

Bishop-Elect-
 Most Rev L.M. Clarke O.D.
 St. Paul's Seminary.

P.O. Box 693K
 Newcastle 2300
 17-5-76

Dear Monsignor Clarke,

A trouble which I knew existed flared up during Thursday + Friday last week.

Fr. Denis McAlinden, Parish Priest of Forster-Luncurry on the coast 100 miles north of Newcastle aged 53, wished to go to W.A. to Bishop Thomas for a period some three years ago. Bishop Tohey prevailed on him to stay. Now it is on again, but for a different reason and Fr. McAlinden is intending to visit St. Paul's this week to discuss the matter with Bishop Thomas. He would not want to do this without your knowing about it nor, of course, would I agree to allow him to do it without your prior knowledge.

This is some of the background. Fr. McAlinden a rugged character, always one not to be taken for granted, is a man of very good faith and pastoral hard work. He received the bishop's permission to go to New Guinea on mission spending time in Mendi & Mt. Hagen between Feb. 1969 & Sept. '73 when he returned to his own diocese

of Maitland. He then was Adm in a parish, parish priest of Kendall, and since 1-11-1975 parish priest of Forster-Tuncurry.

He is a man who can become very bad tempered. He had a serious accident some ten years ago which has left him with a slight limp and I believe, doctors advise a warm or temperate climate for him.

His change while in New Guinea from Mendis to Mr. Hagen must have been for some reason. Bishop Tobey hinted to us that it involved an incident associated with his bad temper. In any case he returned to Maitland requesting permission to go to W.A. pleading genuine interest in the missions etc. and that I believe is sincere. The bishop did not give permission and Father MacLinden received the appointments mentioned above - the last one taking place on 1-11-75 after bishop's death - but it had been arranged long term before bishop's illness owing to the passing of Kendall Parish to Lismore diocese which is another story again that you will be looking at and discussing with us before you come to any final terms with Bishop Satterthwaite. So by agreement Fr. Mac came from Kendall to Forster-Tuncurry on 1-11-75.

On May 6th (I think) a deputation came from Forster-Tuncurry to the Education office to complain that Fr. Mac had struck a child about the head while giving a religion lesson in preparation for forthcoming confirmation. Fr. Coolahan passed the situation on to me. A week later, while I was away in Sydney for our talk, a further deputation (led by a young solicitor) came to Newcastle with other charges against Fr. Mac. In my absence Fr. Coolahan saw them. These charges have to do with 'de sexto' in an unusual way but I think not extremely serious.

On Saturday morning I discussed the situation and the charges with the other consultants.

On Saturday evening I went to Forster-Tuncurry to meet a group of some ten or twelve people convened by telephone independently of Fr. Mac. I stayed with them to a late hour but they insisted that Fr. Mac had to go. He has lost all credibility - the children are scared of him - in the circumstances he himself should not want to stay in the parish etc. etc.

The 'de sexto' business. Fr. Mac has an inclination to interfere (touching only) with young girls - aged perhaps 7 to 12 or so. The furor came by striking the boy about the head.

in the presence of the whole class caused the girls to give the other information to their mothers which they had till then withheld.

On examination this is found to be factual. Having dealt with the people I had a long session with Fr. Mac at the Presbytery.

Slowly very slowly he admitted some indiscreet but then agreed that it was a condition that had been with him for many years.

He feels no such inclination towards the mature female but towards the little ones only. There never has been any physical assault or damage but inevitably it leaves a psychological scar on the child's mind and attitude and religious outlook.

Fr. Mac finally came to the point of asking me to try to arrange some treatment for him. He is willing to resign his charge of the parish - beginning to feel some embarrassment saying Mass & preaching.

I have never heard of this condition before and knowing Fr. Mac, as we do, we think it cannot be real serious, nor do we believe that there is any danger of a development into assault or rape. At the same time what has been going on is more than

can be tolerated.

Last night we had a further meeting of Consultors and agreed to accept Fr. Mac's resignation & to fill the parish by promoting Fr. A. Brady senior Curate at present at Raymond Terrace. This leaves a vacancy for an assistant at Raymond Terrace in a situation in which we are already down three.

The point is that I would still say that we can recommend Fr. Mac to Bishop Thomas provided of course the Bishop is told something of all this background. The reason why Father wants to go so very much now is because it will afford a good cover-up for his resigning the parish. The priests and his own family, most of whom live in Sydney, will not wonder because his desire to go to Geraldton a few years ago was well known.

My recommendation is that we try to find some appropriate treatment for him over the next two months or so during which time he stays with members of his family in Sydney. Then that Bishop Thomas be asked to accept him for one or two years, after which he would come back to the diocese.

If Fr. McAlinden does in fact go to St. Paul to see Bishop Thomas Divill, of course ask him to see you first - which no doubt he would want to do anyway.

This is written in a hurry and I don't want to get it typed by anyone so please excuse the effort.

Everything else is O.K. We have 18 bishops and the Pro. Nuncio coming at this stage.

Coat of arms arrived & book is gone to printer.

On Tuesday June 1st it would be better to meet at Doyalson at 11.30 rather than 12 noon if you can make it. We will be there at 11.30.

With all best wishes

Respectfully yours

Signed

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Most Reverend LM Clarke
St Paul's Seminary

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Newcastle 2300
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P.D. Cotter