



DIocese OF FORT WAYNE-SOUTH BEND

POST OFFICE BOX 390 • FORT WAYNE, INDIANA 46801

March 30, 1972

Rev. John R. McSweeney  
52 Williams Street  
Burlington, Vermont 05401 .

Dear Father McSweeney:

I am responding to your inquiry about Father Edward O. Paquette. The dossier is large and the history long. I will try to be brief and to the point.

Father Paquette was ordained for the Diocese of Fall River on February 2, 1957, and was incardinated in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend on April 6, 1964. He has served briefly in two parishes and for longer periods in three others. In all of his assignments he has done quite satisfactory work, but he has a personal problem described by his psychiatrist as "a latent homosexual drive which becomes active only during cycles of depression".

During the past two years Father Paquette has had extensive and intensive therapy under the care of Dr. Charles Hillenbrand, a Catholic psychiatrist for whom I have great respect. I quote from a medical report of May 22, 1971: "This patient acknowledges his malady and perseveres in his resolution to contain it. He is fiercely proud and protective of his priesthood. He is repelled by the thought of abjuring it. In his conversation with me he says repeatedly that he wants to continue to be a priest, that he feels like a priest, that he has the heart and mind of a priest. I have the opinion, however fallible, that this patient can, with persistence, intelligence and medical assistance, contain his cycles and their perils and function normally".

It would be natural to ask: Why, then, do I not keep him? There are two reasons. First, Father Paquette himself would like to be situated closer to his home and his aging parents in Westfield, Massachusetts. Second, the three homosexual episodes involving young boys occurred over a period of six years in three large parishes in three parts of the Diocese. The territory is not large enough to provide another assignment and the risk scandal is thus aggravated. I believe that Father Paquette should be given an institutional chaplaincy in which he could exercise his ministry with less likelihood of relapse. Presently I do not have such a place.

If you wish to discuss further details with me, I shall be happy to see your Bishop during the Atlanta meeting.

Fraternally in Christ,

+ *Geo. Tursley*  
Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend

