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January 2, 2002

Most Rev. John B. McCormack
 Bishop of Manchester
 657 N. River Road
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OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR
 FILE: *Confidential*
 AUTHORIZED: *J.D. M.S.W.*

Personal & Confidential

Dear Bishop McCormack,

Thank you for sending me your revised comments dated December 3, 2001. I have taken some time to review these carefully, and I have enclosed some reflections about these, and about our meeting of December 7th.

As usual, I feel a need to cushion some of my enclosed reflections in a more personal letter to you. I wish to make a few additional points here which are intended for you alone. I have sent copies of the enclosed reflections to Father Deibel and Eileen Nevins (no one else), but I am sending this letter only to you.

First of all, I deeply appreciate the time and effort you have put into understanding my position, especially over the last year. I want you to know that I have great difficulty in conscience with the fact that you have had to become so personally involved with this matter. Also, your personal involvement causes me to perhaps place too much emphasis on only one of my priorities, i.e. not to put you "on the spot," or escalate the alienation I have felt from the Diocese. When we meet, I become far too concerned about how conflicted this situation is for you personally. I agree with your thoughts about possibly turning the handling of this case over to someone else who can act as your representative. You mentioned Father Arsenault, and that will be fine with me, but I would also agree to meet with Brad Cook. I will even be nice to him!

Here is my second point: My eight years of dealing with this case have been filled with formed and broken reasons to hope. The present is no exception. Two days after receiving your memo about wanting to hire a more local lawyer, I received a letter from an acquaintance informing me that he has decided, contingent upon my permission, to fund Attorney Rosenthal's retainer of \$6,000 so that he can proceed to review the case. The suggestion was that made that I not tell you about this. I cannot operate in this way. The enclosed memo addresses this, but I want you to know directly that I must consider this offer. I am supposed to give an answer on January 9th, but my answer at this point is that I am not sure of what to do. I ask you to read carefully this section of the enclosed reflections so that you or a representative can discuss this with me. I am open to finding a "next step" that we can all live with.

Here is my third point: I am painfully aware of the suspicions about my past conduct alluded to in your December 3rd memorandum. Of interest, for the last seven years I have lived in quite close quarters in a prison filled with needy 18-to-20-something-year-olds with little in the way of a moral center or familial support. There are young men here who routinely seek out older inmates for support in a form of mutual exploitation. In my over seven years of living in this situation, not a single, even remote, suspicion of inappropriate conduct has ever been raised - not even by other inmates who are constantly searching for information to exploit. In seven years, prison officials have four times placed eighteen or nineteen-year-old inmates in my cell because they have been exploited by others. I have been propositioned for the price of a pack of cigarettes or instant coffee. If one incident had arisen, then others would see this as "proof" that the concerns of my past must all be true. The lack of any form of incident or suspicion is, however, proof of absolutely nothing.

In regard to the other past concerns raised about me, you once told Eileen Nevins of your belief that "where there is smoke there is fire." Sometimes, Bishop, where there is smoke there is only smoke. Sometimes the smoke around me was because of someone else's fire. Regardless, you have not yet asked me for direct details about the matters from which I am responsible. I presented the most egregious of these situations to you in detail at our last meeting, but I have not been clear on the extent to which you have wanted direct information about the past. I have hidden these details from no one.

Final point: I am guilty of none of the criminal behavior claimed by the [REDACTED] - the sole matter for which I am in prison, but I am also aware that in the background of this case exists a nebulous, and potentially deeply scandalous, situation for this Diocese.

I have raised this point privately with you before. If you tell me that my imprisonment is unjust, but that pursuing my freedom places the Church at a risk for scandal and ridicule which outweighs my loss of freedom, then I will cease my efforts without anyone else (other than you) knowing why. I have always known that one possible outcome of this situation is that I might have to live with what has transpired. This may be difficult for you to believe at this point, but as a priest I am capable of putting my interests aside.

I hope you read this letter and the enclosed document in the spirit of openness in which they are written, and I hope you do not take offense at my directness. I wish you health, happiness and peace in the new year.

Respectfully Yours in Christ,

G. MacRae

(Rev.) Gordon J. MacRae

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