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March 19, 1997

Fr John Farrell

REDACTED

ARMIDALE NSW 2350

Dear Fr John,

Thank you for your letter. As usual it was eagerly anticipated and I took delight in reading it. To answer your questions: (1) it was postmarked Central Coast since at that time, I wasn't terribly sure where the post office was, so as Fr Paul was down visiting for the day, I asked him to drop in the post office for me and (2) I did go home for the weekend.

The letter was a long time in coming as I thought if I wrote it at the end of my first two weeks, I would have more to tell you which was certainly true.

The main focus of this letter is on a sad and upsetting note. I will relate an unpleasant experience to you and look forward to your reply.

On Friday night, I was talking to Fr Gerard Hayes, who had been staying at the seminary for the past week. When he told me he was from Armidale diocese I informed him that I had a regular letter communication going with a priest from Armidale by the name of John Farrell. His immediate reaction was one of shock which startled me. So I pushed him for an explanation and eventually at my insistence, he revealed that some time ago you had been charged with sexual assault concerning four altar boys. I asked him what the outcome was, at which he replied that the charges were dropped due to lack of evidence, however, you were still under suspension and would probably never work as a priest in a parish again.

Naturally, this news came as quite a shock and I experienced a number of emotions ranging from denial, to hurt, anger and disappointment. I feel that during our correspondences, due to the fact I was asking honest questions relating to some of the more sensitive issues of priesthood from a priest I admired, that I should have been entitled to honesty in return, particularly as this information may or may not have had some effect. This does not, in any way, mean that our conversations and

letters were not helpful or any the less valued, however, I do feel that there was a certain deceitfulness present in the friendship, particularly in light of some questions I asked concerning your immediate future, which I now see were neatly sidestepped.

I value our friendship and would like it to continue, however, I guess I feel that I may need some space to come to terms with this knowledge, as I cannot deny this information. I guess, as well, that I would like you to discuss the matter with me from your side in your next letter, however, I appreciate that this is your choice. I have spoken to Fr Paul about this and he is aware that I know. He suggested that I write to you, as I felt I should do anyway, and see what happens from here.

I look forward to hearing from you soon. I'm sure you will appreciate how difficult this letter has been for me to write as I will appreciate that your next letter to me will quite possibly be more difficult.



Regards

Jamie Cartner


