

14 July 2004

CONFIDENTIAL

Mr Michael McDonald
 Executive Officer
 Catholic Commission for Employment Relations
 Level 14, Polding Centre
 133 Liverpool Street
 SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr McDonald

Rev. John Joseph Farrell

In response to your enquiry in your letter of 8th July, let me make a few preliminary remarks.

In the absence of Mgr Wayne Peters PP VG on recuperative leave, I consulted the file on JJF. I came to the diocese of Armidale on May 1999. Many events occurred before that date.

1. As far as I can determine there were allegations of sexual abuse by JJF. When a Court case took place in Narrabri in 1988, the charges were dismissed. A REDACTED [REDACTED] laid charges.
 As recently as February 1999 a case brought against JJF in the Armidale Magistrate's Court was dismissed. His REDACTED [REDACTED] alleged indecent assault.
2. There was more than one victim. REDACTED [REDACTED] JJF has "acknowledged" as many as five victims, but there may be more, I am uncertain what ages they were but they would have attended the Catholic Primary School in Moree, where JJF was an assistant priest.
3. As far as I can make out the Diocesan authorities became aware of the alleged incidents on 13th August 1987, when JJF was arrested in Tamworth.
4. At the time JJF was an assistant priest with general priestly duties in the parish. This included working with altar boys. I am not sure whether there were any school camps. He would certainly have been at the primary school.
5. John has had no assignment or appointment for many years. After Court case in Narrabri he spent some time in Parramatta diocese, where Bishop B Heather told him to leave after some time. In July 1984 he came under Gary Boyle & Associates for therapy. He is declared suitable for re-appointment! Currently JJF holds no appointment in this diocese and he is aware that no such an

- appointment will ever be given, here or in any other diocese. Bishop Kevin Manning suspended him and withdrew his faculties as a priest August 1992.
6. He was taken out of child related services as early as 1983, apart from a short period in Parramatta in 1984.
 7. JJF resides with his aged mother since 1993 (his father died some two years ago) in the parental home at REDACTED Armidale. As far as I know he is on unemployment benefits. He is Secretary of the Armidale Historical Society. Occasionally an article written by him appears in the Armidale Express on matters historical. Whether he receives any payment for this I do not know. He receives no financial assistance from the Diocese.
 8. As far back as 1992 it was proposed to him that he leave the priesthood, to which he agreed at first and then refused. He was asked to go to Encompass for an assessment and again he refused. Then last year, when he was subpoenaed to appear in a court case in Parramatta, Regina vs CPK, a victim of JJF who had managed to extort more than \$20,000 from JJF in blackmail. JJF came to me to ask what should he do. He was then agreeable to go to Encompass. He did. I enclose a copy of a letter from Encompass to me giving their assessment: *Our concern is that Mr Farrell is accountable to no one and continues to pose an unacceptable risk to minors.* As if we did not know! A couple of years ago I had the Director of Catholic Schools write to JJF and warn him off all school properties. He had been seen at the O'Connor Catholic College, Armidale, "doing research" he said. It was at this school that REDACTED attended who later accused him of indecent assault, though this did not occur at the school.

I am still hopeful that he will sooner or later apply for laicisation.

Please contact me if you need further details. Enclosed are copies of some pages in the file; these set out in more detail what I have attempted to describe above.

With every good wish,

Sincerely in Christ, our Lord

+ L M

Most Reverend Luc Matthys
Bishop of Armidale

Encl.