

Case of C.F. MacDonald

In January 1993, I Received a phone call from Msgr Schonenbach of Ottawa asking if the diocese had a person responsible for receiving complaints of sexual abuses form clergy. I told him that Msgr D.B. McDougald was responsible for the English speaking clergy. I gave Msgr Shonenbach the phone number of Msgr McDougald.

Msgr McDougald suggested to Msgr Shonebach that he receives the complaint and to let him know of the outcome. After this, the alleged victim met with Msgr McDougald.

McDougald called the lawyer Mr J. Leduc to discuss of the situation and a meeting for February 9th was arranged with Fr D. Vaillancourt and the alleged victim Mr David Silmsler. Msgr McDougald, Mr J. Leduc, Fr D. Vaillancourt met with Mr Silmsler to receive his complaint and to offer help to the alleged victim.

We asked David Silmsler to introduce himself. He told us that he was the father a young child and was living common law with his girlfriend. He stated that he came from a good family but because of his traumatic experiences had been involved with the law. When asked if he had serve time in jail, he admitted that.

The complaints by Mr Silmsler were that Fr C.F. MacDonald had sexually attacked Mr Silmsler on a several occasions when he was a teenager. When asked to describe the first time, David Silmsler stated it had occurred in the sacristy of St Columban's church while he was an altar boy, that Fr MacDonald had passed his hands on the outside of David's pants. While preparing for his Confirmation, David went on retreat with his class at St Andrews School. There the group stayed overnight. The boys were sleeping in a dormitory and Fr Charles came in the dorm only in "shorts" and was playing around. He also stated that on one occasion Fr Charles called him into his office stating that he had been masturbating while watching some girls go by. David Silmsler also stated that on one occasion he was offered to go for a car ride with Fr Charles; they drove to a deserted road North of the city. There, they got out of the car and Fr Charles started to walk into the bush. When David Silmsler approached, he noticed that Fr Charles was masturbating, then went towards David and molested him.

When asked to described the aggression, David refused. When the question was placed in another form, he also refused to answer. He was also asked to be more specific about this place "North of Cornwall", but David couldn't remember much and his details could not establish the possible location of the alleged aggression. We also asked him how Fr Charles was dressed and he stated that Fr Charles was not wearing his roman collar.

We once again stated that we wanted to help him: psychological help was offered and any other help as well.

When asked if he would accept to meet Fr MacDonald, David refused. He stated that all he wanted was a letter of apology from Fr MacDonald to be sent to David's mother.

We thanked him for his openness and Mr Silmser left.

After he left, we shared on what we thought of his statement. We felt that some details were not given possibly because he didn't want to or that they had slipped his mind or that perhaps many things had been dreamed up. It was thought that Fr Charles would never walk around in a group only dressed in his underwear. It was decided that we contact Fr Charles' lawyer and he could talk with the accused and possibly the Crown Attorney.

Fr Denis Vaillancourt.