

[REDACTED]

August 14, 2014

Stanley J Keyes
[REDACTED]

Very Rev. Monsignor Curtis Mallet, JCL
1408 Carmel Drive
Lafayette, LA 70501

Dear Monsignor,

It is with deep regret that I am writing to you to report on the behavior of the pastor of St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church in Crowley, Father Mikel Polson. I do find it unnecessarily tough to get an audience with the Bishop of our Diocese in order to discuss this matter.

On the fourth Thursday of September 2013, I was returning from prison ministry at the Acadia Parish Jail. I had taken The Blessed Sacrament with me to offer Holy Communion to the prisoners who could receive. I had some of the Most Blessed Sacrament remaining, so I wanted to return Jesus to the Tabernacle in the Sanctuary at St. Michael's.

I knew that the DRE, [REDACTED] was at youth group in the old convent at the Parish, so I went there to ask her to open the church so that I might repose our Lord. Upon approaching the building, I witnessed a male teenager with his head in Father Polson's lap. When Father saw me, he got up and came to the door to ask what I needed. I told him why I was there and he dutifully opened the church so that I might repose our Lord.

I did not question him about the thing I had just witnessed. I spoke to Father James Brady on the phone concerning this the next day as I was sure that this was definitely a violation of the "safe environment" I had been taught. Father Brady reported my concern to Maureen Fontenot at the Diocesan Office in Lafayette. I received a telephone call from Maureen. During this call, we discussed what I had witnessed. I did not worry too much about this until I heard from someone who was an adult worker with the youth that what I had witnessed continued to be a regular occurrence. This is almost eleven months later and the same conduct continues. Why?

I am quite uncomfortable with the fact that the safeguards in place have not succeeded in reporting this activity to the appropriate authorities such as you or the Bishop. The DRE and other adults who are supposed to have the wellbeing of the youth as a primary concern certainly have failed. The DRE in question has shirked her responsibility to protect the youth of the Parish.


I am not piling on with my report coming at this time. I am aware of the fact that much is going on in the news locally concerning years ago. I waited patiently throughout July for the Bishop to return from his time off to reach out to him.

I am very distressed by the continued blurring of boundaries by Father Polson. I can only wonder what hasn't been revealed in public. Therefore I have some questions.

1. What has been done to stop this conduct by Father Polson and why was this action so ineffective?
2. What will be done now to stop Father Polson from physical contact with young people?
3. Can you assure me that nothing beyond touching has been occurring until the present?
4. Can you assure me that Father Polson will keep his hands to himself in the future and that I don't have to worry about the lives of young people in our Parish being adversely affected?

Finally, I wish to express my intention to continue to pursue this matter until I no longer hear the same stories about boundaries being crossed.

Sincerely,



Stanley J Keyes

CC:

Most Rev. Bishop Michael Jarrell

Very Rev. Jefferson Deblanc

Pam Goff

[REDACTED]

August 14, 2014

Very Rev. Msgr. Curtis Mallet, JCL
Diocese of Lafayette
P.O. Box 3387
Lafayette, LA 70502-3387

Dear Monsignor Mallet:

I find it my duty as a Safe Environment trained CCD teacher and youth worker to report what I consider to be aberrant and inappropriate behavior with young boys by our current priest, Father Mikel Poulson, here at St. Michael in Crowley. I have spoken to 8 different priests, 5 of them local, and they all told me emphatically that I must go to the bishop with this information. My reason for seeking counsel is that I am concerned about "touching the Lord's anointed". I just want to report my experience as indicated in SE training. I do not want to be a stirrer. I previously reported to Father Brady at the Chancery numerous instances of boundary violations with several young men in our youth group, but one in particular. Before I made the initial report I consulted with 4 priests of our diocese. I have requested a copy of my written notes, those that I submitted to the diocese through Father Brady, but they have not been forthcoming. Let me state that I have worked with our youth for the last 6 or 7 years and this is the first time I have ever seen this kind of behavior and this kind of interaction between a priest and young boys.

For the record I will state what I observed and reported the first time (several months ago) and what has happened since. The only exception is the 3rd hand report of Fr. Mikel putting his hand on a young man's butt which was observed by [REDACTED] at St. Michael. She would be apprehensive about losing her job if reported. I feel that it is expedient that I also include my observations while serving as sacristan for about six weeks, shortly after Father Mikel came to St. Michael, for the purpose of giving a fuller picture of troubling behavior and his lack of respect for the dignity of others. This combination of arrogance, anger and profanity present a more complete psychological composite of someone in need of help.

First report to Father Brady:

Fr. Mikel brought young boys in his car with no other adult, to help him move into the rectory. Fr. Jared and [REDACTED] both commented how this was not Safe Environment approved. I assume he also took them back to Iota when they were finished helping. It didn't seem like very long before he also hired two young boys from our parish to work around the grounds in addition to Ricky, our grounds and maintenance man. One of the boys commented to me that he was always having to look for things to do. So I am not sure how "needed" they really were. He seemed to single out one of the young boys who he was always talking to.

These are the things I observed on youth group nights: Boys leaning up against Fr. Mikel and him leaning up against them. His seeming inability to keep his hands off several of them. Sitting on top of boys. Laying on top of boys. Draping himself across several youth at one time with them sitting on the sofa and him laying on his side. Holding hands with the boys while talking to them. Giving dirty looks and angry remarks if they weren't paying enough attention to him. Taking one particular boy outside and talking alone with him when everyone else was inside. Using profanity even when up in front of the group presenting a topic. Putting the boys in a headlock with extreme body contact. In other words, on most of the points of this year's Virtus for safe environment, he would be guilty. If we are not to take our training seriously then why require it? I even asked him if he had to take the same training we do.

All of the things above were noticed and mentioned to me as items of concern by [REDACTED], but she said she couldn't report it because she would lose her job (which I heard him threaten several times for various reasons or in a joking manner). The parent of his favorite young man, one of his new-hires, was also concerned about the amount of time her son was spending with Fr. Mikel and mentioned her concern to [REDACTED] who then reported their conversation to me. Needless to say we were all noticing that this was not normal behavior. Still [REDACTED] did not report it. I understand her dilemma as I have personally seen and heard Fr. Mikel be very rude, crude and disrespectful to [REDACTED] and she even related to me that he had slapped her on her backside with a book and called her (excuse me please) a "whore". He also layed over on her, pushing her down in the seat several times in a public diner where we take the youth after youth group meetings. I believe there is a large conflict of interest where [REDACTED] is concerned. Though I think [REDACTED] is a wonderful person, she is not protecting the kids and reporting the things she should report because not only is she afraid of losing her job, which she loves, but her son is also one of the boys Fr. Mikel hired to work there. She doesn't want him to lose his job either. She related recently to me that she figured that it was me who went to the diocese with this first report because Maureen had called her to see if there was any need for concern. [REDACTED] told her that if she thought any of the children were being hurt she would have reported it. In essence, Maureen called the person who was and is NOT reporting things she was concerned about. What kind of accountability is that? In my humble opinion the kids are already being hurt by Fr. Mikel's favoritism (another topic we discussed), his corrupt communication, his temper, his extreme boundary violations and his general bad example.

If it is truly important to understand what this priest is doing and how he is acting or to verify my facts you might want to speak to Father Jared Suire who lived with Fr. Mikel and saw some of these things first hand as he also worked with our youth group.

My latest report to the Safe Environment co-ordinator via phone: 2

Boundary violations are still going on, as the touching and headlocks continue. This was related to me as being inappropriate by another of the youth workers as seen at a recent youth group meeting.

The newest incident is almost unbelievable behavior for a priest. St. John Vianney said that when you see a priest you think of Jesus Christ. Not so in this case. I was walking out of my driveway at home to go next door when a white car approached me. I could tell that it was slowing down but it kept coming

closer and closer without moving over to allow for pedestrian traffic. There are no shoulders on the road where I live. I had no idea who was in the car because of the tinted windows and the car just kept slowly coming at me until I had to literally step off the road onto a 45 degree angle slope into a deep ditch. The car still kept coming closer until I turned and bent my knees thinking I was going to have to jump in the ditch to avoid being hit. The car then moved slightly to the left, pulled up even with me and the window came down. Who did I see in the car but Fr. Mikel alone in the car with 16 year old [REDACTED], [REDACTED]'s son. Fr. Mikel obviously thought my fright was really funny. [REDACTED] was not laughing. I asked Fr. Mikel if he was crazy and he laughed, rolled up the window and drove off. My first question; why was he driving like that, setting that kind of example, with a young boy in the car with him? Secondly, why was he alone with the young man? Finally, what he did, according to local law enforcement is a criminal offense. I have pictures of the roadway (included) where it happened. I don't see this as exhibiting a pastor's heart or any way to treat a parishioner. There has been no apology.

[REDACTED] called me on another matter later that day and I asked her if her son had related what had happened. She said no and then realized that [REDACTED] was alone with Fr. Mikel and told me why. She said she had to take her 24 year old son to Jennings for minor surgery that day so she had asked Fr. Mikel the night before at youth group to take him home from work the next day. She admitted that she told Fr. Mikel that she knew it wasn't Safe Environment approved but she was giving him permission to take him home. She called again later and told me that [REDACTED] told her about the incident when she asked and he told her that Miss Pam isn't as young as she used to be and she could have broken some bones if she had jumped or fallen when Fr. Mikel acted like he was going to hit her. So by her own admission she had 15 hours to find other transportation for [REDACTED]. It wasn't last minute. The greater question is why didn't Fr. Mikel say, "I can't", when asked, or get someone else to take him home? The pattern is clear. He thinks he is exempt from the rules that other priests and all workers with youth are subject to.

Other things observed as sacristan and CCD/youth volunteer:

Fr. Mikel's lack of tolerance and impatience for the senior elderly (80+) of our parish. He was repeatedly very rude and spoke degradingly to Mrs. [REDACTED] (90+) who has been a faithful server for years.

His eagerness to talk about parishoner's private business with him, the church, their phone conversations, etc. in front of others thus causing me to be leary of going to him for confession.

His openly calling Fr. Bryce Sibly the devil, saying he is an evil man and not to use his name in the same sentence with Fr. Sibly's name.

His open dislike and public comments about Fr. Gary Schexnayder.

Telling me not to equate him with that nut, meaning Fr. Matthew Higginbotham, at Immaculate Heart.

Open disrespect of women In general, i.e. rudely stopping the Recitation (already in progress) of the Rosary before early Sunday Mass and making a scene in front of the congregation present.

Also stopping the Rosary before daily Mass quite rudely.

Loudly cursing the Confirmation class out for not listening attentively to him.

Constant attendance at youth group even with the hire of a new youth minister.

I believe it is wonderful for the pastor to come and fellowship with the youth but to be there every youth night disrupting the presenters, the new youth minister, and the kids who are supposed to be listening to the presenter is really distracting and troubling.

If there is a pattern here of aberrant behavior I hope you find it. I have a degree in Social Science with minor's in psychology and sociology, I own a private Christian school and have been working with teens for 35 years and I know that there is a severe problem here. I pray it doesn't manifest itself, if it hasn't already, in the abuse of our young boys. I have seen nothing lewd, but I have seen erratic and abnormal behavior, questionable gestures and looks toward the one particular boy referenced earlier, and behavior appearing much like a grooming process in progress.

I have included my phone number in the heading should you have any additional questions or request an interview. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely in Christ,

Pam Goff – parishioner
St. Michael, Crowley

Cc: Most Rev. Bishop Michael Jarrell
Very Rev. Msgr. Jeffrey DeBlanc