

710 Upper Esplanade,  
New Vic.

27.6.84

The most-Rev. R. A. Mulkearns, D.D., D.E.L.,  
340 Wendouree Parade,  
Ballarat.

Dear Bishop Mulkearns,

Thank you for your letter, which I received from Fr. Smith last Monday. I realize the seriousness & the difficulty of the decision you have to make: to protect the community of the Church, & at the same time to be kind & considerate of the individual concerned. So I have thought a great deal about this matter - & prayed - to make as good a assessment as possible.

The area of psychology we are dealing with here is little understood & unfortunately little researched. Let me quote some of the significant findings:

We are dealing with individuals who feel markedly inadequate, focus their attention on children as a safer means of meeting their sexual needs & avoiding possible failure & self-devaluation. . . . Often these inadequate individuals view their offences as idiosyncrasies rather than a serious problem & lack any clear sense of the inappropriateness of their behaviour. Typically, they grasp at some seemingly rational explanation of their behaviour. (Abnormal Psychology & Modern Life, G. C. Coleman, p. 450-461.)

The typical paedophile was anything but a rabid "sex fiend". To the contrary, he was moralistic, religious, quiet-moderate & lonely. He was socially ineffective & vocational underachiever. And perhaps most important he had a low sexual frequency. (Sexuality & Homosexual Anne Kartin, p. 66.)

Treatment is essentially no different from the treatment of most other types of abnormal behaviour. Procedures are designed to help the patient gain insight into his motivation, change his basic attitudes & work out more acceptable patterns of behaviour. (Edelman, *op cit.*, p 13)

It is obvious that these passages deal largely in generalities, especially (& regrettably) the third paragraph dealing with treatment. In practice, however, in dealing with Gerry himself I used a generalisation propounded by Viktor Frankl, that I have found useful: 'We live on three levels at the same time, the emotional, the rational & the spiritual. In most of us the emotional is the strongest, the rational tends to be confused & the spiritual is the weakest. Therefore, to lead a balanced life, we must strengthen the spiritual, clarify the rational, discipline & control the emotional.'

I also used other theories & techniques of Frankl's, especially a focusing on the meaning of life, both immediate & ultimate, & simple techniques for dealing with everyday problems. In addition, I had Gerry keep a journal & as you knew, report to me at fairly regular intervals. I insisted that he should see a spiritual director regularly, & this worked well while he was in Sydney & had a director available. I also checked carefully a programme of spiritual reading we worked out together.

The reason I have gone into these matters in a fair amount of detail is that the results were good so long as he stuck to the plan we had agreed upon. Once he neglected his programme, his conduct began to deteriorate. And at one stage, I think I did not see

him at all for something like 12 months.

I agree with you when you say that it would be too risky to let him take up parish work again. So the only viable alternative would seem to be a chaplaincy, although I would suggest a convent of elderly nuns as perhaps the best venue. This would keep him constantly in touch with the spiritual life. He is, of course, an intelligent man & might well undertake a study of Ascetical or Mystical Theology, which would be of benefit to himself & to those in his charge.

It is more than likely, of course, that he will protest at having to give up his work & dwelling at White Bluffs, to which he seems to be strongly attached; but perhaps they could be retained & used as a retreat for him when on vacation? I would regard a regular life a priest, although in somewhat confined circumstances, as ~~than~~ more valuable <sup>and</sup> ultimately more satisfying than his somewhat freelance life as it is at present.

I believe he needs intellectual stimulation. That is why I suggested that he might take up a study of Ascetics — or the Spiritual Life in general. Or he might prefer some other course of study & that should be able to be carried out by correspondence. I am naturally agreeable to keep on seeing him; we seem to have established a workable relationship together. Even if he should go to another diocese or even another country, I suggest he should see someone regularly, because he appears to work best when he is under regular supervision.

Incidentally, in my investigation last year into Houses of Affirmation I discovered that amongst the clergy in America there have been a large number of problems with pedophilia, whether this is due to some

route in the American character or whether it stems  
 from immaturity induced by the type of seminary  
 training, I am not in a position to decide. But it is  
 a matter of concern to Bishops & major superiors. I do  
 not believe that this - or any other serious problem - can  
 be resolved purely by psychology. At the best, psychology is  
 only a useful tool. And I am sure that Frankl's  
 Logotherapy is the best available, mainly because he  
 insists that man is essentially a spiritual being & that  
 the most prevalent psychological illness in the modern  
 world is a spiritual neurosis. Therefore the ultimate solution  
 is in our faith, if thoroughly understood & practised.

I hope I have been in some use in your dilemma.  
 If there is anything further I can do, please do not hesitate  
 to ask me.

I apologize both for the paper & my scrawl.  
 Unfortunately I do not type; & I preferred to write this  
 report myself than to submit it to any 'outsider', even  
 someone as discreet & trustworthy as one of the nuns  
 at Carmel.

My sincere & warm regards. Begging your  
 blessing, I remain

Yours in the Lord,  
 A. Wilson, S.J.