

FR. MEL BUCHER



ARCHDIOCESE
OF PORTLAND
IN OREGON

CONFIDENTIAL

Vicar For Clergy

MEMORANDUM

TO: File

FROM: Father Charles J. Lienert

SUBJECT: Telephone call from

DATE: July 20, 1993

I received a call from [redacted] He told me that he was the individual who was abused by Father Mell Bucher during the period of time that Father Bucher was on leave from the priesthood. He asked me if I had spoken with Detective Stratford about this. I told him that I had. He said that Detective Stratford indicated that I had offered some counseling if he thought that would be helpful. I told him that this was true.

He explained that it had been difficult for him to report this, but he felt it was necessary because there may be other individuals who were damaged by Father Bucher. He reported it first to CSD who referred him to the police department. He said also that he has some unresolved issues about this. It has been difficult to bring it up and think about it. He asked me whether I had any idea who might be good at counseling. I gave him Dr. Chris Eskeli's name from Ridge Crest Associates and also the name of Dr. Lingas. He then said that he would like to talk to the ministers in his own church to see whether they had a recommendation of someone who would be a counselor. I told him that this would be fine and that he might then contact the counselor and me so that we could have some indication of what the counselor's fees were and what the duration of counseling might be. He told me that he would get back in touch with me.

I also told him that we were concerned to make sure that Father Bucher was not a danger to any individual. He is currently undergoing a thorough evaluation by Dr. McGovern and we are expecting a report at any time.

cc: Very Reverend Joseph Chinnici, OFM

Ms. Kathleen Cleary

CJL:gg



ARCHDIOCESE
OF PORTLAND
IN OREGON

CONFIDENTIAL

Office of Business Affairs

M E M O R A N D U M

Date: September 13, 1993
To: File
From: Fr. Lienert
Re: Conversation With Fr. Joseph Chinnici, OFM

Fr. Joseph Chinnici called me with two items to discuss:

- 1) He informed me that he had written to the Archbishop concerning faculties for a priest in residence here, Fr. He said I would need to speak with the Archbishop about the circumstances.
- 2) He wanted to speak with me about Fr. Mel Bucher. The psychological report has been done. Fr. Chinnici feels that there is a prudential decision to be made whether he should remain in the parish or not. His own judgment is that Fr. Bucher could be allowed to remain on as pastor, and he would recommend that, although he is perfectly willing to abide by any decision the Archdiocese may make.

The report was not initially sent to the Archdiocese even though there was a request that it be sent here. Subsequently, they have sent a report to either the Archbishop or to myself (Fr. Chinnici did not know for sure to which one of us it had been sent). I told him I had not seen it yet. He told me that the report recommended some ongoing counseling and spiritual direction, group work, some extended treatment in the future - perhaps next summer.

I told him I would need to review the report with our attorneys and speak with the Archbishop about it. Then, I would be in a position to speak to him more about Fr. Mel Bucher's assignment.

CONFIDENTIAL

Vicar For Clergy

*sets to act -
bishop + Fr.
Chinnici*

11/9/93

ARCHDIOCESE
PORTLAND
OREGON

MEMORANDUM

TO: File

FROM: Father Charles J. Lienert

SUBJECT: Meeting with Father Mell Bucher, OFM, and Reverend Jack Hall

DATE: October 25, 1993

I met with Father Mell Bucher, OFM, and Reverend Jack Hall to review the psychological evaluation we have received from Dr. David Kitch and to discuss Reverend Jack Hall's work with Father Bucher.

Father Bucher stated that the part of the report referring to his attitudes about sexual contact with parishioners does not accurately reflect what he said or intended to say. He believes that sexual contact is always improper, but that there should be room for closeness and personal intimacy. He also stated categorically that his responses to the two polygraph questions cited in the report were truthful even though the examiner concluded he was not being truthful in one and the results of the other were inconclusive.

Reverend Jack Hall stated that he has worked with Father Mell on a monthly basis since he returned to the Archdiocese of Portland. He knew him when he was here before. Their work has dealt with issues of loneliness, relationship with other people in the religious community and spiritual direction. In addition to this individual work, Reverend Hall has seen him in a working setting in the parish on several occasions when he has been there to help with pastoral council, etc.

Reverend Hall states categorically that he is not aware of any sexual activity with others nor does he have any reason to suspect such behavior. He would be very surprised if there were any sexual acting out during the time he has been working with him.

I told them that I would draft a memo about our meeting and send a copy to Reverend Hall to make sure it was accurate. Then I would send copies to Archbishop Levada and Father Joseph Chinnici.

CJL:gg

PD-HO 0004



CONFIDENTIAL

Vicar For Clergy

MEMORANDUM

TO: File

FROM: Father Charles Lienert

SUBJECT: A Meeting with

DATE: October 26, 1993

I met with _____ on October 19, 1993. He wanted to discuss with me his desire to seek counseling. He thought it would be well to talk with me in person.

He said he had begun some preliminary investigations working with one counselor, but that had not been satisfactory. He asked how one might determine whether or not a counselor was good, and secondly, what to do if he found out that he got into counseling and it involved much more than he had anticipated. He indicated he had some apprehension about going into counseling because of what he might uncover.

I encouraged him to take the step of receiving counseling. I assured him that even though it was possible some things might be uncovered that were difficult to face, that it would be far better to face those things in counseling than to have them effect his life. I said he should feel free to make a judgment about a counselor prior to entering into counseling with him or her. I told him it was quite proper for a person to interview a prospective therapist to see whether he thought that therapist might fit his personality and needs. He thanked me for that advice and asked for the names that I had given him. I gave him Chris Eskeli's name.

He asked me what he should say about the Archdiocese picking up the bill. I told him that once he had settled on a counselor, we should visit again and that we could make some determination based on the counselor's recommendation and the fee that he charged. He said what if he got into counseling and it turned out that it took more than he had anticipated. I said that if this were indeed related to the unfortunate incident with Father Bucher, that certainly we would want to make sure that he completed his needed therapy. I told him that the most important thing was for him to make sure that any damage that may have been done by his encounter with Father Bucher was resolved and repaired.

He thanked me and said that he wanted to be cautious. He did not want the therapist to think that he just had an open check book. I told him that I appreciated his concern. He told me that he would get back in touch as soon as he had met with a counselor.

Both Dr. Eskeli and _____ subsequently called to say that he was beginning therapy with Dr. Eskeli.

CJL:gg