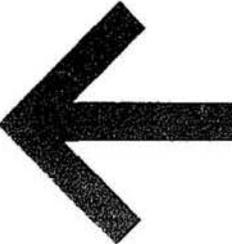


**ARROW**  **INSURANCE ADJUSTING**  
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29 May 1996

Dunhill Madden Butler  
Solicitors and Notaries  
DX 102  
MELBOURNE

Attention: Paul Gamble

Dear Sir

**RE: ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH -ats**

REDACTED

Further to our previous correspondence that centred on the documents obtained from R. J. O'Halloran and Co. Solicitors, from Tamworth, who defended Father John Farrell in the criminal proceedings, we advise that we have now had an opportunity to peruse the Bishop's file on Father Farrell during a meeting with Father Wayne Peters, and now report as follows.

Fr. Peters kindly proved us with a voluminous file covering all correspondence from his induction in 1974 at St Columba's College, Springwood up until the present time.

We should point out, that right from the outset, Farrell's suitability and motives for joining the priesthood were questioned, mainly due to his arrogant nature, and this is a theme that is repeated through his entire file.

By way of history, John Farrell entered the Seminary in 1974 at Springwood and was subsequently transferred to St Patrick's College, Manly, in the early New Year of 1977. Despite his further studies, in August 1978, it was noted by D. J. Willoughby that John Farrell was considered unsuitable for the priesthood.

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Following receiving this appraisal, John Farrell wrote to St Patrick's College advising that he was going to leave the Seminary for a period of 12 months, during which time he would work on areas of his formation that needed special attention. John Farrell returned to his family home at REDACTED, Armidale and also travelled overseas, returning in around October 1979.

He then returned to St Patrick's Manly, where he continued his studies until October 1980, when he petitioned the Bishop of Armidale, Rev. H. J. Kennedy, and it was subsequently confirmed that he was to be ordained as a Deacon on the 28 November 1980, at the Cathedral in Armidale. In early 1981, Farrell was appointed to the South Tamworth Presbytery, at St Edwards, and in February he was appointed to St Xavier's Parish, Narrabri, until April 20.

In June 1981, Farrell was appointed to Moree under Monsignor Frank Ryan until August 3. We also note that in June 1981, some of his correspondence refers to Fr. Rex Brown, his Spiritual Director based in Lismore. (We raise this as Wayne Peters feels this man will come to our attention at some point.)

After a short period in Moree under Monsignor Ryan, Farrell was given a brief stint at Quirindi, and was subsequently ordained as a priest on the 21 September 1981 in the Armidale Cathedral.

Following his ordination, he was appointed as Assistant Priest to the Parish of Moree from the 11 November 1981.

There is very little in the file from his appointment to Moree until the 23 March 1984, and there is nothing in the file concerning any allegations until the next piece of correspondence on the 31 May 1984, in which Farrell advises the Bishop that he presented for treatment in Sydney with Gary Boyle. The correspondence to the Bishop apparently followed complaints made to Monsignor Frank Ryan at Moree, but there is nothing on file to indicate the nature of complaints, or what action was taken other than to refer Farrell to Gary Boyle.

On the 19 July 1984, Bishop Kennedy advised Farrell that he was to take up a position as Assistant Priest in the Parish of St Nicholas, Tamworth East, from the 26 July under the guidance of Fr. Gerard Hanna, and there is a letter on file to Bishop Kennedy from Fr. Bernard Flood, then of Bingara, which urges the Bishop to closely monitor Farrell's appointment.

There is also a letter on file dated 23 July 1984, from parishioner Mr H. O'Halloran outlining his concerns following becoming aware of the allegations raised in Moree and Farrell's appointment to Tamworth. It is of note that Harry O'Halloran subsequently defended Farrell in the criminal matters.

Farrell spent considerable time in the Parish of St Nicholas, and was apparently still undergoing treatment from physiologist Gary Boyle when in August 1987, he was arrested and charged by Police following the complaints of CPH

An injunction was taken out against the local media preventing them from covering the story, and correspondence in October 1987 shows that Fr. Farrell was taken from the diocese and sent to a residence in Bondi.

Fr. Farrell was charged with a number of offences and was represented at the Committal Hearing on the 18 & 19 February 1988, at the Narrabri Local Court by Chester Porter QC, and it is now history that Fr. Farrell was acquitted on the grounds of insufficient evidence. Following his acquittal, Farrell wrote to the Bishop of Armidale in February 1988, proposing he undertake study leave for the academic year in order to complete his Bachelor of Arts Degree, as he was not convinced that matters had ended, following officials making further enquiries in Moree, and acknowledging that he was unfit to exercise ministry at present.

Further correspondence describes him as being a broken man, but he was re-appointed by the Vicar General in March 1988, on light duties. It was at around this time that the case concerning Fr. Farrell was referred to the Public Prosecutions Office with a view to re-opening the case, and after legal arguments in around June 1988, the Public Prosecutor advised that the case would not be reopened.

In around June 1990, Fr. Farrell was transferred to the St Madeleine Sophie Centre in Kenthurst, following a mandate given by Bishop Bede Heather of Parramatta, but there is correspondence on file in August and September 1990 from Fr. John Usher and Fr. Gerald Hayes raising doubts regarding Farrell, particularly from Fr. Gerald that outlines out a proposed camping trip by Fr. Farrell and four young boys, which ultimately did not go ahead. There is also correspondence on file in October 1990 at which time it was suggested that Farrell be referred to Dr Alex Brazinski from the St John of God Medical Centre, Burwood, where it is suggest that Farrell be referred for further treatment.

On the 1 January 1991, Farrell took up a position as Assistant Pastor to the Parish of Merrylands, and there are numerous documents on file from various parties raising concern about Farrell's appointment and continued service, and a far more zealous approach to the problem seems to have been taken by the new Bishop of Armidale, Kevin Manning, from around October 1991.

The situation was monitored, and Farrell continued to see Dr Brazinski, but there is correspondence on file dated 6 June 1992 from one<sup>CPS</sup> [REDACTED], outlining Fr. Farrell's advances towards both her and [REDACTED], which subsequently saw Fr. Brian Lucas become involved, and on the 1 July 1992, Bishop Manning advised John Farrell that his mandate to continue work in the diocese in Parramatta had been withdrawn, and outlining that Farrell was to have no further active role.

During our discussions with Fr. Wayne Peters, our attention was brought to a document dated the 11 September 1992, in which Fr. Wayne Peters advised Bishop Manning of a face to face meeting with John Farrell conducted on the 3 September 1992, in the presence of Brian Lucas, John Usher and Wayne Peters, in which John Farrell admitted that there had been five boys around the age of 10 and 11 who had been sexually interfered with in varying degrees in the years between 1982 and 1984, whilst he was the Assistant Priest at Moree.

Wayne Peters advised that whilst no boys were actually named, Farrell did admit that he had interfered with one [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and he admitted that he fondled the boys' genitals during a car trip from Moree to Narrabri.

He also made further admissions regarding two other boys where more serious offences were committed over a period of approximately 12 months, and he engaged in fondling and oral sex, and still further admissions that he then subsequently became sexual involved with a woman for approximately 12 months, and later in 1988, toward the end of his university course in Armidale, he also became involved in a brief sexual affair with a young woman at the University of New England.

There are numerous letters on file regarding Farrell's continuing offer to resign from the ministry, however, despite all his rhetoric, he has never proceeded.

We also discovered correspondence on file dated 30 August 1993, from Fr. Bernard Flood, from Frances Xavier Parish Moree, in which he outlines that a parishioner, CPE [REDACTED] called regarding allegations of her son being sexual abused by Fr. John Farrell during his time at Moree.

Following this, in September 1993, pressure mounted via articles in the local press concerning the apparent lack of justice in Fr. Farrell's earlier case in which he was acquitted, which culminated in a submission being sent to the Independent Commission Against Corruption, making allegations against the presiding Magistrate at the time Mr Blissett, who it was alleged was a prominent catholic layperson in Tamworth, and thus swayed towards the accused.

Unfortunately, there is no further correspondence or press articles which indicate what action was ultimately taken, but there was apparently no move to re-open the case, and no evidence of any form of corruption to justify any enquiry, so one did not proceed. The remaining correspondence on file concerns the allegations raised in McCabe Brown Statement of Claim.

## SUMMARY

It would appear that between March and May 1984, complaints were made to Monsignor Father Frank Ryan in Moree, concerning allegations against Fr. John Farrell, and that as a result of those complaints, Farrell was subsequently transferred to Tamworth.

[REDACTED]

In August 1987, Fr. Farrell was arrested and charged by Police in relation to his alleged assault on CPH [REDACTED], however, the matter did not proceed to Trial due to an alleged lack of evidence and Farrell was acquitted.

However, this did little to resolve the matter, and in the interim, he was appointed to other parishes, and further allegations were made in June 1992 by CPS REDACT, which culminated in Farrell's stark admissions in September 1992, that certain offences had been committed earlier against young boys in Moree, and that he had engaged in sexual relations with at least two other women.

It is clear that Fr. Frank Ryan had knowledge of the allegations in around March 1984, and while there always been serious concerns regarding John Farrell's attitude and suitability to become a priest, there was never any indication until that time that his problems were of a sexual nature.

#### COMMENTS

Whilst naturally we defer to your own expert opinion, it would be our suggestion that Monsignor Frank Ryan, who is now retired in West Tamworth, be interviewed regarding his recollections of the original complaints made, and that consideration be given to interviewing Fr. Bernard Flood at Moree regarding his knowledge, and the allegations of CPE, and ultimately, you may consider it prudent for an interview to be conducted with John Farrell himself, at which time some sort of history of events maybe compiled.

We enclose copies of the relevant documents contained in Fr. Farrell's file and advise that Fr. Wayne Peters has assured us that there are no secret archives kept on Farrell.

We now submit this report for your consideration and await your further instructions.

Yours faithfully



Ian Whitehead  
ARROW INSURANCE ADJUSTING