

Review Board
February 7, 1994

Case #36

1. Allegations:

A report in the priest's file indicated that there was a relationship with a woman while he served in a diocese on a lend-lease basis. Further conversation revealed that the priest has had ongoing relationships with women since early ordination.

The first woman with whom he had a relationship also had two children by him. One time he left public ministry for a couple months and lived with her out of state. Later, while he was present in her home she took an overdose of medication. He left, returned, called 911 and then left. She died.

The second woman with whom he was involved while on a lend-lease assignment was a young woman. It was public knowledge and made the newspapers.

Upon his return, he received another assignment and entered into another relationship with a woman. This broke off several years ago.

2. Complainants:

The first woman is dead. It is reported that her sister knows something about the relationship between the priest and her. She told him to stay away from the children and the family.

The second woman is married again and has kept a friendship with the priest through letters and a once of twice telephone call a year.

The third woman continues to live in a parish of the Archdiocese. She is a spiritual woman. He has had lunch with her recently to see how she was doing and how she was dealing with their former relationship.

3. Response:

Much of the above information was given by the priest.

4. Background of the Priest:

He is an intelligent, well-liked man about sixty years of age. Currently, he is assigned as a pastor. He projects an image of dependability, reliability and integrity.

Impressions:

He is a thoughtful and sensitive man who has handled his need for intimacy and 'affirmation' by rationalizing long-term personal and sexual relationships. He thinks he has come to terms about them and that they are behind him. I am unsure how deep an impact or personal responsibility he has taken about these situations.

5. Action to Date:

The priest was sent for a psychiatric assessment.

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He does not concur with the recommendation of psychotherapy and thinks that some of the observations are based on a remark that he said in a light manner, namely, what would happen if he were tempted again and he said he did not know.

6. Delegate's Recommendation:

It is clear that the priest has come to some level of acknowledgment about his sexual misconduct in that he was able to talk about it so specifically and clearly. It is also clear, though, he is blind to his own vulnerability. He doesn't come through with a strong sense of remorse. He tends to blame the women and doesn't take personal responsibility. What will happen when his mother dies? Who will supervise him in his ministry if he doesn't enter psychotherapy? Or even if he does?

In view of these concerns, there are three major concerns: scandal about the past; his spiritual maturity and activity; his emotional and psychological health.

7. Recommendation:

1. That he work out with the Archdiocesan legal counsel a resolve around his civil and moral responsibility toward his children.
2. That he make a lengthy retreat.
3. That he be engaged in psychotherapy so that he can deal with his vulnerabilities that have lead him to act out sexually.
4. That he be in a supervised pastoral ministry, not in a leadership position.
5. That his progress in addressing these three areas be reviewed within one year by the Review Board in order to insure that the recommendations are being implemented fully.

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