



DIOCESE of BRIDGEPORT

CONFIDENTIAL
SUBJECT TO COURT ORDER

OFFICE OF
CLERGY AND RELIGIOUS

September 11, 1996

The Very Reverend Thomas M. Marin
Chancellor
Archdiocese of Miami
9401 Biscayne Boulevard
Miami Shores, Florida 33138

Dear Father Marin:

His Excellency, The Most Reverend Edward M. Egan, Bishop of Bridgeport, is grateful for your letter of August 28, 1996, and has asked me to inform you that he is not able to sign the requested certification of aptitude for priestly ministry.

On the morning of August 27 the Reverend Michael Sullivan, Pastor of Our Lady of Mercy Parish in Deerfield Beach, Florida, informed me by telephone that the Reverend W. Philip Coleman, a retired priest of the Diocese of Bridgeport, had been assisting him and that he had recently received a serious misconduct complaint about him. I explained to Father Sullivan that we had no prior knowledge of that complaint which came from a woman whose former married name was Knecht. At the same time I also told him that in late 1995 a lawsuit alleging misconduct with a minor had been filed in our State Superior Court against Father Coleman. The plaintiff's name is James Harding, and Father Coleman has denied the charges.

In the late afternoon of the day on which I spoke with the Pastor of Our Lady of Mercy Parish, a civil summons arrived informing us that a second lawsuit had been filed against Father Coleman. Knecht, the family name of the plaintiff, matches the former name of the person who approached Father Sullivan with the complaint.

If I can be of any further service to you in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

With kindest regards, I am

Fraternally in Christ Jesus,

Rev. Msgr. Laurence R. Bronkiewicz, S.T.D.
Episcopal Vicar for Clergy and Religious

cc: Most Reverend Edward M. Egan
Joseph T. Sweeney, Esq.
Robert G. Golger, Esq.