

MEMORANDUM

TO: CONFIDENTIAL FILE - ROMANO FERRARO
FROM: MONSIGNOR GARCIA *og*
DATE: DECEMBER 7, 1988
RE: ALLEGED INCIDENT AT ST. RITA'S PARISH, STATEN ISLAND

On the afternoon of December 7, 1988, Monsignor Douglas L. Brown, Secretary for Personnel, received a call from Father Lawrence Connaughton, Personnel Director for the Archdiocese of New York, informing him that an allegation of sexual abuse had been presented against Father Romano Ferraro, who was then assisting at the Parish of St. Rita in Staten Island.

Monsignor Brown and I immediately called the Pastor of St. Rita's, the Reverend John Reardon, who informed us of what had happened, insofar as he could construct it:

On December 6, in the afternoon, Father Ferraro was hearing confessions at St. Rita's. One of the children did not want to go to confession to him, and went to the teacher and told the teacher that Father Ferraro had abused him. Father Reardon does not remember if the word "sexually" was used. The teacher then went to the principal, and the principal told the school psychologist the morning of December 7.

The psychologist, who is not assigned by the Board of Education, but employed by the school, indicated that this was a felony and had to be reported within a certain amount of time. The Pastor was also told, however, that it need not be reported if immediate action was taken to give assistance to the offender.

The associate in the Parish called Father Benedict Groeschel, and Father Groeschel told him to call the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of New York immediately. The Vicar General, in turn, handed the matter over to the Secretary for Personnel, and asked him to contact Monsignor Brown in Brooklyn.

It appears that the child told the father immediately what had happened, as soon as the action had taken place, which had been in August. The father, who was a friend of Father Ferraro from Brooklyn (he knew the family before they moved to Staten Island), confronted Father Ferraro with the allegation, and Father Ferraro admitted that he had done something. He excused himself, and he said that he thought it was far beyond him to do that. (As Father Reardon tells the story, Father Ferraro indicated that he thought he had been cured from his past actions).

The father of the child went yesterday to the Pastor wondering why Father Ferraro was still celebrating Masses at St. Rita's. Father Reardon indicated that they had not received any report of any inappropriate behavior, and that he had no basis to take any action. However, upon hearing of this report, Father Reardon immediately asked Father Ferraro to leave the Parish.

Father Reardon has informed us that Father Ferraro went to stay with his brother, who is dying of [redacted]. Allegedly, his brother lives on [redacted]th Street and [redacted]th Avenue, but he does not know his name. Father Ferraro spent all of September, as a month of vacation, with his brother, taking him out, and explained to Father Reardon that perhaps that stress is what has caused him to begin acting out again.

Father Reardon wonders whether anything else happened in Metuchen, besides the problem with the "Santa Claus" situation. He does not know anything about Father Ferraro's past history, particularly in view of the fact that he had just simply been told that Father Ferraro had been a very volatile individual, and had gone to the House of Affirmation, but was now able to function.

Father Ferraro assured Father Reardon that he would be calling Monsignor Brown, either December 7 or December 8. Since he has not yet called, we called his sister's home, whose phone number we had, but there was no answer. We looked through his seminary papers, and found that one of his brothers was named [redacted], and Monsignor Brown found someone by that name living on West [redacted]th Street in Manhattan. We called that number, but

were unable to find anyone at home. Instead, a message was left on a recording machine for Father Romano Ferraro to call me at the Chancery, as soon as he came in, and after 4:30 p.m., to call Monsignor Brown at St. Ephrem's Rectory.

In the meantime, I called St. Luke Institute in Suitland, Maryland, in order to begin to secure a reservation for Father Ferraro, so that he could enter treatment. I spoke to Bonnie Connor (Tel. 301-967-3700), who told me that the earliest available date, due to the holidays and decrease in available personnel, would be January 9, 1989. She indicated that, after the evaluation, the earliest that Father Ferraro would be able to be accepted for treatment - should that be recommended - would be some time in February.

I assured Ms. Connor that I would be sending her the material which we had available, once arrangements were finalized. The material should be sent to 2420 Brooks Drive, Suitland, Maryland 20746.

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