

Archdiocese of Melbourne

In causa: BAKER

Do you recall what happened at Gladstone Park?

I have a very clear memory of three senior parishioners coming to see me when I was Vicar General. As I recall one was a retired magistrate and one a solicitor. They were very concerned that Bill had abused a boy in the parish.

I referred them on to the Archbishop Little immediately. I believed their statements. They were committed members of the parish.

What happened to Bill after that?

I don't recall all the details or timeline, but eventually he ended up as a parish priest again – at Eltham, and then North Richmond. Of course, I had gone to Ballarat in the meantime. I did catch up with him when he was at North Richmond. He was definitely an alcoholic by then.

If I recall correctly, he drank heavily before that, when he was at Gladstone Park. I don't know much more. When we had year reunions over the years he always drank heavily at them – whisky.

Is there anything more you can say about his character or background?

I have often wondered whether he had been molested himself. I always thought – long before now – that him being sent to boarding school at the age of eight was strange. I can understand if he felt rejected by his parents – there was no need for him to be sent.

I do know that one of his brothers ended up a heavy gambler. He was a pharmacist. The other two brothers are very successful medicos.

Did Bill have any close priest friends?

Not really. There was no-one he caught up with regularly. Over some years I tried to keep contact, but it was a waste of time. He seemed to concentrate on the boys all the time.

He would be friendly, of course, but never got close. Perhaps Noel Mackay might know a bit about him.

9 August 2010

Cathedral Presbytery
East Melbourne

(Signed) + P J Connors

(Before) Reverend John Salvano