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MEMORANDUM

To: File - PFR-277
From: Leah McCluskey, Professional Responsibility Administrator 
Re: McCormack, Rev. Daniel J. [Withdrawn] 
Date: February 12, 2006

PRA spoke with Sr. Mary Therese Cusack via phone on January 26, 2006 regarding the alleged abuse of  [minor] by Rev. Daniel J. McCormack in October 1999 at Holy Family School. Sr. Mary Therese was the principal of Holy Family at the time of the alleged abuse.

At the beginning of the January 26th phone call, PRA explained to Sr. Mary Therese that the reason for the call was to ask her recollections of the alleged incident of abuse of  by Fr. McCormack. It was also explained to Sr. Mary Therese the reason for PRA's involvement in the matter, as well as the role of the Office of Professional Responsibility. Sr. Mary Therese agreed to speak with PRA and was extremely cooperative throughout the phone conversation.

When asked, Sr. Mary Therese stated that she was principal of Holy Family from 1985 through 2000, until the principal position was eliminated. Sr. Mary Therese referred to the merging of Holy Trinity, St. Colistus, and Holy Family.

When asked, Sr. Mary Therese stated that Fr. McCormack was first appointed sacramental minister on Sundays at Holy Family. Sr. Mary Therese stated that some time after Fr. McCormack's appointment, Bishop Manz informed her that Fr. McCormack "missed kids," as he [Fr. McCormack] was assigned to St. Joseph's Seminary. The discussion between Bishop Manz and Sr. Mary Therese led to Fr. McCormack presiding over the weekly all school mass at Holy Family. Sr. Mary Therese stated that she was thrilled at the time to have Fr. McCormack celebrate the all school mass, as they did not have a priest assigned to the school, and that in her opinion the cleric was a wonderful homilist. She informed PRA that the all school mass took place in the chapel behind the altar at Holy Family Church every Friday at 9:00am.



Recalling the alleged incident involving [REDACTED] Sr. Mary Therese believes that it was a Monday morning in the winter [October 1999] when [REDACTED] mother had come to see her in the school office. Sr. Mary Therese described [REDACTED] parents as wonderful and supportive at the school. She also remarked that [REDACTED] father "couldn't hold a job." Referring back to the time of the incident, Sr. Mary Therese stated that [REDACTED] came to her office and closed the door.

Sr. Mary Therese explained to PRA that the Friday before [REDACTED] came to see her, [REDACTED] had been sent to the sacristy to retrieve the book used for the readings [at the all school mass] and to bring it back to his class. As per Sr. Mary Therese, [REDACTED] was in fourth grade at the time and he had gone to retrieve the book on the Friday in question so that his class could prepare the readings for the next week. Sr. Mary Therese stated that [REDACTED] fourth grade teacher at the time was Mr. Roel Vivit. She believes that Mr. Vivit is currently a part of the Inner City Teaching Core, teaching at either Francis Xavier Ward at Old St. Pat's or Cathedral.

Referring back to the time of the incident, Sr. Mary Therese stated that [REDACTED] informed her that [REDACTED] had disclosed the incident to her [REDACTED] the Friday before. [REDACTED] informed Sr. Mary Therese that [REDACTED] had told her that when he had gone to the sacristy to retrieve the book, he ran into Fr. McCormack. [REDACTED] told his mother that he told Fr. McCormack that he wanted to be an altar boy. [REDACTED] reported to Sr. Mary Therese that Fr. McCormack responded to [REDACTED] request by saying something to the effect of, "...sure...take down your pants, I need to measure you [for his cassock]..." When asked by PRA, Sr. Mary Therese stated that she does not remember if [REDACTED] informed her if [REDACTED] did or did not take his pants down when instructed by Fr. McCormack. As she thought about it, Sr. Mary Therese continued by expressing that she is not sure, but that [REDACTED] may have asked at the time something to the effect of "...why did Fr. McCormack have him [REDACTED] take down his pants?" Sr. Mary Therese stated that she then gave [REDACTED] Fr. McCormack's phone number from the directory "...because she [REDACTED] wanted to talk to him..."

After speaking with [REDACTED] Sr. Mary Therese contacted Mr. Robert [Bob] Davies, who was the consultant for Holy Family School at the time. Sr. Mary Therese informed PRA that she told Mr. Davies of the conversation with [REDACTED] regarding the alleged incident between Fr. McCormack and [REDACTED]. As per Sr. Mary Therese, Mr. Davies said to her "...keep me posted..."

Sr. Mary Therese stated that after her conversation with [REDACTED] she tried to call Fr. McCormack every day and left him messages each time. She explained to PRA that she had Fr. McCormack's private phone number, but that she never heard back from him. Sr. Mary Therese stated that Fr. McCormack never returned her phone calls. She believes that the week after the incident was exam week in the school. Sr. Mary Therese stated that [REDACTED] came back to see her on Thursday, three days after the initial meeting between the two regarding the alleged incident. [REDACTED] informed Sr. Mary Therese that she had called Fr. McCormack several times and that he would not return the phone calls. Sr. Mary Therese informed [REDACTED] that Fr. McCormack would not return her

phone calls either. [REDACTED] then informed Sr. Mary Therese that she had planned to wait for Fr. McCormack at the all school mass the next day [Friday morning] so that she could talk to him about the incident involving [REDACTED]. That same Thursday night at 11:00pm, Sr. Mary Therese attempted to reach Fr. McCormack via phone again. Sr. Mary Therese left Fr. McCormack a message on his answering machine to inform him that [REDACTED] would be waiting for him the next day to talk about the incident with [REDACTED] that had taken place the Friday before.

Sr. Mary Therese stated that the next day [Friday], she arrived at Holy Family School at approximately 6:30am. She saw that Fr. McCormack had arrived at the front door of the school at 7:00am that day and walked inside. Sr. Mary Therese informed PRA that she and Fr. McCormack were both standing inside the front area of the school "friendly" talking to each other as the two greeted children and parents as they walked back and forth to begin the day. At approximately 7:45am, a parent had asked Sr. Mary Therese if they could speak privately in her office about a tuition issue. Sr. Mary Therese noted that the time was approximately 7:45am, as school began at 8:00am.

Once Sr. Mary Therese and the parent were finished speaking, they exited her office. Upon leaving her office, Sr. Mary Therese saw Fr. McCormack and [REDACTED] talking in his office with the door closed. When asked by PRA, Sr. Mary Therese stated that her office was directly across from Fr. McCormack's and that there was a window next to his office door, which is how she could see the cleric and [REDACTED] talking inside.

Sr. Mary Therese waited outside of her/Fr. McCormack's door until it was time to read the prayers over the PA system. She went inside her office again while the prayers for the day were read. Upon conclusion of the prayers being read, Sr. Mary Therese walked outside of her office again, which is when she saw [REDACTED] and Fr. McCormack walking out of his office together. As per Sr. Mary Therese, [REDACTED] then told her "...everything's fine...I understand now what happened [the Friday before between Fr. McCormack and [REDACTED]]"

After [REDACTED] left the school that day, Sr. Mary Therese remembers feeling relieved. Fr. McCormack then walked up to Sr. Mary Therese. She recalls that his face was red and his eyes were [looking] down and never left the floor during the next exchange. Sr. Mary Therese asked Fr. McCormack, "Dan, what happened?" Fr. McCormack replied to her, "I used very poor judgment." Sr. Mary Therese asked again, "Dan, did you ask the boy [REDACTED] to take his pants down?" Fr. McCormack again replied, "I used very poor judgment." Sr. Mary Therese then asked him, "Dan, could you give me a yes or a no?!" She noted that Fr. McCormack then began backing away from her, his eyes still never leaving the floor as he again replied, "I used very poor judgment...I have to go." Sr. Mary Therese stated that Fr. McCormack continued to back away from her until he was gone.

When asked by PRA, Sr. Mary Therese stated that she never heard anything again from [REDACTED] or Fr. McCormack about the incident involving [REDACTED]

The following Monday, Sr. Mary Therese's secretary at the school told her that the [REDACTED] had "...paid several hundred dollars in tuition..." The fact of the payment struck Sr. Mary Therese as unusual at the time, as [REDACTED] had many full and half siblings at the school and their parents were often not up to date with the tuition. When asked by PRA for clarification, Sr. Mary Therese stated that the secretary informed her that [REDACTED] had paid the tuition in cash.

At this point during the January 26th phone call, Sr. Mary Therese referred back to the time period of the alleged incident. Sr. Mary Therese stated that the same day after she tried to talk to Fr. McCormack about the incident, she called Mr. Davies. She explained to Mr. Davies what had happened, that she had seen [REDACTED] and Fr. McCormack meeting with the door closed, the exchange that she had with [REDACTED] as well as her attempt at a conversation with the accused. Sr. Mary Therese thinks that Mr. Davies told her that he would "get back" to her. As per Sr. Mary Therese, later that same day Mr. Davies did call her back. Sr. Mary Therese stated that Mr. Davies informed her something to the effect of, "...as long as the parent is satisfied, let it go..." As per Sr. Mary Therese, she told Mr. Davies that *she* [Sr. Mary Therese] was not satisfied. Sr. Mary Therese stated that Mr. Davies again told her to "...let it go..." The following Monday when she learned that the [REDACTED] had paid all of their tuition, Sr. Mary Therese again called Mr. Davies. She informed PRA that Mr. Davies told her, "Mary, let it go."

When asked by PRA, Sr. Mary Therese stated that she did not speak with anyone else at the Archdiocese of Chicago about the incident involving Fr. McCormack and [REDACTED] except for Mr. Davies.

When asked, Sr. Mary Therese stated that her date of birth is [REDACTED]. After leaving Holy Family School, Sr. Mary Therese did not look for another principalship. Sr. Mary Therese continues to do some work for the Archdiocese of Chicago as well as volunteering at the Information Desk at Our Lady of Resurrection.

Sr. Mary Therese then spoke of Sr. Mary Therese Freymann, who to her recollection worked with "the computer lab" at Holy Family around the time of the alleged abuse of [REDACTED] by Fr. McCormack. As per Sr. Mary Therese Cusack, Sr. Mary Therese Freymann came to her approximately one week to ten days after the alleged incident and asked, "Do you know what they're saying about Fr. Dan [McCormack]?" Sr. Mary Therese Cusack stated that she then closed the door and told Sr. Mary Therese Freymann about the alleged incident.

At this point during the January 26th phone call, Sr. Mary Therese Cusack informed PRA that approximately two weeks prior she had received a phone call from Sr. Mary Therese Freymann. As per Sr. Mary Therese Cusack, Sr. Mary Therese Freymann said to her, "Fr. Dan [McCormack] is at it again...what should Barb [Westrick, principal of St. Agatha's] do?" Sr. Mary Therese Cusack then suggested to Sr. Mary Therese Freymann that Ms. Westrick be informed to call Mr. Davies in the Office of Catholic Schools.

Referring back to the time of the alleged incident, Sr. Mary Therese stated that she "kept a record" of what had taken place. Sr. Mary Therese stated that she typed this record and that it was approximately two pages in length. She then mentioned that the Monday or Tuesday after [REDACTED] came to see her for the first time to talk about the incident, she called Sr. Marion Murphy. Sr. Mary Therese stated that Sr. Marion was in charge of the Literacy Program at the time. As per Sr. Mary Therese, she explained to Sr. Marion that the reason for her call was to tell her "what happened [the alleged incident concerning Fr. McCormack and [REDACTED] and that "...I think you [Sr. Marion] should know [about the incident] as administrator of the parish." The following day, Sr. Marion informed Sr. Mary Therese that she [Sr. Marion] had called Mr. Davies at the Office of Catholic Schools. Sr. Marion informed Sr. Mary Therese that she also asked Mr. Davies if the dean or the vicar [of the Vicariate] should be called about the alleged incident. She reported to Sr. Mary Therese that Mr. Davies informed her that she [Sr. Marion] did not need to call the dean or the vicar.

As per Sr. Mary Therese, it was after her conversation with Sr. Marion that she decided to type up a record of all of the events that had taken place, stemming from [REDACTED] report to her of the alleged incident of abuse of her son [REDACTED] by Fr. McCormack. Sr. Mary Therese informed PRA that she did not make a copy of the document, but that she did show it to Sr. Marion. As per Sr. Mary Therese, she then put the document in a brown envelope, wrote Bob Davies' name on the front, and drove it down to the Pastoral Center where she left it at the front desk. Sr. Mary Therese stated that she never heard from Mr. Davies after she left the document at the front desk of the Pastoral Center.

PRA thanked Sr. Mary Therese for her time and all of the information she shared. Sr. Mary Therese agreed to be contacted at any time again in the future regarding this matter. She may be reached at [REDACTED]

Cc: Rev. Daniel Smilanic, Cardinal's Delegate to the Review Board
Rev. Edward D. Grace, Vicar for Priests
Ralph Bonaccorsi, Assistance Ministry
Dr. Nicholas Wolsonovich, Superintendent of Schools
Robert Davies, Assistant Superintendent [Vicariate I]