

3/10/93

STATEMENT RE FR. FASCIALE

I would like to begin by making a few general remarks about this matter :

- a) these are memories of some events which date back many years, so it's hard to date accurately the years.
- b) they are not "facts" as such but more circumstantial things, impressions or concerns.
- c) certain events of this year have brought these concerns to mind again
- d) I am conscious of my own personal prejudices in regard to Fr Fasciale re the management of the parish in other ways as well.

EARLY YEARS AT YARRAVILLE

I moved to Yarraville parish in 1975 (April), and lived in the presbytery along with Fr Fasciale and Fr Arsuffi, an Italian-speaking priest from Tripoli.

I moved from the presbytery as a living situation in mid-1976. Most of my work was based at the house away from the presbytery, but I was still in touch at the presbytery with day-to-day matters.

In those first couple of years, there were four young boys always at the presbytery in their school-free times. They were being given jobs to do, messages to run, helping Fr Fasciale with his jobs including the banking and so on. Regularly they would go off with Fr Fasciale in his car for outings.

When Fr Fasciale went overseas for about 3 months (probably around 1977), he was arranging for the four boys to do all manner of jobs in his absence. I, however, made it clear that once he left for overseas the boys would not be allowed in the presbytery at any time for any reason and that I would be in charge of all things. I would say that the four boys at this time would have been aged 13-15 years.

I took the same stance in regard to money matters -- counting, banking, etc -- indicating that Noel Mangion, who had been employed for years as "secretary" (and still is), would not be needed either.

While Fr Fasciale was away, I discovered quite a few things about the financial management of the parish and took these concerns to the Vicar-General of the time (Mgr. Peter Connors). There were serious matters concerning school monies which I felt could have damaged the church/state arrangements re school grants and the like.

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On his return, I conveyed some of my concerns to Fr Fasciale but got nowhere. My decision at that time, and stated quite clearly to him, was that, given the situation with both the financial management and the boys around the place, I would therefore never handle church money. I refused to even carry the collection money from the church to the presbytery from then on. The four boys came back on to the scene at that time, once again involved in the same way as mentioned above.

Obviously I did have concerns about Fr Fasciale and the four boys. However, as there was nothing except a "feeling" on my part, there was nothing I could do about it except distance myself from the situation and express my disapproval as mentioned above.

REFERRAL TO BISHOP O'CONNELL

At around this time a parent, **REDACTED**, approached me about Fr Fasciale and a concern (really a complaint) in regard to his son **REDACTED**. I did not discuss with him details of his complaint except that in broad terms it was about Fr Fasciale being a bit too "close" to his son.

I simply asked him whether he would be prepared to speak with Bishop O'Connell about this matter. I arranged for this to happen. The fact that I took this action is an indication that I had serious worries, without factual evidence, about Fr Fasciale with the boys.

Later on I followed up with Bishop O'Connell and was informed that Fr Fasciale had been called in and had been referred to a psychologist or counsellor. To the best of my knowledge this did not continue for very long and I do not know exactly what was asked of him.

RECENT HAPPENINGS

Over the past year some events have brought these matters to my attention again with some deep concerns. They revolve around the four boys and their present life situations.

The first of these four boys, whose family I am in touch with fairly regularly, is homosexual. This had become an issue for the parish team around 1983-4 (I had left the parish by then). He was living in the parish community house in Yarraville and was becoming "actively" homosexual. He moved out of the parish house and began living in a homosexual relationship. Through my work with AIDS I met up with him at a National AIDS Conference in Canberra. I discovered that he is HIV-AIDS and working in Queensland **REDACTED**. I have kept up contact with him since then.

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The second of the boys is his brother. He is also homosexual and now living in Queensland. These two boys are the youngest in a family of seven children. Neither lad feels particularly welcome at home with their parents. Both have been in Queensland or other parts of Australia for several years now.

The third boy, now aged 29, has never married nor have I come across him in recent years until recently. Earlier this year, because of the above two lads and my growing concerns, I asked Fr Fasciale about this lad and how he was going. I was told that he had never married, had never had girlfriends and Fr Fasciale couldn't understand this. About four months ago, I came across this young man at one of the top city hotels where he is working as a porter. It appears to me that he also is in a homosexual environment.

The fourth boy and his family I had not seen for many years until earlier this year when I met the family at a wedding. I was quite pleased to see that he was married. However, on talking with Bishop O'Connell about the other three boys and my concerns, I discovered that this marriage had unusual features. Bishop O'Connell had always felt that there was something wrong with the marriage arrangement. So it would seem that perhaps it is an indication that something is/was amiss with this young man also.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The event which primarily brought these concerns back to me after so long was a film on television about the end of last year or early this year. I cannot think of the name of the film. It was about a priest in U.S.A. who had a long history of abuse of young boys and he had been moved from place to place.

The film prompted me to think of the two lads in Queensland. I also recalled various comments of priests about Fr Fasciale not long after I had been appointed to Yarraville.

After a couple of months of thinking this through, I raised the matter with Bishop Connors who asked me to talk to Bishop O'Connell.

MY CONCERNS

Obviously, I can say nothing definite about anything which could be said to be wrong or damaging in regard to Fr Fasciale and these four young men when they were young boys around the presbytery. However, there were four boys .. I was concerned at the time .. I am even more concerned now.

Of the four boys, one is positive HIV-AIDS homosexual, a second is homosexual, a third could be homosexual and the fourth has displayed something different in his marriage situation. It seems too much of a coincidence that all four boys should end up like this.

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5 OCT 1993