

A.B. M. Ed.

NAME		Meffan, Rev. Robert Vincent	
DATE OF BIRTH	Mar. 22, 1929	PLACE OF BIRTH	Boston, Massachusetts
DATE OF ORDINATION	Sept. 29, 1953	PLACE OF ORDINATION	Holy Cross Cathedral, Boston, Massachusetts (Card. Cushing)
HOME ADDRESS	330 Bowdoin St., Dorchester, MA 282-4285 <del>28 Cambridge Street</del> <del>Dorchester, Massachusetts</del>		
ASSIGNMENTS		DATE DETACHED	REMARKS
DATE ASSIGNED	OFFICE		
10/12/53	Assistant St. Ann's, West Bridgewater	2/18/57	
2/18/57	Assistant Sacred Heart Weymouth	6/12/68	
6/12/68	Asst. Chaplain - Met. State Hosp., Waltham	8-25-72	
8/25/72	Asst. Our Lady of Good Counsel, Quincy		
--	Box 298, White Horse Beach, MA 02381 (PHONE UNPUBLISHED)	1-22-82	
1/11/86	Parochial Vicar, St. Thedea, Pembroke	7/8/93	
7/8/93	Administrative Leave		
7/14/93	Address: P.O. Box 298 White Horse Beach, MA 02381		

Rev. Robert V. Meffan  
P.O. Box 298  
White Horse Beach, Massachusetts 02381  
508-866-5941

CONFIDENTIAL REPORT

TO: Rev. John B. McCormack ✓  
FROM: Sr. Catherine E. Mulkerrin  
RE: Rev. Robert Meffan  
DATE: February 3, 1993

GT REDACTION

January 22, 1993 - Call from Jane McNally, former CSJ and currently a licensed psychologist. In September she happened to switch to the religion channel where she heard a priest being interviewed about his book, ██████████ Was Her Life. Her description was that it got "sicker by the minute". When the priest was thanked by name, she recalled incidents which she had heard about from young women in the novitiate of the Sisters of St. Joseph; incidents connected to this priest, F. Muffin. As told to her, F. Muffin would attract adolescent girls, get them to enter religious order and then visit them in various novitiates. He would link spiritual stages with sexual acts, "what one had to do in order to progress" and would perform the acts. She knows of three people in the CSJ Community, two of whom are still in the Congregation. The one who left described to Jane what happened as sick, delusional stuff; she has gone for counseling.

One of the women, still a CSJ, left and then re-entered the community. (An interview she had at Chancery in January, 1986 is on file which corroborates Jane's telephone call.) Jane mentioned no names.

CEM, after reporting this at 1-28-93 meeting, contacted Jane by taped message to see if more could be done by Jane's contacts.

February 4, 1993 - Return call from Jane McNally to CEM in the evening at Cohasset. The following was discussed:

- 1) My (CEM) request that she might want to contact the former member of the CSJ's and see if she wants to come forward. Jane has attempted contact, thinks the person might be away. She seemed to have some hesitation, is cautious about whether confidentiality will be kept and action taken. "How was this priest skipped over, when records were reviewed." CEM said that could happen if no actions had been taken, e.g. assessments.
- 2) Jane shared a CSJ name - is willing that CEM say that she called - especially after thinking about the TV show F. Muffin was on - the "sickness" of that - and her recollection of a certain period of time and events told to her about F. Muffin at Sacred Heart, Weymouth

**GT REDACTION**

- 3) Jane McNally located former member, [REDACTED] who will come for an appointment with CEM, readily.

February 17, 1993 - CEM's call to S. Barbara (1986-file). She felt she had been listened to. "I put it in God's hand and went on with my life." She appreciated concern that she was "heard". CEM - readily accepted above, assured confidentiality. (CEM: I would not press this person.)

CEM:tt

November 5, 1976

Reverend Robert V. Meffan  
Our Lady Rectory  
227 Sea Street  
Quincy, Massachusetts 02169

Dear Father Meffan:

I am responding to your letter of October 17.

I am happy to excuse you from participation in this year's retreat program.

At the same time, I know His Eminence would want me to remind you of our diocesan policy which requires that all priests make a study week and a retreat week in alternate years. Both His Eminence and I feel that in doing this, not only would pastoral performance be enriched, but our priests would have an opportunity to come to know one another better. I naturally, therefore, would appreciate your cooperation in the implementation of this policy.

With best personal regards, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Thomas V. Daily  
Auxiliary Bishop of Boston  
Chancellor

MEFFAN-2 073

Our Lady of Good Counsel Rectory

227 ~~100~~ Sea Street

Quincy, Mass. 02169

July 29, 1977

Your Eminence:

Since the Archdiocesan policy of appointing pastors prevents me from being a pastor in the Archdiocese of Boston and since the word I received on July 15, 1977 indicates to me that this same policy now prohibits me from serving as an associate pastor in our Diocese, I have decided after much thought and even more prayer to retire for the good of all concerned.

Therefore, I submit my retirement effective one week after a new pastor has been appointed to serve the people of Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish, Quincy, Massachusetts.

I have always taught in my priesthood that it does not matter what you are, who you are or where you are. It only matters ~~WHY~~ you are! It seems that the Good Lord now wants me to practice for the rest of my life and Priesthood what I have always preached.

At the moment I can only give you a mailing address:

Reverend Robert V. Meffan  
Box 298  
White Horse Beach, Massachusetts 02381

I will furnish an address and telephone number after I take a good long vacation and get myself settled.

With my continued prayers for the success of your difficult assignment, I remain

Humbly in Christ,

*Robert V. Meffan*  
Reverend Robert V. Meffan

MEFFAN-2 075

Our Lady of Good Counsel Rectory

227 ~~125~~ Sea Street

Quincy, Mass. 02169

August 26, 1977

Your Eminence:

Aware of the many serious problems that you must deal with every day, I hesitate to again come to you with my insignificant problems but with the time passing so rapidly I feel I must have a decision from you.

Since God has blessed me with good health and since there is such a shortage of priests in the diocese, you will recall that on July 30, 1977, I visited Your Eminence as my father in Christ with a problem of conscience which I hoped we could resolve so that I could continue to work in the diocese as an active priest. You will recall that after much discussion that you could not change anything and further told me that you did not know what you could do. I then submitted in writing a request to retire for the good of all concerned effective one week after a new Pastor had been assigned to Our Lady's Parish. You asked for time to think about it which I gladly gave to you. The new Pastor was assigned on August 23, and as yet I have not heard from Your Eminence. By the way on July 30 you indicated to me that you had not read the letter which a newly appointed pastor must sign, so I am taking the liberty of enclosing a copy for your files.

During the past three weeks after much prayer, I took the time to sit down with a lawyer and a canon lawyer. In view of the fact that on June 10, 1977, I accepted the pastorate of Our Lady's parish only to be told on July 8 that my beliefs would prevent me from doing this, and in view of the fact that on that same July 8 after being deprived of the Pastorate, I readily consented to remain as Associate Pastor for the good of the diocese and the good of the people of Our Lady's Parish only to be told again on July 15 that my beliefs also made this an impossibility, both of the lawyers heartily agreed that I am entitled either to full salary as a priest in good standing or full retirement benefits. Both were concerned for my good name as a dedicated priest for twenty-four years because of the many rumors that could get started, and especially since there was no way to stifle these rumors. They also felt that the case should go immediately to Rome because it was as they put it "a flagrant violation of Canon Law".

MEFFAN-2 083

Our Lady of Good Counsel Society

227 ~~125~~ Sea Street

Quincy, Mass. 02169

I once again turned to the Good Lord for direction. I certainly feel that my twenty-four years of service do entitle me to a pension that would allow me to support myself. As to taking the case to Rome, I am undecided. There is presently so much scandal in the Church that I hesitate to add to it. Such recourse however still remains a possibility.

It is with an aching heart that I write this letter to Your Eminence, and I am truly sorry that my conscience cannot agree with a diocesan policy that I had hoped you would change for the good of the priests and people of God.

Once again, I offer remembrance in my Masses and constant prayers for the success of your ministry as Cardinal Archbishop of Boston. I hope to hear from you soon. I remain,

Humbly in Christ,

Reverend Robert V. Meffan

MEFFAN-2 084

September 29, 1977

Reverend Robert V. Meffan  
P.O. Box 298  
White Horse Beach, MA 02381

Dear Father Meffan:

I am writing to acknowledge your personal and confidential letter to me of July 29, 1977 in which you expressed a desire to retire effective one week after a new pastor was appointed to Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish in Quincy.

I have not answered until now because I want you to have a peaceful vacation. Father Martocchio was appointed to Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish on August 23. I assume you started vacation around the beginning of September. I believe, after a month's vacation, it is time for me to give you my views.

Father Bob, I do not want you to retire. There is no policy that prohibits you from serving as an associate pastor in this Archdiocese. It is time that I do not believe you should be an associate pastor at Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish but there are many other parishes in the Archdiocese.

Bishop Hart will be trying to reach you to arrange a meeting to discuss your remaining as an active priest in this Archdiocese. I sincerely hope you are willing to discuss and consider the continuance of your ministry in this way.

With best wishes, I remain

Devotedly yours in Our Lord,

Humberto Cardinal Medeiros  
Archbishop of Boston

MEFFAN-2 090

October 27, 1977.

His Eminence Humberto Cardinal Medeiros  
2101 Commonwealth Avenue  
Brighton, MA 02135

Dear Cardinal Medeiros:

I met yesterday with Father Robert Meffan and spoke with him for some time.

At present, he is unwilling to accept an assignment to a parish in this Archdiocese. He sees this decision as one which will be his as long as the present system prevails. He judges the system to be an evil one because of its emphasis on money, and he feels his particular experience is merely the "tip of the iceberg" of evil and injustice here.

He has thought a long time about retiring, feeling for at least two years that there would some time be a collision between him and the Archdiocese. He told me his difficulties with Cardinal Cushing who, he perceived, considered him too idealistic and not material-minded enough. They surfaced, he said, when he was always rejected when his name was presented to Cardinal Cushing for various Archdiocesan posts (CCD, CYO, Vocation Director).

Father Meffan feels he has been "painted into a corner" on the occasion of his being asked about becoming a pastor, accepting, being rejected; asked about remaining at Our Lady's Parish, accepting, and being rejected. He feels he cannot accept any assignment without at the same time cooperating with the injustice that he sees so clearly at work: to cooperate would not only be a moral compromise regarding truth and honesty for himself, it would be a desertion of the priesthood which he sees as being destroyed by these evils. The matter then is bigger than himself, it concerns the priesthood and the whole Church.

At this time, he wishes to withdraw from any and every official assignment in the Archdiocese. He considers himself already terminated at Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish, Quincy (although presumably officially he is not) and he is unwilling to be assigned to any other

MEFFAN-2 092

parish. He feels he is due some regular stipend in the light of his years of experience. In addition, he wants to have health insurance although he feels healthy now.

He judges that he has already requested this "withdrawal" in his letters to you. He does not feel any further letters from him would be necessary or appropriate until he has an answer to his request for retirement.

I told him I planned to write to you and present a summary of our meeting: that he has refused to accept any assignment, that he wants health insurance, and he feels that he is due some stipend.

I suggest that you write to him along the lines of the enclosed draft.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Father Smyth for his Personnel Office Confidential File.

Respectfully yours in Christ,

*Daniel A. Hart*

+Daniel A. Hart

D R A F T

Rev. Robert Meffan  
P.O. Box 298  
White Horse Beach  
Manomet, MA 02381

October 31, 1977

Dear Father Meffan:

I have a summary of your discussion with Bishop Hart on October 26, 1977.

I regret that you are unwilling to accept an assignment to a parish in the Archdiocese of Boston at this time. I must, therefore, terminate your appointment as Associate Pastor at Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish, Quincy, as of this date.

I do this reluctantly and sadly because I feel you should be able to continue your priestly work in another parish. My concern is not only for the Archdiocese of Boston which thus loses the services of your priesthood in an official way. I am also concerned about you personally.

With this in mind, I ask as your father in Christ that you seek guidance from some professional person. Bishop D'Arcy or Father James Morrissey will be able to suggest in confidence some possibilities in this regard.

MEFFAN-2 098

I shall make arrangements with Bishop Daily so that you will receive the benefits of "Sick Leave" status until April 30, 1978. This will include a monthly stipend of \$200.00 and coverage in the clergy Hospitalization Plan. This status will be reviewed during Marhh 1978 and a further decision will be made at that time.

Please pray with me that your questions will soon be answered and your burdens lightened so that you may return to an assignment in the Archdiocese.

Gratefully yours in Christ,

Humberto Cardinal Medeiros

MEMORANDUM

NOV 28 1978  
OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

November 27, 1978

TO: Bishop Daily

FROM: Father Ryan

RE: Follow-up of the November 8, 1978 Clergy Fund Advisory Committee

(1) It was suggested by the Clergy Fund Advisory Committee that there be some "method of review" for the special cases on the Clergy Benefit Trust listing. It was recommended that you would have some meeting with Fathers Cowhig and Mason in the future, so as to determine whether or not we are "just" in continuing the benefits they receive.

*Done  
9/27/78*

(2) Regarding payments from the Clergy Retirement/Disability Trust and/or Clergy Benefit Trust for early retired to "retired military chaplains" there was question of how we might go about securing data at the time of a man's retirement, so that we will not send to him any check which would bring his total benefit above \$500.00.

A few of the preists already on our listing, may be protected by the grandfather clause since they were retired prior to October 1974, when the Trust documents and Plan were signed by His Eminence, the Cardinal. Nonetheless, the Advisory Committee did register concern that some of the modern day retirees who have been military chaplains can sneak by us if there is no method at Personnel when they are retiring, to find out exactly what their retirement benefit should be. It was further suggested that perhaps a letter of acceptance by His Eminence of a man's retirement, that some specific acknowledgement of his category for stipend be noted. I give this to you for your recall.

*Personnel*

(3) Regarding the anonymity of a priest who approached Father/Doctor Peterson at the St. Luke Institute at Marsalin in Holliston, it was felt that it might be better for you to invite Father/Doctor Peterson to work with Father James Morrissey in the submission of confidential out-patient therapy medical claims, etc. It was discussed that there could be a possible conflict of interest of the "vendor" being the only one aware of the services rendered. Furthermore, there was a concern that no Archdiocesan priest would have a direct contact with the patient/priest.

*need  
letter  
12/7/78*

(4) There was the request that you speak to His Eminence, the Cardinal, regarding Father Meffan, suggesting that he go to "special case" category and off sick leave, since he has insisted to Personnel he is not sick, etc. Furthermore, it was reported by Personnel that Father Meffan was waiting to hear from His Eminence or Bishop Daily, etc. An update at the December 13 meeting on Father Meffan could be valuable.

FJR:tg

*12/13/78*  
*[Handwritten signature]*

MEFFAN-2 116

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Bishop Daily

December 15, 1978

FROM: Father Ryan

RE: Follow-Ups of the Clergy Fund Advisory Committee of  
December 13, 1978

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- 1) Regarding Father Robert Meffan, it was recommended at the November meeting, and further discussed at the December meeting of the Clergy Fund Advisory Committee, that you might speak to His Eminence, the Cardinal regarding the anomaly of Father Meffan's situation of receiving sick leave benefits but not being "sick". Furthermore, he is receiving separate funding for weekend work and thus we would need to know that amount so as to reduce the sick leave benefit in accord with the Trust documents.
- 2) Rev. Edward Cowhig - We have not sent a check for December to Father Cowhig but I am holding the \$613.00 monthly payment here at my office awaiting further directions from you. The Board of Trustees recommended that His Eminence consider no longer sending funds to Father Cowhig until he is willing to secure the needed medical help for his condition.

FJR:tg



TO: Father Ryan  
FROM: Bishop Daily  
SUBJECT: MEMORANDUM OF DECEMBER 15, 1978 - "FOLLOWUPS"  
DATE: 12/19/78

Thank you for the memorandum regarding Reverend Edward Cowhig. One real reason why we have to hold up payment of the \$613.00 monthly check is that we do not know exactly where he is or where he will be. Until we do, obviously, we cannot pay him. In the meantime, I shall try to contact him and have him come here in order that we might have a personal encounter.

Regarding Father Robert Meffan, it has been suggested by His Eminence that I ask Bishop Hart to speak with Father Meffan once again in order to obtain some kind of an idea of just what his situation is and where he intends to go, regarding his priestly ministry. I shall report to you at the earliest possible opportunity.

TVD:mason

MEFFAN-2 119

December 19, 1978

Most Rev. Daniel A. Hart  
Bishop's Office  
235 North Pearl Street  
Brockton, Massachusetts 02401

Dear Bishop:

At the suggestion of His Eminence, I write to ask your intervention with Father Robert Meffan relative his priestly ministry.

I am enclosing copies of correspondence relative to Father Meffan's situation. The Clergy Fund Advisory Committee is the latest agency to raise the question because of the apparent contradiction in his current status; namely, on "sick leave" and receiving benefits, and his own expression of "not being sick".

Your evaluation of the current situation would be deeply appreciated, I am sure, with the hope that Father can return to full-time priestly ministry in the Archdiocese.

With best personal regards, I am

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Rev. Thomas V. Daily  
Auxiliary Bishop of Boston  
Chancellor

TVD/al

MEFFAN-2 121

ARCHDIOCESE OF BOSTON  
OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL BISHOP  
BROCKTON REGION

January 16, 1979

Most Reverend Thomas V. Daily  
Chancellor  
2121 Commonwealth Avenue  
Brighton, MA 02135

Dear Bishop Daily:

This is a reply to your request of December 19 for an evaluation of the circumstances of Reverend Robert Meffan. I met last week with Father Meffan and listened at length to his description of his present condition and his perception of his ministry.

Present Situation:

Health - He indicates he is very healthy and happy. He looks well. He lives alone in a trailer in Carver which he owns jointly with a couple who use it only on weekends. He judges that he has no need now or ever of counseling or any psychiatric help. In conversation with two psychiatrists, they told him that the one who suggested any such help is the one who needs it. He resents very much the fact that this advice was given to him.

Ministry - He told me he sees many people for individual counseling. The next day, for example, he had six appointments. More and more are seeking him out now that he has a more permanent living arrangement. He says Mass at a Nursing Home regularly, baptizes on some occasions, teaches CCD high school courses, helps out on weekends at St. Elizabeth's Parish, Milton; St. Bonaventure's Parish, Manomet; and other places. He is as busy as he ever was, doing priestly work, as distinct from fund-raising. He is completely satisfied with his present ministry. He feels he is more a priest than he was two years ago. "God has been good to me. While it was not easy at first, I am very happy now."

Finances - His monthly check from the Archdiocese changed from \$200 to \$500 without any information why. He wonders if there was fear that he was going to present this matter to Rome and the increase was a way of "buying him off." Later, he heard that all sick-leave payments were increased. He actually has more money than he needs. He gives much of it away. What he wants is retirement status with some monthly payment and (especially) hospitalization benefits. He has requested this twice and has been refused. He continues to pay his "clergy fund" dues.

Future Priestly Ministry - Father Meffan wishes to continue the way he is now. He has no intention of "coming back" to the Archdiocese (that is, to accept a formal assignment) while Cardinal Medeiros is Ordinary. He has two reasons for this: 1 - he was told that his beliefs were in opposition to diocesan policy. If he couldn't stay at Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish because of this, then he couldn't be assigned to any place in the Archdiocese. 2 - The Cardinal said he needed psychiatric help. If we disagree about this, I can't be assigned in the Archdiocese.

Other Topics Discussed:

Personnel Board Members - He judges that they felt he would go along with anything, no matter how unjust or inconsistent.

Finances - The new salary scale for priests and sisters is far beyond what is needed. This is why the Archdiocese is in financial difficulty. Also, part of the problem is the unnecessary expenses in regard to construction. (Detailed story of how Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish lost about \$50,000 because of the delay in approval of the sale of the old rectory and unnecessary additional expenses in connection with the new rectory - and he knows many more similar stories.)

General Overview - The whole Archdiocese is caving in. There is no substance. Morale is poor. Nobody wants to commit himself. What we need are priests like those in "Going My Way." Everyone loved them and they did priestly work, cooperating together, old and young. Possibly many priests have left because they were not as strong as he to stand up to the injustice of the system.

January 23, 1979

Reverend Robert V. Meffan  
Box 298  
White Horse Beach, Massachusetts 02381

Dear Father Meffan:

I have read and considered a summary of your discussion with Bishop Hart on January 10, 1979.

I am sorry that you are unwilling to accept an assignment in the Archdiocese of Boston at this time. This effectively makes you a priest who is disobedient to his lawful superior.

Even though this request is not one with which you agree, I again ask, as your Bishop, that you seek guidance from some professional person. Bishop D'Arcy or Father James Morrissey will be able to suggest in confidence some possibilities in this regard.

It is not appropriate for you to be "retired." I cannot accept your request for such a status.

If I can help, I do not want you to be in material need. Hence, I shall make arrangements with Bishop Daily that you will receive monthly \$200 and coverage in the Clergy Fund Hospitalization Plan for this calendar year. If you do not need any part of this \$200, please return what is extra to Bishop Daily. I will ask him to review this arrangement in December 1979 and a further decision will be made at that time.

I am not happy with this kind of arrangement, not only because the Archdiocese is losing the services of your priesthood in an official way, but also because your situation as a priest is untenable, separated as you are from your Bishop.

I pray with you that you may soon return to an assignment in the Archdiocese.

Devotedly yours in Christ,

Archbishop of Boston

MEFFAN-2 129

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

*Back to Bishop  
for locked file*

October 1, 1980

Rev. Dennis J. Burns, J.C.D.  
Officialis  
Metropolitan Tribunal  
1 Lake Street  
Brighton, Massachusetts 02135

Dear Father Dennis:

I spoke to Father Robert Meffan on September 30 at 4:00 P.M. here at the Chancery Office regarding the matter you brought to my attention recently.

He did not ask that I reveal the source of my information but went on to say that [REDACTED] was an emotional person who brought this matter or this accusation up about eight years ago when he was leaving or had just left Waltham State Hospital. More recently, he gave a weekend retreat to members of the Waltham Legion of Mary and had heard it directly that [REDACTED] has said she was going to stop him from doing that. He gave me the indication that he categorically denied the allegations.

I send this to you for your private, confidential information and should you wish to speak to me further about it or offer me further counsel, I would be happy to meet with you.

With best personal regards, I am

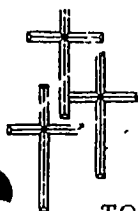
Sincerely in Christ,

Most Rev. Thomas V. Daily  
Auxiliary Bishop of Boston  
Chancellor

TVD/mbg

MEFFAN-2 146

GT REDACTION



ARCHDIOCESE OF BOSTON  
OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL BISHOP  
BROCKTON REGION

MEMORANDUM

TO: Archbishop Law  
Clergy Personnel Directors

FROM: +D. A. Hart

DATE: July 27, 1984

At the request of Father McCarthy, I write this memorandum for Archbishop Law regarding my perception of the issues related to the circumstances of Reverend Robert Meffan, a priest of the Archdiocese of Boston, ordained in September 1953.

Having completed his preparation at St. John's Seminary, Brighton, with signal honors, Bob began and continued his priestly ministry until 1977 with apparent satisfaction and success. He was clearly hard-working, capable, an associate pastor who was exacting on himself and challenging to those who became his co-workers in parish activities and programs. He was quietly effective, always friendly, but not too talkative or visible.

Seven years, Bob's pastor retired and after the customary procedure, Bob was invited to be pastor. At that time, by policy, prospective pastors were asked to commit themselves to support the Stewardship Appeal. It was an ordinary statement to be signed; but Bob refused to do this, and he was not named pastor. As a result of a further misunderstanding, almost immediately upon the new pastor's arrival, Bob left, claiming (as I recall) that he was told that he was required to move. There was a continuing escalating breakdown in communications. I recall listening to Bob one day for about an hour. He was completely justified in his estimation and merely waiting an assignment. Later he became very bitter and claimed that Cardinal Medeiros was personally opposed to him and deliberately unfair.

At that time, Bob shared with me that on at least two separate occasions, Cardinal Cushing had personally vetoed his appointment - once to a diocesan office and once to a chaplaincy. His story had all the appearances of paranoia.

For the past six years, Bob has lived alone in the Plymouth area. He now lives there in a mobile home. He has helped in a number of parishes on weekends. I think he is now regularly celebrating a weekend Mass or two at St. Bonaventure's Parish, Manomet. He also celebrates a Mass regularly for a nursing home-type facility in the Weymouth area. He has told me that he is very busy with counselees who seek him for advice, direction and confession.

To my knowledge, Bob has not been penalized officially in any way, except that he has not been given a priestly assignment. The previous Personnel Director has told me that he had asked Bob about his willingness to be assigned to a specific parish on a number of occasions, but Bob has always been negative. As far as I know, Chancery has been sending his salary regularly over these past seven years.

I hope that the proposed visit of Bob Meffan with Archbishop Law will lead to Bob's assignment as an associate pastor in the Archdiocese. My fear is that Bob will not want even to discuss this until he is given the opportunity to tell his whole story - which could take forever. My suggestion is to try to have the visit be viewed in the context of starting again, on the basis of reconciliation, putting aside old arguments, a clean slate, a new beginning. I expect that Bob would have to be assigned (rather than be given options) and appeals to obedience, to the untenable nature of his present position, and to his devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary may be helpful.

I will be praying for positive results from the proposed meeting.

I hope this will be helpful.

+ D. A. Hart

ARCHDIOCESE OF BOSTON  
OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL BISHOP  
BROCKTON REGION

C O N F I D E N T I A L

December 7, 1984

Most Reverend Bernard F. Law, D. D.  
Archbishop of Boston  
2101 Commonwealth Avenue  
Brighton, MA 02135

Dear Archbishop Law:

I write regarding Reverend Robert Meffan, ordained in 1953, who visited me today at your request.

We spoke at some length about his present circumstances and apostolate. He indicates that he counsels many, is visited by about 25 penitents monthly, gives weekly pastoral care at a Braintree Nursing Home, and helps weekends at a local parish.

Today, he told me that he also has a "mission" confided to him by God which he is bound to keep secret. He indicated he had told no other priest about this before today. He hinted that it is related to DeMontfort Devotion, but was unwilling to be questioned further. This "mission" makes it impossible for him to accept any regular assignment from you. He is saddened by this fact, but feels he is compelled to fulfill this "mission" and any assignment other than his current apostolate is incompatible with it.

I recommend that you allow him to continue his present apostolate for one year with the provision that he would arrange for two appointments during this year with either Bishop Hughes (Vicar for Spiritual Enrichment of Priests) or Bishop D'Arcy. I talked with Bishop D'Arcy who will be agreeable to accept this assignment, but judges that Father Meffan would be completely unacceptable as an associate in the Office of Spiritual Development Programs because of his lack of balance.

I told Father Meffan today that either you or I would write or call him. If you wish, I will draw up a proposed draft of a letter for you to review; and, if you wish, I will arrange with Bishop Hughes and/or Bishop D'Arcy about the possibility of Father Meffan's visiting with them occasionally.

I hope this is helpful.

Respectfully yours in Christ,

+ *Dan Hart*

+ Daniel A. Hart

ARCHBISHOP'S RESIDENCE  
RECEIVED

DEC 10 1984

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY



ARCHBISHOP'S RESIDENCE

2101 COMMONWEALTH AVENUE  
BRIGHTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02135

December 26, 1984

The Reverend Robert V. Meffan  
Box 298  
White Horse Beach, MA 02381

Dear Father Meffan:

Bishop Hart has discussed with me your meeting with him. I regret that you feel unable to accept an assignment from me at this time.

With reluctance I acknowledge this and I will take no further action about this for a period of one year provided that during March 1985 and October 1985 you meet with Bishop Hughes or Bishop D'Arcy, and during December 1985 you meet with Bishop Hart. These meetings will be at your initiative and by appointment. After you meet with Bishop Hart in December I will indicate to you my decision about further action.

Please write to acknowledge this letter indicating your acceptance of these conditions.

Please be sure of my prayers for you during this time.

Devotedly yours in Christ,

Archbishop of Boston

MEFFAN-2 163

CARDINAL'S RESIDENCE

2101 COMMONWEALTH AVENUE  
BRIGHTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02135

December 16, 1985

Reverend Robert V. Meffan  
P. O. Box 298  
White Horse Beach, MA. 02381

Dear Father Meffan:

Upon the recommendation of the Personnel Board of the Archdiocese, I am appointing you Parochial Vicar at Saint Thecla Parish in Pembroke, effective January 11, 1986.

I am confident that you will render fine priestly service to the People of God in Saint Thecla Parish.

Please notify Most Reverend Robert J. Banks, Vicar for Administration, and Reverend Thomas F. Oates, Personnel Director, that you have received this letter.

With my warm personal regards and best wishes, I am,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Archbishop of Boston

MEFFAN-2 178

Reverend Robert V. Meffan  
Box 298  
White Horse Beach, Ma. 02720  
December 27, 1985

RECEIVED  
DEC 30 1985

Reverend Thomas F. Oates  
Personnel Director  
1 Lake Street  
Brighton, Massachusetts 02135

CLERGY PERSONNEL OFFICE

Dear Father Oates:

This is to confirm receipt of a letter  
from the Cardinal appointing me Parochial Vicar  
at Saint Thecla Parish in Pembroke, effective  
January 11, 1986.

May the blessings of Christmas be yours  
throughout the year.

Prayerfully in Christ,  
*Robert V. Meffan*  
(Rev.) Robert V. Meffan



MEFFAN-2 180

Chris Meffan

1/31/86

- Dad Meffan began Sp Wks Sept 1961 - went out  
Lived Hart. 17 - talked to him. Lived in walls,  
Went on Hill College - Sept, 1962.
- family relation - nothing improper
- Sept, 1963 - entered CSF - came 2 or 3 x a year
- Aug, 1964 - "my soul is called to X in Spec. way" sent of the Second Comg -  
Dad didnt want under brick at this time. "He had  
seen in prison anything my nt had seen"

- Oct Nov. 1967 - Previously had talked about growth - but not  
ready to profit from it. But now ready - he'd  
be seeing me my 3 weeks - I'd see him at King  
Began by asking me to smoke gradually. Then  
took to his bedroom.  
Met Steve - ~~1965~~: 2 or 3 months - regular in bedroom  
lasted until 1972. It was a normal kind of  
~~relationship~~ relationship. He did not complete union

1974 - lived at Dad's house: It had become more  
tense because of school. The field of focus was  
focus & wouldn't be tense.

- He was very angry because I was so tense -  
which meant not being "Maybe you should  
be seeing a psychiatrist" I then immediately  
got a psychologist. He said - "I didn't  
see him enough to hold him."

I really don't know about anything since 1975.

All Systems: He issued some of ideas + actions on basis of reading  
B. He used "h" since the invention

Women - before 1980 - <sup>strong and to a like</sup> <sub>compulsive behavior</sub>

MARY WAS HER LIFE

Background:

1/31/86

Interview recorded with [redacted] - [redacted]  
described - love-making which was led up to  
Revelations - (Al Sylvia)

2/22/86 - denial - accepted

but comment - Bob's reactions were such that the  
allegations might well be true: not upset, but matter of fact  
no desire to know who - ... no indignation - no dry mouth

- some reference to [redacted]

GT REDACTION

CONFIDENTIAL REPORT

TO: Rev. John B. McCormack  
FROM: Sr. Catherine E. Mulkerrin  
RE: Interview with Ms. [REDACTED]  
regarding Fr. Robert Meffan  
DATE: February 19, 1993

GT REDACTION

February 9, 1993 - [REDACTED] a former Sister of St. Joseph kept an appointment with CEM in order to describe her relationship with Fr. Meffan when she was a parishioner and student at Sacred Heart, Weymouth and Fr. Meffan was stationed there.

In her sophomore or junior year when she was 15-16 years old, [REDACTED] joined CYO and other clubs at Sacred Heart, because she wanted the girls there as friends. As she recalls now, of the 5 or 6 in special relationship with Fr. Meffan, there was something wrong at home. In her own case both parents were alcoholic.

Fr. Meffan's message was based on the bride and bridegroom scripture image which he claimed was "not metaphorical, but meant to be literal and for some special reason he had the vision (about that)" ahead of others.

[REDACTED] said that "he made me feel special, smart . . ." He spoke of a special relationship (of her and the others) with Christ, the soul of Christ. He did not go as far as intercourse because that was the after-life. She said that his touching (while she was on his lap) was encouragement also to masturbate mentally and if "one managed to have contractions, he could get real off". This went on for three years of high school and her postulancy. He "did anything" short of intercourse. The girls met with him in his rectory office, which [REDACTED] recalls the other priests jokingly calling "his tank"; he also had the young women at a cottage down the Cape- seeing them one at a time. Fr. Meffan monitored them, e.g. clothing - no slacks; and after the 7:00 A.M. Mass (daily) each would go into the vestry one at a time. When asked what each girl knew about the other, [REDACTED] said, "We all knew there was no intercourse" and there was some kind of competitiveness among them. At the same time lots of people had bad feelings about Fr. Meffan, including [REDACTED] mother who saw a book about the stigmata which Father Meffan had given to [REDACTED].

When [REDACTED] as a postulant told Fr. Meffan she did not wish to visit with him, his reply was, "I knew I moved too fast with you", also "you were always a cynic, a skeptic. In Framingham [REDACTED] recalled a time of feeling absolutely crazy, spacy (postulant).

As a kid she felt that Father Meffan has a very strong, personal

kind of power. She wanted to please him, was not in love with him, but somebody was paying attention to her.

[REDACTED] says that Father Meffan continued to see others in their novitiates - Springfield, SCH's, 2 others in CSJ's - He told them, this (what he was doing) is a religious vocation.

CEM:tt

**GT REDACTION**

CONFIDENTIAL REPORT

TO: Rev. John B. McCormack ✓  
FROM: Sr. Catherine Mulkerrin  
RE: Allegation #2 - Fr. Meffan  
DATE: April 16, 1993

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On March 31, 1993 at Chancery, CEM met with [REDACTED] at 4:30 P.M. [REDACTED] had met [REDACTED] at the wake/funeral of [REDACTED]'s aunt. Both were aware of prior experiences pertaining to Fr. Meffan; and [REDACTED] told [REDACTED] there was a person she would contact. [REDACTED] currently lives in Connecticut, is in her [REDACTED] marriage and has [REDACTED] daughters by her first marriage. She was a member of the Srs. of St. Joseph for four years and grew up in [REDACTED]

When [REDACTED] was in the ninth grade she was advised to go see Fr. Meffan because she was troubled by her father's severe alcoholism. She was in a sense an only child, because her brother was ten years older. A public school student, she joined the Junior Legion of Mary and other groups. She describes meeting with Fr. Meffan as a process that moved slowly and carefully. He used Bride of Christ images and talked a lot about how much God loved her, how special she was. Suggestions for physical suffering included putting buttons in one's shoes, or a piece of twine with knots around one's waist, kneeling with arms outstretched, etc. . Fr. Meffan used to suggest imaging Christ touching, kissing, having intercourse with [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] father died when she was a junior in April , [REDACTED] On Father's day of the same year, Fr. Meffan hugged [REDACTED], had her kneel for his blessing and kneeling had her hug him around the waist.

In July 1964, she and ? three other girls went to Father's rented cottage at the Cape. his parents were there also. At night the girls individually would go into a room upstairs. With Fr. Meffan, there would be hugging, kissing, touching everywhere, kissing of genitals Fr. Meffan had learned through a mystic that he was going to be the Christ of the Second Coming.

Through 1965-69, Fr. Meffan made visits to the CSJ novitiate and scholasticate. When [REDACTED] said she was leaving, he said that was not part of the plan; she realized the plan centered on him.

When [REDACTED] divorced in 1980 and sought counseling afterward, none of the above was talked about. More recently, she has dealt with this in counseling and has told her husband. Since her appointment at Chancery, She has decided to return to counseling. Financial help for that was offered, but at present [REDACTED] prefers

GT REDACTION

not to jeopardize her medical plan supplement.

The one thing she would especially like to happen is that this man not be able to harm any others.

CEM:tt

**GT REDACTION**

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

Reverend Robert Meffan

Father Meffan is age sixty-five. Two allegations have been made recently. One anonymous allegation was made seven years ago and Father Meffan was made aware of that at that time. These allegations all revolve around spiritual advice given to vulnerable young girls which encouraged literal interpretation of the scriptural image of the Bride and the Bridegroom.

The anonymous allegation was made by a woman who describes meeting with Father Meffan when she was seventeen. This continued over a twelve year period. During that time she alleges that Father Meffan began slowly by providing spiritual counseling. She alleges that eventually there was sexual contact which she described as 'lovemaking'. We are not clear whether this included intercourse. She says that Father Meffan began by inviting her to undress gradually and then invited her to his bedroom. At a later stage, for a four year period when she was age 24 she met monthly with Father Meffan and she describes that there was 'normal kind of lovemaking that took place'. This person is in religious life.

The next allegation was made by [REDACTED]. Her relationship with Father Meffan began when she was in high school and Father Meffan was a priest in her parish.

Father Meffan served as her spiritual director and guide during her high school years. Father Meffan's message to her was based on the bride and bridegroom scripture image which he claimed was not meant to be metaphorical but meant to be literal. There was touching and fondling. This went on for three years of high school and her postulancy in the convent. [REDACTED] claims that Father Meffan did everything short of intercourse with her because he claimed that that action was for the afterlife.

When [REDACTED] was a postulant in the convent she ended it by telling Father Meffan that she did not wish him to visit her.

Another allegation was made by [REDACTED]. Her relationship with Father Meffan began when she was in the ninth grade and he was a priest in her parish. [REDACTED] went to see Father Meffan at the advice of others at a difficult time in her life. She describes meeting with Father Meffan as a process that moved slowly and carefully. Father Meffan used Bride of Christ scripture images and talked a lot about how much God loved her and how special she was. He used to suggest to her that she imagine Christ touching, kissing, having intercourse with her.

She recalls that when she was a junior in high school Father Meffan hugged her, had her kneel for his blessing, and kneeling had her hug him around the waist.

**GT REDACTION**

In the summer of her Junior year she recalls visiting Father Meffan at a summer cottage with three other girls. His parents were also present. At night, she recalls that each of the girls would individually go into a room upstairs with Father Meffan and there would be hugging, kissing, touching everywhere and kissing of genitals. Also, she recalls Father Meffan telling them that he had learned through a mystic that he was going to be the Christ of the Second Coming.

Father Meffan continued to visit with [REDACTED] when she entered the convent. It ended when [REDACTED] left the convent after four years.

Father Meffan denies all these allegations. He describes himself as a perfectionist. In conversation he can seem rather rigid in his approach. He was very reluctant to go for an assesment.

GT REDACTION

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Father Deeley  
FROM: Father McCormack  
DATE: July 6, 1993  
RE: Reverend Robert Meffan

---

Father Meffan has refused to go into residential treatment at St. Luke's. However, I think he might be open to outpatient treatment. What would you think of putting him in outpatient treatment and asking him to consider prison ministry? Hospital ministry?

My ~~only~~ concern about putting him back into ministry is that up to this point he has never fully denied the allegations nor does he fully admit them. I wonder if through outpatient treatment he might be helped to come to own the allegations and take advantage of therapy.

We can talk about this on Thursday.

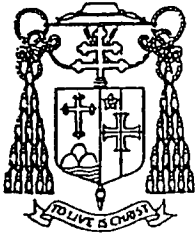
His assignment is to be ended but the letter should not be sent without reflecting the lack of a resolve. Would you share with me the draft letter you have arranged?

Any observations or questions?

Many thanks.

JBM:mo'1  
6222M

MEFFAN-2 263



CARDINAL'S RESIDENCE  
2101 COMMONWEALTH AVENUE  
BRIGHTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02135

RECEIVED

JUL 15 1993

MODERATOR OF THE CURIA

July 8, 1993

Reverend Robert Meffan  
St. Thecla Parish  
154 Washington Street  
North Pembroke, Massachusetts 02358

Dear Father Meffan:

I was sorry to learn about the allegations made about you. In light of the procedures used by the Archdiocese to address such allegations and in line with the agreement you reached with Reverend John B. McCormack, Secretary for Ministerial Personnel, I am ending your assignment as parochial vicar at St. Thecla's Parish, Pembroke effective July 8, 1993 and am assigning you to an administrative leave with residence at your family home in Plymouth, Massachusetts. It is my understanding that Father McCormack will be working with you to come to a resolution as to how best to address the concerns raised by these allegations.

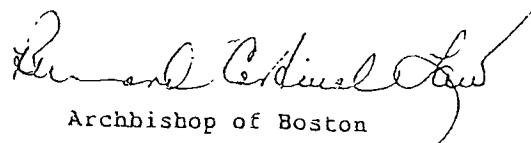
During this period, you are free to celebrate Mass privately. Otherwise, I ask that you refrain from all pastoral activity until a resolution has been arrived at regarding the allegations. During this period, your regular monthly remuneration will be provided through the Clergy Benefit Trust of the Archdiocese.

I realize that this is a difficult time for you and for those close to you. If I can be of help to you in some way, please let me know. Be assured you are remembered in my prayers.

Please send a written notice to Most Reverend Alfred C. Hughes, Moderator of the Curia, and Reverend James J. McCarthy, Director of the Officer of Clergy Personnel, indicating that you have received this letter.

With warm personal regards, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

  
Archbishop of Boston

MEFFAN-2 265

Review Board

July 18, 1993

Case #22

1. Allegations:

Initial contact:

Licensed psychologist (former nun - who had known about one or two of the women). She contacted CEM then told one woman about this office. She in turn met and told second woman.

There are three allegations. They were all young women. The incidents began in the early or late high school years. The allegations include lovemaking, inviting her to undress, inviting her to his bedroom; touching and fondling, everything short of intercourse; bride of Christ, imagine Christ touching, kissing, having intercourse with her, hugging him around waist and kissing of genitals. All under guise of spiritual counseling. These complaints took place about twenty-five years ago.

2. Complainants:

All high school girls went to the convent and went to person for spiritual counseling. Two women have left the convent. Initial contact heard him on the TV - "sick religious talk." One complainant is anonymous and made the complaint seven years ago. She was recontacted but will not be asked to repeat her allegations.

3. Response:

Person is stunned. He remembers the girls who are named. They were active in CYO. He taught them to be brides of Christ. He does not know why they are saying these things. He admits to hugging people. He tried to teach girls to love Christ, to go to daily Mass and to make sacrifices. In his talks he emphasizes sex as very special, as God's gift.

4-1 Background of Person:

He is sixty-four years old. He is very intelligent and is known to be deeply spiritual. He does a lot of counseling. He has had problems with ecclesial authority in previous years. He projects an image of sincerity, idealism, and perfectionism.

4-2 Impressions:

A summary of the assessment: He learned it is necessary to express love to other people. He has used self-control throughout his life in order to channel his sexual energy. Regarding the allegations, he denies any sexual motivation in his behavior. In hugging people, if he touched them on any sexual parts, it was accidental. He admits that he was hugged around his legs by a kneeling female, but notes that he was not sexually aroused.

He appears to have difficulty understanding the presence of sin and evil impulses within himself. His personality profile suggests he may attempt to present an unrealistically favorable picture of his personal virtue and moral values. He tends to avoid self-disclosure and places strong value on adhering to the expectations of others. He may be excessively rigid and authoritarian in a defensive way. He tends to see things in an overly simplistic light. He has strong dependency needs while simultaneously has less than usual needs for emotional closeness.

Review Board

July 28, 1993

Case #22

1. Allegations:

Initial contact:

Licensed psychologist (former nun - who had known about one or two of the women). She contacted CEM then told one woman about this office. She in turn met and told second woman.

There are three allegations. They were all young women. The incidents began in the early or late high school years. The allegations include lovemaking, inviting her to undress, inviting her to his bedroom; touching and fondling, everything short of intercourse; bride of Christ, imagine Christ touching, kissing, having intercourse with her, hugging him around waist and kissing of genitals. All under guise of spiritual counseling. These complaints took place about twenty-five years ago.

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3. Response:

Person is stunned. He remembers the girls who are named. They were active in CYO. He taught them to be brides of Christ. He does not know why they are saying these things. He admits to hugging people. He tried to teach girls to love Christ, to go to daily Mass and to make sacrifices. In his talks he emphasizes sex as very special, as God's gift.

4-1 Background of Person:

He is sixty-four years old. He is very intelligent and is known to be deeply spiritual. He does a lot of counseling. He has had problems with ecclesial authority in previous years. He projects an image of sincerity, idealism, and perfectionism.

4-2 Impressions:

A summary of the assessment:

RCAB Redaction

*REB Redaction*

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

5. The person has a very aged mother to whom he is closely devoted. He does not want to leave her and enter residential treatment. He is open to outpatient treatment and wants to retire.
6. Delegate Recommendation:  
  
That he continue in regular contact with his monitor. That he be allowed to live at home ~~with his mother~~. That he be engaged in outpatient psychotherapy. That he not have faculties to carry out ministry. That this case be reviewed within one year to see if there is progress in his being able to look at the negative factors in his personal history and personality and inability to handle his personality in a more healthy way.

JBM:mo  
6290  
7/28/93

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

Review Board

Case #22

The board endorsed the recommendation of the delegate with the following refinement:

- a) Delete "that he be allowed to live at home with his cousin." and substitute "that he live in a structured aftercare program."

*J.M. Mark W. Jeffrey — Kevin Hill me at last August*

JBM:mo'l  
6397M  
8/2/93

*Conf file*

September 20, 1993

Reverend Robert Meffan  
P. O. Box 298  
White Horse Beach  
Plymouth, Massachusetts 02381

Dear Father Meffan

I hope that you are doing well. It is not the easiest of times and you have been in my thoughts and prayers.

I am aware of the lack of closure regarding your circumstances. I wonder if you and I could meet to continue our discussion about what has been recommended to the Cardinal about your ministry and care and what ability you think you have to meet this.

Would you give Maureen O'Leary a telephone call and she can set up a time for us to meet the week of October 4 or 11. If these days are not convenient, she will arrange it for another time.

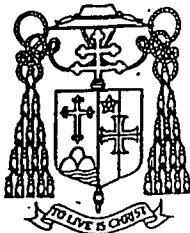
Take care, Bob.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

JBM:mo'l  
6510M

Reverend John B. McCormack  
Secretary for Ministerial Personnel

MEFFAN-2 288



CARDINAL'S RESIDENCE  
2101 COMMONWEALTH AVENUE  
BRIGHTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02135-3192

June 17, 1996

Reverend Robert V. Meffan  
P.O. Box # 298  
White Horse Beach, MA 02381

Dear Father Meffan:

It was good to be able to meet with you on last Friday afternoon to discuss your request in your letter dated April 29, 1996. You indicated in that letter that after consultation with Father Flatley you felt that the best course of action was to seek Senior Priest/Retirement status and you therefore did request that status.

I write now to advise you formally that in line with your request and our discussion, I am granting you Senior Priest/Retirement status. The effective date of this action is July 1, 1996.

Please send written notification to Most Reverend William F. Murphy, Vicar for Administration, and Reverend James J. McCarthy, Director of Clergy Personnel, indicating that you have received this communication.

This letter provides me with an opportunity to thank you in my name and in the name of the people of the Archdiocese for the ministry which you have offered in both hospital and parish settings over the years since your ordination in 1953. You have worked over these years to bring God's Word and His Love to His people. We are truly grateful for your priestly care and ministry to all whom you have served during those years. Without doubt over these years of generous care, the lives and hearts of many people have been touched by your sharing of the Lord's Spirit. We are truly grateful.

I am aware that there are some specific considerations which call for attention at this time in order to be sure that we have a mutual understanding with regard to this new status. Thus I have asked Father Flatley to follow-up on this communication. I am certain that you will hear from him shortly.

With grateful remembrance and with my blessing and promise of prayer, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Archbishop of Boston

cc: Reverend Brian M. Flatley

MEFFAN-2 329

RECEIVED

JUL -3 1995

Bernard Cardinal Law  
2101 Commonwealth Avenue  
Brighton, Massachusetts 02135

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Your Eminence:

I wish to take this opportunity to thank you for your time  
your kindness and especially for your pain. God knows you have  
enough problems without my adding to your burden. So again thanks  
and God love you.

This past Sunday we had Father Mahoney down to celebrate his  
fifty first anniversary of ordination. He had a marvelous time.  
Recently his medication was changed and he was brighter and  
sharper than he has been for months. Thank God!

When we met on June 14 you asked me to consider writing about  
my reactions to my current situation. Enclosed please find a  
copy of same. I tried to keep it brief but inclusive. If you  
feel it has value please use it as you see fit. If not, file  
it. This morning I offered Mass that God bless and guide your  
every decision. Peace and love to you, my friend,

Humbly in Christ,  
*Robert V. Meffan*  
(Reverend) Robert V. Meffan

I live my life now as a prisoner of love not because I chose it but because Christ permitted it. Let me explain. Some years ago I received the greatest gift awarded to man in this life, a vocation, a calling to the priesthood. After completing my Seminary studies I was ordained a priest. My life became full and extremely happy. I was a servant of the servants of God-His people. I had the awesome ability as another Christ of bringing the Creator of all things down to earth to dwell physically with His creatures. This miracle of miracles took place daily while the sacrifice of Mass was being offered. Then as His other self I was able to forgive sins through the Sacrament of reconciliation, the humbling ministry of the confessional. It was exciting to pour the water of Baptism on the sometimes hairless heads of the newborn, to make them children of God and heirs to His eternal kingdom. It was a privilege to witness the marriage vows of couples lovingly giving up their individuality to live as one through the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony. The countless hours spent listening to the never ending problems of His people were a joy and sometimes there was even a solution. Teaching religion classes and working with parish organizations was always a challenge but more often than not the results were gratifying. And so it went, busy days and busier nights but always love-filled and happy.

Then came the bombshell, "You have been accused of sexual misconduct with a minor. No longer can you serve as a priest in a parish." This was Diocesan policy, strict but necessary. My dreams were shattered. It seemed that life had passed me by. I was trapped, a prisoner of love in a cell of allegation. Anger flared up and bitterness was at my doorstep, but only briefly. Such reaction would serve no purpose, for those who live with bitterness will die in bitterness. So forgive and be happy and pick up the pieces. Did not the Lord forgive and pray for His accusers and besides He allowed this to happen. Why? I do not know. You can be sure that He had a reason which will some day be revealed to me. With this in mind a gentle peace settled over my soul and I began to realize that my ministry was not over. I could still say Mass privately each morning, becoming one with my loving Christ. I could still tell Him over and over again that I loved Him and since I knew that He was with me always my ministry could reach to the ends of the earth. "I am the vine, you are the branches." United to Him every act of love, every sacrifice, every heartache could secretly touch souls that I will never know on earth. Now each moment of each day is offered to Him to be used wherever He may see fit. And so in perfect peace and happiness, I live a prisoner of love, patiently waiting for eternity where hidden things will be revealed and the truth shall set me free.

PRISONER OF LOVE

MEFFAN-2 350