

MEMORANDUM

TO: File
FROM: Rev. Brian M. Flattery *BMF*
DATE: October 3, 1995
RE: Rev. John M. Picardi, Jr.

On October 2, 1995 I traveled to Trinity Retreat in Larchmont, New York to meet with Father Eugene Fulton and Father Benedict Groeschel, C.F.R. concerning Father John M. Picardi, Jr. Father Fulton had requested this meeting to discuss some concerns they had about Father Picardi.

Fathers Groeschel and Fulton met with me in Father Fulton's Office. The Retreat House is a beautiful setting in which Father Picardi spent a great deal of time when he first left the Archdiocese.

Father Groeschel indicated that he was concerned about the way that the Archdiocese has handled Father Picardi's case. Father Groeschel said that he found Father Picardi to be one of the more honest priests he has dealt with. Father Picardi acknowledges that he has some sexual identity confusion. He has been forthright about his past. Father Groeschel sees him as a good candidate for return to ministry.

Father Groeschel talked a great deal about Father Mark Sheehan and his role in this situation. He described unusual behavior on Father Sheehan's part early in the time when Father Sheehan was Father Picardi's Pastor at Saint Michael's Parish in Bedford, Massachusetts. For example, on Father Picardi's birthday, Father Sheehan placed wrapped presents on each step of the stairway up to the Rectory living quarters. When Father Sheehan came to say good-bye to Monsignor Andrew Cusack at a recent National Institute for Clergy Formation, he seemed to ignore Father Groeschel, who was sitting with Monsignor Cusack. Father Groeschel wondered if this was an indication of guilt feelings concerning this case. I pointed out to him that I was a neighbor of the Bedford parish when Fathers Picardi and Sheehan were there. Father Sheehan can be self-aggrandizing, but I always sensed that he had real concern for Father Picardi. The over-generous response is something that I would see as typical of Father Sheehan.

Father Groeschel heard that there were false reports of anonymous calls to the Bedford Police about Father Picardi. He wondered if Mark Sheehan was the source of these reports. I explained that someone told the investigator from New Jersey that anonymous calls had been made about Father Picardi to the Bedford Police. I called a friend of mine who is a Bedford Police Officer. He told me that there had indeed been calls, but Bedford Police Department policy is not to record anonymous reports. There are no records, but it is generally known among the officers that these calls were made, so the information could have come from many sources.

We talked about Father Picardi's past. I told them that our files indicate that [REDACTED] accused Father Picardi of rape. He alleged that Father Picardi woke him three times during the night. The first time Father Picardi was removing [REDACTED] pants; the second time he performed oral sex; the third time he attempted anal sex and ejaculated. They were aware of the first two allegations, not the third. I told them that our files indicate that Father Picardi admitted to Bishop Hughes that [REDACTED]'s allegations were correct.

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I told them that in Father Picardi's file there are references to his being too close to children; to being "touchy" with them. [REDACTED] says that three other young people said that Father Picardi was always touching them, but not genitally. These are observations and not accusations. By themselves they are not important. With the [REDACTED] case, and with the New Jersey case they take on a new significance. After the New Jersey accusation I pointed out to Father Picardi that in light of this accusation the anonymous calls became more important. His reply was, "I know that. I'm not stupid."

Father Groeschel and Father Fulton are aware that Bishop Rodimer is considering reopening the investigation in New Jersey. I shared with them my feeling that I could see very little good coming out of such a reopening, and a great deal of harm to Father Picardi.

They asked what has changed since the Archdiocese allowed Father Picardi to work in the Paterson Diocese. I pointed out that this was before the James Porter case. The Archdiocese did not have a policy on sexual abuse at that time. I am convinced that the Review Board would not be comfortable with Father Picardi ministering in Parish ministry in the Archdiocese of Boston again. While he was seeking involvement in Paterson, Cardinal Law was always insistent that Bishop Rodimer be aware of everything in this case.

Father Groeschel's final observation was that they, Fathers Fulton and Groeschel, should work with Father Picardi on coming to terms with the fact that he will not be able to minister within the Archdiocese of Boston again.

October 3, 1995

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