

ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA

Office of: Secretary for Clergy

TO: Anthony Cardinal Bevilacqua
FROM: Monsignor William J. Lynn
DATE: September 4, 2002
RE: Reverend John A. Cannon (1948)
Chaplain, Saint Joseph Home for Aged

Attached is a copy of my December 4, 1992 memorandum to you summarizing allegations of sexual abuse brought against Father John Cannon by [redacted]. Father Cannon denied the allegations but was cooperative with a psychological evaluation. Attached also is a copy of my February 8, 1993 memorandum summarizing the results of the evaluation. Father Cannon was 70 years old at the time. You did approve inpatient hospitalization at the time. The inpatient hospitalization never took place and I am at a loss as to why this never happened. No further complaints have been brought against Father Cannon. At the time [redacted] wanted a cash settlement which we refused.

Excerpts from these memos may be blocked out for attorney client privilege. I only have copies in our file. The Grand Jury has the original file.

On July 23, 2002, Bishop Dattilo called me to inform me that [redacted] who lives in Lancaster, had approached the Harrisburg Diocese. He went to Harrisburg because Saint Monica's Camp, the place where the alleged abuse took place, is in the Harrisburg Diocese. He told Bishop Dattilo that I had told him at the time that his allegations were not credible. Bishop Dattilo said that states he has a lawyer and all he wants is to be believed. I filled Bishop Dattilo in on previous demands.

[redacted] told Bishop Dattilo that Father John McCole could verify what he alleges. [redacted] had provided a different priest name before, who did not back up his allegations. I spoke to Father McCole. Father McCole took Father Cannon's place at the camp. Father McCole stated there were vague stories about Father Cannon but nothing specific. He stated that no one ever came to him and made specific allegations, but that there was talk that "Father Cannon was strange."

I told Bishop Dattilo I would review the file and make recommendations regarding the situation.

I met with Father Cannon on August 2, 2002 to inform him that these allegations have resurfaced. Father Cannon denied the allegations again. He stated that there was a problem at the camp with a group of Benedictines trying to start an agricultural school nearby. He said one of them had problems and came to say Mass for a time until he was let go. Father Cannon feels he may have been confused with this priest.

Father Cannon is 80 years of age and is assigned as Chaplain at Saint Joseph Home for Aged. He is willing to retire but would prefer to stay where he is. Even if he retires, I do not know if there is enough evidence to keep him from exercising his priestly ministry. He taught high school for 35 years and there are no allegations other than

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A 2002 memo in which Secretary for Clergy Lynn suggests there is insufficient evidence to restrict Fr. Cannon's faculties, even though he had previously admitted molesting boys. The victim referred to in the memo (whose name is whited out) was one of the boys listed in Fr. Murphy's 1964 letter to the Archdiocese. GJ-1980

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I have consulted with legal counsel and there is no legal liability in this situation.

Since Father Cannon is open to retirement if suggested, I think it best to go that route. He is the oldest priest in active ministry at this time. However, I do not believe there is enough evidence to restrict his priestly service in retirement at this time. This might be a case that could be presented to the Review Board when it is established.

Recommendation:

That Father Cannon be asked to request retirement.

Approved
WJL
9/7/02

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