to check even further into Fr. Kern's activities between 1969 and the present. Above I have referred to my conversation with Fr. Joseph Baglio, whom Fr. Kern allowed me to talk to and who was also with him from 1969 until 1976 at Our Lady of Grace.

Fr. Kern also authorized me to speak with Fr. Rinaldo Custodio, with whom he has been co-pastor from 1976 to 1987 at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Minnetonka.

I met with Fr. Custodio in October, 1987. Upon questioning Fr. Custodio about Fr. Kern's behavior around adolescent and pre-adolescent children, Fr. Custodio could only remember that when Fr. Kern and other members of the parish staff are seated in the school lunchroom, Fr. Kern does have a habit of "drawing and/or pulling male children into his lap and tickling them on the stomach". Fr. Custodio indicated that Fr. Kern does this only to boys, as best as he can remember, between approximately the ages of 6-11. Fr. Custodio has never thought that this was unusual behavior because Fr. Kern does it in the presence of a lot of other adult people and to the best of his knowledge, he has never seen a child that objected to it. However, Fr. Custodio would admit that he himself is a rather private person and does not readily accept anyone else reaching out and physically pulling him into any kind of physically close proximity and he could see how maybe some of these children may have felt that way when Fr. Kern did this. Because of their relationship as a child to Fr. Kern as an adult and as a priest, they may not have been able to express their discomfort with this kind of behavior. Fr. Custodio also indicated that he has observed that Fr. Kern does spontaneously embrace and touch adult men

ARCH-016693

Gary Schoener - Kern  
November 30, 1987

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CONFIDENTIAL

and women and there has never seemed to be anything inappropriate about this kind of behavior. He seems to initiate it as much as he is responsive to it. It appears very natural and normal as far as Fr. Custodio can say.

Fr. Custodio also indicates that Fr. Kern takes a day off a week and is faithful to that. He seems to get a normal amount of recreation along with his hard work and he does describe him as a hard-working priest. Fr. Custodio and Fr. Kern both joined the "International Fitness Center" on Hwy. 101 and Hwy. 7 and they both regularly use the whirlpool, sauna and go swimming.

Fr. Kern also indicated that I could speak to his long-time friend, Fr. William Whittier, more in the aspect of Fr. Whittier being an advocate for him. I did have a lengthy conversation with Fr. Whittier on the phone and he appreciates the fact that we are willing to stay in touch with him.

Gary, you can see by all of the above information that there is a need for a person of your expertise to re-assess and evaluate the material from New Mexico and give us a specific recommendation for ongoing rehabilitation for Fr. Kern. [REDACTED] deserve to know what kind of follow-up we are finally doing in the case of Fr. Kern and certainly Fr. Kern deserves to have us be straight and clear with him as to our expectations for him if he is to continue in ministry.

It is also my understanding and Fr. Kern's understanding that you will be contacting him by mid-December to set up an appointment with him.

I will be more than willing to cooperate with you in any way that I can. I deeply appreciate your willingness to assist us.

Sincerely,

Reverend Michael J. O'Connell  
Vicar General  
Moderator of the Curia

MJO:mrw  
Enclosures

*bcc: Archbishop Rouch  
Bishop Carlson*

ARCH-016694

Gary Shover + mjoe. phone 1/7/88

- Jeb  
- Vandromac  
- Desutter

Jerry Kern:

double ck'd by another Psych.

G.S. has

They should have done more testing - Gary S. has done much more testing

Impression:

- no homosexuality - very heterosexual

- ~~no~~

- healthy indiv., dedicated parent; no turmoil or problem

except this issue

- no impulse problem



- he's not good at explaining how he feels (New Mexico)

- much physical wrestling in his fam (affection) rough house  
(<sup>family</sup> <sup>brothers</sup> <sup>brothers</sup> <sup>grasping from behind</sup> & today)

- he went to Rome + played football as way of compensation

- he found himself envious of Italian father's relationship w/ their kids - He had a lot of emotional need

> felt unsupported + rejected by Gelligan + Starved for

contact + affection

> w/ Boys → engaged in rough house play - They pickand

up an emotional intensity; whether or not he

physically touched them ~~or~~ genitiles

is Question:

They experienced a "sort of sexual episode" that they

He grew up, wrestling w/ brother & sisters  
Very sensitive about women  
Complete works to get back to M.D.C.

No sexual problems:

Wool adjusted to it. Who does not have a problem

Good healthy relationships now  
present behavior of her I AM

Comparison? - No Therapy  
"big"



IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY CHURCH

13505 EXCELSIOR BOULEVARD  
MINNETONKA, MINNESOTA 55345

March 28, 1988

Dear families,

I'm writing a letter to you to express something that I've wanted to say many years ago but never did. Regarding the events at the lake in the summer of [redacted] I want to say how truly sorry I am to each & everyone of you for the pain & hurt you endured. I apologize with all my heart.

Also, I feel bad about the way I reacted to you when discussing it afterwards. Though I may have appeared insolent to you, inside of me I was so nervous & scared. When I left your house that night, I just cried for the longest time.

I am sorry. I hope & pray some day you may forgive me. I will always pray for you.

Sincerely,

(Rev.) Deanne Kean

ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS

226 Summit Avenue  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102-2197

The Chancery

April 13, 1988

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Friends,

I am finally able to get back to all of you after a considerable length of time during which I have looked into the concerns that you brought to my attention last year regarding Father Jerome Kern.

I know that you know we have taken your concerns very, very seriously and as a result, we are most grateful to you for your willingness to take the time and extend the considerable emotional and physical energy that you did in alerting us to our need to act.

Following the numerous consultations that I had with you, I asked Father Kern to go down to the Servants of the Paraclete in Jemez Springs, New Mexico to go through an extensive in-patient evaluation. He did this last August and he did it willingly and cooperatively. I received that report and then I had a local psycho-therapist who has come to my attention to be as fine a psychological and testing resource as I can find in the Twin Cities area, Dr. Gary Schoener, review the evaluation that was done at Jemez Springs, New Mexico and interview Father Kern extensively to provide a secondary evaluation. He then had his work in turn cross-evaluated by a colleague which is his constant practice and one of the reasons that I respect him as well as I do. Father Kern saw Dr. Schoener on a number of occasions.

With Father Kern's permission, I also spoke with Father Joseph Baglio, who is currently retired but was pastor of Our Lady of Grace Church in Edina during the period that Father Kern was there from 1969-1976. I also spoke with Father Rinaldo Custodio who has been co-pastor with Father Kern at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Minnetonka, from 1976 to the present. I felt that both of these priests, whom I regard highly, could give us a very credible account of Father Kern's activities as a priest since he left St. Mark's in 1969.

You also will note the attached letter from Father Kern, dated March 28, which is to my satisfaction, a very sincere apology to all of you and especially to the young men for what he did back in [REDACTED] with the boys at that time and then the subsequent behavior he displayed

in meeting with the parents. I am satisfied that Father Kern is extremely sincere and contrite in the expression he makes in this letter and in the multiple interviews that I have had with him over this past year regarding this incident.

As a result of the extensive testing at Jemez Springs and the counter and cross-testing done by Dr. Schoener and his colleague, I am satisfied that though Father Kern may well have had developmental problems which contributed to his actions in the [REDACTED] since then he has gone through a regular and systematic program of self-development and counseling under his own motivation which in no way makes him a danger to young people or anyone for that matter in his pastoral ministry today. The real question that we had to deal with, and I think it was the one that all of you brought forth, was: What has been done with Father Kern since the events of [REDACTED] which would ensure that he is functioning properly and effectively as a priest today and would not be endangering anyone that he serves? I believe the answer to that question is now confirmed in all of the testing and evaluation mentioned above and that is that he is, in fact, not a danger. He has, as a matter of fact, turned into being a good pastoral minister and has received quite a bit of positive evaluation for the ministry that he did at Our Lady of Grace and he does at Immaculate Heart of Mary.

I am very much convinced that Father Kern learned well, a lesson, from those events in [REDACTED] and I am satisfied that he has taken and continues to take all of the necessary measures of personal, spiritual and psychological growth that contribute to his functioning today as a successful priest.

I am most grateful to all of you for extending yourselves in bringing this to our attention. I do believe we have followed through in terms of satisfying ourselves and yourselves as to the current health of Father Kern and his ability to function well as a priest.

If I can do anything further to explain the process outlined above, please do not hesitate to call upon me. Again, my thanks to all of you and I sincerely hope that our efforts have served your just and considerate needs.

Sincerely,

Reverend Michael J. O'Connell  
Vicar General  
Moderator of the Curia

Enclosure

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

DATE: April 26, 1988  
MEMO TO: Archbishop Roach  
FROM: Fr. Michael O'Connell  
SUBJECT: REV. JEROME KERN

As you can see from the attached evaluation of Fr. Jerome Kern by Dr. Gary Schoener, there is no current reason to believe that Fr. Kern is acting out in any inappropriate way or that he poses any kind of a danger in terms of his ministry to youth or anyone else for that matter.

I have met with Fr. Kern and asked him to submit the letter that is also attached which we have sent to the [REDACTED] along with the letter that I addressed to the same people.

I am satisfied that Fr. Kern is ready to have this issue brought to closure and I must say that he has been extremely cooperative in this whole process over the past year.

It was the concern of the [REDACTED] that Fr. Kern be evaluated and deemed able to currently function in ministry without being a danger to anyone and I feel that Fr. Kern's evaluation by Jemez Springs, his subsequent evaluation by Dr. Schoener and then the cross evaluation that Dr. Schoener had done with his colleague assures us of there being no problem with Fr. Kern's continued ministry.

At this point, with your approval, I would like to have all of these records destroyed and leave a short summary of this in a confidential envelope in Fr. Kern's file.

cc: Bishop Carlson  
Bishop Ham  
Fr. McDonough







# Parish of the Holy Spirit

612-698-3353

512 South Albert Street  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55105

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

May 1, 1991

Reverend Michael J. O'Connell  
Vicar General  
Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis  
226 Summit Avenue  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55102-2197

Dear Father O'Connell,

In response to your request, I met on December 1, 1990 to discuss with [redacted] the rumors of some sexual touch taking place several years before with their son by Fr. Jerome Kern. [redacted] agreed to broach this matter with their son when he and his wife were to visit them during the Christmas holidays.

On December 30, 1990 after [redacted] had discussed this subject with their son, assured me that there was no substance to these allegations.

Sincerely,

Reverend Thomas P. Hunstiger  
Pastor

ARCH-016570

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

DATE: June 5, 1992  
MEMO TO: ARCHBISHOP ROACH, BISHOP CHARRON, BISHOP CARLSON  
FROM: Fr. Kevin McDonough  
SUBJECT: FR. JERRY KERN

On May 28 I met with [REDACTED] earlier had confronted Fr. Kern in a meeting in his office, accusing Kern of sexually abusing him when [REDACTED] was a child. Kern had called me right after that meeting, shaken but unable to remember [REDACTED] as a young man, or any contact with him. I spoke with [REDACTED] the same day and set up the May 28 meeting.

[REDACTED] indicated that when he was [REDACTED] Kern had sexual contact with him. He described it as "a particularly violent incident". This took place while [REDACTED]

He indicated that he also has a memory of many rumors about Kern at Our Lady of Grace.

He says that he has spoken with someone who was abused by Kern at St. Mark's. He and I discussed this case at some length, and I emphasized to him that we had done some extensive assessment on Kern which indicated that, whatever may have happened in the past, he does not constitute a danger to young people at this time.

[REDACTED] did not give me the details of the incident, and said that he needed more time before he would be ready to do so. Because he has not given me any of those details, I do not think that it is possible for us to take any further action at this time. I have indicated to [REDACTED] that we would like to follow up on his complaint, and he knows that he can come forward with further information when he is prepared to do so.

Since this accusation covers a period of time long before the time when we had Fr. Kern assessed, I believe that we can still rely on the recommendation from Dr. Schoener and leave Kern in place for the time being. I am torn about the question of moving Kern at this time. We have been looking toward a move for him for several years. My only concern would be that [REDACTED] and those with whom he is speaking might view such a move as another part of some sort of cover-up. I could speak to [REDACTED] and indicate that, since the normal assignment period for Kern has been exhausted, a move at this time would be normal. This might prevent any concern that might move him toward some sort of panic reaction.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

DATE: JANUARY 22, 1993  
MEMO TO: THE FILE OF JERRY KERN  
FROM: FR. KEVIN MCDONOUGH  
SUBJECT: REPORT OF ABUSE [REDACTED]

I met on January 11 with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] told me that during this past summer he recovered a memory of abuse allegedly committed by Fr. Jerome Kern. He has talked about this recovered memory with Fr. Tim Power, who in turn referred [REDACTED] to me. His concern in bringing forward this story is that Fr. Kern not be in a position to abuse others. He agreed to permit me to use his name in any future confrontation with Fr. Kern about this matter.

The alleged abuse occurred [REDACTED] or more particularly in very late winter, [REDACTED] pursuing his Ad Altare Dei Award through his troop [REDACTED]. The classes for the award were held at [REDACTED]. One night a group of the candidates went to the Saint Paul Seminary on a tour. Fr. Kern served as the tour guide. The participants went into the sauna. [REDACTED] sat next to Kern. Kern touched [REDACTED] on his chest and abdomen and commented on how well developed he was for his age. The group then went to the pool. [REDACTED] did not go because he had no swimsuit, but Kern insisted that [REDACTED] use one of the swimsuits that the gym lent out in those days and join the group in the pool.

In the pool, Kern started to wrestle with [REDACTED] and grabbed him by the crotch. [REDACTED] indicated that he was embarrassed to admit that he became sexually aroused by this and that Kern continued to wrestle him and to reach inside his bathing suit. This continued for an extended period of time, according to [REDACTED] "perhaps a half an hour". Another young person with a snorkel and mask came up to them under water, saw them wrestling, and came out of the water looking stunned and then swam away. This moved [REDACTED] to break away and to swim laps.

During the rest of the evening they played racquetball, showered, and returned home. Fr. Kern volunteered to drop [REDACTED] off at home and they rode with [REDACTED] keeping his distance. Kern asked whether [REDACTED] had a girlfriend, and he responded that he did. [REDACTED] met Kern only one other time, and at that time briefly. There was another meeting to be held at IHM for award preparation, but it was cancelled without announcement. [REDACTED] was dropped off at the church and then had to try to find a phone to call home. He ran into Kern in this process, and felt that

MEMO TO THE FILE OF JERRY KERN  
PAGE 2  
January 22, 1993

Kern was obviously embarrassed. That was the last time that  
[REDACTED] saw him.

[REDACTED] His contact with Kern was very limited, and he indicated that he was not particularly traumatized by any of this. He is concerned, however, that Kern not be in a position to hurt other young people.

cc: Archbishop Roach  
Bishop Carlson  
Bishop Charron  
Mr. Fallon

January 22, 1993

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Mr. Gary Schoener  
Walk-In Counseling Center  
2421 Chicago Avenue S.  
Minneapolis, MN 55404

Dear Mr. Schoener,

In 1988 you provided a "second opinion" on some materials regarding Fr. Jerome Kern. Your second opinion was very helpful to us, and the Archdiocese chose to continue Fr. Kern in his ministry setting at the time, in part as a result of your reflections.

Since the time of your review of materials, three other complaints have been raised about Fr. Kern. One of them, involving an alleged inappropriate closeness with an adult female parishioner, proved to be a misunderstanding. A second, involving a complaint from a [REDACTED] has languished because [REDACTED] has not come forward with the further information that he indicated would be forthcoming. The third and most recent complaint is particularly troubling to me, however. I am enclosing a copy of my summary of it.

What is disturbing is that the complaint reflects alleged behavior very similar to that of which Kern had been earlier accused. The earlier accusations date from [REDACTED]. The later accusation dates from [REDACTED]. At the time that we intervened with Fr. Kern (in 1988) the allegations were [REDACTED] and uncorroborated. All of us who reviewed the materials were fairly comfortable in considering this a misunderstanding, or at least too distant and unrepeatable to be a concern. If the later allegation has any veracity, however, then it can be seen to corroborate the earlier accusations and extend the alleged behavior over a longer period of time.

I am writing to ask you to review the enclosed material. Most of it is what you reviewed before, and I am including a copy of your summary letter. I am including a few brief notes about the more recent complaints, and particularly the information about the complaint from [REDACTED].

Mr. Gary Schoener  
Page 2  
January 22, 1993

Gary, do we have something new to be concerned about here, or can our earlier assurances about him remain intact? Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Reverend Kevin M. McDonough  
Vicar General  
Moderator of the Curia

KMM:jd

Enclosure

cc: Archbishop Roach  
Bishop Carlson  
Bishop Charron  
Mr. Fallon

*Kemfile,  
please*

I.E.M. FAX-O-GRAM

DATE:

9/9/93

TIME:

1:00 PM

COMPANY:

Fr. Kevin Mc Donough

ATTENTION:

FROM:

IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY CHURCH  
13505 EXCELSIOR BOULEVARD, MINNETONKA MN 55345-4999

MESSAGE:

*Fr. Kevin, I think it's time to send this  
to ALL our School Parents. Most  
were NOT AT The meeting. Would you  
please look it over and let me  
know if it should be amended.  
Thanks,*

*Greg Pizzolatto*

Number of pages, including this cover sheet

2

IF THERE ARE PROBLEMS WITH THIS FAX PLEASE CONTACT

Mary Ellen

AT (612) 935-1492



September 9, 1993

Dear Parent,

In the middle of August we were informed that an allegation of sexual misconduct has been brought against Father Kern. At Father's request parish leadership, including staff, was brought together to meet with Bishop Charron to discuss how best to deal with this in our parish. At that time it was decided to hold a parish meeting on Sunday, August 29th. It was announced at all the Masses and about 300 parishioners gathered in the church that evening. At that time the complaint had not been filed in the court system and was not a matter of public record, but parish leadership felt clearly that the parish should be kept informed. (This past weekend the complaint was filed and reported in Saturday's Pioneer Press which I have copied on the reverse.) Although some school parents were present at the meeting it was certainly not a majority. For this reason I feel it is important to keep you informed as well.

The complaint arises from a youth field trip in [redacted] when, according to the plaintiff, Father Kern improperly touched him once in a swimming pool. About seventy other young people and adults were present at the time. The plaintiff was not a parish member and had no other relationship with Father Kern.

Father Kern recalls the field trip, but denies any abuse of the young man. A careful assessment by an independent psychologist has reassured the Archdiocese that Father Kern does not pose a danger to young people. He will remain as our pastor where he has served since 1976.

Like the psychological assessment I too feel strongly that no school child is in any danger because of Father Kern's presence. Our primary concern, as always, is the safety of each child entrusted to our care. If you have any concerns, or would like to discuss this further, I invite you to call me.

I ask for your prayers for our parish, the plaintiff and Father Kern. This has been a difficult time for all and it is only through prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit that peace and justice can be brought to all those involved.

Sincerely,

Greg Pizzolato  
Principal

TOTAL P.02

ARCH-016591

To the parishiners of

My name is . In the spring of a I was years old, I was on a field trip with the Boy Scouts to the Seminary in St. Paul. Father Jerome Kern was a chaperone on this field trip. While swimming in the pool at the seminary, Father Kern abused me sexually. I know this will come as a shock to you and for a great many of you it will be impossible to believe. I know that Father Kern has told many of you about these charges and has denied them. He would have you believe that I am a troubled soul who has lived with a misinterpretation of events all of these years and now I am trying to sort them out- and in the process, falsely accuse Father Kern of sexual abuse. I have heard that he has told you all to pray for me to help me find the truth in my tormented soul.

The truth is that Father Kern singled me out and started "wrestling" with me in the pool. His "wrestling" turned to fondling- for almost an hour, with Father Kern repeatedly telling me how "large my penis was for my age". He also insisted on giving me a ride home that night separate from the other boys in my group. On the way he asked me if I had a girlfriend and when I told him that I did he became very nervous and told me that I "should stay with her".

Father Kern would also have you believe that this is a one time, isolated incident. It is not. Father Kern was first accused of molesting two boys in the summer of a lake- in much the same manner that I was abused. He denied these charges also, but was eventually sent to the Servants of the Paraclete in New Mexico, a retreat for priests with abuse problems. There is also one other incident on file for a total of four abuse victims.

The point of writing this letter is to tell my side of the story. I now know that I was victimized by Father Kern years ago. It was a year ago while listening to a friend tell me about himself being abused, that my own ordeal came flooding back to me and I then realized the full scope of this. I decided that I couldn't stand back and let him possibly abuse someone else.

I am sorry to have to shock you like this. I know that it is difficult to believe that someone you've known, trusted and revered is capable of something like this. I have thought the same thing and can see how it would be difficult to believe that someone such as he could look you in the eyes and lie to you. Father Kern professes to be

a man of the Word- a representative of God. But he stands before you every Sunday in a mockery of the celebration of mass.

Father Kern has denied all of this, saying that I must have misunderstood his actions. When I heard this, I felt victimized all over again. But I wont let him get away with it this time. Father Kern knows the truth in his heart. It's time for the congregation to start asking some serious questions - it's time to find the truth. Discuss this within your families and amongst yourselves. And I hope that if there are any other victims out there that this will give them the courage to come forward also.

It's time that the truth be known about Father Kern. And Father Kern, whether it's now or standing before God in judgement, the truth will prevail.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

January 12, 1995

**MEMO TO:** Archbishop Roach and Bishop Welsh  
**FROM:** Father Kevin McDonough  
**SUBJECT:** FATHER JERRY KERN

At the Council meeting during your retreat we discussed Jerry Kern's situation. Bill Fallon indicated to us that a settlement was reached this past Monday. Bill can fill you in on the details of that. One of the barriers to finding another assignment for Father Kern has thereby been resolved. We do not anticipate any significant publicity to follow up on this.

The other, and more serious, barrier was Kern's condition himself. As you recall, by the time he left IHM last spring he had become fairly nonfunctional. I met with him on December 29 to discuss what has been happening during his sabbatical. He indicated that he has been living at St. Paul Seminary and has taken several courses there. He travelled in South America and has done a good deal of reading. He has been meeting regularly with his spiritual director and has been spending time with his family and some friends. He said that he is now "at peace" about his leaving IHM. He said goodbyes that had to be said and now is prepared to look toward the future.

While he has been part of a priests' support group, he has not participated in therapy. We did not require him to do so, and our consultation with Gary Schoener did not indicate that that would have been necessary. I encouraged him, nevertheless, to consider making use of a counselor for his own personal growth. He and I have had some conversations in the past about moving out of his own pain and concerns into a real appreciation of the needs and boundaries of other people, and I think that some of this would be well addressed in counseling. I did not indicate, however, that this was any sort of requirement.

Archbishop and Bishop Welsh  
Page 2

I want to indicate, Archbishop, that Father Kern believes that you have been supportive to him throughout this. He has been grateful for the trust that you showed by leaving him in the parish even in the face of the allegation.

I am ready to recommend that Father Kern be placed as an associate pastor for a limited period of time (one to two years). I hesitate to recommend assignment as a pastor for two reasons. First, I think that it would be profitable for him to see a good pastor working well with staff. Father Custodio and he never evolved an effective leadership style at IHM, and this would be an opportunity for him to do so. Second, word of the recently settled lawsuit to become public, an assignment as an associate pastor would be easier to defend, even though we continue to believe that he did not engage in sexual abuse of this minor or any other, and that he is safe for ministry and has been so for some time.

Bill Fallon has also suggested that the question of a more permanent reassignment for Kern be discussed with the Clergy Review Board. I think that that is a good recommendation.

I suggest that we might want to raise this again at the Archbishop's Council in your presence. I merely wanted to bring you up-to-date on the conversation we had had.

KMM:md

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

DATE: APRIL 12, 1994  
MEMO TO: FR. PAUL JAROSZESKI  
FROM: FR. KEVIN MCDONOUGH  
SUBJECT: FR. JEROME KERN

Paul, I met with Jerry Kern on April 8. We talked about options for him for the next year or so. So that you and he can begin some planning together, I suggested that he consider three options. First, we might consider making him temporary administrator of a parish for several months. It would be clear to everyone that it was a temporary appointment, and would have a specific time limit on it. This would mean that we would not have to do extensive disclosure in the parish about the lawsuit. Second, he could become a "senior associate". My guess is that we would have a couple of places available for him that would be meeting true Archdiocesan needs. Third, I suggested he consider a six-month sabbatical.

I told him that he might consider combining two or more of these ideas to build a plan for the next year to two years. Obviously, the legal issues that are hanging over him would make it difficult to start a new, permanent assignment. He understands this, and understands that we will have to put together a series of temporary assignments until his name is cleared, as we believe it should be.

I encouraged him to consider the sabbatical possibility most strongly. He is obviously very tired and emotionally worn. There are concerns about the health of his parents and an aunt, all of whom depend of him for some degree or other of emotional and even physical support. He has not had a sabbatical since 1981, and so he is certainly eligible for one.

He is concerned that he would have some sort of housing arrangement in place by the time he leaves IHM. We talked about several possibilities, including staying temporarily with family (which does not appear to be possible), moving into a rectory, either in connection with an assignment to that parish or simply as a housing base, or even staying at Saint Paul Seminary if he were to do a sabbatical locally. Paul, could you check into the possibility of a priest staying at the Seminary while taking classes there in the fall as a part of a local sabbatical?

I promised him that we would pick up his salary and related costs if he were to take a sabbatical this summer and fall. If he were to take either an administrator or an associate assignment, then he would be supported by the parish.

Paul, I believe that Fr. Kern will be in contact with you in the next week or so to set up an appointment. Please let me know if you have any questions about all of this.

cc: Archbishop Roach  
Bishop Welsh  
Fr. Kern

January 17, 1995

MEMO TO: *Paul Janoszeki*  
Father McDonough  
FROM: Archbishop Roach

I believe that we have to work quickly to make a decision about Jerome Kern. He will not do well simply sitting around.

Early in his career at Immaculate Heart of Mary he did a good job at administration. As his life began to unravel he became more and more reclusive and also in a sense, more impetuous, and he didn't do a good job. I believe that he has the makings of a decent administrator.

I like Bill Fallon's suggestion. Let's get him before the Review Board, right away. I think that we need to get a recommendation from them and the sooner the better.

Personally, I'd like to see him get into a parish setting as soon as that's possible because I don't think he is going to really heal until he has some good experience in a parish.

Bishop Welsh  
Bill Fallon

*Mo*  
Paul - For your info. Let's move ahead right now on a temporary associate slot if possible (eg. Blaine). We can talk about pastoring after the Review Board discussion. *K*

ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS

Chancellor's Office

291-4405/291-4424

**DATE:** January 31, 1995  
**MEMO TO:** Clergy Review Board  
**FROM:** Bill Fallon  
**SUBJECT:** Fr. J.

Fr. J. was ordained in 1966, studied in Rome, and thereafter, was assigned as associate pastor in several metropolitan parishes. In 1976 he became co-pastor of a large suburban parish, where he remained until last June when, because of his debilitating condition he took a sabbatical. He has not yet been re-assigned.

[REDACTED] met with Bishop Carlson and Fr. O'Connell to relate an incident that occurred [REDACTED] at which time they were [REDACTED]. They were invited to go swimming with Fr. J. and several others at Lake Nokomis. In the water they began a game of tag, during which Fr. J. slipped his hand inside one boy's cutoff jeans and touched his genitals. On four or five occasions, he did the same thing to the other boy. Out of the water Fr. J. initiated a wrestling match, and again, there was a great deal of touching through clothing. Later, these incidents were brought to the attention of Fr. J's pastor, and ultimately, to the St. Paul Police Department.

When he was made aware of these allegations, Fr. J. met with the parents. His attitude was in their words "brazen." He did not deny that he had done these things, said that this sort of thing was done all the time in Europe, where it was a common occurrence. The parents were terribly offended by his attitude. The police conducted an investigation, and the police chief later called one of the parents to "assure her" that Fr. J. would be moved, which he was.

Fr. J. was referred to the Servants of the Paraclete in New Mexico for evaluation. Their report of July 15, 1987, recommended that Fr. J. be in "therapy to develop an understanding, accepting and accommodating within his self perception of his behavior of many years ago." They also felt there were aspects of his sexuality of which he may be



totally unaware, which would also be beneficial for him to delve into.

November 30, 1987, Fr. O'Connell asked Dr. Gary Schoener for an evaluation of Fr. J. In his letter to Dr. Schoener, Fr. O'Connell also mentioned that Bishop Carlson and another priest had seen Fr. J. several years earlier entering Loring Park about 8:30 p.m. on a weekday evening, a fact that Fr. J. did not deny, but he denied that any misconduct took place and further denied that he was homosexual. Fr. J. was most willing to cooperate with any program of rehabilitation. Fr. O'Connell also mentioned that Fr. J's co-pastor could not remember any negative behavior around children other than his habit of pulling male children into his lap and tickling them on the stomach.

March 3, 1988, Dr. Schoener provided his evaluation to Fr. O'Connell, in which he indicates he had reviewed the evaluation report from New Mexico, administered certain tests and interviewed Fr. J. His findings were that there was no psychological disorder, no evidence was found of any sexual disorder or problem, or issues of sexual identity. He also indicated that the New Mexico examination was based on an invalid MMPI. He found no reason for further evaluation or any sort of counseling of Fr. J. He found that Fr. J. was a warm and sensitive man fully dedicated to the priesthood and of great credit to the Church. He also felt that the New Mexico evaluation did not reach a clear understanding about Fr. J's explanation for the incident in question that caused them to suggest some sort of counseling. He had a valid MMPI additional testing and what he thought was a clear and coherent explanation for the incident.

March 28, 1988, Fr. J. wrote a letter of apology to the parents of the two boys involved in the above incident.

April 13, 1988, Fr. O'Connell wrote to those parents advising them of the evaluations and stating that while Fr. J. may have developmental problems which contributed to his actions in 1969, he has gone through a program of self-development and counseling, which in no way makes a danger to young people in his ministry.

May 25, 1989, Bishop Carlson reported that he had met with Fr. J's co-pastor who reported that he had met with [REDACTED] who complained about the relationship that had existed between Fr. J. and his wife for several years. The co-pastor met with parish Trustees. [REDACTED] stated that he had never complained to his wife about her relationship with Fr. J. The Trustees met with Fr. J., at which time Fr. J. denied any sexual contacts, stating only that the relationship was a brother/sister friendship, and that [REDACTED] had been under psychiatric care. Bishop Carlson talked

to [REDACTED] who indicated to him that he felt the relationship was a platonic one, that he sees Fr. J. as a good priest and does not want to hurt him.

On May 9, 1991, Fr. O'Connell memoed the file that recent allegations concerning Fr. J's relationship with [REDACTED] and allegations that there was an inappropriate involvement with a minor in the parish were false and ill-founded based on Bishop Charron's investigation. There was no reason to continue in an inquiry into Fr. J's behavior.

On May 8, 1992, Fr. McDonough received a phone call from Fr. J. who said that he had a meeting with [REDACTED] accused him (Fr. J.) of sexual abuse when he [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Fr. McDonough thereafter met with [REDACTED] who stated that he had had "a particularly violent incident" with Fr. J. but would not provide details of the incident. Fr. McDonough felt that as this had happened before the Schoener evaluation, he could rely on that evaluation and leave Fr. J. in place for the present. [REDACTED] stated that he needed more time before he could provide details.

May 21, 1993, Dr. Schoener advised Fr. McDonough that he briefly interviewed [REDACTED] on April 13th, but was hesitant to discuss his situation. He suggested instead that Dr. Schoener talk to his therapist, who advised Schoener that [REDACTED] has kinesthetic memories of abuse by his father, as well as Fr. J. [REDACTED] later left a message with Dr. Schoener saying he'd be in touch later. Apparently, they did not talk again. Schoener's recommendation with respect to Fr. J. was that given that fact that he had been assessed once, and there was no recent evidence of any problem of anyone being at risk, that he would advise waiting so that we can get a quality evaluation. He was going to re-contact [REDACTED] the following month. Nothing further has been heard from [REDACTED]

On January 11, 1993, Fr. McDonough met with [REDACTED] who said that he had a recovered memory of abuse committed by Fr. J. in the [REDACTED] while on a Catholic scouting trip to the swimming pool at the St. Paul Seminary. In the sauna, Fr. J. touched [REDACTED] on the chest and abdomen and commented on how well developed he was. In the swimming pool, Fr. J. wrestled with [REDACTED] and grabbed him by the crotch. This wrestling and touching extended for a period of time, perhaps half an hour.

[REDACTED] commenced a law suit against Fr. J., the Archdiocese and the parish based on the incident mentioned above. This case was settled in January of this year by the Archdiocese's insurance company.

In the summer of 1993, meetings were held with Bishop Charron, Fr. McDonough, and parish leaders, followed by an open meeting for all parish members to discuss the allegations of the law suit, the allegations of Fr. J. and related matters. Because of Dr. Schoener's recommendation that Fr. J. posed no threat, the decision was made to leave Fr. J. a co-pastor.

Following a meeting with Fr. McDonough on April 8, 1994, in which a number of options were discussed concerning his future, Fr. J. elected to go on sabbatical, as he was very tired and emotionally worn.

On January 12, 1995, Fr. McDonough reported a meeting with Fr. J. on December 29th. Fr. J. indicated that he had been living at the St. Paul Seminary, had taken several courses there, travelled in South America, and done a great deal of reading. He has been meeting regularly with his spiritual director and spending time with his family and friends. He is now at peace about his leaving his parish. While he is part of a priest's support group, he has not participated in therapy, as he was not required to do so, and Dr. Schoener's consultation did not indicate that that would be necessary. Fr. McDonough recommended that Fr. J. be placed as an associate pastor for one to two years, but he hesitated to recommend an assignment as pastor at this time, because he thought it would be profitable to see a good pastor working well with his staff, and because of the recent law suit. He also recommended that this case be reviewed by the Clergy Review Board.



**DRAFT**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**MEMO**

**TO:** Archbishop John Roach  
**FROM:** Father Richard E. Pates, Chair, Clergy Review Board  
**RE:** Father Jerome Kern, Currently on Sabbatical from Pastoral Assignment  
**DATE:** June 15, 1995

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The Clergy Review Board has studied the case of Father Jerome Kern with regard to the issue of sexual abuse and the future exercise of priestly ministry and offers the attached recommendation.

The process followed in reaching our recommendation was as follows:

- 1). Bill Fallon prepared a four-page summary of Father Kern's file which all Board members received and studied.
- 2). Two Board members reviewed the extensive file of Father Kern. They presented their findings in some detail and led the discussion of the Board.
- 3). The entire Board met with Father McDonough and discussed carefully questions which had surfaced during its consideration of the case.

*Our Lady of Peace  
Catholic Community  
5425 Eleventh Avenue South  
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(612)823-8253 Fax (612) 823-5102*

Archbishop John Roach  
June 15, 1995 - Page Two  
**Confidential**

RECOMMENDATION

The Board judges that there is need for Father Kern to undergo mandated assessment of his condition as well as mandated therapy before it can render a recommendation as to Father's future ministerial placement.

The two assessments which Father Kern has undergone - by the Paracletes and by Dr. Gary Schoener - are in the Board's judgment inconclusive. The Board feels that some of the issues and their psychological implications have not been fully explored. In the interest of the common good, the Board recommends that these be dealt with more directly and extensively.

It further recommends that the assessment of Father Kern be done by a forensic psychiatrist (references for such professionals can be obtained from Dr. Suzanne Witterholt, a member of the Clergy Review Board) and that therapy be conducted by a professional different than the one who did the assessment.

The preceding recommendation was carefully studied by all members of the Clergy Review Board and is submitted with that body's unanimous approval.

The Board would be very happy to review with you any aspects of its recommendation or respond to any questions you may have.

DATE: June 27, 1995  
MEMO TO: File of Father Jerome Kern  
FROM: Fr. Kevin McDonough  
SUBJECT: Meeting at Saint Peter in Forest Lake

On Sunday evening, June 25, I met with about 50 members of the parish in Forest Lake in an open meeting. The gathering was a follow-up to the letter from Archbishop Roach which was read at all of the Masses that weekend.

I reviewed the letter paragraph by paragraph and provided more detailed information and reflection. We then spent over an hour discussing people's reactions and answering questions. This latter part of the meeting began rather negatively, with the tone of the questions fairly suspicious. Concerns expressed or implied included these: whether parishioners were receiving all the relevant information or not; why a priest with even a shadow of suspicion would be assigned to a parish with a school; why a parish that has had much recent turmoil would have to face more possible disturbance; whether sufficient safeguards were in place so that Father Kern or any other staff member would be interacting with young people only in appropriate circumstances.

As the meeting progressed, however, the tone became increasingly positive. I emphasized that we were not asking the parish to take on a known child abuser, but rather to receive a skilled associate pastor who unfortunately has a mostly unmerited taint on his record. Parishioners began to speak up in Father Kern's favor and to challenge one another to be more open-minded. The meeting ended quite positively.

It is worth noting that both Father Kern and Father Sipe did an excellent job in responding to questions, in acknowledging issues and problems as they were raised, and in keeping the focus on the good of the parish rather than on themselves. We will need follow-up communication with the parish, but Father Kern should meet with fairly minimal resistance and suspicion at this point.

cc: Archbishop Roach  
Archbishop Flynn  
Bill Fallon

File  
Fr. Jerome Kern

September 9, 1996

Ms. Carmel Kropp  
The Anodos Center  
St. John Vianney Hospital  
P. O. Box 219  
Dowington, PA 19335

Dear Ms. Kropp,

I am writing to follow up on our recent conversation. I am sending a copy of this letter also to Father Jerome Kern so that you and he "are on the same page" with these arrangements.

We have reserved the dates of our October 7 through October 10 for an assessment for Father Kern at the Anodos Center at Villa St. John Vianney. I will work with Father Kern here to make travel arrangements. I know that you send a packet of information about housing arrangements.

You asked that Father Kern would make arrangements for a physical examination before he arrives if possible. I will ask that he do so. He had told me that he was considering having a physical anyway, so this will be good timing.

I am enclosing some documents that may be useful to you. These include a good deal of detail about the background for this referral. Essentially, the referral is made to comply with the recommendations of the Clergy Review Board, a lay and clergy advisory group that Archbishop Roach set up several years ago. The staff here at the Archdiocese, after seeing the various evaluations we had received about Father Kern, had reached the conclusion that a return to parochial ministry was the best use of Father Kern's skills and would be entirely safe and positive for the people being served. Archbishop Roach wanted to submit that conclusion to outside review, however, and that resulted in the recommendation that you see attached. The delay in following up in this assessment is essentially due to our tremendous dislocation here with the transfer from one Archbishop to another. I am sorry that it has taken so long. Even so, we have believed that the combination of Father Kern's own basic stability and the extensive disclosure that we did in the parish have permitted us to attend to other matters first.

I would summarize the fundamental question of the assessment in this way. We have received recommendations in the past that, in spite of some early behavioral indications that could be interpreted to the contrary, Father Kern is now an essentially psychologically healthy man without the sorts of affective, attractional, impulse control, or power needs that would make him constitute a danger to young people. Would the Anodos Center endorse this conclusion, or would the results of your evaluation bring that conclusion into question in some significant way?

Ms. Carmen Kropp  
Page 2  
September 9, 1996

I am enclosing a variety of documents from our records which may be useful in this assessment. If further documentation is necessary, please do not hesitate to let me know.

I am grateful to you for your assistance in assessing the situation of a man whom we consider to be a good and effective priest. I wish you well in your continued service.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Reverend Kevin M. McDonough  
Vicar General  
Moderator of the Curia

KMM:md

cc: Archbishop Flynn  
Father Kern

Encl.



28 February 2002

Most Reverend Harry J. Flynn  
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis  
226 Summit Avenue  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Archbishop Flynn,

I am writing to you to submit my resignation from the Church of Saint Peter, Forest Lake. I also request that you grant me retired status for medical reasons.

I called you just over a week ago to inform you of my diagnosis of bone cancer. Further testing has indicated that I have a difficult battle ahead of me.

Father McDonough has also informed me of your belief that I would soon come under attack for my continuation in parish ministry, given the accusations made against me in the past. As you can imagine, my instinct is to ask your permission to stay in the parish and to fight those attacks. I have always denied that I had any sexual interest in young people. I believe that the accusations arose from misunderstandings of what had been my own family's way of "roughhousing". It embarrasses and angers me to lose a ministry that I love over such misunderstanding.

Even so, I understand and am grateful to you for your concern. It would not be fair to the people of Saint Peter's to submit them to that kind of public attack. I do not want to bring embarrassment on you or on my brother priests. And my health situation raises a legitimate question about my ability to carry on my ministry in such an environment.

I am grateful to God for my years of active parish service. I ask his grace to restore my health and to permit me to engage in some form of ministerial service. I ask your prayers in support of my request, Archbishop.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Reverend Jerome Kern