

On 15 August I rang John Farrell at [REDACTED] is response to a message he left me to ring him.

John advised me that he realised there was no future for him in priestly ministry; he was now moving towards applying for a dispensation from priesthood to return to the life of a lay person.

He advised Monsignor Frank Ryan had offered to send and fund him going to a week's live in course at Encompass Sydney to assist him in leaving the priesthood. I indicated that I was aware of the offer and it still was available to him.

I advised John that the Diocese would require of Encompass a report on his status, the assessment of him and the advice given. John was clearly not very keen on this. I advised that this was normal practice where a diocese was introducing a person to Encompass and funding the week long live in. John agreed that Encompass would and could issue a report at the end of the assessment week.

John requested some travelling expenses to meet the cost of running his car to the Encompass programme. I agreed the diocese would give him some funding for this.

I advised John that I would be in touch with Encompass as from Monday 17 August to introduce him and make preliminary arrangements about him going there. As his whereabouts was going to be changing, he agreed to ring me on Monday 17 August to find out whom he should contact etc to make final arrangements suitable for him and Encompass to accommodate him.

John requested advice of how best to initiate proceedings for a dispensation from priesthood. I advised him to contact Father Tom O'Reilly, a Vincentian priest who handled the processes in Sydney. I gave John several phone numbers to contact Father Tom O'Reilly.

John than advised me, *as a matter of courtesy as I might hear it from another source*, that a young man he had known from the Parramatta diocese had been blackmailing him. John said he had paid the young man money. John explained that the young man knew of the allegations against John of sexual abuse against young men in Moree many years ago and was taking advantage of that to threaten John. John advised he paid up because of the very difficult situation he was in because of the previous allegations of sexual abuse.

John advised that he had seen a solicitor who had advised him he had no choice but to take the matter to the police, otherwise he would be never free of the threats from the alleged blackmailer. The solicitor was to take further advice on the weekend of 15, 16 August.

W J Peters  
Armidale NSW  
15 August 1998