

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

Office of Professional Responsibility



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MEMORANDUM

To: File - PFR-170

From: Leah McCluskey, Professional Responsibility Administrator

Re: Bennett, Rev. Joseph [Active] [REDACTED]

Date: December 19, 2003

PRA received a phone call from Ms. [REDACTED] on December 3, 2003 regarding an allegation of sexual misconduct against a priest of the Archdiocese of Chicago. During the initial phone call, Ms. [REDACTED] stated that she did not wish to have her name released, nor was she intending of providing PRA with the name of the accused. After some conversation and an explanation of the process of formalizing an allegation of sexual misconduct, Ms. [REDACTED] named her alleged abuser as Rev. Joseph Bennett. However, Ms. [REDACTED] requested that PRA not release her name or any detail of the alleged abuse [to follow] until she had been able to obtain legal representation. PRA received two messages from Ms. [REDACTED] today allowing PRA to release her name and any detail of the allegation against Fr. Bennett provided on December 3, 2003. However, Ms. [REDACTED] has yet to obtain council, but will contact PRA once she has been able to identify appropriate representation.

During the phone conversation on December 3, Ms. [REDACTED] informed PRA that she had spoken with a parish priest in her home state of [REDACTED] regarding her allegation against Fr. Bennett. As per Ms. [REDACTED], she sought advice from her priest as to how she should go about addressing the alleged past abuse and he advised her to contact the Archdiocese of Chicago.

Ms. [REDACTED] stated that she is 43 years old and [REDACTED] Ms. [REDACTED] described 2003 as "a rough year" but that she had [REDACTED] She mentioned the fact that she "had a great childhood" and grew up on the south side of Chicago. During 2003 Ms. [REDACTED] had participated in a women's prayer group through her church and began to "clean house" as directed by the leader of the group. It was at this time that Ms. [REDACTED] began to experience "memories that didn't make any sense." The memories were of her grammar school years, when she was approximately eight years old and in CCD classes prior to her First Communion. As per Ms. [REDACTED] she

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was in third grade at the time, but was held back so that she could be in classes with her sister. Their CCD teacher was [redacted] [Carmelite nun] whom Ms. [redacted] described as "a sweet young nun." Ms. [redacted] also referred to a priest [alleged abuser] as "wonderful." She recalls that the priest was reassigned to a parish in the suburbs at one point. However, the priest would be present during [redacted]'s CCD classes from time to time. At this point in the conversation, Ms. [redacted] still did not feel comfortable disclosing the name of the accused as she was advised by her parish priest not to disclose such information over the phone.

PRA began to explain to Ms. [redacted] the purpose and responsibilities of PRA and the Office of Professional Responsibility. After some discussion and Ms. [redacted] information that the accused is an active priest in the Archdiocese of Chicago, Ms. [redacted] named her abuser as Rev. Joseph Bennett. She referred back to her recent memories of the alleged abuse and stated that she has "clear memories of Fr. Joe and [redacted]" Mr. [redacted] alleges that [redacted] was "present and a part of the abuse." She also informed PRA that Fr. Bennett has a birthmark on a part of his body that she "shouldn't know." Later in the conversation, Ms. [redacted] informed PRA that Fr. Bennett has a freckle on his left testicle. When asked by PRA, Ms. [redacted] stated that she and her sister attended CCD classes at St. John De La Salle at 106th and King.

Ms. [redacted] informed PRA that she is coming forward at this time out of her "concern for the kids" and that Fr. Bennett is "only 61 [years old] now" and assigned to a parish in the Archdiocese of Chicago. She stated, "I don't want any money and I don't want revenge. I just want the truth." As per Ms. [redacted] the alleged abuse took place when she was between 7 and 9 years old. She moved out of St. John De La Salle parish with her family when she was 11 years old.

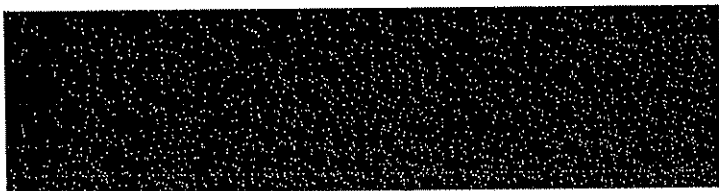
When provided information regarding formalizing her allegation, Ms. [redacted] informed PRA that she would be interested in PRA and Assistance Ministry traveling to [redacted] to meet with her. Ms. [redacted] also came to the decision that she would like time to obtain an attorney to protect her interests prior to PRA releasing any information regarding her allegation. Upon her identification of an attorney, Ms. [redacted] stated that she would contact PRA and schedule a meeting.

It was agreed that PRA would send Ms. [redacted] a copy of *§1100 Sexual Abuse of Minors: Policies for Education, Prevention, Assistance to Victims and Procedures for Determination of Fitness for Ministry*. Her contact information is as follows:

[redacted]

Ms. [redacted] birth date is [redacted]

Ms. [REDACTED] contacted this office on December 17, 2003 and left a message approving the release of her name and information regarding her allegation of sexual misconduct against Fr. Bennett. She informed PRA that she continues to seek an attorney and will contact PRA when she has found an attorney and is ready to schedule a meeting. Ms. [REDACTED] also mentioned in her message that her sister [REDACTED] has memories of misconduct involving Fr. Bennett and Sr. Maria. As per [REDACTED], her sister [REDACTED] may be interested in coming forward as well. Ms. [REDACTED] left the following contact numbers and requested a return call from PRA.



PRA left a message for Ms. [REDACTED] on December 19, 2003.