

CONFIDENTIAL MEMORANDUM

TO: THE MOST REVEREND RICHARD G. LENNON
THE REVEREND ROBERT CONNORS

FROM: AMY JILL STRICKLAND, JCL

SUBJECT: THE REVEREND MARTIN WALSH

DATE: NOVEMBER 4, 2003

ARCHDIOCESE OF BOSTON
RECEIVED

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OFFICE OF
MINISTERIAL PERSONNEL

The Reverend Martin Walsh (born 1948, ordained 1974) is on permanent disability; he suffers from [redacted] I have given his confidential file to Father Connors, since it is my understanding that Fr. Walsh has expressed a desire to return to active ministry.

There is a reference to sexual abuse of a minor in Fr. Walsh's case file, but the complaint was received from a friend of the alleged victim after his death. Therefore, it is not possible for the Delegate to pursue it canonically. However, this allegation—as well as the other material in Fr. Walsh's file—needs to be weighed in the balance regarding any possible return to ministry. It is interesting to note that Fr. Walsh has articulated a desire for laicization on more than one occasion.

Finally, I would note that Cardinal Law wrote to Fr. Walsh in November 2002 that he was impeded from the exercise of orders due to psychic infirmity. However, no process was done to declare this impediment and no formal decree was ever issued. Therefore, Fr. Walsh is actually not impeded or restricted in any way from the exercise of ministry in the Archdiocese. If there is a desire to restrict him canonically, I can assist with this matter.

To provide some background, Fr. Walsh was on Sick Leave from November 1981 until March 1982.

In 1988, James A. Field (then a seminarian at Pope John Seminary) contacted Fr. John McCormack to express concerns about Fr. Walsh's drinking, as did others. Fr. Walsh was admitted for evaluation at Our Lady's Hall in July 1988, at which time it was noted "

" Fr. Walsh entered treatment at Our Lady's Hall the same month, and he was discharged in August 1988.

Notes in Father Walsh's file indicate that he began drinking again in February 1991 and was arrested in New Hampshire for driving while intoxicated the same month. He pled guilty to the charge in April 1991, and his driver's license was suspended.

In March 1992, Fr. Walsh had a psychological evaluation and entered individual psychotherapy. He was hospitalized in April 1992 for a condition that appears to have been [redacted] and was unassigned from July-October 1992.

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REDACTED

REDACTED

A July 1996 note in Fr. Walsh's file indicates two hospitalizations around that time for [REDACTED]. There was another intervention that month, and Fr. Walsh agreed to go to Guest House for an assessment and treatment.

A September 1996 report from Guest House indicated that Fr. Walsh : [REDACTED] as well as : [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] Issues identified on Fr. Walsh's psychological evaluation included: (1)

[REDACTED] Fr. Walsh was discharged from Guest House in October 1996.

Fr. Walsh was placed on Sick Leave in January 1997. In June 1997, Fr. Walsh wrote to Fr. Miceli: "As of now, I am not planning to remain in the active ministry." Fr. Miceli met with Fr. Walsh later that month and, according to Fr. Miceli's notes, Fr. Walsh had become "involved with a woman whom he calls his friend, the one who saved him, and it is his intention to explore this relationship to see whether he should eventually move towards marriage. She is divorced and has children."

Also in June 1997, Fr. Beale from the Priests' Recovery Program met with several members of Fr. Walsh's family (including his parents). The family members expressed concerns that Fr. Walsh had relapsed into alcohol abuse and had "a suspicious relationship with a woman." In August 1997, Fr. Walsh was given a leave of absence.

In December 1997, [REDACTED] called Sr. Rita McCarthy, CSJ to allege that he had sexually abused [REDACTED] when M [REDACTED] was fourteen years old. Mr. [REDACTED] had died earlier in the month of lung cancer. According to Sr. Rita's notes, [REDACTED] told [REDACTED] of two specific incidents. When [REDACTED] was 14 years old, the [REDACTED] family celebrated a 50th anniversary in upstate New York. Father Walsh, along with many of their friends, was invited. There was much drinking, even among the young boys. They stayed at the rectory where they engaged in a lot of horse play. Father Walsh called [REDACTED] downstairs because he thought [REDACTED] to be the instigator. Father made [REDACTED] sleep in the bed with him. Later when [REDACTED] awakened, he felt Father's hand on his penis and [REDACTED] hand was on Father's penis. He was frightened, so he rolled over and pretended to be asleep. He did not sleep the rest of the night; and whenever Father came near him, he moved around feigning restlessness. The other instance was at Father's cabin at Chalk Pond in New Hampshire. Father had taken a group of boys there. [REDACTED] once again, was elected to sleep with Father."

Fr. Wm. Murphy confronted Fr. Walsh with this allegation, at which time Fr. Walsh denied any impropriety with [REDACTED]; He acknowledged being at the [REDACTED] anniversary party in New York, but he denied that [REDACTED] slept with him on that occasion or any other.

In August 1998, Fr. Miceli met with Fr. Walsh to discuss his leave of absence. Notes from this meeting indicate that Fr. Walsh had moved in with his female friend and her children, and that his hemorrhaging problems—and alcohol abuse—were continuing issues.

In January 1999, Fr. Walsh entered Guest House again, and he was discharged in June 1999. While he was at Guest House, Fr. Walsh had to be hospitalized for : [REDACTED]

In December 1999, Fr. Walsh was again admitted to Guest House, and he again was hospitalized for [REDACTED]. He was discharged from Guest House in March 2000, to go to St. John Vianney Hospital in Philadelphia for an assessment.

REDACTED

A March 2000 summary of Fr. Walsh's assessment noted: "Father Walsh's history is significant for

In addition, Father Walsh has had significant ambivalence about his desire to remain a priest, along with sexual boundary problems. During a recent leave of absence, he had a relationship with a woman, which involved him moving in with her family. Although Father denies current intimate contact, he remains in steady contact with her."

In April 2000, Fr. Miceli participated in a teleconference with Fr. Walsh and the medical staff treating him at St. John Vianney. According to Fr. Miceli's notes, Fr. Walsh was "most honest in admitting that he has been very unhappy in ministry and sincerely questions the motivations behind his priestly vocation." Fr. Miceli added: "He informed me that he would be seeking a leave of absence from active ministry and was quite sure that he would be moving towards laicization."

In May 2000, the summary of Fr. Walsh's treatment noted: "Father came to realize that he wanted to leave priesthood and that he had been unhappy as a priest for some time. Father Walsh said that he played the role of a priest well, but that he did not feel that he would be true to himself if he remained a priest. Father's decision to leave the priesthood resulted in an almost immediate reduction in anxiety and tension. At first, it was unclear if this decision was well-grounded; yet over time Father Walsh became more clear and convinced that this was the right path to take. Needless to say, the decision was fraught with other anxieties about living life outside of priesthood and providing for himself financially, emotionally and spiritually."

In April 2002, Fr. Walsh was again admitted to the hospital

He was diagnosed with _____ and his personal physician wrote to the Archdiocese in November 2002: "I

" The same month, the Cardinal wrote to Fr. Walsh to inform him that he was on permanent disability status; the Cardinal also stated that Fr. Walsh was impeded from the exercise of orders under c. 1044.