

VINCENTIAN FATHERS & BROTHERS

PROVINCE OF THE WEST

650 WEST 23rd STREET • LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90007 • (213) 749-1865

Confidential Memo

June 15, 1993 --

I received a telephone call from [REDACTED] this morning. He said that he wanted to see me to speak about an incident, which occurred 17 years ago, involving one of our priests. I told him to come in as soon as possible, and he agreed to leave Tustin immediately.

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] arrived about 10:50 a.m. [REDACTED] said that she wanted to wait in the waiting area while [REDACTED] spoke to me.

The [REDACTED], is now a [REDACTED]. While doing this [REDACTED], he recall a situation which had occurred in his own life.

In 1976 [REDACTED] attended the Vocation Week at Saint Vincent's Seminary in Montebello. One day during the week, he had been directed to leave one of the playing fields and to go shower. Somehow the handle came off the shower and a "Father John R." came in and began to berate [REDACTED] for "breaking" the shower. [REDACTED] was naked at the time and Father John kept hanging around and staring at him. Finally he told [REDACTED] that, for his penance he had to kneel down. Father John, fully clothed, walked up to [REDACTED] and shoved his head in his crotch.

At the time, [REDACTED] did not know anything about sex or about molestation, so it was no big deal to him, but when he was doing the [REDACTED], he realized that he himself had been a victim. He was not terribly traumatized and has no desire to persue legal remedies, but his concern is that this minimal contact that "Father John R." had with him might have blossomed into full-fledged molestation of other children. He wants to be sure that this priest is never allowed to do this to other children.

I concluded that "Father John R." had to be John Ruhl, so I informed [REDACTED] that John had been removed from his job as Vocation Director that same year and that he had undergone counselling with [REDACTED] (now deceased), who approved his returning to ministry in 1977. I said that John had left the Vincentian Community around 1980 and had joined "a diocese", but that he had left active ministry about a year ago. I assured [REDACTED]

VINCENTIAN FATHERS & BROTHERS

that I would inform the ^{PROVINCE OF THE WEST} diocese to which he belongs that this report had been made. I also assured him that I would do what I could to see that John Ruhl was not allowed to return to active ministry, at least not without serious psychiatric treatment and approval of suitable experts.

I asked [redacted] to express my and the Community's apologies to [redacted] for this incident and to assure him that, if there is anything he needs as a result of this incident (e.g., counseling), he should contact me. [redacted] was satisfied with our session and, as he was leaving, told [redacted] that I had "been a big help" and that "everything was taken care of." I told them to phone me if anything else comes up.

June 16, 1993 --

I phoned Monsignor John Urell, Chancellor of the Diocese of Orange, at 9:00 a.m. and informed him of this report. He assured me that John Ruhl was on "inactive leave" and that there were no expectations that he would ever return to active ministry. He told me that John had been confronted with another case of similar inappropriate behaviour and that a lie-detector test had indicated that there was reason to suspect that there had possibly been other inappropriate behaviours.

I told John Urell that the Province of the West would be responsible for any other consequences of the incident with [redacted], if there should be any.

[redacted] live in [redacted]. They invited me to visit them and to stay with them if I am ever in that area. Their telephone number is: [redacted]

James R. Heff, C.M.
6/16/93