

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 5, 1987  
TO: Archbishop Roach  
FROM: Father William Kenney

I spoke to George Freeman on February 4. Ben Peichel gave him a tongue-lashing recently at a meeting about the school. In front of several lay people, Ben told George he was not a good pastor because of his "lack of support" for the school.

As we dialogued, I asked George how he thought Jim Murphy was doing. Among other things, he told me Murphy has a student from B.A. living with him. George feels Jim is not a well or happy man.

Copy - Bishop Carlson  
Bishop Ham  
Father O'Connell

DATE: March 4, 1987  
MEMO TO: Archbishop Roach and Fr. O'Connell  
FROM: Bishop Carlson  
SUBJECT:

I received a copy of the memo that Fr. Bill Kenney prepared indicating that Father Murphy apparently does not have a chemical dependency problem and will be discharged from Guest House.

Given our history with Jim I wonder if the problem is more of psycho-sexual nature and therefore I am inquiring if we should have an evaluation done by someone in this area on Jim Murphy. I could imagine a number of people who we could use for this and I will make a positive recommendation in the next several days.

*JK*

*Please go ahead  
with plan we  
discussed  
JK*

DATE: June 9, 1987  
MEMO TO: Archbishop Roach  
FROM: Bishop Carlson  
SUBJECT: FATHER JAMES MURPHY

Archbishop, as you know, in mid-February, we received an evaluation from Guest House, on Father Murphy, and it was decided that he was not chemically dependent.

In March, I brought this case to the attention of Dr. Maddock and Dr. Larson, and at that time we were hopeful that they would evaluate Father Murphy. I spoke with you after Dr. Maddock told me that they would not be working with us and we decided that we would have Father Murphy evaluated by someone locally.

Last Friday evening, Father George Freeman spoke to me about Father Murphy, and indicated that he continues to see the young man who is living at the rectory. Apparently, the young man even stays there from time to time. As the young man [REDACTED] it is difficult for us to do much about it, but it does raise a number of issues and is of concern to many people in Faribault.

The scene that Bishop Ham spoke about at the graduation is just one indication of the dependency involved in this relationship.

Given our warnings to Father Murphy not to be involved with youth after the situation in Hennepin County, it seems to me that at this point we better call Father Murphy in and talk with him, and put the counseling on the front burner.

RECOMMENDATION.

At this point Archbishop, I would recommend that we upgrade the level of evaluation and send Father Murphy to Jemez Springs, for their week long evaluation program. If you prefer to continue with an evaluation locally, then I will do that, but what is really important is that we get involved actively with this case in the very near future.



STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

DATE: August 13, 1987  
MEMO TO: Archbishop Roach, Bishop Ham, and Father O'Connell  
FROM: Bishop Robert J. Carlson  
SUBJECT: FATHER JAMES MURPHY

On Wednesday, August 13th, 1987, Bishop Ham and I, met with Father James Murphy, to discuss certain allegations which had come out of the Faribault area, with regard to Father Murphy's relationship with a [REDACTED] year old young man who has been living on and off at the rectory.

Father Murphy indicates that a young man who graduated from [REDACTED] had been living at the rectory on and off this summer and, during the past two years, because of some family tensions and for convenience given his summer employment.

Father Murphy indicated that before he allowed [REDACTED] to live at his house, he discussed this with Sister Kate at [REDACTED] as he did not want to do anything that seemed secretive. I told Father Murphy that, given his previous history, it was unfortunate that he would decide to do this without first discussing it with Bishop Ham or Archbishop Roach.

I also indicated that there are a number of concerns with regard to Father Murphy's relationship with young people which include his hugging of males and his language which often times has double meanings with sexual overtones. I told him that it was this type of humor which was getting in the way of many of the good things that he does.

Father Murphy insists that the relationship with [REDACTED] is wholesome and he is really providing ministry for this young man.

It was agreed that Bishop Ham would interview [REDACTED] both as a precaution for us and because we felt that we wanted to review this entire matter with him. Father Murphy volunteered the fact that he did receive an anonymous letter which accused him of behavior similar to that of Father Thomas Adamson. I asked Father Murphy to show this letter to Bishop Ham, and he has agreed to do that.

At Father Murphy's suggestion, Bishop Ham will also be talking to the principals at [REDACTED]

I felt that we apprised Father Murphy of this entire matter and indicated rather clearly the problems that we saw with this type of lifestyle, especially the humor and inviting young people to the rectory.

I might add that Father Murphy has denied hugging young males at the Communal Penance services etc.

While it is very clear that Father Murphy has a real charism of working with young people, this continues to cause him some problems.

Once Bishop Ham has had the opportunity of interviewing the principals at [REDACTED] and reviewing the correspondence that Father Murphy has received, then we should probably sit down and discuss any further steps which should be taken.

Given the evaluation this year at Guest House, I am not sure what else can be done, but we might want to have an evaluation at some point which would focus on Father Murphy's handling of his own sexuality.

Father Murphy indicated that he was very clear with his counselor at Guest House, that he had this young man living at the rectory and it did not create any particular problem. It might be helpful to review the Guest House report so that we could see whether sexual issues were covered.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'SM' or similar, located in the center of the page below the main text.

Copy

CONFIDENTIAL  
ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS

226 Summit Avenue  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102-2197

The Chancery

March 14, 1988

Dr. Dolore Rockers  
Director  
Consultation Services Center  
633 N. Snelling Avenue  
St. Paul, MN 55104

Dear Dr. Rockers,

We are referring to you the case of Fr. James Murphy along with the documentation included in this correspondence which you can see has been released by Father Murphy to yourself from us, for the purpose of gaining your evaluation regarding his future viability as a presbyteral minister. To be more specific, as I will detail below, we have some serious reasons to questions Fr. Murphy's ability to function fully and without limitations as a priest, or at least, whether he would have to be limited in some fashion in his functioning as a priest in the future. Our expectation of your assistance would be for you to make a recommendation to us regarding his mental and emotional abilities, as well as, indicated therapy and after-care which he would need in order to function in some fashion as a priest. I would also note that there is more specific material in his file that may be of assistance to you and to him to come up with this recommendation. I know the heavy scheduling that you and the other staff members have at the Consultation Services Center, however, I would deeply appreciate extra attention to this case because we feel in justice to Fr. Murphy, as well as to the filling of the pastoral at St. Lawrence this coming spring, we would need to communicate with him as soon as possible what his assignment might be, if any, past this spring and begin the specific project of filling the pastorate at St. Lawrence.

If you have any questions regarding our referral of Fr. Murphy to yourself or in any other matter please be in touch with me.

The history of concerns surrounding Fr. Murphy at least goes back to his being arrested and charged with illegally touching a male moral. squad officer on December 22, 1980 in an adult bookstore. These charges were essentially dropped and he was put on probation at that time. Associated with that charge there have been a number of reports that have come, mostly from people in Faribault, regarding Fr. Murphy's inappropriate use of sexually suggestive language in his marriage counseling, as well as, in his use of the sacrament of penance with penitents. There has also been, over the years, going back even to his time at St. Raphael's in Crystal, more or less explicit concerns about his pattern of associating principally with

young men of adolescent age, and at times publicly embracing them in ways that are noticeably inappropriate, such as sustained hugging. I think the real point in this matter would be the fact that there is a long history of people noticing his preferred association with adolescent boys, with a wide range of people noting what they feel to be an inappropriate amount of time to the exclusion of other categories of the population. There has also been, recently, considerable amount of concern with a young man who is some kind of [REDACTED] who has lived with him at the parish, and even after Fr. Murphy was challenged on this he continued to live with him.

Over the last six years there have also been a number of concerns raised about Fr. Murphy's inappropriate use of alcohol by people outside of and within his parish, so much so, that he was asked to go for an alcohol evaluation at Guest House in the winter of 1987 and with the conclusion from the Guest House that there was no obvious indication of an alcohol problem, however, they did indicate that Fr. Murphy seemed to gloss over and treat lightly the reasons that people used in asking him to get the evaluation. The report from Guest House also indicates that the MMPI instrument was not of much value because of Fr. Murphy's defensiveness in taking it.

Over the last couple of years there has been a considerable amount of concern shown on the part of the trustees at St. Lawrence in Faribault, as well as by a former staff person and other people regarding Fr. Murphy's management of parish monies. In particular, there was a great deal of concern regarding how he managed a rectory renovation where there was an approved amount of money from the Chancery which was far exceeded by the actual expense, and Fr. Murphy's continuing denial that there was anything inappropriate. Most recently there have been instances in the parish where Fr. Murphy has not told the truth about some aspects of parish finance explicitly and very recently regarding an estate that was willed to the parish. Fr. Murphy made some denials in the face of explicit facts which the trustees could prove, which further indicated a pattern of his inability to be truthful.

Unfortunately, at this time there is a major environment of suspicion and consternation amongst a lot of the catholic people in all of the parishes in Faribault about Fr. Murphy, the sum of which is due to rumor mongering, but a great deal of which is due to a sustained pattern of behavior on his part over the years which he has been unwilling to adjust even though there have been several confrontations of him about this behavior.

As can be seen in the report from St. Luke's Institute, and I would draw your attention especially to the bottom paragraph on the third page. Fr. Murphy has exhibited a consistent and constant pattern of denial, defensive behavior and unwillingness to hear what several other people have said over several years regarding the inappropriateness and offensiveness of his behavior. It is as if he is incapable of hearing these things or at least maintains an inability to be able to appreciate the affect of his behavior on others.

It is for those reasons, as well as, the specifics that are spelled out above, that we have some very very serious concern as to his ability in ministry, and we sincerely hope that your evaluation of Fr. Murphy, through your own interviewing as well as whatever testing you want to do and reviewal of the materials we have sent, and further materials we are willing to send might assist you in making a recommendation to us. Thank you once again for your willingness to take this case on for us. Let us pray that Fr. Murphy and the local Church will be served well in the work that we do.

Sincerely,

Reverend Michael J. O'Connell  
Vicar General  
Moderator of the Curia

cc: Archbishop Roach

Enclosures: 1. Fr. Murphy's release of Chancery file  
2. St. Luke's Institute Report  
3. Report from Guest House



January 30, 1990

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

MEMO TO: Father O'Connell and Fr. McDonough

FROM: Archbishop Roach

I have read the deposition concerning James Murphy.

That's a little uneasy for me because there is a terrific lack of specificity. It is interesting to me that Anderson almost cut off the discussion before there could be specificity. That is not like Anderson, at least based on past depositions of people.

On the other hand it is clear that there is enough there that we have to do something about Murphy. We are going to be talking about that on Monday and it's going to be a little more difficult to make a decision than I had imagined.

*AR*

## ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS

MEMO TO: Archbishop John R. Roach  
Bishop Robert Carlson  
Father Michael O'Connell  
Father William Kenney

DATE: May 22, 1990

FROM: Father Kevin M. McDonough

RE: FATHER JAMES MURPHY

On May 21, 1990, I spoke with Father Dennis Thiessen, the personnel director for the Diocese of Phoenix. Father Murphy went to see Bishop O'Brien last week and the Bishop asked Father Theisen to follow up with us.

I had an extensive discussion about Murphy with him. He will be taking up the matter with the Personnel Board. The pastor with whom Murphy currently lives is a member of the Board and will be able to give some current information about him.

My impression from Father Theissen is that the Diocese will not consider Murphy for incardination and that they will probably not even be interested in having him stay. We will have a better fix on that in about two weeks, but it would not hurt for us to keep our eyes open to some possibilities that may arise for placement for Murphy.

After rereading his file, it seems to me that a placement might be workable here with certain structures in place. In particular, we would probably want to look at some sort of "feedback" group for Murphy. This would be a group of people who could sit with him regularly and evaluate his performance with him. Some sort of mentorship might accomplish the same thing. It is clear that he will explode every 12 to 18 months and create a lot of negative reaction. On the other hand, he does a lot of good work as well.