

Diocese of Raleigh

Office of Child and Youth Protection

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October 1, 2014

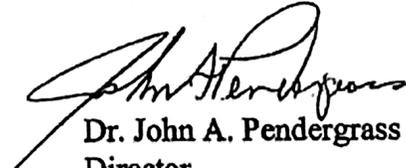
Msgr. Steven F. Callahan
Diocesan Administrator
Catholic Diocese of San Diego
P.O. Box 85728
San Diego, California 92186-5728

Dear Monsignor Callahan,

This letter is to inform you that I have recently received a report of sexual contact between a priest of the Diocese of San Diego and an adult woman, who feels that this contact did her great harm. Although this allegation is not included in the policies and procedures pertaining to the *Charter for Protection of Children and Young People* (USCCB, 2002), my office has responded to this allegation by offering assistance.

I have enclosed my notes from my conversation with this alleged victim and I seek your direction as to any next steps with which I may be able to be of assistance. With assurances of my prayers, especially upon the recent death of your beloved Ordinary, Bishop Cirilo Flores, I am pleased to remain

Sincerely in Christ,



Dr. John A. Pendergrass
Director

Enclosure

Notes for Meeting with Rachel "Olson" Mastrogiacomo and her Husband Richard on August 29, 2014. These notes are a summary of the main points, the entire conversation was approximately 3 hours long.

Rachel Olson - Born 12/30/1985.

She grew up in St. Paul Minnesota. She lost her father at a young age and always felt that as a deep loss.

In her early 20's, she has a strong sense of "a call" in her life but struggled to discern that call. Rachel had studied at Steubenville as an undergrad. In 2009 she went for a year of study at the pontifical University, the Angelicum in Rome. There she met two transitional Deacons, Craig and Jake, with whom she became good friends.

It was Deacon Jacob Bertrand who she had a close connection with. Deacon Bertrand noted that it was interesting "like Rachel and Jacob in the Old Testament, that they had found this friendship." In October of that year, Jacob took her to the 5th floor terrace and confided that he felt "called to share his sexual past with her", told her his story and then confided his two personal journals to her for her to read. She shared with him that she was a virgin and had no sexual past.

She began then to spend much time with Deacon Jacob. She shared many thoughts and struggles with him. Rachel also had a spiritual director who was named "Fr. Tom" who told her he felt she was "mystically pregnant" and that she was going to be a "foundress" of something that would benefit the Church. Fr. Tom asserted that he found her attractive in a way that was not disordered and that her gift could be to help lead priests to be stronger. Rachel asserts that this was hard to understand but she trusted her spiritual director. She shared this with Deacon Jacob Bertrand. The two of them concluded that Deacon Jacob was to be something like Joseph to her, a "most chaste spouse" and that she was like the Virgin Mary, they had a special, pure, bond.

Deacon Jacob took her to the "Jesu Church" and spiritually proposed to her. He held her hand and asked her to trust him. He continued to tell her that their conversation were holy and that their relationship was special and mystical. On one occasion, after Adoration, he share with her that he had had a vision of her naked, straddling him. They would have to wait to see what that vision meant.

It was also during this time that Rachel gave Deacon Bertrand her personal journal, as she left the spiritual direction of Fr. Tom.

In June 2010, they leave Rome to go to his ordination to the priesthood in San Diego. It was on this plane flight back to the states that Jacob first kissed Rachel. He was not wearing his clerical attire as they traveled. Rachel gave him the ring her father had given her as a gift for his ordination. She felt as if she had help him reach his call, she had helped "bear him" to the priesthood.

Three weeks after his ordination Fr. Bertrand traveled to Rachel's home (the home of her parents). He visited to attend the ordination of Deacon Craig, their mutual friend from Rome. Fr. Bertrand celebrated private Mass (just he and Rachel) in the basement of her home. He asked her to be naked for the Mass. He wore vestments. After the liturgy of the Word, he [REDACTED] her, he reached a climax, and then he had her straddle him for part of the liturgy of the Eucharist. He tells her they have just fulfilled his vision. He tells her that the Mass and her purity are the two greatest sacrifices. He then asks her to

participate in the same "Mass" again. (the next day) She was confused as to why a second "Mass" is needed to fulfill a mystical union and therefore why questions why they need to repeat it. He urges her to trust him, she acquiesces. Rachel becomes confused and informs him that they can never do this again. He is upset that they cannot continue to celebrate their mystic union. He encourages her by asserting that this secret "mystical" union of theirs would not be understood, that they could celebrate again, but after some discussion he agrees to respect her wishes and refrain.

Fr. Bertrand goes back to San Diego - He sends Rachel \$1,000 to help her as she moves on with life and then they do not communicate much. About a year later, in 2011, she asks him (my notes unclear if they met somewhere or just talked) if he ever worries that what they did was sinful. He assures her it was not and says he is bothered that the Devil tempts him to think that she might break their bond by telling other people about their mystical union.

Rachel has struggled with this for some time. She was married to Richard in June of 2014 and together they are moving toward healing from this abuse. Richard is a laicized priest who was in seminary with Jacob Bertrand. They were not in the same class.

Rachel is seeing our counselor and we have also offered couples therapy to them. The door is open for Richard to come individually as they try to handle this situation as a couple.

Notes compiled 9/30/2014 - John A. Pendergrass