

August 23, 1982

PERSONAL/CONFIDENTIAL

Howard W. Thompson, CAC
Director
Guest House
Post Office Box 954
Rochester, Minnesota 55903

Dear Mr. Thompson:

In response to your letter of August 17th, I am pleased to provide you with the following information regarding Father Leo A. Shea, who is to be admitted to Guest House in Rochester on August 23rd. I will respond directly to the questions as you present them in your letter.

1. In my recent discussion with Father Shea he indicated that for the past year he has been treated by a physician for extremely high blood pressure. While I do now know the physician's name and thus am unable to provide you with any medical records, Father Shea indicated that he has been taking up to five blood pressure pills a day. Father Shea also indicated that he does have some problem with his legs. The nature of this problem I do not know.
2. As you know, Father Shea was treated for alcoholism on two occasions in the past at the Guest House in Lake Orion. He was there from September 18th to December 15th, 1978, as well as from August 18th to October 9th, 1980. I am unaware of any other psychological treatment that he has ever received.
3. Father Shea's history of drinking is well known to you from previous hospitalizations. The Diocese, however, was under the impression that since his discharge in 1980 Father Shea had refrained from any alcoholic beverages. In his recent conversation with me, however, Father Shea did admit that he does have a drink when he eats out. I specifically mentioned to him that this was not permitted for someone with alcoholism. He agreed, but seemed to give the impression that he did not feel this was improper for him. I asked him whether he had been intoxicated at any time since 1980. He said that he had not. The people to whom I make reference in Question #5 seem to indicate that alcohol had been smelled on Father Shea's breath by more than one person on different occasions. I mentioned this to Father Shea, but he indicated that this was not true.

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4. I have no information that is pertinent in this regard.
5. Approximately two weeks ago I received a call from two women whose sons are altar boys in Father Shea's parish. He had taken four or five boys to his home on Cape Cod to reward them for their work in the parish. During that time, while the other boys were outside playing, he took one of the boys into the house whose age was 14. According to this boy, Father Shea kissed him and fondled his genitals. The boy was frightened and ran out of the house and told two of the other boys that this occurred. These boys told their parents upon returning home. The father of one of the boys who had been told of the incident called Father Shea and Father Shea supposedly admitted to him that he had gotten out of hand. I asked Father Shea to see me on August 18th. Father Shea admitted that this occurrence had taken place. I asked him if he had had a problem like this for a long time. He indicated that he has been attracted to younger boys for a long time, but that nothing like this has ever happened before. He stated that while he would occasionally hug a young boy and perhaps kiss him on the cheek, this sort of thing has never occurred. Furthermore, he claims that he does not know what came over him or why this occurred. I asked Father Shea whether or not this whole problem in his sexuality had ever come up during previous therapy periods at Guest House. He indicated that while he was questioned about sexual problem he never revealed anything of this inclination. When I asked him why, he stated that he felt he had the problem under control and it was not necessary to talk about it. I made it very clear to Father Shea that he had put himself and the Church into a very difficult situation legally. I mentioned that if the parents in question were to decide to prosecute him legally there was a very good chance he could end up in prison for child molestation. Father Shea seemed to understand this and regretted the whole situation very deeply. I have spoken to the parents involved on several occasions. Specifically, today I made them aware of what the Diocese has done in regard to Father Shea and the clinical treatment that he is receiving. I am confident, but not entirely sure, that they will not pursue any legal action.

It is clear, given the seriousness of the event which occurred and particularly given the number of people in the small rural parish of Troy who know about the situation or have the potential of knowing about it, that Father Shea cannot return to this parish. With the Bishop's permission I made this clear to him during our conversation, and he understands and accepts this fact.

Hoping that this information will be helpful to you, and assuring you of my gratefulness for your concern for Father Shea, I would ask you to please call upon me if I can be of any further assistance to you in this matter.

Howard W. Thompson, CAC

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With every good wish, I am

Sincerely yours,

Rev. Francis J. Christian
Chancellor