

**[REDACTED]**  
**ASF**

PETIT



**CONFIDENTIAL**



BISHOP'S HOUSE  
657 RIVER ROAD  
MANCHESTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
03105

March 6, 1981

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

Reverend Philip Petit  
St. Joseph Rectory  
150 Central Avenue  
Dover, New Hampshire 03820

Dear Father Petit:

For the sake of the record, I would like in this letter to summarize in substance the conversations which I, Bishop Mulvee and Father Ham have had with you concerning the event which took place on November 1, 1980.

First of all, I want to stress that this information came to us from the police for your own good. Any ill will which you might have against the police is completely out of order. As a matter of fact, it is the sincere hope of all of us that you will say a prayer for that policeman every day of your priestly life.

We are all particularly concerned with the circumstances surrounding this entire episode: the person involved, the use of the rectory, the failure to have any priest with whom you could share your difficulty, the rather surprising manner in which you went to the police, your reaction in general to what we all consider to be an extremely flagrant and serious incident. The potential for grave scandal cannot be minimized.

At the same time, we were satisfied with your statement that this was an isolated incident, that no such situation has transpired while in the seminary or while serving as a deacon and priest in the Diocese of Manchester.

This whole matter has been discussed with Doctor Ernest Desjardins. He has been made aware of all the events which we discussed with you. I wish to state here the following conditions with which you have agreed to abide in order to maintain your pastoral functioning in the diocese.

Rev. Philip Petit  
March 6, 1981  
Page 2.

First, you are to make an appointment within the week with Dr. Ernest Desjardins to begin long-term psychotherapy with the understanding that you will be expected to develop the necessary impulse control to lead a celibate and chaste life. Secondly, that you must refrain from all sexual advances and/or contacts with any males or females in the parish you serve or outside of the parish, and refrain from visiting those places where you know temptations can be encountered easily. Thirdly, any violation of condition two will result in ipso facto suspension from all priestly faculties. The lifting of such a suspension is reserved to myself or Bishop Mulvee. Fourthly, you will be expected to have regular and frequent contact with other priests in the diocese. You are expected to be part of a priests' support group and attend meetings regularly. Further, I suggest you contact Monsignor Burke or one of his team persons, to develop a growth plan for yourself. It is understood that you will also meet monthly with Father Ham.

Finally, I suggested you seek out a spiritual director that you would be able to work with at regular intervals for your spiritual growth. I added that you must be working hard at developing a strong spiritual life, suggesting even that you consider a daily holy hour. I also mentioned physical exercise as an important part of staying in good health.

I am forwarding this information to Dr. Desjardins. We have spoken to him, and he assured us he would be happy to discuss these points with you. He suggested that you call the Consultation Office for the Clergy and Religious on Concord Street for your appointment with him pertaining to these matters in discussion, beginning the long-term therapy with him. The number of his office is 668-0014. If you fail to reach him at this number, you might want to reach him at his clinic in Portsmouth.

May I repeat the assurance that you have been given by myself, Bishop Mulvee and Father Ham of our willingness to be of help and support to you. Everything that has been done has been done for you. It is our sincere wish to try our best to be supportive of you as you work through your problems. It is our fondest prayer that you will be a good, holy, zealous priest, an asset to the Diocese of Manchester.

Cordially in Christ,

Bishop of Manchester

cc/ Dr. Ernest Desjardins

Conversation with Philip Petit pertaining to the problem that he has developed and was reported to us by the Chief of Police, Chief LeBoeuf.

I covered the entire letter material (letter, "Personal and Confidential" dated March 6, 1981, addressed to Philip Petit, a copy of which is to be sent to Dr. Desjardins), and first of all asked Phil Petit if he wanted to make any comments or anything, and he had little to say. Father Petit was very docile and well disposed. I pointed out clearly to him that he was in a situation which indicated that he was seeking out for help and we are happy to help him. I pointed out to Father Petit, or, rather, I verified with Father Petit whether or not his thoughts were clear in terms of what the Church teaches pertaining to his lifestyle and whether or not he agreed with the Church's teaching. I repeated this twice, to make sure he understood what I was speaking about, and he twice said, yes, he did understand the teaching of the Church and he did believe them and accept them and was willing to make every effort to live by them. The homosexual orientation is something that you might inherit and develop, but that we cannot be active in that orientation. We must live a celibate life. That's the only option we have open to us in terms of morality and of course, a-fortiori, in terms of the priesthood. He agreed with that. He said he had worked even in the seminary with his spiritual director and after evaluations they felt he was ready for the priesthood and he felt he was. He went even to Dr. Gill who is a psychiatrist before diaconate, and he also agreed that he was capable of living a celibate life and therefore he went ahead. And he felt comfortable with that, but because of this particular change of assignment he sort of let go of many things such as relationships with priests, and he didn't have too many priest friends; his spiritual life had kind of become a little less supportive; many things had kind of broken down and so all these circumstances together he feels kind of led him to this kind of activity.

I covered every other part of this letter thoroughly with him. Then I turned the letter over to him to read while I got out of the room for a few minutes, and suggested that if he had any comments, any discussion, any disagreement, we would re-discuss it and then we could come to some agreement. But when he finished reading it he was totally in conformity with the letter, which I left with him. He's got it. I said I was going to send a copy of that letter to another doctor, psychiatrist, that he agreed to go to. Infact, he's already made an appointment to see him next Tuesday.

The two things that came up that are not included in the letter: (1) that Dr. Desjardins, in talking with him, indicated that he might want to deal with him on a private client basis rather than a consulting agency for clergy in the Diocese. I said to Father Petit that I thought this might be for the sake of having him come into his own private office in the Portsmouth area as long as Father Petit is in Dover. It would be closer than coming to Manchester. But I would check this out with Dr. Desjardins and then make a choice and tell him what it is. Secondly, with regards to the fee, I said that a psychiatrist sometimes imposes on the client a certain amount to be paid by the client of the total fee, for the sake of therapeutic benefits, such as a direct involvement

and a commitment that they will stay with if they really want to get better. I said that we would discuss that with the doctor also and then let him know what the results are. Otherwise, we would pick up either the bulk of the expenses or the total expenses for this.

I re-emphasized the point that if there's any activity whatsoever during this period of time that he would automatically be suspended and that was reserved to Bishop Mulvee and myself.

The conversation went well, I feel. He didn't seem too tense or uncomfortable. I pointed out the importance of his spiritual life and I insisted on him visiting with Monsignor Burke and to both ask to be part of a support group and secondly to develop a growth plan with Monsignor Burke. He was willing to do all of these things. I indicated to him, too, his need to have a well balanced life, to get some activity whether they're supportive or just walking, that he needed to do some exercise. All of these he agreed to. The conversation concluded with encouragement for him to be deeply spiritual and to stay close to the Lord for His help, following a spiritual director that he ought to choose, and being in constant relationship with him.

June 22, 1981

PERSONAL/CONFIDENTIAL

Rev. Philip Petit  
St. Joseph Rectory  
150 Central Avenue - PO Box 280  
Dover, New Hampshire 03820

Dear Father Petit:

Subsequent to our recent meeting, I felt it important to summarize the conclusion of our conversation for the sake of clarity on both our parts.

First of all, I wish to remind you that any recurrence of activities we discussed which take place in your rectory or in any rectory will, ipso facto, result in suspension a divinis. Secondly, I wish to further remind you that any such activity, no matter where it takes place, is a serious failure to live up to the demands of celibacy which all of us, as priests, must strive to live in fidelity. In this regard, I feel it essential that you undergo serious long term therapy so that you can gain control over your drives in this regard, which I would expect you to do within the period of a year. In this way, you will be better able to use your talents for the welfare of the Church as the Lord desires.

As I indicated to you, you may arrange for this therapy with either Dr. Desjardins or Dr. Ouellette, but I would ask you to make that decision only after meeting with Dr. Desjardins so that he may give you an indepth view of the evaluations you have taken. I also request that you be in touch with Father George Ham on a frequent basis, who is charged with your supervision, and that you join a support group to which you will be faithful.

I am convinced that with your continued cooperation in each of these areas you will be able to achieve both happiness and fruitfulness in your priestly ministry.

With every good wish, I am

Cordially in Christ,

Bishop of Manchester



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

MOST REVEREND ODORE J. GENDRON, D.D.  
*Bishop*

MOST REVEREND ROBERT E. MULVEE, J.C.D.  
*Auxiliary Bishop*

June 1, 1982

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

Reverend Philip Petit  
St. Joseph Rectory  
150 Central Avenue  
Dover, New Hampshire 03820

Dear Father Petit:

You have by this time received your letter of assignment to Guardian Angel Parish in Berlin. I want to take this occasion to express again my hope that you will find your ministry there with Father Bisson, the Pastor, both satisfying and fruitful. Based on what I have been told by Doctor Ernest Desjardins, there is every reason to believe that with continuing treatment you will be able to proceed to a state of integration and control of the problem with which he has been helping you. I am heartened by his report that you have made considerable progress within the last year and assure you of my prayers that this progress will continue.

Given the seriousness of the situation, however, I wish to remind you formally of the conditions I discussed with you during our recent personal meeting. First, if there is any further sexual activity not only in the rectory but anywhere in the north country, this will result ipso facto in your suspension from the priestly ministry. Secondly, if there is any such activity anywhere which comes to my attention, I will invoke the same suspension. Finally, of course, I expect you to continue your treatment on a regular basis so that the control you are seeking will become a reality for you as soon as is possible.

Rev. Philip Petit  
Page 2.  
June 1, 1982

I realize that your struggle with this problem is difficult for you and certainly at times painful. In closing, let me assure you of my prayers for you that you will receive both the enlightenment and the strength to deal with it in a fashion that will allow you to use your considerable talents fully for the Lord here in the Diocese of Manchester.

With every good wish, I am

Cordially in Christ,

*+ Dore J. Gendron*  
Bishop of Manchester

cc/ Dr. Ernest Desjardins



CHANCERY OFFICE  
153 ASH STREET  
P.O. BOX 310  
MANCHESTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
03105-0310



DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

February 2, 1984

TO: File  
FROM: Father Francis J. Christian, Chancellor  
RE: Father Philip A. Petit

On January 31st, I received a phone call from a [redacted] in [redacted]. She claimed that in August, while on a sailing expedition to Northwood Lake with her son, Father Petit revealed to her son that he was homosexual. Her son, [redacted]. She and her husband were worried that this might have been some sort of verbal solicitation. She claims that she and her husband met with Father Petit shortly after the incident and that her husband was asked to meet with him again shortly after Christmas. In both instances Father Petit admitted that he was homosexual, but that he was not actively involved with their son or anyone in the parish. The [redacted] had approached Father Richard in Merrimack to help them in this matter. He had spoken to Father Petit, but the parents were still concerned that maybe enough was not being done.

On January 31st, I met with Father Robert Carty, the Pastor of Our Lady of Mercy in Merrimack, to explain the situation to him and what our plans for Father Petit were. I asked him to discuss the whole incident with Father Petit after I had met with him.

On February 1st, I met with Father Petit. He admitted that he had brought up the subject of homosexuality, but only because he felt the young man already was concerned that Father Petit was homosexual. He claims that there was no verbal solicitation intended. I told Father Petit that I was concerned about a recurring pattern. The same sort of thing had happened in Dover two years ago. A similar incidence had happened in St. Jean the Baptist Parish several months ago, and now this incident. (Father Petit did not deny that he had brought up the subject of homosexuality with a young man from Saint Jean's. He indicated he had done this only because he had heard that some of the young people of Saint Jean's were talking about him). I told Father Petit that this pattern was disturbing and asked him to explain it. His explanation was that he needs to be accepted in spite of the

fact he is homosexual, and this fact forces him to reveal his problem even though he knows it is not appropriate. I told him that I could understand his need for acceptance, but that he was certainly being indiscreet in revealing his problem to the wrong people. I also indicated that he could be facing serious legal problems if anyone ever wanted to charge him with verbal solicitation. I mentioned that even if he was not convicted, the public scandal would irrevocably damage his priesthood. If convicted, he could go to jail. I indicated that there were two immediate problems we were facing. One was to placate the parents as much as possible by showing them that both he and we took the problem seriously. Secondly, was the necessity of examining more carefully the repeated pattern of his behavior even though he has been in therapy. As a result, I told him that we wanted him to go to the House of Affirmation for a series of psychological tests. The dates for that testing would be February 28th to March 2nd. Once we had the results of the tests we would sit down and discuss the recommendations of the professionals to see what the next step should be, if any. Father Petit would have preferred to have the testing done by his psychiatrist, Dr. Desjardins. I told him this was not possible for two reasons; first, if the parents pressed the issue and found out we had sent him back to a psychiatrist with whom he was working, they could charge us with collusion because he had done the activity while under the care of this psychiatrist, and secondly, that we really needed a second opinion in this matter. Father Petit eventually agreed to my request.

On the evening of February 1st, I called Father Carty to explain what had happened in my interview with Father Petit. I also called the [REDACTED] family, who showed no vindictiveness and were pleased with the steps that the Diocese was taking.



CHANCERY OFFICE  
153 ASH STREET  
P.O. BOX 310  
MANCHESTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
03105-0310



DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

February 22, 1984

PERSONAL/CONFIDENTIAL

Richard J. Gilmartin, Ph.D.  
Director  
House of Affirmation, Inc.  
120 Hill Street  
Whitinsville, MA 01588

Dear Dr. Gilmartin:

In response to your letter of February 2nd of this year, I am pleased to offer you the following information regarding Father Philip Petit, who is scheduled to undergo your assessment program on February 28th through March 2nd.

Father Petit is thirty-one years old and was ordained in the Spring of 1980. Shortly after his ordination, while serving in a temporary assignment in the city of Manchester, he picked up a young man and brought him to the rectory, where they engaged in homosexual behavior. This event became known to the Diocese through a confidential contact from the police department of the city, to whom Father Petit had gone to report that he had been robbed by this same young man. Apparently, Father Petit had had to give them some of the details of why he was in the rectory, etc. When confronted with this information, Father Petit admitted to the fact and agreed to undergo extensive psychological testing and whatever follow-up therapy was required with Dr. Ernest Desjardins of Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Dr. Desjardins's reports indicated that Father Petit did have a sexual problem, but that he felt with ongoing therapy it could be controlled. Father Petit has been seeing Dr. Desjardins regularly up until this time. Dr. Desjardins has periodically reported some improvement in Father Petit's difficulty.

There have been, however, several recurring similar sorts of behavior which continue to cause us concern and necessitate the need for a second opinion in his regard. About three years ago, while he was serving in a parish in Dover, New Hampshire, Father Petit openly discussed his homosexuality with a young man of the parish who reported it to his parents. The parents interpreted this as some sort of verbal solicitation, necessitating Father Petit's transfer to another parish. During the year or so he was in Berlin we had no reports of any difficulties. About nine months ago, however, a report was received by the Chancery that Father Petit, who was now stationed in Merrimack, New Hampshire, had approached a young man in another Manchester parish where he had served as a deacon, and again openly discussed his homosexuality with him. It has further

Richard J. Gilmartin, Ph.D.

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February 22, 1984

come to our attention just recently that during this summer he again approached a young man with whom he had become friendly in the Merrimack parish about his homosexuality. In this case, the young man reported it to his parents who, in time, decided to report it to the Chancery. They also interpreted Father Petit's conversation as some sort of verbal solicitation. In my conversation with Father Petit I mentioned our concern at this recurring pattern of behavior where he would (a) arrange to be alone in the company of a young man, and (b) discuss openly his homosexuality with him. Father Petit's explanation to this is that he needs people's affirmation in spite of his homosexuality, and is looking for that. I explained to Father Petit that, whatever his intentions, he was in grave jeopardy in regard to his credibility as a priest and, potentially, even with the law. In at least two of the cases mentioned the young man in question was a minor. I explained to Father Petit that his ability to live a celibate life was the primary concern of the Diocese, and that given his repeated similar difficulties, and particularly in light of the parents' concerns in the last case, it would be necessary for him to undergo a further assessment from an independent source to see if there is anything more that can be done to be of assistance to him. I explained that this assessment would both satisfy the demands of the parents in the latter case, as well as provide the Diocese with a second opinion on the source of his problem and his ability to control it.

I trust that this information will be helpful to you. Please do not hesitate to call upon me if anything more is required. In closing, let me assure you of the gratitude of the Diocese to you in being of assistance to Father Petit.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Rev. Francis J. Christian  
Chancellor

April 4, 1984

Ms. Mary Ann Fay  
House of Affirmation  
120 Hill Street  
Whitinsville, Ma. 01588

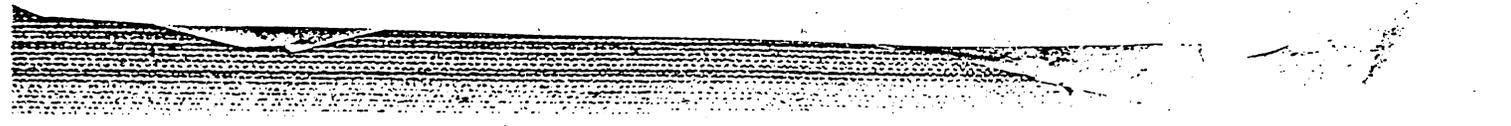
Dear Mary Ann:

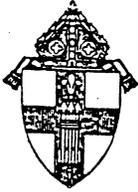
I am in receipt of your report regarding Reverend Philip A. Petit, priest of the Diocese of Manchester who recently underwent a testing program at your facility. I have studied the report in detail and am grateful for your assessment of his situation. I am pleased that you conclude that he can continue to deal with his problem by on-going therapy with Dr. Ernest Desjardins, with whom he has been consulting over the past three years. It is my intention to recommend this course of action to Father Petit for the time being.

In closing, let me thank you again for your kind assistance in his regard. With every good wish, I am

Cordially in Christ,

Bishop of Manchester





DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

CHANCERY OFFICE  
153 ASH STREET  
P.O. BOX 310  
MANCHESTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
03105-0310

December 23, 1985

C O N F I D E N T I A L

REPORT ON FATHER PHILIP A. PETIT BY FATHER FRANCIS J. CHRISTIAN,  
CHANCELLOR

The following information has been obtained from Father Philip A. Petit himself, in his conversations with Monsignor John E. Molan, Vicar General, and Father Francis J. Christian, Chancellor.

On or about October 5th, Father Petit stopped to offer a ride to a [REDACTED] a young man in his late teens or early twenties (he is definitely older than 18 years of age). In the course of their brief conversation Father Petit revealed that he was homosexual. According to Father Petit, who at the time was not addressed as a priest and did not identify himself as a priest, This revelation upset the young man, who asked to be let out of the car, which Father Petit claims that he did. Approximately a week and a half later this same young man was admitted as a patient at the Portsmouth Hospital. In the course of his rounds Father Petit stopped to see him and did not recognize him in any way. The young man, however, recognized him. Apparently, upon being discharged from the hospital, he revealed to his mother that the man who had offered him a ride was a priest. This upset the mother and the young man, who then placed charges against Father Petit.

On or around October 18th Father Petit was questioned by a Detective Demo of the Portsmouth Police Department. Father Petit then obtained the services of an Attorney Tony McManus, who met with the detective in question and the attorney. Father Petit related to the detective the story detailed above. The young man, however, was claiming to the police that Father Petit attempted to touch him sexually. He therefore accused Father Petit of simple assault, which is a misdemeanor in the State of New Hampshire. Father Petit steadfastly maintains that he made no such attempt on the young man and did not touch him in any way. [REDACTED]

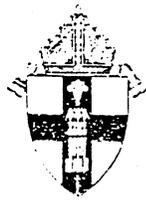
[REDACTED] At this point, [REDACTED], there has been no notoriety of any sort about the matter. On December 23rd, Father Christian received a call from the Manchester Police Department to notify him that the Portsmouth Police Department had been making inquiries as to whether or not Father Petit had any record. They were told by the Manchester Department that he did not.

[REDACTED]

Father Christian discussed with Father Petit in some depth the difficult public relations problem that could surface [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Father Christian pointed out that while it is true that Father Petit has no criminal record, he does have several instances of similar problems which might surface if the people with whom he was involved came forward in anger at a public disclosure of the continuing nature of the problem. Father Petit realizes this danger, but is so convinced as to his innocence in this particular case he feels he has no other choice because anything else would be to admit guilt where he is not guilty. Father Christian pointed out to him that as in the other instances where the Diocese has tried to be of assistance, while at the same time demanding that he receive the appropriate psychological testing and help, the Diocese would do what was possible in any public notoriety. He pointed out, however, that the Diocese could not defend him unconditionally out of fear of something from his past surfacing.

Dr. Ernest Desjardins, the psychologist with whom Father Petit has been treating for some years believes that the present instance is simply a "slip", and that Father Petit is really doing quite well. He believes that Father Petit has made real progress. [REDACTED], even if there is no bad publicity, the Diocese must review Father Petit's situation to decide whether he should be simply allowed to continue treatment with Dr. Desjardins, or whether, in light of what appeared to be just repeated "slips", something more is required if he is to be allowed to continue to function.



**SECRETARIAT FOR ADMINISTRATIVE AND CANONICAL AFFAIRS**

Diocese of Manchester, 153 Ash Street, P.O. Box 310 Manchester, NH 03105-0310 603-669-3100

January 24, 1986

C O N F I D E N T I A L

MEMORANDUM

FROM: Reverend Francis J. Christian, Chancellor  
RE: Father Philip A. Petit

At the request of Bishop Gendron, I spoke today with Father Philip Petit and informed him that [redacted], the Bishop feels he must relieve Father Petit of his ministerial responsibilities at this time. He is doing this because of the [redacted], and also because the public notoriety involved will make it difficult for Father Petit to serve fruitfully. While Father Petit was somewhat disappointed in the Bishop's decision in this regard, he appeared to understand its rationale and agreed to accept that decision.

I proceeded to discuss with him the advisability of his temporarily residing elsewhere than Immaculate Conception Parish. This was occasioned particularly by the discomfort of Father Michael Kerper, the Associate Pastor, with Father Petit's presence. Father Petit was quite angry that he would be asked to leave, but appeared to understand that the Bishop had no other alternative at this time, given Father Kerper's intransigence. Father Petit agreed to temporarily reside at Saint Michael's Parish in Exeter, if the Diocese could confirm that possibility with the Pastor, Father Lennon.

January 25, 1986

I spoke on this date with Father William Quirk, Pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish in Portsmouth. He agreed to convey to the administration of the Portsmouth Hospital Bishop Gendron's decision regarding Father Petit, and that temporarily Immaculate Conception would assume responsibility for the hospital. He indicated he would do this the first thing Monday morning, January 27th.

Monday, January 27, 1986

I spoke with Dr. Gilmartin at the House of Affirmation in Whitinsville and brought him up-to-date on the [REDACTED] involving Father Petit. I asked him whether or not inpatient care might now be considered for Father Petit. He indicated that the initial report of the House of Affirmation which had recommended outpatient care would need to be resubmitted to the Staff for further evaluation, in view of the new situation. He felt, however, that inpatient care would be desirable and a possibility.

January 31, 1986

On this date I spoke with Dr. Ernest Desjardins, Father Petit's psychotherapist. He indicated a real concern for Father Petit's depressive attitude and inquired about inpatient care for him, which he was now recommending and Father Petit had agreed to. He asked us to have Father Petit's name put on the waiting list at the House of Affirmation, with the understanding that Father Petit be allowed to remain in the area until [REDACTED] was resolved.

On February 5th, Father Paul Bouchard, the Assistant Chancellor, called Dr. Gilmartin at the House of Affirmation to ask that Father Petit's name be placed on the waiting list, given the circumstances and the request of his therapist. Dr. Gilmartin indicated that Father Petit's name would be put on the waiting list.

February 13th. Miss Murphy from the House of Affirmation called Father Bouchard to indicate that there was an opening at the House of Affirmation in Clearwater, Florida, as of March 12th. Father Bouchard indicated he would discuss this possibility with Bishop Gendron and Father Petit and would confirm that date.

On speaking with Father Petit, it became clear that he was hesitant to commit himself to that particular date before knowing if in fact his situation would be clarified by that time.

February 20th. Father Bouchard called Miss Murphy at the House of Affirmation to inform her that we did not want to reserve the date of March 12th for Father Petit, given the lack of assurance that [REDACTED]. He indicated that we would want his name retained on the waiting list, and that we would contact the House of Affirmation as soon as his [REDACTED] situation was clarified so that he could have as early an entry into inpatient care as possible.

February 5, 1986

Rev. Philip A. Petit  
Immaculate Conception Rectory  
98 Summer Street  
Portsmouth, New Hampshire 03801

Dear Father Petit:

This letter will confirm our agreement that you are presently on a temporary leave of absence

[REDACTED]

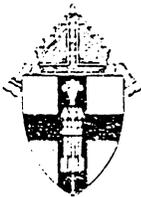
[REDACTED], you will be in residence at Saint Michael Rectory in Exeter. I am grateful to Father Lennon, Father Thibeault and Father Majka who have extended their welcome and hospitality to you. My main concern is that you be in a place where you feel comfortable.

Please be assured of my prayers, Phil, as you experience this difficult time of waiting. If I may be of assistance to you in any way, do not hesitate to contact me.

With every good wish, I remain

Cordially in Christ,

Bishop of Manchester



**SECRETARIAT FOR ADMINISTRATIVE AND CANONICAL AFFAIRS**

Diocese of Manchester, 153 Ash Street, P.O. Box 310 Manchester, NH 03105-0310 603-669-3100

March 6, 1986

C O N F I D E N T I A L

MEMORANDUM

FROM: Reverend Francis J. Christian, Chancellor

RE: Father Philip A. Petit

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I spoke today with the House of Affirmation, who assured me that Father Petit's name was still on their waiting list. They would probably be able to place him in inpatient care at one of their facilities [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

PERSONAL/CONFIDENTIAL

Martha L. Campbell, C.S.J., Psy.D.  
Psychotherapist  
House of Affirmation, Inc.  
11 Williams Street  
Hopedale, Massachusetts 01747

RE: Reverend Philip Petit

Dear Sister Martha:

I have received your letter of July 3rd, in reference to Father Philip Petit, a priest of the Diocese of Manchester, currently undergoing resident therapy at the House of Affirmation in Hopedale. Please excuse the delay in my response, but I was on vacation when your letter arrived and only returned to the diocese within the past several days. I am pleased to offer you the following personal perceptions in regard to Father Petit. I hope these may be of some assistance to you.

As I perceive things based on the problem Father Petit has had in his ministry, I would underline three areas which are a cause for concern to him and to me: (a) his homosexuality, (b) his rigidity and harshness with people on occasion, and (c) his questions about priesthood, and particularly secular priesthood as a viable vocation for himself.

Please allow me to comment briefly on each of these points. I became aware of Father Petit's homosexual orientation shortly after his ordination in 1980. He brought a young man back to the rectory where he was stationed and engaged in homosexual activity with him. The young man subsequently robbed Father Petit, and it is through the local police that the matter was brought to my attention. At that time Father Petit entered into psychological testing and counseling with Dr. Ernest Desjardins, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, a therapist he has seen regularly up until his entry into the House of Affirmation. Dr. Desjardins's occasional reports to me indicated that he felt that Father Petit was making progress and gaining a better control in the area of his homosexuality as time went on. However, on several occasions in the last few years I have received accusations from people who were verbally solicited by Father Petit. The pattern used seemed to be one of indirect solicitation, that is, for no apparent reason when in the company of a young man (this man might have been a perfect stranger or someone known to Father

Petit) he would reveal his homosexuality. The people involved interpreted this as an invitation. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] In this case the young man in question alleged that there had been some attempt at sexual contact by Father Petit. Father Petit denies that, while admitting that he did reveal his homosexuality to the man. In sum, it would seem to me that Father Petit has found it very difficult to maintain a celibate lifestyle. On the other hand, I believe that this inability has been a real source of anguish and pain to him, and that he has struggled seriously with it. There is no doubt that his lack of capability for celibacy has been a serious problem to him and the diocese.

In several of his parish assignment Father Petit has also found it difficult to establish a friendly and harmonious work relationship with the lay people involved in ministry in the parish. He alienated many of these people by his insistence that things always be his way, and by being unable to accept their suggestions or criticisms. Apparently, when he was challenged in any fashion he became very angry and defensive, and simply hardened in the position he was trying to impose. It would appear that the people found him an excellent liturgist, homilist, and teacher, but on a personal level they found it very hard to relate with him, and found the rigidity mentioned above counter-productive to the life of the parish.

Finally, for some time Father Petit has been struggling with whether or not he should remain a diocesan priest, given his failure to find a happy ministry in parishes. He mentioned to me on several occasions his question of whether or not he would be better suited to religious life and perhaps a teaching vocation. I do not know whether he has explored in any depth this question. Neither do I know whether or not, given the points I have mentioned above, he is now perhaps questioning whether the priesthood is an appropriate vocation for him. Certainly, these are important questions for him to clarify.

I hope that these comments are of some assistance to you. Please do not hesitate to call upon me if I can be of any further assistance. I am grateful to you and the rest of the Staff for your kind efforts on Father Petit's behalf. I assure you of my prayers that your work with him will be blessed by God, and enable him to find peace and contentment within himself. Assuring you of my prayerful best wishes, I am

Cordially in Christ,

Bishop of Manchester



*From the Desk of*

REV. PHILIP A. PETIT

28 August, 1986

Most Rev. Odore J. Gendron, D.D.  
Bishop of Manchester

Dear Bishop Gendron:

As you know, my involvement in the residential program at the House of Affirmation includes periodic progress reports to you as my Ordinary. It is now time for the first report, and this raises a serious concern I have regarding the confidentiality of my psychological reports.

In signing release forms in the past I named you as the recipient of my reports, and it was my intention that you alone have access to those reports. I now believe that others on your staff have had access to my reports. I am very concerned about who will have access to my reports in the future.

I will feel safer if I have your personal assurance that from now on you alone will have access to any of my psychological reports. If you, or your successor as Ordinary, want to share any information from my reports with anyone else you should request my express written consent.

I appreciate your genuine concern for me, and I thank you in advance for your response to my request.

Peace

*Philip A. Petit*

Fr. Petit

September 8, 1986

Reverend Philip A. Petit  
11 Williams Street  
Hopedale, Massachusetts 01747-1212

Dear Father Petit:

I have received your letter of August 28 in which you express concern regarding the confidentiality of the psychological reports I will be receiving from the House of Affirmation. Let me clearly state, first of all, that I share your concern for confidentiality. It is something that you certainly have a right to expect. I believe I can confidently state that, since I have been Bishop, I am unaware of any breach of confidentiality emanating from my office or my staff. On the other hand, I believe that your request that I, and I alone, have any sort of access to the facts of your treatment is unreasonable. There are times when in your best interest, and the best interest of the Diocese, I must consult with my staff people. Furthermore, if something should happen to me or if I am out of the Diocese on the occasion of a critical situation, Bishop Gerry and my other staff people who, at that point, would represent the Diocese, must be able to do so in a professional and knowledgeable fashion. That means that they must have some knowledge of your situation (or for that matter the situation regarding any priest).

I assure you that I do not routinely circulate, even to my staff, any psychological report I receive. When necessary I do share certain facts with my staff people who need the information for the above-mentioned purposes. As you know, all of these priests are bound by the oath of confidentiality they take when I share some of my responsibilities as Bishop with them. I believe it would be a very administratively unwise situation if I were to accede to your requests, and certainly unwieldy if I needed written permission from you each time I felt it necessary to consult on certain specific facts. As a result, I request that the release form prepared and signed by you with the House of Affirmation read as follows:

Rev. Philip A. Petit  
September 8, 1986  
Page 2.

"I, Philip A. Petit, authorize the release of any and all information regarding my treatment to Most Reverend Odore J. Gendron, Bishop of Manchester, with the understanding that Bishop Gendron may, at his discretion, share such information with those persons he deems necessary in the performance of his pastoral responsibilities as Bishop."

I trust, Phil, that you understand that this agreement does not in any way undermine the confidentiality with which I will treat the sensitive materials which come to me. Your good name and reputation are very important, and I will preserve them carefully while at the same time acting responsibly on behalf of the Diocese.

Cordially in Christ,

Bishop of Manchester

24 October, 1986

Most Reverend Odore J. Gendron, D.D.  
Bishop of Manchester

Dear Bishop Gendron:

I very much appreciated your honesty and sensitivity during our dialogue last Wednesday. While I know that my future as a priest is far from resolved, I am now more at ease about my relationship with you personally. I hope that you now have a better understanding of why I am so hurt, frightened, and angry.

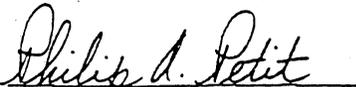
As you requested, I am providing you with a written statement of my requests concerning the confidentiality of my written psychological reports which are kept in diocesan files.

- 1) Regarding my psychological assessment and reports which were prepared by Ernest C. Desjardins, Ph.D.:
  - a) that all documents, and/or photocopies and notes of the same, be immediately removed from diocesan files and destroyed;
  - b) that all written notes of conversations with Dr. Desjardins be immediately removed from diocesan files and destroyed.
  
- 2) Regarding my psychological assessment and reports as prepared by the House of Affirmation, Inc.:
  - a) that you alone be the recipient and have access to these documents;
  - b) that you have permission to share verbally with your staff about my therapeutic progress, but not to read verbatim from the documents;
  - c) that if a future incident involving me be reported to you, a member of your staff would have access to these documents only if you are out of the diocese for an extended period of time;
  - d) that all documents, and/or photocopies and notes of the same, will be removed from diocesan files and destroyed within one year of my termination of residency at the House of Affirmation.

I think these requests are reasonable in that they respect both your need for administrative discretion and my right to confidentiality. If these requests are acceptable, I would appreciate a letter from you stating that the points in #1 have been complied with, and that you will abide by the points in #2.

In closing I must say that your visit meant a great deal to me. It is important for me not only to presume that you care, but to experience it. Your visit was just such an experience, and helps me to believe that you are genuinely interested in my future well-being. I would welcome your visiting again if your schedule permits.

Peace

  
Rev. Philip A. Petit



*From the Desk of*

REV. PHILIP A. PETIT

28 October, 1986

Most Reverend Odore J. Gendron, D.D.  
Bishop of Manchester

Dear Bishop Gendron:

Just prior to beginning residency at the House of Affirmation I submitted to you a listing of my expenses in order that you might determine how much I should receive as a monthly stipend.

[REDACTED]

I am requesting that my monthly stipend be increased to \$500.00, which was my salary when I went on leave. I further request that this increase be made retroactive to June.

[REDACTED]

Thank you for your consideration of this request, and for your continued concern for me.

Peace

*Philip A. Petit*



*From the Desk of*

REV. PHILIP A. PETIT

2 December, 1986

Most Rev. Odore J. Gendron, D.D.  
Bishop of Manchester

Dear Bishop Gendron:

I sent two letters to you at the end of October, one outlining my requests with regard to confidentiality and the other requesting an increase in my monthly stipend. To date I have not received a response to either letter.

[REDACTED]

If there is any way I can clarify my requests in either letter, I am more than willing to do so. I thank you again for your continued concern and support, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Peace

*Philip A. Petit*

December 3, 1986

Reverend Philip A. Petit  
House of Affirmation  
11 Williams Street  
Hopedale, Massachusetts

Dear Father Petit:

Please excuse the rather lengthy delay in replying to your letter and proposal of October 24th, and your subsequent request in your letter of October 28th. I simply did not have sufficient time until recently to go through your file to see how it would be affected by the proposal we discussed during my visit.

At this point, however, I am happy to notify you that I am agreeable to the proposal as outlined in your October 24th letter with one exception. I will certainly destroy all documents, notes, etc., referring to your treatment with Dr. Desjardins. I feel it important, however, that I keep one letter from him dated July 24, 1982. This letter was written after the situation in Dover requiring your transfer to Berlin. It basically indicates Dr. Desjardins' assessment of your continuing progress and his feeling that the Dover incident was isolated. It was basically because of his feeling in that letter that your reassignment was effected, and I feel I need to retain this document for legal protection should any questions ever surface about your reassignments in the Diocese. With the exception of this particular document, everything else has been destroyed. I also agree to your proposal regarding reports prepared and sent to me by the House of Affirmation, that is, I alone will receive and read them, although it is understood that I may share with a member of my staff orally any pertinent information I feel they need to be aware of for the good administration of the Diocese. It is understood further that a member of my staff may have access to these documents in relation to a further incident that might be reported if I am out of the Diocese at that time. I will remove and destroy those documents from the House of Affirmation a year after your termination.

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Reverend Philip A. Petit  
December 3, 1986  
Page 2.

I trust that these are substantially the provisions we discussed and agreed to as outlined in your letter, and I appreciate your willingness to allow me to be sensitive to your personal needs while at the same time see to the good administration of the Diocese.

I would like to take this occasion as well to inform you that I have authorized an increase of \$50.00 a month in the stipend the Diocese is providing you. This will take effect with the check you receive in December.

In closing, Phil, let me assure you of my continued prayers for you in the hopes that you will be able to make continuing progress in your therapy. Please do not hesitate to call upon me if I can be of any further assistance. I will remember you in a special way during my prayers in Masses during this holy season, and hope that Christmas will bring you many blessings.

Cordially in Christ,

Bishop of Manchester

16 January, 1987

Most Reverend Odore J. Gendron, D.D.  
Bishop of Manchester

Dear Bishop Gendron:

I regret any inconvenience as a result of my delay in responding to your letter of 3 December, however I had not anticipated its content and it has taken me this long to phrase my thoughts. I had hoped that the matter of confidentiality was resolved by our discussion here in Hopedale on 15 October. I think I told you then that my concern about confidentiality goes beyond the content of any one report.

I agreed to release those psychological reports to you because I believed you were genuinely interested in my well-being. I now get the impression that your concern for me is overshadowed by your concern for the legal defense of the diocese, and that my psychological reports are important to you for this reason. To date I am aware of no legal action against the diocese as a result of any activity of mine. It seems to me that if there were going to be any such litigation it would have been initiated by now. My attorney does not expect that I will be sued now or in the future, and I do not understand why your attorney thinks you will be sued on my account. If there is a particular incident which is the basis of your concern, I want to know about it. However, in the absence of a real threat of a lawsuit the need to defend the diocese remains hypothetical.

It is my understanding that federal law prohibits you from making any disclosure from my psychological reports without my specific written permission. In spite of this, I am aware that Fr. Christian referred to the 1981 assessment by Dr. Desjardins [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] This action seems to demonstrate your willingness to use such documents without my consent, but with gross disregard for the impact [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I believe I am justified in my anger about this, and understandably vigilant about protecting my right to confidentiality in the future.

A particular phrase of [REDACTED] in quotation marks and is attributed to the 1981 assessment. I compared the quote with the assessment report only to discover that the alleged quote is a paraphrase/synthesis of phrases in the assessment. This misrepresentation is quite disturbing both to Dr. Desjardins and to me. It is all the more egregious since Dr. Desjardins warned Fr. Christian not to refer to any psychological reports when speaking [REDACTED]

Most Reverend Odore J. Gendron, D.D.  
16 January, 1987  
page 2

A further concern of mine is the question of diocesan files being subject to subpoena in the event of a lawsuit. I raised the issue with Mr. Cook and Fr. Christian during my meeting with them on 11 March. Mr Cook assured me that the diocese would take every measure to defend itself against such an order. He also stated, however, that in his opinion even an appeal to the U. S. Supreme Court would fail and the documents would have to be surrendered. If this ever happened I think we can agree that the prosecution would use the information against us both. On the other hand, reports which are kept in the therapist's files are far more defensible against subpoena. Dr. Desjardins will keep all documents on file, and in the event of a lawsuit against either or both of us will very much want to be of assistance. As long as he has the only copies of the reports he can better manage the dissemination of information for which he is ultimately responsible.

In view of all this, it is still my opinion that keeping any of my psychological reports from Dr. Desjardins in diocesan files is ill advised. To continue to do so places me at a real jeopardy which outweighs the potential benefit to the diocese. In the event of a lawsuit against the diocese on my account, I will instruct my attorney to cooperate with the diocesan attorney and Dr. Desjardins in coming to a mutually beneficial approach.

I therefore reiterate my request as specified in my letter to you of 24 October. I hope this detailed explanation of my concerns is helpful to you. I appreciate your patience in this matter, and thank you for your continued concern and encouragement.

Sincerely,



Rev. Philip A. Petit  
11 Williams Street  
Hopedale, Massachusetts  
01747-1212

February 19, 1987

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

Reverend Philip A. Petit  
11 Williams Street  
Hopedale, Massachusetts 01747-1212

Dear Father Petit:

Please excuse my delay in responding to your letter of January 16th. During this time I have been praying over your concerns, as well as consulting at some length with our diocesan attorney. After much consideration, I now feel better able to address the impasse at which we seem to have arrived in regard to the 1981 report of Dr. Desjardins.

Let me clearly state, Phil, that I am genuinely interested in your wellbeing. If you do not believe that, then perhaps my saying it will not convince you. I would hope that my actions toward you over the years speak clearly enough in this regard. I trust you can understand, however, that I also must have a concern for the Diocese, not only its legal status but the reputation it enjoys in terms of the correctness of our actions. In this regard it is imperative for me to be able to clearly demonstrate that everything the Diocese has done in your regard was proper. In my mind these two issues, your welfare and the welfare of the Diocese, are not an either/or proposition. They are both concerns and I intend to continue to do my best in regard to both of them.

I also feel it important to seriously question your statement that Monsignor Christian or anyone else in the Diocesan Office made direct reference to the 1981 document in dealing with [REDACTED]. I would specifically question whether the quotation you refer to is clearly attributed to this office and clearly referring to that 1981 report. [REDACTED]

But you must remember [REDACTED] has spoken with many people about your situation, and unless the quote in question is directly attributed to the Diocese, I cannot take seriously your claim that

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Rev. Philip A. Petit  
February 19, 1987  
Page 2.

it originated here. Our recollection of our dealing with [REDACTED] is one brief phone call during which three questions were asked: whether we had previously been aware of a problem on your part; whether we had previously encouraged you to receive psychiatric care, and thirdly whether or not we were willing to assume the cost of inpatient care should that occur. The answer given by the Diocese was a simple "Yes" to each of those questions. Again, our recollection in no way substantiates your feeling that any other information was given to the Office by us.

Having said these things, I need now to share with you the feeling of our diocesan attorneys in reference to the 1981 document. It is their assessment that this is the only concrete evidence in the possession of the Diocese which clearly demonstrates that (a) we were requiring psychological care for you, and (b) that the psychological care was proving beneficial, and (c) that a specific incident, that is, the Dover situation, was in Doctor Desjardins' estimation not indicative of an ongoing pattern of behavior and that you were continuing to develop greater and greater control in the problem area. Obviously, that assessment played a great role in the decision of the Diocese that you should continue in pastoral ministry. Should any questions about the rectitude of the diocesan decision to continue to assign you be raised, that document becomes very important. It is our attorney's opinion that it is not enough to assume that such a document would be available to us in any legal action (no matter how remote a possibility that might be), simply because it is in Dr. Desjardins' file. If Dr. Desjardins relocates in another part of the country, if he should pass away, or in any other number of possible scenarios, that document might not be available to us if we destroy our copy. For this reason I am determined that the 1981 document remain part of your confidential file here at the Chancery Office.

As much as I wish to be sensitive to your concerns, Phil, I must ask you in turn to be sensitive to mine. I do not feel I can negotiate any further on this particular point. I must simply ask you to abide by my decision that this document will be treated according to all the conditions we have already agreed to in our previous correspondence. In this regard as well, I expect that I will begin to receive in the near future reports from the House of Affirmation regarding the status of your treatment. Please be aware of my continued concern and prayers. With every good wish,  
I am

Cordially in Christ,

Bishop of Manchester



82  
62  
44

1

TO: FILE

FROM: Paul E. Brodeur, Inv.

RE: DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER  
Complaints re: Priest

DATE: 9 APRIL, 02

This date spoke with: Atty. MARK ABRAMSON  
1819 Elm St., Manchester, NH 03104  
tel. 603-627-1819

OAG had received a package of material from the above on March 29, 2002. The package included articles written by ABRAMSON and the fact that he was about to institute six new cases in Superior Court. He offered additional information if wanted.

This date called and spoke with Atty. ABRAMSON. In an effort to determine if his six clients were other than the victims known to OAG inquired of the names. Atty. ABRAMSON advised of the following clients:

[REDACTED]	priest	FLEMING
[REDACTED]	priest	FLEMING
[REDACTED]	priest	FLEMING
[REDACTED]	priest	PETIT

These victims and priests were known to OAG.

[REDACTED]	priest	LAMOTHE
[REDACTED]	priest	DUNN, Gerald (possible)

LAMOTHE had a prior complaint. The two victims were unknown to OAG and ABRAMSON explained that he is in the process of confirming that DUNN is the priest in question. The incident supposedly occurred at Holy Trinity church in Somersworth, NH.

ABRAMSON advised that he would furnish OAG with whatever material he has and will obtain.

# 4 priests accused of sex abuse in suits filed against diocese

1430

By NANCY MEERSMAN

Union Leader Staff *U.L. 4/10/88 A 8*

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Manchester was hit yesterday with four lawsuits accusing the church of failing to protect six children from sexual assaults by priests at four different New Hampshire parishes.

The lawsuits say the priests molested young male parishioners in Manchester, Hudson, Keene and Somersworth from the late 1960s through the early 1980s, and they blame the church for allowing it to happen. The suits are filed against the Roman Catholic Bishop of Manchester Inc.

"The church was complicit in keeping all this stuff buried, with catastrophic effects on the emotional lives of the victims and their families. It has torn them apart," said attorney Mark A. Abramson, who filed the lawsuits in Hillsborough County Superior Court.

Abramson said some of the six plaintiffs he represents came forward after Bishop John B. McCormack in February issued a list of 14 priests who had been accused of sexual misconduct and who had been removed from parish duties.

The bishop said the church knew of no credible accusations of sexual misconduct against other priests.

The four priests in the lawsuits were not on the bishop's list. They are not listed as priests in the Manchester Diocese's current directory.

One of the lawsuits, brought by three brothers under the names John Doe I, II and III, identifies a priest whose name is being withheld in today's editions because his accusers are anonymous.

The others accused include the Rev. Philip Petit of St. Jean the Baptist in Manchester, the Rev. Francis Lamothe of St. Margaret Mary in Keene and a priest who has not yet been conclusively identified who allegedly molested a minor in the Holy Trinity Rectory in Somersworth.

Patrick McGee, spokesman for the diocese, said the church had nothing to say about the lawsuits yesterday because no one had seen them. Nor, he said, could the diocese discuss why these names

were absent from the bishop's list of priests accused of sexual misconduct.

McGee said he would research the status of the accused individuals and respond later.

Abramson, a plaintiff's attorney with Abramson, Brown and Dugan in Manchester, litigated the civil lawsuit by the Grover brothers of Keene against former priest Gordon MacRae in the 1990s. (MacRae is serving up to 67 years in prison on a 1994 rape conviction.)

Abramson said that case was so emotionally upsetting that he was reluctant to handle any more sexual abuse allegations against the clergy. But he felt it was necessary to seek some form of justice for people whose lives have been ruined. "I wish there was some way to hold the church criminally responsible," he said.

In one suit, the three "Doe" brothers and their parents allege a priest "savagely sexually assaulted" the pre-pubescent boys, who were frequently sent to play on the grounds of the John the Evangelist Rectory in Hudson.

Abramson said the parents thought: "What safer place than the rectory?"

He said the priest took one of the boys to the ocean and asserted his power over him by holding his head under water as he struggled. The boy finally escaped.

In his introduction to the lawsuit, Abramson says, "These monstrous acts have caused permanent, traumatic and devastating emotional injury to the plaintiffs by this defendant's utter failure to make even the most minimal effort to protect them from harm."

Abramson said the Doe brothers went on to serve as military officers, they now have good jobs and they don't need money from a lawsuit, but they were harmed.

"It's their psyche that's been destroyed, horribly traumatized in ways words can't describe," Abramson said.

"One of them told me it has affected any decision he has made in his entire life."

Abramson expects the Manchester Diocese to say it had no obligation to disclose the name of the priest the Does are accusing

because he is deceased.

"We have information that he's not dead. They knew exactly who he was," the lawyer said.

In one of the other suits,

of Manchester alleges he was sexually assaulted from 1979 through 1981 by Petit at the former St. Jean Baptiste Church in Manchester. As a result, the lawsuit says, suffered severe and painful physical injuries, devastating and continuing emotional psychological harm and loss of enjoyment of life.

of Fremont lodges similar allegations against Lamothe for the years 1979 through 1982.

Plaintiff of Somersworth accuses an unidentified priest of assaulting him at Holy Trinity Rectory in Somersworth from 1966 to 1968. Abramson said the priest was not identified because was not certain of the name, but that would be established later.

Abramson said the priest, while wearing his clerical collar, would take boys aside and have inappropriate sexual contact with them.

The lawsuits do not specify damages sought.

"How much is the destruction of your emotional reserves worth?" Abramson said. "... maybe the church can put a figure on it."

The diocese settled the MacRae cases, but only after a bitter fight on technical grounds, Abramson said. The case would have collapsed if Judge Carol Ann Conboy hadn't ruled that the six-year statute of limitations hadn't begun to run until the victims became emotionally aware of the harm that was done to them.

In the end, the church paid, but the amount is confidential.

At least three other attorneys have said publicly they have clients who allege they were sexually abused by priests in New Hampshire and plan to sue.

Abramson said the Manchester Diocese had adequate insurance coverage in the 1990s because there were not many cases here, and he surmises this may still be the case.

MEMORANDUM OF INTERVIEW

PERSON INTERVIEWED: [REDACTED]

PLACE OF INTERVIEW: Telephonic (603) 644-3451

DATE OF INTERVIEW: February 20, 2002

INTERVIEWED BY: Michael Bahan, Chief Investigator

*[out of priesthood since 1985]*

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] contacted this office regarding Father PHILIP PETIT on sexual assault that occurred on or about 1981 to 1982. [REDACTED] provided the following information, in substance:

[REDACTED] stated that he works nights at the [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] During early '80's he was an alter boy in Manchester and he along with several of his friends were friends with the then Deacon [REDACTED].

[REDACTED] said that PETIT was also a friend of his parents and on one occasion when he was either 14 or 16 years of age he was assaulted by PETIT. [REDACTED] recalled not having his driver's license at that time) PETIT had asked [REDACTED] parents if it was okay for [REDACTED] go with PETIT to his mother's house in Suncook, NH to watch a movie. [REDACTED] parents approved and [REDACTED] went with PETIT to Suncook. At the time of the arrival it was their plan to watch movies and they would stay the night and then PETIT was going to bring him back to Manchester the next day.

[REDACTED] said that PETIT'S parents were not home at the time and instead of giving him a separate bedroom he brought him downstairs and opened out a couch for [REDACTED] to sleep on. Later in the night, PETIT said he didn't want to stay in his parent's bed and he ended up sleeping with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] said he woke up in the middle of the night with PETIT groping him. He stated "I jumped up after he grabbed my genitals and I went and I sat at the table for the rest of the night". He said it was a very uncomfortable time. He stated that it was the last time that he had ever spoken to PETIT.

[REDACTED] said that later he read that PETIT was ordained as a Priest, however, he believed somewhere between 1983 and 1988, that PETIT [REDACTED]. He did not know if this offense occurred in New Hampshire or Massachusetts. He also stated he does not know if PETIT is still a Priest after the hitchhiking incident.

[REDACTED] stated that he wanted to remain confidential at this time and that he has only told his wife about this. [REDACTED] when he went into detail as to whether or not we thought that he should obtain an attorney as he thought he might be looking at possible civil law suit against the Manchester Diocese. I advised him that was his own choice and that we could not make a recommendation regarding his getting legal representation.

I also advised [REDACTED] that at this time we had not made a determination on who would be handling the cases or if cases could be brought because this incident may have occurred outside the statute of limitations for us to bring charges. [REDACTED] said at no time has he ever reported this incident to any law enforcement until now.

GMB:sch  
181143



BISHOP'S HOUSE  
657 RIVER ROAD  
MANCHESTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
03105

3587

March 6, 1981

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

Reverend Philip Petit  
St. Joseph Rectory  
150 Central Avenue  
Dover, New Hampshire 03820

Dear Father Petit:

For the sake of the record, I would like in this letter to summarize in substance the conversations which I, Bishop Mulvee and Father Ham have had with you concerning the event which took place on November 1, 1980.

First of all, I want to stress that this information came to us from the police for your own good. Any ill will which you might have against the police is completely out of order. As a matter of fact, it is the sincere hope of all of us that you will say a prayer for that policeman every day of your priestly life.

We are all particularly concerned with the circumstances surrounding this entire episode: the person involved, the use of the rectory, the failure to have any priest with whom you could share your difficulty, the rather surprising manner in which you went to the police, your reaction in general to what we all consider to be an extremely flagrant and serious incident. The potential for grave scandal cannot be minimized.

At the same time, we were satisfied with your statement that this was an isolated incident, that no such situation has transpired while in the seminary or while serving as a deacon and priest in the Diocese of Manchester.

This whole matter has been discussed with Doctor Ernest Desjardins. He has been made aware of all the events which we discussed with you. I wish to state here the following conditions with which you have agreed to abide in order to maintain your pastoral functioning in the diocese.

First, you are to make an appointment within the week with Dr. Ernest Desjardins to begin long-term psychotherapy with the understanding that you will be expected to develop the necessary impulse control to lead a celibate and chaste life. Secondly, that you must refrain from all sexual advances and/or contacts with any males or females in the parish you serve or outside of the parish, and refrain from visiting those places where you know temptations can be encountered easily. Thirdly, any violation of condition two will result in ipso facto suspension from all priestly faculties. The lifting of such a suspension is reserved to myself or Bishop Mulvee. Fourthly, you will be expected to have regular and frequent contact with other priests in the diocese. You are expected to be part of a priests' support group and attend meetings regularly. Further, I suggest you contact Monsignor Burke or one of his team persons, to develop a growth plan for yourself. It is understood that you will also meet monthly with Father Ham.

Finally, I suggested you seek out a spiritual director that you would be able to work with at regular intervals for your spiritual growth. I added that you must be working hard at developing a strong spiritual life, suggesting even that you consider a daily holy hour. I also mentioned physical exercise as an important part of staying in good health.

I am forwarding this information to Dr. Desjardins. We have spoken to him, and he assured us he would be happy to discuss these points with you. He suggested that you call the Consultation Office for the Clergy and Religious on Concord Street for your appointment with him pertaining to these matters in discussion, beginning the long-term therapy with him. The number of his office is 668-0014. If you fail to reach him at this number, you might want to reach him at his clinic in Portsmouth.

May I repeat the assurance that you have been given by myself, Bishop Mulvee and Father Ham of our willingness to be of help and support to you. Everything that has been done has been done for you. It is our sincere wish to try our best to be supportive of you as you work through your problems. It is our fondest prayer that you will be a good, holy, zealous priest, an asset to the Diocese of Manchester.

Cordially in Christ,

Bishop of Manchester

Conversation with Philip Petit pertaining to the problem that he has developed and was reported to us by the Chief of Police, Chief LeBoeuf.

I covered the entire letter material (letter, "Personal and Confidential" dated March 6, 1981, addressed to Philip Petit, a copy of which is to be sent to Dr. Desjardins), and first of all asked Phil Petit if he wanted to make any comments or anything, and he had little to say. Father Petit was very docile and well disposed. I pointed out clearly to him that he was in a situation which indicated that he was seeking out for help and we are happy to help him. I pointed out to Father Petit, or, rather, I verified with Father Petit whether or not his thoughts were clear in terms of what the Church teaches pertaining to his lifestyle and whether or not he agreed with the Church's teaching. I repeated this twice, to make sure he understood what I was speaking about, and he twice said, yes, he did understand the teaching of the Church and he did believe them and accept them and was willing to make every effort to live by them. The homosexual orientation is something that you might inherit and develop, but that we cannot be active in that orientation. We must live a celibate life. That's the only option we have open to us in terms of morality and of course, a-fortiori, in terms of the priesthood. He agreed with that. He said he had worked even in the seminary with his spiritual director and after evaluations they felt he was ready for the priesthood and he felt he was. He went even to Dr. Gill who is a psychiatrist before diaconate, and he also agreed that he was capable of living a celibate life and therefore he went ahead. And he felt comfortable with that, but because of this particular change of assignment he sort of let go of many things such as relationships with priests, and he didn't have too many priest friends; his spiritual life had kind of become a little less supportive; many things had kind of broken down and so all these circumstances together he feels kind of led him to this kind of activity.

I covered every other part of this letter thoroughly with him. Then I turned the letter over to him to read while I got out of the room for a few minutes, and suggested that if he had any comments, any discussion, any disagreement, we would re-discuss it and then we could come to some agreement. But when he finished reading it he was totally in conformity with the letter, which I left with him. He's got it. I said I was going to send a copy of that letter to another doctor, psychiatrist, that he agreed to go to. Infact, he's already made an appointment to see him next Tuesday.

The two things that came up that are not included in the letter: (1) that Dr. Desjardins, in talking with him, indicated that he might want to deal with him on a private client basis rather than a consulting agency for clergy in the Diocese. I said to Father Petit that I thought this might be for the sake of having him come into his own private office in the Portsmouth area as long as Father Petit is in Dover. It would be closer than coming to Manchester. But I would check this out with Dr. Desjardins and then make a choice and tell him what it is. Secondly, with regards to the fee, I said that a psychiatrist sometimes imposes on the client a certain amount to be paid by the client of the total fee, for the sake of therapeutic benefits, such as a direct involvement

and a commitment that they will stay with if they really want to get better. I said that we would discuss that with the doctor also and then let him know what the results are. Otherwise, we would pick up either the bulk of the expenses or the total expenses for this.

I re-emphasized the point that if there's any activity whatsoever during this period of time that he would automatically be suspended and that was reserved to Bishop Mulvee and myself.

The conversation went well, I feel. He didn't seem too tense or uncomfortable. I pointed out the importance of his spiritual life and I insisted on him visiting with Monsignor Burke and to both ask to be part of a support group and secondly to develop a growth plan with Monsignor Burke. He was willing to do all of these things. I indicated to him, too, his need to have a well balanced life, to get some activity whether they're supportive or just walking, that he needed to do some exercise. All of these he agreed to. The conversation concluded with encouragement for him to be deeply spiritual and to stay close to the Lord for His help, following a spiritual director that he ought to choose, and being in constant relationship with him.

June 22, 1981

PERSONAL/CONFIDENTIAL

Rev. Philip Petit  
St. Joseph Rectory  
150 Central Avenue - PO Box 280  
Dover, New Hampshire 03820

Dear Father Petit:

Subsequent to our recent meeting, I felt it important to summarize the conclusion of our conversation for the sake of clarity on both our parts.

First of all, I wish to remind you that any recurrence of activities we discussed which take place in your rectory or in any rectory will, ipso facto, result in suspension a divinis. Secondly, I wish to further remind you that any such activity, no matter where it takes place, is a serious failure to live up to the demands of celibacy which all of us, as priests, must strive to live in fidelity. In this regard, I feel it essential that you undergo serious long term therapy so that you can gain control over your drives in this regard, which I would expect you to do within the period of a year. In this way, you will be better able to use your talents for the welfare of the Church as the Lord desires.

As I indicated to you, you may arrange for this therapy with either Dr. Desjardins or Dr. Ouellette, but I would ask you to make that decision only after meeting with Dr. Desjardins so that he may give you an indepth view of the evaluations you have taken. I also request that you be in touch with Father George Ham on a frequent basis, who is charged with your supervision, and that you join a support group to which you will be faithful.

I am convinced that with your continued cooperation in each of these areas you will be able to achieve both happiness and fruitfulness in your priestly ministry.

With every good wish, I am

Cordially in Christ,

Bishop of Manchester

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DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

MOST REVEREND ODORE J. GENDRON, D.D.  
*Bishop*

MOST REVEREND ROBERT E. MULVEE, J.C.D.  
*Auxiliary Bishop*

June 1, 1982

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

Reverend Philip Petit  
St. Joseph Rectory  
150 Central Avenue  
Dover, New Hampshire 03820

Dear Father Petit:

You have by this time received your letter of assignment to Guardian Angel Parish in Berlin. I want to take this occasion to express again my hope that you will find your ministry there with Father Bisson, the Pastor, both satisfying and fruitful. Based on what I have been told by Doctor Ernest Desjardins, there is every reason to believe that with continuing treatment you will be able to proceed to a state of integration and control of the problem with which he has been helping you. I am heartened by his report that you have made considerable progress within the last year and assure you of my prayers that this progress will continue.

Given the seriousness of the situation, however, I wish to remind you formally of the conditions I discussed with you during our recent personal meeting. First, if there is any further sexual activity not only in the rectory but anywhere in the north country, this will result ipso facto in your suspension from the priestly ministry. Secondly, if there is any such activity anywhere which comes to my attention, I will invoke the same suspension. Finally, of course, I expect you to continue your treatment on a regular basis so that the control you are seeking will become a reality for you as soon as is possible.

Rev. Philip Petit  
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June 1, 1982

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I realize that your struggle with this problem is difficult for you and certainly at times painful. In closing, let me assure you of my prayers for you that you will receive both the enlightenment and the strength to deal with it in a fashion that will allow you to use your considerable talents fully for the Lord here in the Diocese of Manchester.

With every good wish, I am

Cordially in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Joseph Gendron".

Bishop of Manchester

cc/ Dr. Ernest Desjardins