

M E M O

TO: His Grace,
Most Rev. T.F. Little, D.D., K.B.E.,
Archbishop of Melbourne

FROM: Rev. Monsignor P.J. Connors
Vicar General

DATE: 31st October, 1985

SUBJECT: PARISH OF DOVETON

Your Grace,

I attach a memo which I received from Mr. Norm Lalor, an Officer of the Catholic Education Office, concerning certain problems which have occurred in the Parish of Doveton.

On the 24th September I discussed the allegations with Father Searson. In brief, he claims that the tape recorder is used for the playing of hymns while he is celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation. As for the other matter he assured me that in future he would insist upon the use of a kneeler.

After the interview Father Searson rang back to ask for the names of the informants, which I refused to give to him.

On the 29th October I met with Mr. Graham Sleeman, the Principal of the Parish Primary School. I told him that I was aware of the allegations which I had discussed with Father Searson and that I had to accept the explanations given by Father Searson. Mr. Sleeman then went on to discuss with me the difficult situation which now exists in the Parish of Doveton. We both agreed that it would be most difficult to prove any allegations against Father Searson, who has created a climate of suspicion and lack of trust in the Parish.

I could put on paper many other points raised by Mr. Sleeman, e.g. Father Searson's obsession with the celebration of the Eucharist and the First Rite of Reconciliation. I told Mr. Sleeman that there was nothing that we could do at this stage other than to monitor the situation.

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Rev. Monsignor P.J. Connors
