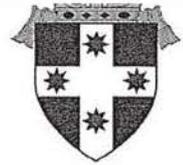


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CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF SYDNEY



File note

Date: 4 July 2012

Author: **Jennifer Cook**

Re: **Meeting with Mgr Wayne Peters- 4 July 2012**

On 4 July 2012, Mgr John Usher (**JU**), Michael Casey (**MC**), Danny Casey (**DC**), Katrina Lee (**KL**), Michael do Rozario of Corrs Chambers Westgarth (**MdR**) and Jennifer Cook (**JC**) met with Mgr Wayne Peters.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss with Mgr Peters his recollection of the meeting with Fr F on 3 September 1992 (**Meeting**) for the primary purpose of obtaining legal advice in relation to allegations made by ABC 4 Corners that admissions were made at that meeting that were reportable to the police.

Set out below is a record of the meeting with Mgr Peters.

Meeting with Mgr Peters

1. MC began by referring to Cardinal Pell's statement during the ABC 4 Corners programme that no admissions had been made during the Meeting. This statement was based on JU having spoken to Mgr Peters and Fr Lucas and reporting to the Cardinal that all 3 agreed that no admissions had been made during the Meeting. A representative of a plaintiff lawyers group had said that morning that Cardinal Pell has been either misled or failed to conduct adequate enquiries before making that statement to the ABC.
2. MC then asked about the letter dated 11 September 1992 from Mgr Peters to Bishop Manning which came to light in 4 Corners.
3. Mgr Peters said that it was his job to come to the Meeting as the Bishop's representative to observe what happened at the Meeting. The letter was "a private letter intended for the Bishop." Mgr Peters said he was "mystified how the letter got out". He said that Bishop Manning was also surprised that the letter was made public. After 4 Corners aired, Bishop Manning called Mgr Peters and asked him "how did the letter get out?".
4. Mgr Peters then said he had recently become aware that the letter and other material about Fr F were provided to the Parramatta Court in response to a subpoena. He had not known the letter had been provided on subpoena or even about the subpoena – it is possible that the subpoena was served while he was in hospital.
5. Mgr Peters then produced some pages printed from the Broken Rites website and said it is clear from the Broken Rites website that the letter has been in the public domain for years.

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6. Mgr Peters said that Fr F had been sent to Parramatta because of scandal surrounding Fr F. It was not possible [following the CPH case] for him to continue his ministry in Armidale.
7. Mgr Peters referred to the report of Dr Boyle who had concluded that Fr F was not a risk to children and could be returned to the Ministry. Mgr Peters said he thought the report of Dr Boyle was terrible and he did not accept it. He said Fr F was arrogant, self opinionated and "clerical". He believes Fr F became a priest because of the power it gave him.
8. Bishops Kennedy (of the Armidale Diocese) and Heather (of the Parramatta Diocese) discussed the CPH charges and Dr Boyle's report. Although Bishop Kennedy did not take Mgr Peters into his confidence regarding Fr F and his move to Parramatta, Mgr Peters guesses that Parramatta was seen as a big place where no one would know about the allegations.
9. There are some reports of inappropriate conduct by Father F in Parramatta. JU reported that Fr John Boyle mentioned to him last weekend (on 30 June 2012) when visiting JU's parish to celebrate a wedding, that he had told Bishop Heather about Fr F having a young boy in his car and that this concerned him, but Fr Boyle was told to mind his own business. Fr Boyle then told the mother not to allow her son with Fr F.
10. Mgr Peters then referred to a story about 3 boys in Parramatta who were the REDACTED of a Moree woman (who were REDACTED who happened to be visiting who warned her family not to allow the boys to go camping with Fr F.
11. Fr F was ordered back to Armidale (from Parramatta) because he had been heard using inappropriate language with altar boys at the Merrylands church. A parishioner reported this to Bishop Heather. Bishop Manning subsequently forbade Fr F from public ministry in July 1992. He was suspended until the Bishop "got to the bottom of this".
12. The Meeting was for Fr Farrell to meet with the special issues committee with Mgr Peters as an observer for Armidale to "get to the bottom" of things. Fr Lucas was the chair of the committee. Mgr Usher said that the committee was very informal committee. Fr Lucas asked JU to attend as he was assisting on such matters. Mgr Peters said that the intention was "to close him [Fr F] down no matter what".
13. Mgr Peters said that there were 3 meetings. No admissions were made at the second or third meetings. JU was at the second meeting on 24 September 1992 where a 7 point plan was presented to Fr F.
14. Mgr Peters said he had not been directly informed previously of the allegations referred to by Fr F in the Meeting but that parents had made complaints to Fr Ryan and this had been reported to Bishop Kennedy. It was

rumoured that Fr F had interfered with other children. Mgr Peters had never met a victim or had a complaint about Fr F. JU also confirmed he never met or interviewed a complainant in relation to Fr F.

15. In relation to the Meeting, JU said that even if the charges against Fr F had been dismissed, it was incumbent for the Church to look into the allegations. The sense was that the Church had to do something. Mgr Peters said after the charges were dismissed the police and people in the town petitioned the DPP to reconsider but the DPP decided not to do so.
16. Mgr Peters said he was surprised by admissions made by Fr F during the meeting. Mgr Peters said that it was "not clear if he was telling the truth". JU agreed with this. He said it was not clear if it was fantasy or made up. He was "unreal and weird". Mgr Peter had to report what he said, but was not sure it was true.
17. Mgr Peters confirmed that he did not take notes during the meeting and has no notes about the meeting. He did not have regard to notes or files when writing the letter. He does not remember Fr Lucas making notes during the Meeting. JU says he did not take notes of the Meeting but later recorded short "aide de memoire" notes in his red bound diary. Mgr Usher said Fr F was unrepentant about his misconduct. He recorded that he should not have an appointment. He doubted his willingness to go to therapy, although Fr F said he would. If Fr F had made admissions of actual criminal conduct, he would have recorded this.
18. Mgr Peters referred to Fr F as being "evil". He said: "I was gung ho for this guy to be put on ice". He is not happy that Fr F is still around in Armidale, attending Mass and showing up from time-to-time.
19. When it was put to Mgr Peters that JU and Fr Lucas had no memory of admissions being made as set out in his 11 September 1992 letter, Mgr Peters said "if I did not have the letter, I would not remember". He confirmed that he had not discussed the contents of the letter with Fr Lucas or JU. "Neither Jack nor Brian knew the contents of the letter". He says he "if that is what I wrote, I have to stand by my letter".
20. JU said if Fr F had admitted what is set out in the letter, he would have gone to the police.
21. Mgr Peters said he was unaware of his obligation to report to the police. "My responsibility was to report to the Bishop". He only found out about the obligation to report "in the last couple of weeks".
22. Reporting to the police was not discussed at the Meeting. Mgr Usher said he may not have been aware at the date of the meeting of the duty to report under the Crimes Act, but was aware of the reporting obligations under the child protection regulation.

23. In relation to whether he should have reported Fr F to the police, Mgr Peters said that Fr F referred only to "Boy 1" "Boy 2", "Boy 3" – no specifics were given so as not to incriminate himself and no names were provided so no one could contact any victims. So there was nothing specific to report.
24. Mgr Peters has no knowledge of any offences since 1992 and nothing on file about further allegations. He has had no contact with victims. He heard about a case regarding Fr F brought in relation to sexual assault of REDACTED (when she was around 14) but the charges were also dismissed. The first time he heard of CPR [interviewed on 4 Corners] was when he saw the 4 Corners Report. In response to a question by MdR, he said he has not reached out to CPR pastorally.
25. It was unclear why Mgr Peters first told JU that no admissions were made but he now "stands by the letter". Mgr Peters did say he checked the file immediately when 4 Corners asked questions about Fr F and other priests in Armidale "over a month ago". From the discussion, it appears that at the time Mgr Peters told JU no admissions were made at the Meeting. He was not aware that the letter was in the public domain.
26. Mgr Peters said that he obtained Fr Lucas' assistance in framing responses to questions by 4 Corners. He was asked by 4 Corners whether there was any information that was reportable to the police and, if so, did he report to the police. When Mgr Peters spoke to Fr Lucas about 4 Corners, Fr Lucas said "I think they must have a copy of that letter, he said Fr Lucas made reference to the Broken Rites website.
27. In consultation with Fr Lucas (who gave him a "form of words"), Mgr Peters responded that Fr F had said "nothing specific in a legal sense" that could be reported to the police.
28. When asked what he would now tell the media, Mgr Peters said he would "stand by the letter" but that he would not be saying anything to the media.
29. We thanked Mgr Peters for his time.
30. Meeting concluded at about 11:40am

Jennifer Cook