

MSN Hotmail - Message

Page 1 of 3

*McGuire Fontana*

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From: Paul R. Mueller <prmueller@uchicago.edu>

Inbox

Sent: Thursday, April 8, 2004 12:19 AM

To: jpgsj@hotmail.com

CC: eschmidl@jesuits-chf.org

Subject: recent events at Woodlawn

Dear Jim and Ed,

At Jim's request, I am writing up a summary of my recent dealings with a police investigator from Fontana, Wisconsin. Also at Jim's request, I am sending a copy to Ed.

The officer rang the bell at Woodlawn at around 4:30 pm on Tuesday April 6. He identified himself as a police officer and showed me his identification. He said that he was here concerning Fr. Don McGuire. I said that Don was not home. The officer asked if we could chat. I said yes, and invited him in.

I don't remember the officer's name; George Lane has his card.

The officer said that he wished to speak with Don McGuire, and that he planned to wait until whatever time Don got home. I told him that Don tended to get home rather late, and that I had no way to contact him. I also told the officer that I was going to call Jim Gschwend to alert him to the officer's presence and desire to speak with Don.

I called Jim on his cell phone, told him what was going on, and passed the phone to the officer. Jim chatted with the officer for a few minutes. Then I took the phone back. Jim told me that I should not feel any obligation to show hospitality to the officer, and that otherwise I should "follow my bliss".

After I hung up from my conversation with Jim, I returned to the officer. He was unfaillingly polite. He earnestly explained to me that he was investigating accusations concerning Fr. McGuire concerning a criminal matter which was unrelated to the civil suit against him. He said that, in light of accusations that had been made against Fr. McGuire, he thought it only fair to hear Fr. McGuire's side of the story, and that he wished to make every reasonable effort to contact Fr. McGuire. He said that he could not discuss what the accusations were. He said that he had been in contact with the province, that he had met with Jim Gschwend, and that he had been told that a meeting would be arranged for him with Fr. McGuire. But that was some months ago, and there had been no follow-up. That was why he was taking the initiative to come to Chicago to see Fr. McGuire in person. He said that he was not here to arrest Fr. McGuire.

I told the officer that Don would not be home until late, but that our house superior would be home soon, and that perhaps that would be the person to talk to. The officer asked me for my name and birthdate; he said that was needed for his report concerning his visit. I gave him my card. The officer asked what kind of house Woodlawn was -- was it a retirement community? I explained that it was a house for Jesuit priests, students, pastoral workers, and administrators.

About half an hour after I hung up from the call with Jim Gschwend, George Lane arrived home. I explained the situation to George. He sat down with the officer, and much of the previous conversation was repeated. George reiterated that Don would not be home til late, and we let the officer know that it was time for our evening mass and dinner. George told him he could come back later in the evening, and offered to let him wait in

EXHIBIT 69

our front room when he returned.

We went to mass and dinner. After dinner I went to my room and retrieved a message that had just arrived on my voicemail from Don McGuire. In his message, Don said that he had been contacted by the Province lawyer, advised of the situation, and instructed not to speak with the officer. Don also said that he would not be coming home to Woodlawn that night -- he would instead stay at his sister's house.

I passed that information along to George Lane. George called Don back and spoke with him. Then I had a spiritual director. While I was in conference with my director, I could hear George chatting at some length on the front porch with the officer -- at around 8:15pm.

That's as much as I know about what happened on April 6. But you should also know about something that happened five or six days earlier, which may be related. Paul Mariani answered the door to find two men who said they were Chicago policemen. They said that threatening letters to George Bush had been written from our address, and they wanted to talk about it. Paul said that he was quite flustered and confused, and found the whole thing strange and intimidating. The two men wanted to know who lived here, so Paul showed them the catalogue page for our community. It is my suspicion that the scene with the two police officers was a set-up of some sort, designed to find out who was living here. It seems to me like a bit too much of a coincidence that the officer from Wisconsin arrived just a few days after Mariani's experience.

Jim Gschwend asked me to write down my own reflections on these events and on Don. Here they are:

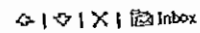
- (1) In theory, I have no problem living with Don McGuire in his current situation. I am happy and willing to stand by my brother in his difficulty... as long as the truth is being served.
- (2) In light of the fact that Don has repeatedly assured us that all charges against him are false, I find it puzzling that he is not willing or able to speak with what appears to be a legitimate investigating officer -- not even with a lawyer present, and not even to say "no comment".
- (3) I have the uncomfortable feeling that, by calling Jim Gschwend to alert him the presence of the officer, I indirectly abetted Don in avoiding contact with a legitimate police investigation; I feel as though I helped an accused priest hide from the law. In light of how much bad press the Church has gotten, I want no part in helping to hide someone from the law. I think that in the current situation the truth is our friend. I would find it difficult, in conscience, to "cover" for Don if he is somehow hiding from the law.
- (4) Now that "the cat is out of the bag" as to where Don is living, I think it would be good for the Province to provide us at Woodlawn with some specific guidelines as to how we should deal with foreseeable possible future situations: visits by law enforcement officials, by protesters, or by the press... at times when Jim Gschwend can or cannot be reached by phone... and at times when Don is at home or is not at home.
- (5) I have no problem referring inquiries to the province office or to Jim Gschwend. But I am uncomfortable, at the level of conscience, with being or with seeming to be a shield between Don and inquiries from legitimate law enforcement officials.
- (6) I am concerned that George Lane and I both said (truthfully) to the officer who visited us on Tuesday that Don is out for most of the day every day, and that we don't know where he is or how to reach him when he is out. It strikes me that, in the spirit of the Dallas charter, there is the expectation that there will be some sort of appropriate supervision for priests who are suspended from ministry. The visiting officer might have concluded that the Jesuits are not supervising Don. It seems to me that prudence would dictate setting up at least the appearance of appropriate supervision of Don.
- (7) With some frequency, Don leaves the house in clerical attire. It is my understanding that suspended priests are not supposed to appear in clerics. It seems to me that prudence would dictate that Don should not wear clerics outside the house.
- (8) At the level of community life, I find it strange living with Don. He is very seldom with us for dinner; he is never with us for mass. If I were in Don's situation, I would be leaning on my community for prayer and support. I am puzzled and disappointed that Don is so seldom here, and that pretty much my only contact with him is in the mornings when he asks me to help him tie his shoes and put on his leg brace.

Those are the observations which occur to me. Happy to talk more, as needed.

In the Lord,

Paul

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