

Tribunal of The Catholic Church
Diocese of Armidale

11th September, 1992.

Most Rev. K.M.Manning D.D.,
 Bishop of Armidale,
 Chancery Office,
 Dangar Street,
 ARMIDALE. N.S.W. 2350.

Dear Bishop Manning,

I wish to communicate a short report on the meeting that took place recently between Rev. John Farrell and members of the Australian Catholic Bishops Special Issues Resource Committee. At your instruction, I attended that meeting as a representative of you and the Diocese of Armidale.

The meeting was held at the Cathedral Presbytery, St. Mary's Cathedral Sydney on Thursday 3rd September 1992 commencing at 7.40 p.m. Present were Rev. John Farrell, Rev. Brian Lucas, Rev. J. Usher and Rev. W. Peters.

After opening remarks from Rev. Brian Lucas, Rev. John Farrell indicated that he wished to make certain admissions.

He admitted that there had been five boys around the age of ten and eleven that he had sexually interfered with in varying degrees in the years approximately 1982 to 1984 while he was the assistant priest at Moree.

He had placed his hand on the leg of one boy who had indicated that he did not want that to happen. Rev. Farrell maintains he never attempted any advances again to that particular child.

It was a similar story with another boy. He made advances by touching the second child on the leg and the child indicated he did not want that to happen. Rev. Farrell maintains he made no such further advances to that child.

A third child **REDACTED**

REDACTED

REDACTED

REDACTED Rev. Farrell did admit that he fondled the boy's genitals during a car trip from Moree to Narrabri.

The situations of boys four and five were the occasion of more serious admissions on the part of Rev. Farrell. He admitted that over a period of approximately twelve months he fondled the genitals of each of these boys and to quote "*sucked off their dicks*". As far as Rev. Farrell can remember this was done on about a monthly basis over a period of twelve months. It was done only

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when each boy was alone with him. The boys were never together whenever an offence took place.

After the allegations of this behaviour were made, Rev. Farrell was transferred to another parish. He alleges he then became sexually involved with a woman and that this continued for a period of some months. This was in the period of twelve months after being transferred from Moree.

In 1988, towards the end of his university course at Armidale, while he was on leave awaiting the outcome of civil proceedings against him, he alleges that he became sexually involved with a young lady at the University of New England. This was a short affair.

After the period in which Rev. Farrell made the above admissions and allegations against himself, the two members of the Bishop's Resource Committee questioned Rev. Farrell and attempted to explain the various complexities that have arisen because of his actions and the problems of the future. The following was pointed out: -

That there was widespread knowledge in the Diocese of Armidale of the nature of the allegations

There continued to be widespread scandal in the Diocese of Armidale

Because of the knowledge and the scandal, it was not possible for an appointment in the Diocese of Armidale in the foreseeable future

Appointment to another diocese was also seen as impossible given that the whole matter of the allegations was an unresolved matter. Without resolution no recommendation could come for an appointment to another diocese from the Bishop of Armidale. Such a recommendation could be seriously injurious to the Church and the Diocese of Armidale in particular in the event of further criminal charges being made by the other boys involved without a previous clearance for appointment from competent psychiatric authority.

As there is no statute of limitations on charges being laid in the matter of sexual abuse of children, the possibility always remains that one or some of the boys involved may bring criminal charges against the Rev. Farrell with subsequent grave harm to the priesthood and the Church.

In the present climate in Australia, the media and public in general are more inclined to publicise, highlight and pursue the matter of a priest offending sexually against children than the situation of a lay person offending.

Various ways of proceeding were presented. These included: -

That Rev. John Farrell return to the lay state seeking a laicisation from the Holy See with the support of his Diocesan Bishop.

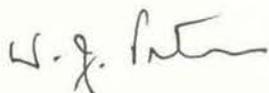
That Rev. John Farrell place himself into a programme of therapy arranged and monitored by the Bishops' Special Issues Resource Committee. Even with this, no guarantees could be given of a future appointment

The meeting agreed that a further meeting between the same people was to be held within a few weeks to further discuss the whole situation and possible ways of proceeding.

The meeting closed at 10.30 p.m.

A further meeting has now been arranged for the evening of 24th September next at the Cathedral Presbytery, St. Mary's Cathedral Sydney.

Yours sincerely,



(Rev. W. J. Peters)
Judicial Vicar