

2 August 1995

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Dear Sir,

Thank you for asking me to see your client Fr. John Kevin O'Donnell regarding County Court proceedings dated for the 14th August. I am writing this as a general background to what you asked me to assess and this is not a repeat NOT - the letter which you wanted. That will be attached as a separate missive.

In order to get some idea of the whole situation I did of course have to go into the background, the nature of the offences, the duration of them and the frequency of them. Suffice it to say, that Fr O'Donnell is one of those cases in which through a multitude of associated disasters he had some early involvement with young folks but nothing much until shortly after ordination, and from then on until three or four years ago there was a series of paedophilic activities, sometimes going on for a reasonably lengthy time with particular individuals. The majority were of a homosexual nature but there were two girls with whom he was involved. The behaviour was clearly sexual and involved a fairly typical pattern of activity but not genital contact in the sense of any genital penetration by him. There was, however, clear arousal and gratification at the time.

It is clear that only some of the people concerned have come forward and it is quite possible that with further publicity more will come.

As is not uncommon with priests, he has a peculiar, naive lack of insight and a paradoxical tendency to justify, including statements like: "I nearly always stopped when I realised they were becoming sexually aware." And yet at the same time in another part of the interview he said that he thought he was meeting their needs, and only under pressure admitted that he was meeting his own. He claims that such matters were never openly discussed. On two occasions he did mention it to fellow priests who more or less helped him to deny and brush under the carpet.

He claims that he has not been sexually active for the last three to four years and has little or no libido now. Clearly it would be necessary to see him a great deal more to carry out a very detailed appreciation about these matters, but I understand this is not primarily what you wanted me to do. Accordingly I will go on to the second letter which is the one you want to use for official purposes.

Kindest regards and best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

RICHARD BALL

Lately Prof. of Psychiatry University of Melbourne at St. Vincent's Hospital and Director Dept of Psychiatry at St. Vincent's Hospital; Past President R.A.N.Z.C.P. Past Censor & Chief (Chief Examiner) R.A.N.Z.C.P. etc; Currently Part-Time Prof. of Forensic Psychiatry, University of Melbourne Department of Psychiatry.