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SECRETARY FOR PASTORAL SERVICES

MEMORANDUM

TO: MOST REV. WILLIAM F. MURPHY
FROM: REV. PAUL B. O'BRIEN *POB*
SUBJECT: REV. TOM FORRY
DATE: 29 JANUARY 1999

I received the following from Deacon Bill Kane:

Dear Paul:

Chris Mitchell [Department of Correction] called yesterday saying he was quite upset and concerned over an incident that occurred at the Department of Correction chaplains (Catholic, Protestant and Jewish) meeting on 1.27.99 involving Tom Forry. He said that he was "concerned for his (Forry's) well being," and I should contact Ibrahim Rahim for the details since he chaired the meeting.

I spoke with Ibrahim this morning. At these meetings, they schedule a chaplain to present what he/she is doing at the chaplain's facility as a way of sharing ideas and programs that other chaplains might be interested in or want to adopt. Forry presented at this meeting for MCI-Concord.

Forry stood in front of the group refusing to speak until some chaplains in the rear stopped talking. One of the Protestant chaplains politely requested that Forry begin to speak and the people in the rear would settle down. Tom screamed back at him, "Hey pal, I don't tell you what to do, so don't tell me what to do." Rahim said the room was shocked and went very silent, while Forry just stood there glaring at everyone.

Forry then began what Rahim described as a screaming tirade that began with "the food here stinks," and continued with abrasive shouting. Everyone was in shock and could not understand what was going on.

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Halfway through his presentation, Forry explained that this is how he speaks to all new groups of prisoners arriving at Concord, which, as you know, is the classification center for prisoners who will move on to other facilities. Rahim said that Forry did not use any profanity but it was the most unprofessional presentation he has ever heard, especially for a chaplain. Rahim said that he and Mitchell fear that if this is representative of Forry's behavior at Concord, the inmates are being mistreated and abused, and that Forry's tone and approach is contradictory to what they expect chaplains to be presenting for themselves, ministry, and the DOC's care for inmates at the institution.

Rahim went on to say that Program Services has presented all chaplains with a form to fill and describe the religious programs and services at their facility, so that program services can publish a directory for all chaplains to consider and use at their assignments. Forry presented Rahim with a piece of paper with some terse scribbling, and said to Rahim the other day: "like it or not. . . complete or incomplete. . . this is all you are going to get, since you know this whole thing is bullshit. . . this is just bullshit." Those comments were made out loud to Rahim, in front of other chaplains.

I have several concerns regarding what has been going on:

1. Forry's behavior is inappropriate and unprofessional, and has been on several occasions I have observed in the past.
2. His behavior is publicly scandalous to the Church and what the Church is seeking to accomplish in this ministry.
3. I question, but do not know as a fact, whether he is a harmful presence at Concord prison.
4. I am becoming more and more uncomfortable with the idea of leaving him in place for another five months in his assignment at Concord, considering the events of the last few months.
5. Finally - I believe this is most important, given what I have seen and heard about his behavior - it is my sincere concern that this priest may be experiencing some emotional or behavioral problem in his personal life and the Church out of charity should take a closer look. When people I trust such as Rahim and Mitchell that they are concerned for Tom's "well being," I believe it is worth taking notice of their instincts.

As always, I appreciate your thoughts, insight and guidance in this matter.

Bill

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Bishop, I concur with all that Bill reports. Mitchell's and Rahim's descriptions of Tom Forry's behavior correspond to the bizarre character Tom Forry has displayed on every occasion I have met him. During the past months, Tom Forry has behaved the same way with Bill Kane, at chaplains' gatherings, and in a very ugly incident in which he shoved a piece of food into Sr. Maureen Clark's mouth at a lunch. I am very much concerned that Tom Forry is unbalanced, and would appreciate your direction on how this situation should be addressed.

Thanks.