

Rt. Rev. and dear Monsignor Sexton:

I know that you suggested that this not be put in writing but my advisor feels this is important for reasons to be explained below.

I want to thank you for your very kind approach even though in your mind the accusations against me must have seemed just. If there is any note of bitterness in what I am about to say, please believe me it is not directed against you but at the hopelessness of the situation. On more than one occasion I have helped other priests in similar predicaments and have many times myself been similarly situated but never with a Scylla and Charybdis so devastating.

Fight or Flight? If I fight I am sure I could at least convince you but by attempting to secure release from the Seal, summoning witnesses and thereafter risking the tongue of this woman. On the other hand flight leaves a doubt in your mind, in the mind of the priest who wrote to you, and a record in Chancery.

You suggest a June transfer. Leaving this overwhelming parish is a prospect not at all unattractive to me. Staying, with such a suspicion looming on the horizon would be crippling. But if leaving would indicate to you the veracity of this allegation then I could not live with that either, and would have to request a confrontation and secure a lawyer.

At your suggestion I consulted a wise priest and under the seal disclosed him all the facts. He agrees that if the boy would release me from the seal you would quickly conclude that the accusation has no foundation. On the other hand he is equally certain that the boy is not likely to do this. Others could be brought in to testify but the suspicion and notoriety thus engendered would end my effectiveness in the parish anyway. He found of interest your quote regarding the lesser of two evils and suggested speculation on what might have been the greater. He wanted to know, and I could not tell him, whether the mother or the boy spoke to the priest. If it was just the mother then there is more hope.

Even if I were to convince you of my innocence he said, there is still the doubt about my prudence hence he insisted that I apprise you of the youth work in which I have been engaged over a period of 20 years without ever running afoul of such an accusation. Is it not wondrous he asks that I deceived a whole police department into requesting my chaplaincy and referring all juveniles to me especially those with sexual problems? Is it not pertinent that I deceived an entire psychiatric staff to whom I have made dozens of referrals, who put me on the board of Consultants, who honored me with the Mental Health Award of 1967 for an outstanding contribution in the field of Mental Health. That I deceived you, yourself into requesting that I take a position with the Catholic Boys Guidance Center. That I deceived my classmates for for 15 yrs. who elected me to the Senate and the Senate to the Advisory Board. That I deceived an entire population into bestowing the Man of the Year Award on me for my work with 1000's of teenagers (half of whom are male). It would have to be renamed: Charlatan of the Year. Unbeknownst to my superiors, before entering the seminary I was accorded national honors for outstanding service and leadership to youth, and the Mayor of Boston Citizenship Citation for the same reason.

RCAB 00046

Continuing on the prudence of my actions: All of my priest friends drop in unannounced at this alleged trysting-place. The fire chief of the area and the police are frequent visitors. The irony of it is that the reason I started taking youngsters with me to these woods (where I lived and worked for 7 years before the seminary) as a YMCA Camp Director) was to obviate it ever being the occasion for accusation from any of the disturbed women with whom I was working. After a local doctor was placed in such a compromising situation it was a priest confessor who advised me to do this very thing. "Put a Roman collar on a lamp-post and some woman will fall in love with it...is a saying to the truth of which I can attest many times over. Half a dozen times I have gone to the pastor to tell him of dangerous situations in which I was involved and to set up safeguards. More than once other priests have taken over cases for me when I became apprehensive on this level. Perhaps had I been less discreet in the area I would not know be burdened with this nightmare.

The older priest also raised some questions which did not occur to me while I was speaking with you. Since the boy continued to be a frequent penitent of mine for nearly a year after the alleged liaison, is there any implication that solicitation or absolution of an accomplice is involved, for then I would have no choice but to fight. Since you did not explicitly mention these matters and since he has had dealings with you in such cases before he feels that you do not believe the story and advises me to follow your counsel. On the other hand he says that if you do believe the story then my career is in jeopardy and I must fight. "Leave it to his discretion. If transfer implies in his mind guilt, and if the confrontation will not jeopardize the seal or spread suspicion broadcast and will not be simply your word against this boy, then fight. But if no implication of guilt would accrue to a transfer and since you want a change anyway and since the pastor will not raise up a storm then accept the transfer but if a record is to be kept then insist that a record of your defense be attached since Monsignor Sexton will not always be Chancellor. The boy's story was obviously convincing to the priest who wrote to the Chancellor or he would have contacted you directly to warn you. It might be convincing to the next Chancellor

Finally, after days of discouragement, temptation and prayer, I am in agreement with this advice if you can give me assurance that transfer will in no way be interpreted as substantiating these charges.

But let me warn you--if this paper implies a calmness and a rational confidence you are misled. As often as I opt for this conclusion I am, within hours filled with rage and determined to fight and to make an example of this type of behavior to which we priests are subject, in a civil court case. Perhaps I am mistaken but I got the impression you might have had similar dark desires.

In any case I am sure I will never again be able to function with the freedom and confidence I once had.

I swear to you as God is my Judge that I did not masturbate this boy here or anywhere else at that date or any other date, so help me God. I feel unclean even writing such a demurrer.

About the only note of humor I can inject into this horror is that it is indeed a comforting prospect to realize that any allegations which might in the future be made against me involving women will be given far less credence than ordinary in the light of my presumed predilection for pederasty. Let us hope that this knowledge does not lead me to too great a sense of security.

RCAB 00047

May god give you the strength and grace you need to discharge your office in the unsavory circumstances which must so often beset you. And may god give me the wisdom to grow closer to Him as a result of this trial and not to become a broken cistern of bitter waters.