

CHURCH OF ST. GEORGE

133 South Brown Road

Long Lake, Minnesota

55356 473-1247



Jan 6, 1979

Dear Archbishop,

I thank you for a caring ear,
your support and prayers.

I was told Thursday afternoon
that the entire investigation had been
dropped. The story had been contradicted
by several others whom they had spoken
to and there was no reason to believe
the accusations.

The past month was most
traumatic. I think I've learned a num-
ber of things I could not have otherwise.

Sincerely,

Tom

I tried to call but you were on retreat. I'm

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Leaving town for a week starting Jan 13th

Confidential

January 17, 1979

Reverend Thomas S. Stitts
Church of St. George
433 South Brown Road
Long Lake, Minnesota 55356

Dear Tom,

I am very pleased to hear that the whole issue that you and I discussed has worked out.

Tom, I would add only one thing, and that is that if there is something here that you feel you ought to be facing that you be sure to get some help in it. You are too good a man and too good a priest to have to face that kind of trauma in your life.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend John R. Roach, D. D.
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

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ARCH-010215

Archbishop John Roach
226 Summit
St. Paul, In.

September 1, 1980

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Dear Archbishop,

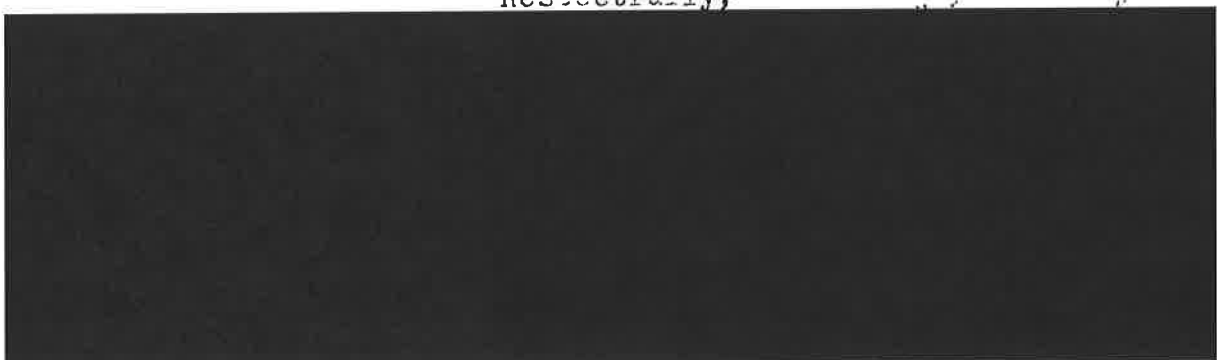
We were informed last week of an anonymous letter written to you, which included some facts and information regarding the molestation of our [REDACTED] back in 1973, by Rev. Tom Stitts, then administrator of St. Leos parish. With the advice of a psychologist and a Catholic Social worker we did discuss the incidents with Rev. Stitts, at the time, and have documentation of that visit, which we shared with Archbishop Byrne.

We wish to assure you that we did not give permission for our names, nor that of Father Charles Froehle, to be used in AN ANONYMOUS LETTER, nor did he...he didn't know of the letter. ...he does now, because I phoned him to apologize, and to tell him we gave no such permission.

However, since the letter has been written, let us say that we do share the serious concern of the writer that other boys not continue to be victimized in this manner. [REDACTED] our son, is now eighteen and there is no doubt in our minds that his confusion over his own sexuality may have root in this early experience with sex at the hands of such an important authority figure.

We hope that you will give this serious matter your personal consideration.

Respectfully,



March 9, 1982

Father Korf

Archbishop Roach

I have just heard from a couple of sources that Tom Stitts is terribly uptight at New Brighton. Apparently he is over his head. When he gets uptight it's not very good news. I suspect that we ought to move in on that. Bishop Kinney knows something about it as does Bishop Bullock.

It's possible that Tom ought to be invited to request another parish. Please talk to me about this when we next meet.

/cmh

DATE: October 25, 1983
MEMO TO: Archbishop Roach, Msgr. Hayden
FROM: Father Robert J. Carlson
SUBJECT: Father Thomas Sitts

CONFIDENTIAL

I was called concerning an incident involving Tom Sitts. He went to the home of one of his parishioners, Pat Jorisson the wife of the former priest Jim Jorisson, and told her that Kevin Clinton has stabbed him in the back with the Archdiocese and he is afraid that Kevin knows about his sexual relationship with two boys that stayed at the parish from time to time.

Pat Jorisson took this information to Mrs. Sylvia Thoren, one of the trustees and a friend of Sr. Bullock. At the time Tom had been drinking, was crying and was described as being in a rage.

According to Kevin Clinton the two boys [REDACTED] came from a troubled family and tom met the boys when he was at Long Lake. They lived with Tom at Long Lake and frequently stayed at St. John's. Although there was an extra guest room the boys (at different times) stayed on the couch in Tom's study.

[REDACTED]

Once when [REDACTED] was at the Jorisson home, after having a few drinks he told the couple about the sexual favors Tom was requesting. When [REDACTED] is home from school he frequently works at St. John the Baptist and lives in the Rectory staying in Tom's Study.

On Monday, October 24, 1983 I was called by Mrs. Sylvia Thoren and I will see her on Wednesday with Father Korf.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

DATE: November 22, 1985
MEMO TO: Archbishop Roach
FROM: Bishop Carlson
SUBJECT: POSSIBLE LETTER WRITTEN BY FATHER TOM STITTS PRIOR TO HIS DEATH

On Sunday, November 3rd, 1985 while visiting Nativity parish, St. Paul, Father Patrick Lannan, the administrator, asked to see me privately and indicated that there was a rumor circulating among several priests that previous to Father Tom Stitts' death, Father Stitts had a letter prepared to be sent to the Reverend Dick Rice, following his death. In this letter according to rumor, Father Stitts spoke of his personal moral life and implicated several priests in his activities.

As you may remember I shared this information with you and Bishop Bullock, and you requested that Bishop Bullock and I look into the matter.

Bishop Bullock and I were present at a meeting on Thursday, November 7th, 1985 in which we interviewed Mrs. Sylvia Thorn who is one of the parish trustees. Mrs. Thorn indicated that at about the time of Father Stitts' death, Pat Jorrison, the choir director at St. John the Baptist and a close friend of Father Stitts, called her to indicate that she had a letter which Father Stitts wanted to send to Dick Rice after he died. Pat told Sylvia Thorn that the contents were scandalous and she did not know what to do with the letter. Although Mrs. Thorn did not indicate this, it appears through my investigation that she contacted Kevin Clinton in Faribault and asked him what should be done with this document. Father Clinton asked Father Freeman what should be done and he suggested that Pat Jorrison seal the letter and contact the Archbishop or Bishop Carlson. Father Clinton called Sylvia Thorn and indicated what Father Freeman had mentioned to him. In turn and this Sylvia Thorn does ~~not~~ admit, she told Pat Jorrison to contact the Chancery and talk to the Archbishop, Bishop Carlson or the director of the Personnel Board.

Although I am not clear how they found out, Fred Campbell, Walter Sochacki and Frank Kittock, were also made aware of the existence of the letter. Sylvia Thorn says that she was not the one who contacted them and after discussing this with the three priests I just mentioned, I cannot determine who told who.

On the day of the funeral, Pat Jorrison came up to Father Kevin Clinton and said to him - "I am happy you are here. I know how hard it is for you to be here". With that introduction, Pat Jorrison and Father Kevin Clinton spoke for some time. Pat brought up the moral activity of Father Stitts as Tom had previously told her that he thought Father Clinton knew something about his past. In the course of this discussion Father Clinton said to Pat - "I even understand that there is a document".

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL - Father Tom Stitts

Pat Jorrisen responded back to Kevin - "Oh yes there is or I should say there was. I read it to Father Bill Kenney". Father Kevin Clinton then asked Pat what happend to the letter. Pat Jorrisen told Father Clinton - "He (Father Bill Kenney) kind of laughed and asked me to burn it in the fireplace". I am not aware whether Bill Kenney was present in person or this conversation took place over the phone.

It is clear that the existence of a document is well known to a certain group of priests and that the fact of the document was discussed at a priests' gathering at St Charles parish, St. Anthony. It is also clear that Father Stitts' moral life was known to be the content of the letter and while I am unable to ascertain how certain priests' names were attached to the document, the following priests are indicated in the gossip - Fathers Parkos, Murtaugh, Kenney and Nygaard. I am not sure whether these names are mentioned because of other rumors or because some of the individuals are also known to be friends of Father Stitts.

After following the various rumors and talking to several people, I would like to suggest that both of us sit down with Father Bill Kenney and find out what he knows. In all the rumors and in conversations that Kevin Clinton shared, Bill Kenney is the focus. The only other route at this time would be for me to meet with Pat Jorrisen.

There are some other aspects of this case that I would like to discuss with you in person as the investigation show some other facts which you should be aware of. These facts concern a former parish secretary, Father Bill Murtaugh and a young man who worked and lived at the parish for some time.

- Internal audit
- Murtaugh in the office
- Can see Mr Jorrisen

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

January 4, 1995

Reverend Thomas P. Hunstiger
Church of Saint Leo
2055 Bohland Avenue
St. Paul, Minnesota 55116

Reverend Florian Muggli, O.S.B.
Church of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
2035 West 15th Street
Hastings, Minnesota 55033

Dear Fathers Hunstiger and Muggli,

You will recall that about two years ago we received notice that two men were accusing Father Thomas Stitts, now deceased of having abused them when they were teenagers. One man claimed that this happened while Father Stitts was at Guardian Angels Parish in Hastings in the 1960s and the other claimed that it happened at St. Leo's Parish in Saint Paul in the early 1970s. ~~We had no word of these complaints about Father Stitts until they were brought to us in the form of lawsuits.~~

The attorney for our insurer in one of the cases, the one involving St. Leo's, has informed us of his intention to ask a judge to summarily dismiss that case on one or more legal bases. I am writing to you first of all to let you know this. Second, I want to alert you to the possibility that this legal step may result in some public disclosure of the existence of one or both of the lawsuits.

Because of this possibility of public disclosure, I want to raise with you the question of who should know about this ahead of time and how. Since Father Stitts has been gone from both of your parishes for nearly a quarter of a century, it is Archbishop Roach's opinion that a lot of public discussion in the parish is not necessary. On the other hand, he believes that at least your trustees and perhaps Parish Council members ought to know of the existence of these suits. Furthermore, he would like your opinion and theirs about whether some broader disclosure ought to take place as well.

Fathers Thomas Hunstiger and Florian Muggli, OSB
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Legally, this matter most directly affects St. Leo's parish. Obviously, however, news that would become public in Saint Paul would also have reverberations in Hastings, and vice versa. Therefore, we would like to coordinate what we do in one parish with what happens in the other.

I am also sending copies of this letter to Father Grieman in New Brighton and Father Mahoney in Long Lake. These are the two parishes where Father Stitts served as pastor. While neither parish has any legal connection to these complaints, Archbishop Roach wants to be attentive to the spiritual and emotional impact of public information in this regard in both of those parishes. I want to ask Fathers Mahoney and Grieman to give this some consideration, speak with your trustees, and let me know what you are thinking.

Finally, because of the shared responsibilities in the Highland parishes, I am sending a copy of this to Msgr. Berntson as well. I would appreciate his thoughts on all of this, particularly as it might affect the broader Highland area pastoral care.

I want to thank all of you for your consideration of this matter. I would be open to having all of the affected pastors sit down together and discuss implications and possibilities. Please let me know what you think. In the meantime, I wish you well in the New Year.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Reverend Kevin M. McDonough
Vicar General
Moderator of the Curia

KMM:md

cc: Archbishop Roach, Archbishop Flynn, Bishop Welsh
Father Mahoney, Father Grieman, Msgr. Berntson
~~Joan Bernet~~, William Fallon