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Most Rev. H.J. Kennedy,
Bishop of Armidale,
P.O.Box 93,
ARMIDALE NSW 2350

Dear Bishop Kennedy,

Re: Rev. John Farrell.

Further to my phone call of July 1984 Rev. John Farrell has requested that I write to you concerning my opinion of his problem and the prognosis following my interviews with him over these years.

When Father Farrell first presented he was highly agitated and clinically depressed following his removal from his parish. After considerable discussions and assessment I was, and still am, of the opinion that Fr. Farrell did not present as a man with a true paedophilia. Although the presenting behaviour was consistent with paedophilia the issue for Fr. Farrell was more of a delayed psychosexual development. His psychosexual development was equivalent to the age of the children with whom he became attached. The actual behaviour was similar to the sexual curiosity of children of that age.

Through counselling Fr. Farrell made rapid progress in his psychosexual development and within a three month period had developed to age appropriate and mature sexual orientation. Fr. Farrell rapidly moved beyond a stage of curiosity with children to establishing a mature heterosexual orientation. In my opinion children no longer present as true sexual objects.

In my opinion Fr. Farrell's problems were that of delayed maturation which sadly had to cause difficulties for himself and others before the issues were addressed and more appropriate maturity obtained. In my opinion Fr. Farrell does not have a paedophilia problem and no longer presents any problems for children or yourself.

Fr. Farrell has reported to me that you and your consultants are concerned about his level of aggressiveness and determination to have his own way. Central to Fr. Farrell's difficulties is a basic lack of assertiveness which commonly results in his feeling abused. After remaining passive for some time the bottling of negative feelings and hurts result in aggressive type outbursts and forceful sometimes apparently offensive expressions of his desires. Fr. Farrell is aware of these issues and is honestly endeavouring to rectify his assertiveness problem. No doubt Fr. Farrell would be prepared to discuss with you the techniques he is learning to apply if you so wish. I believe Fr. Farrell would be less apparently aggressive if he felt he was more trusted, affirmed and positively supported in the Diocese. I have been impressed with Fr. Farrell's openness and honesty.

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He has always been willing to face issues directly and is very open to growth and change. In a supportive environment I believe he will continue to do well for himself and the Church.

It is my hope that Fr. Farrell be given every assistance in putting this difficult period behind him and is allowed to return to full ministry in the Church. I am concerned with the level of depression still evident in Fr. Farrell and believe that he needs to be trusted, supported and returned to active ministry so as to recover from this traumatic period. From discussions with Fr. Farrell his placement at Tamworth rather than reducing trauma appears to have increased his distress and depression due to the lack of trust and support he received. I would hope that Fr. Farrell be given every opportunity to move beyond the cloud that still appears to hang over his head and receive the care and support he justly deserves after all this time.

Yours faithfully,



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