

Bishop Edward D. Head
Bishop Edward Grosz
795 Main Street
Buffalo, NY 14203

May 9, 1992

Dear Bishop Head and Bishop Grosz,

As a student in the ministerial program at Christ the King Seminary I was required to participate in the Field Education Program (PS741, PS742, and PS742A), and I was assigned for two academic semesters to Queen of All Saints Parish in Lackawanna, NY under the leadership of Rev. Dennis Riter and Sr. Barbara Riter.

This pastoral assignment was going very well until very questionable situation that has taken place a month ago, which is still very disturbing to me to the point that this keeps me awake at night. Therefore, after much thinking and prayer, I have decided to write this letter to you, Bishops, informing both of you of the details, requesting your immediate canonical investigation of this very unfortunate matter where many questions need to find the answer. This involves Rev. Dennis Riter whom I witnessed to be in a morally and legally questionable situation with young male child named Anthony. The child is less than 10 years of age, yet he was found to be with Rev. Riter at the Queen of All Saints Rectory, while the father and I went to get McDonald's lunch; Anthony and Tommy (his older brother) were left behind with their mother in the car waiting for our return.

Upon our return, the mother was "napping" in the car, with Tommy, a little older son, playing in the back of the vehicle, yet younger son Anthony was nowhere to be found. The father and I were worried that Anthony wandered away or was taken away by someone; as we began our search, calling aloud his name, I and the father went towards the Rectory, hoping to inquire further. All the sudden, from the inside of one of the rooms, the child emerged and in the background was Rev. Riter. As the father took Anthony by his hand and spoke "to his ear" dragging him outside, with me following, he exploded. Dumbfounded, I asked what was wrong. All of the sudden he raised his hand to my nose, asking me what was the substance he had on his hand. At that point I noticed that Anthony was terrified, with his eyes blinking and watery; the same substance was found on his shirt, face and in his hair!

I was shocked as I realized that Anthony had on him "mature male body fluid." At that point, as Anthony's father cursed in the direction of the building, the main door to the Rectory was immediately shut; the father turned around, walked back towards it, yet the door was positively locked. I tried to open it myself to no avail, kept knocking and using the bell (which did not work), but this action did not produce any result.

In all this I am finding myself very disturbed, so do Anthony's parents. At their specific request, I wish to set up an appointment, so they and I can meet with you, expressing our concerns directly to you, filling you with more details if desired. Further, they stated to me that they spoke with local Police, yet they did not tell me the specifics of their report as of the day of this letter. On my part, I think that this is critically serious event and that the canonical investigation shall be initiated according to the norms set in the canon 1395, §2 of our Code of Canon Law. In short, Bishop Head and Bishop Grosz, your investigation and appropriate preventive measure action shall be swift in order to mitigate any possibility of other children to be victimized in the future as those situations are never one time events. In the meantime, I wonder how many other children may already have been taken advantage of by Rev. Riter, and this very fact does not let me sleep well at night, especially that I was assigned to Queen of All Saints under the pastoral supervision of Rev. Riter, for whom I lost much respect at this time. Anyone who would take advantage of a child this way shall be criminally investigated, and not serve as priest in any capacity in any ministry in our Catholic Church.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Wieslaw J. Walawender
Theology Student
Christ the King Seminary, East Aurora, NY

cc: Rev. Peter Drilling, Formation