

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

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MEMORANDUM

Revised

To: File - PFR-170
From: Review Board Meeting
Re: Bennett, Rev. Joseph [Active] [REDACTED]
Date: December 3, 2005

A summary of the discussion from the Review Board Meeting on Saturday, December 3, 2005:

- Meeting began with a review of Rev. Joseph Bennett's file in regards to the allegations of sexual misconduct made against him by Ms. [REDACTED] and Ms. [REDACTED]
- Fr. Smilanic informed the Board that Rev. Paul Golden, C.M., J.C.D. is Fr. Bennett's newly appointed canonical advocate; Fr. Smilanic also informed the Board of Fr. Golden's request to have the entire file copied and sent to him
- Cardinal George arrived at the Board meeting at 9:30am to discuss the Board's recommendations made on the Bennett [REDACTED] and Bennett [REDACTED] allegations
- The Cardinal explained that in the interest of procedure, he would like for Fr. Bennett to address the Board in regards to the allegations made against him by Ms. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] [clarification that Fr. Bennett did address the Review Board at the November 19, 2005 Review Board meeting]
- The Cardinal stated that he wanted to ensure that Fr. Bennett is aware of his [Fr. Bennett's] right to appear before the Review Board
- The Cardinal informed the Board that he has read the entire file and that he was prepared to converse with them regarding these matters, as he had questions he wished to ask the Board members so that he could understand the Board's conclusions and recommendations of these matters
- Mr. Gass then provided the Cardinal with a verbal history of the aforementioned matters as they have appeared before the Board
- Mr. Gass informed the Cardinal of the Board members' feelings of the evidence of the existence of freckles on Fr. Bennett's scrotum

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- Mr. Gass explained to the Cardinal the fact that "reasonable cause to suspect" is not a high standard of proof in these matters, however the freckles on Fr. Bennett's scrotum lead the Board to believe that something [sexually abusive] did happen in the matters involving Ms. [REDACTED] and Ms. [REDACTED]
- Dr. Renshaw then referred the Cardinal to the medical documentation concerning marks/freckles on Fr. Bennett's scrotum
- Dr. Jenuwine noted that Fr. Bennett initially denied the existence of freckles on his scrotum and had his [personal] physician write a letter noting such; referring to the more recent medical information obtained that states that Fr. Bennett does have marks on his scrotum, Dr. Jenuwine made the point that when Ms. [REDACTED] allegation was first read to him [Fr. Bennett], he did not remark something to the effect of, "...how would she [Ms. [REDACTED]] know that [that there are marks/freckles on his scrotum]?"
- Dr. Jenuwine also made the point that Ms. [REDACTED] recall of Fr. Bennett having a birth mark on his back "...does not stand up..." and that the back surgery that Fr. Bennett underwent took place significantly after the alleged abuse
- Fr. Rubey made the point that Dr. Renshaw had talked to the Board about such marks on a male's scrotum, that they are not age spots and they are also not common
- Dr. Jenuwine stated that when he first reviewed the allegation [made by Ms. [REDACTED] against Fr. Bennett, that he found it to be incredible until he read the information concerning the existence of freckles on the accused's scrotum; Dr. Jenuwine then provided the opinion that freckles on the scrotum as alleged in the matter of Ms. [REDACTED] allegation against Fr. Bennett would be a "flashbulb memory" that a child sexual abuse victim would remember
- Fr. Dowling stated that he had doubts that Fr. Bennett is an abuser
- The Cardinal stated that in regards to Ms. [REDACTED] allegation, other parts of her allegation seem to be inaccurate, except for the presence of freckles on Fr. Bennett's scrotum
- The Cardinal expressed his great support and appreciation for the Board's review of and recommendations on the matters of Ms. [REDACTED] and Ms. [REDACTED] allegations against Fr. Bennett
- Fr. Smilanic suggested that Fr. Golden [Fr. Bennett's canonical advocate] be allowed to review the matters and provide a response on the behalf of the accused prior to the Cardinal making his final decision [based upon the Board's Review for Cause determinations of Ms. [REDACTED] and Ms. [REDACTED] allegations against Fr. Bennett]
- The Cardinal questioned as to why Fr. Bennett did not have a canonical advocate until recently; Fr. Smilanic stated that he cannot recall and does not know why
- Responding to Fr. Dowling's question of "turn around time" in the review of the matters by Fr. Golden, Fr. Smilanic reiterated his [Fr. Golden's] request to have the file copied and sent to him

- In regards to Fr. Golden's request for having a copy of Fr. Bennett's files sent to him, the Cardinal expressed his concern for the integrity of the files if they are copied, but that he is "open to discussion"
- Dr. Jenuwine suggested that based upon confidentiality, the Office of Legal Services could draw up an agreement that information from Fr. Bennett's file copied and sent to Fr. Golden could not be copied and/or reproduced
- The Cardinal requested that Fr. Golden submit his information/response on behalf of Fr. Bennett to the Board and then communicated to him
- The Cardinal stated that he would like to follow through the matters of the two aforementioned allegations against Fr. Bennett procedurally [with the defense of a canon lawyer], as Rome would first ask and ensure that a matter [regarding such misconduct] abided by procedure and "The Code," the Cardinal expressed his concern that he does not want Rome to send any cases back [to him] due to a lack of following procedure
- Fr. Dowling expressed the need to have the monitoring of Fr. Bennett continue, with which the Cardinal agreed
- It was agreed that all Board members would keep their files on Bennett [REDACTED] and Bennett [REDACTED] until hearing [a response] from Fr. Bennett's canon lawyer
- Fr. Rubey will abstain from the matters, as he and Fr. Bennett are classmates and friends

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