

CONFIDENTIAL**FILE NOTE:****INCIDENTS AT HOLY FAMILY DOVETON
30TH MARCH, 1993 AND 2ND APRIL 1993
CONCERNING FR. PETER SEARSON****30th March, 1993**

I was advised by the Principal of Holy Family, Mr. Ray Adams at 12.15 p.m. that Fr. Searson had started a fire on the school playground at morning recess of 30th March and had encouraged children to throw material onto the fire.

I advised Mr. Adams that the designated Occupational Health and Safety Officer could proceed, however the backlash from Fr. Searson toward the teacher could be unpleasant.

2nd April, 1993

I was phoned by Mr. Adams late morning on 2nd April and advised that Fr. Searson had held a knife to the chest of a young girl in the Church that morning, saying to her "If you move this will go through you". The student and another present immediately reported the incident to a teacher who informed Mr. Adams who spoke to the two students immediately. He then phoned me seeking advice.

I immediately informed Fr. Doyle, Mgr. Cudmore, the Vicar General and Fr. G. Smith, the Archbishop's Secretary. I then phoned Ray back and told him to inform the police. This he did. And I then informed all three of this.

The police took a statement from the student concerned but were not able to proceed without parental consent. This was not given.

I spoke to the girl's father at 5.00 p.m. on 2nd April and strongly encouraged him to allow the police to proceed with charges. I gained the impression from the father that he would advise the police as I suggested. I then went to see Mgr. Cudmore to inform him, however he had gone. Consequently I informed Fr. Smith and subsequently the Archbishop. Whilst with the Archbishop, I spoke with Mgr. Cudmore by phone advising him.

On Friday night, 2nd April, I spoke with Mr. Adams at 11.15 p.m. and he informed me that the parents visited Fr. Searson who denied any knowledge of the incident and consequently would not allow the police to proceed. (Fr. Searson recalled the incident perfectly to Ray Adams 30 minutes after he saw the parents.)

Fr. Searson told Ray to tell Mark Reynolds to stop the witch hunt.

On Saturday, 3rd April at 10.15 a.m. I spoke with the police at Doveton and advised Constable Bob to contact the Vicar General. This he did.

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On both Tuesday, 6th April and Wednesday, 7th April I spoke to the Vicar General attempting to ascertain what action was to be taken by the Archdiocese. My concern was for the Principal and staff whom Fr. Searson was now ignoring, yet normal matters of school business need to proceed.

At my meeting with the Vicar General at 11.30 a.m. on 7th April, I urged him to act as soon as possible toward the removal of Fr. Searson.

M. Reynolds

(Rev. M. Reynolds)
7th April, 1993.

I spoke to the Vicar General today (7th April) about his situation (c. 12.20 pm).

He spoke of the ~~major~~ difficulty in the fact that no charges have been laid. We spoke about the 'danger' to the children' as our primary concern.

He has decided to send for Father Searson this afternoon, after which he will speak to me about developments.
M. Reynolds 7/4/93

The matter has been discussed several times with the Vicar General & by law. The decision was taken that in the absence of action by the Police & the unwillingness of the Parents to pursue the matter, nothing could be done about the incident.

M. Reynolds
19/4/93