

Introduction

51.1 There are no allegations of child sexual abuse against Fr Guido but there were suspicions and concerns. Fr Guido was ordained in the 1990s and took up a parish appointment immediately. In 2002 and 2003, Bishop Martin Drennan heard reports that Fr Guido was indulging in inappropriate behaviour which gave rise to concern. He had been seen taking photographs of male teenagers (mostly rugby players). He was then offering these photographs to the players and had been seen in the dormitory of a boarding school late one night. He had been inviting young people to his house for meals and collecting teenagers from pubs late at night. He had also taken young people to Lourdes and joined them for drinking parties. He had refused to make changes to the drinking regime on the Lourdes pilgrimage. When he was invited to boys' schools for penance services he started exchanging telephone numbers with some of the boys and some of the school staff expressed concern.

Psychological assessment

51.2 Bishop Drennan recommended that he attend at the Granada Institute for treatment, but he adopted delaying tactics and the Granada Institute then declined to take him because of his resistance. In May 2003, he was sent for an initial assessment to a consultant psychologist. During that assessment he admitted that he was homosexual. He acknowledged that he might be in the process of developing a problem related to young men. The psychologist recommended a comprehensive risk assessment to establish the extent of his problematic behaviour. He recommended that Fr Guido not have any contact with children or young people until the assessment had been completed and that he go abroad for treatment.

51.3 Fr Guido was asked to step aside from his curacy pending the outcome of the report.

51.4 Fr Guido went to a therapeutic facility abroad for assessment. In its report the clinic stated that Fr Guido did not appear to be at high risk of violating sexual boundaries with young people. However, his risk of violating

¹¹⁹ This is a pseudonym.

emotional boundaries, that is, of growing too close and showing poor judgment in his actions was significant and had been demonstrated in his behaviour already. Consequently, in their view, some action needed to be taken to address his self awareness sexually and emotionally and to alter his awareness of appropriate boundaries. The clinic confirmed that he had homosexual leanings. It was recommended that, although he did not necessarily need to be prevented from working with youths and young adults, it would be prudent to develop a different focus for his ministry. The report recommended a residential programme of treatment.

51.5 Following receipt of the report, it was agreed that Fr Guido would have a spiritual advisor and would continue to get professional help. It is not clear from the documentation furnished to the Commission whether he, in fact, embarked upon the course of residential treatment which had been recommended. It seems that he returned to Dublin and recommenced his role as curate. He also continued his involvement in the Dublin Diocesan pilgrimage.

Further concerns

51.6 In October 2003, he recommenced his inappropriate behaviour. On the Dublin Diocesan pilgrimage he spent an inordinate amount of time taking photographs of the boys and arranging to meet them at night. In his conversations with the boys he talked about his loneliness and he asked for email addresses. None of the boys made a complaint but they stated that his behaviour was “*fishy*”.

51.7 He was immediately suspended from all duties and was admitted to Stroud. At the time there were eight places on the residential course for child abusers and the majority of these places were taken by Irish priests.

51.8 In December 2003, the Gardaí were notified about the Church’s concerns. In March 2004, the Gardaí reported that they were satisfied from their inquiries that there was no evidence of criminal activity in this case.

51.9 The health board was also informed in December 2003. In January 2004, the health board reported that it would not be pursuing an investigation as there had not been any child abuse allegations made against Fr Guido.

51.10 Fr Guido spent nine months in Stroud. He admitted that he had a homosexual orientation which manifested itself in an attraction to fit young men. The Archdiocese was obviously concerned as to how this might affect his future in the priesthood. It was suggested that upon his return to Dublin he would have a part-time ministry which would involve no contact with young people. Stroud recommended that he have a limited parochial appointment as parish chaplain, continue with therapy and spiritual direction, pursue a course of study related to his ministry and have a priest advisor. It made a further series of recommendations all of which were put in place by the Archdiocese.

51.11 When he returned to Dublin, the Archdiocese considered that a course in pastoral leadership would be suitable for him at that time and decided that he could live in a presbytery in the city centre. He was sent on a master's course in pastoral leadership.

51.12 The Archdiocese attempted to place him in a parish but there was considerable difficulty in finding someone prepared to take him when the circumstances were explained. In January 2005 he was sent for a further assessment to the psychologist who had assessed him in May 2003. The psychologist said that, where somebody had expressed a sexual interest in children and had gone so far as to photograph young people, the Archdiocese should make a decision in principle as to whether such a person could be permitted to function in the ministry. The report, while obviously leaving the decision open to the Archdiocese, left no doubt as to its recommendation that Fr Guido should not continue in ministry. Stroud did not agree with this. They believed that he had responded well to the therapy and could be returned to full ministry.

51.13 Finally, the Archdiocese sought advice from a psychiatrist in Dublin. He stated that Fr Guido had undergone a very careful and detailed assessment and treatment process. While he had shown a high motivation in his participation in the treatment programme, even with ongoing treatment and support no professional could guarantee that he might not at some point engage in further inappropriate behaviour towards adolescent boys. The psychiatrist recommended that he should not be returned to ministry but rather that he be helped with ongoing support and therapy to resign and find a

new direction in his life. In June 2005, Archbishop Martin told Fr Guido that there was no limited ministry that he could give him that would meet the supervision requirements. There were therefore only two options open to him, namely, to apply for laicisation or to retire as a priest with no public ministry. He chose to be laicised. He has commenced another career. The Archdiocese spent a substantial amount of money on treatment and on helping him to establish a new career.

The Commission's assessment

51.14 The Archdiocese acted correctly in immediately addressing the concerns and suspicions in this case. It did everything possible to assist Fr Guido to address the issues of concern and, when it was clear that a limited ministry was not possible, it helped him to get started on another career.