

# ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Office of Professional Responsibility

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**Professional Responsibility Review Board  
Saturday, November 18, 2006 9:00 am to 1:00 pm**

## MINUTES

### Review Board Members Present:

[REDACTED]

### Review Board Members Absent:

[REDACTED]

### Non-members present:

Leah McCluskey, Professional Responsibility Administrator [PRA]   
Rev. Daniel Smilanic, Cardinal's Delegate to the Review Board

- 
- I. Approval of Minutes – October 21, 2006 and October 25, 2006**
- October 21, 2006 Minutes approved
  - Changes made to October 25, 2006 Minutes [clarification on page 2, fourth bullet point]

[REDACTED]

**II. Case Reviews**

**Initial Review**

**A. In the Matter of**

[REDACTED]

**B. In the Matter of**

[REDACTED]

**C. In the Matter of**

[REDACTED]

**D. In the Matter of**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**III. Review for Cause**

**E. In the Matter of Rev. James Steel [Resigned/Laicized] – PFR 280**

The Review Board conducted a Review for Cause of [REDACTED] allegation of sexual misconduct against the former Rev. James Steel. A summary of the allegation is as follows: repeated abuse including anal penetration that took place at St. Joseph the Worker rectory as well as at the summer home of the [REDACTED] of the school.

In a 5-3 vote in light of the information presented, the Review Board determined that there is reasonable cause to suspect that the alleged misconduct occurred.

**F. In the Matter of** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**IV. Supplementary Review**

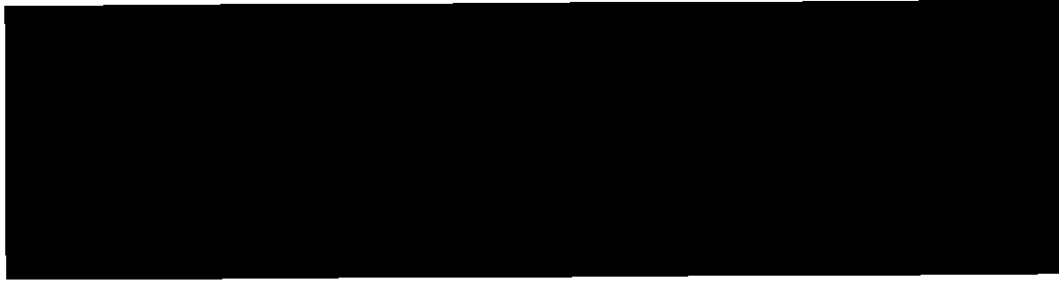
**G. In the Matter of** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

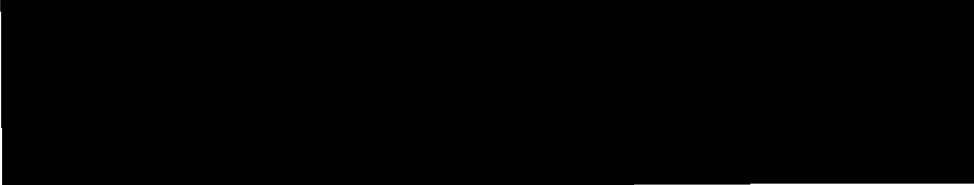

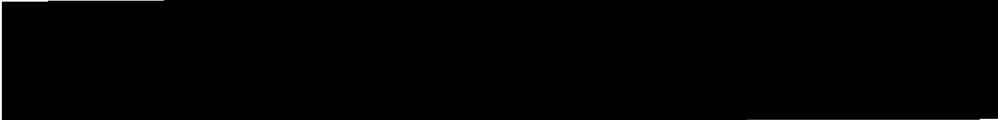

**V. For Discussion**

**H. In the Matter of** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



**Other Matters**

- 
- 
- 
- Cardinal George swore in new Board member, 
- 2007 Schedule: all meetings scheduled for the third Saturday of every month except for December, which the meeting will be on 12/8/07

***Next scheduled meeting is Saturday, January 20, 2007 at 9:00 a.m.***

Cc: Review Board Members  
Francis Cardinal George, O.M.I.  
Rev. Daniel A. Smilanic, Cardinal's Delegate to the Review Board  
Jimmy Lago, Chancellor  
Rev. Vincent Costello, Vicar for Priests  
Rev. Edward D. Grace, Vicar for Priests  
Rev. John Canary, Vicar General

To: File  
From: Ed Grace  
Re: Steve Bauer  
Date: 1/30/06

- Today Steve Bauer came in talk more about the [REDACTED]/Ryniecki matter.
- Steve had, in fact, met with [REDACTED] and talked with him
- Some additional information according to [REDACTED]
  - [REDACTED] stated that Ryniecki abused [REDACTED] who then went to Steele who subsequently also abused him.
- Apparently Bauer found the allegation credible.
- [REDACTED] wrote out a 58-page journal of the events.
- Steve's name was mentioned in the journal but Steve feels [REDACTED] may be confusing him with [REDACTED] who would have been a contemporary of [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] was trying to discover:
  1. if there were other victims
  2. if Steve would corroborate [REDACTED]'s story
  - Answer : NO

[REDACTED] -- St. Joseph School -- '85 [REDACTED] brothers  
[REDACTED] -- St. Joseph School -- '84

- The oldest boy was [REDACTED] but he was in Religious Ed Program.
- [REDACTED] apparently went to the Ryniecki cabin as part of his Confirmation preparation.
- But [REDACTED] was not molested.
- [REDACTED] has no clear memory of [REDACTED] who would have been about his time. (Sic; Steve)

Steve is currently at St. Benedict's  
Ryniecki was a principal at St. Ben's Grade School subsequent to his time at St. Joe's. (There had been an interval between principalships when Ryniecki sold insurance.

Steve seemed concerned about having spoken to [REDACTED]  
I assured Steve that he was free to speak with [REDACTED]  
I repeated -- he should speak the truth.

To: File  
From: Ed Grace  
Re: Steve Bauer '04  
Date: 1/10/06

Today Steve Bauer '04 called me and asked about a call he had from the Wheeling police last September concerning accusations of sexual abuse brought against Don Ryniecki (principal) by [REDACTED] (Officer Jim Plovovich, Wheeling Police)

The alleged activity took place at St. Joseph the Worker in Wheeling when Steve Bauer was a student there.

- A. According to Steve the police told him:
1. The accusation was against the then principal of the school.
  2. Police were contacting alumni to corroborate the accusers story.
- B. Steve told me he remembered the victim's name but the victim was three years ahead of him in school.
1. There was no connection i.e. no family or sibling contacts outside school.
  2. Steve indicated that the police had shown him sections of a 40 page journal of the events which the [REDACTED]
  3. Steve said elements of the journal were very graphic.
  4. Steve told me he had no corroborating details to offer.
  5. It was his understanding that the allegation primarily involved the principal, not Jim Steel.
  6. Steve indicated it was his understanding that Steel was not being accused of sexual abuse but rather complicity in that he knew and did not report the offense.
    - At least in a couple of excerpts – Steel was in adjacent room *of the cabin?*
    - Steele secondarily involved in that he went up to the cabin; a couple of excerpts happened up at the cabin – in another room – at very least Steele was aware and did not prevent.
- C. Steve then said he had received (past day or two) received an email from [REDACTED] who was asking Steve to go to lunch with [REDACTED]
1. I confirmed that Steve really had no knowledge of the events.
  2. I indicated that if he chose to go to lunch with [REDACTED] he should speak only the truth – the facts.
  3. He should not speculate on details that he did not really have.
  4. But if he wished to go to lunch it might be a healing moment for someone who had been in grammar school around his time.
- D. I called Leah to check if the allegation had come into her office.  
I noted some discrepancies between my understanding from Steve
1. I thought Steve told me the accusation of sexual abuse was only against the

principal – Steel was involved only as one who knew but did not report or something of that nature

Leah informed me, however, that allegations against Jim Steel were also made by the accuser

To: Leah McCluskey  
From: Father V. Costello  
Re: Father James Steel (Resigned 1992/Laicized 2001)  
Date: October 6, 2005

James Steel (sometimes spelled "Steele") was ordained for the archdiocese in 1968. The record of his assignments is included in this report but the record omits a temporary assignment at St. Clement Parish in 1987.

In summary, James Steel has had a career that was noted for a rather active nightlife. For a period of years it was not uncommon for him to leave the rectory some time during the evening and to not return until it was time for him to celebrate Mass. Then he would sleep in his quarters until some time in the afternoon. During those hours in the morning and early afternoon, when he was sleeping, he was not available for calls, etc. This was a very usual pattern for him. Needless to say, this did not make him a very sought after associate. It would seem that the term "apostolic zeal" could not be applied to him during those years.

On the other hand, there are reports that he was very good with people in one-on-one situations. Some of the priests with whom he lived found him to be cordial, polite, and friendly.

As far as we know Steel was arrested twice. The first time was in 1989 for picking up a prostitute on the north side of Chicago. This occurred around 5:20 a.m. Jim told the police that he saw her signaling and stopped to pick her up, thinking she needed some sort of assistance. Since the lady in question was a known streetwalker the police were keeping an eye on her. They pulled Steel's car over immediately before anything illegal or immoral could transpire. The second time Steel was arrested was in 1990. This time it was for gambling. His arrest took place in a family home that seems to have been used by organized crime for high stakes gambling. Apparently neither of these arrests led to convictions.

The archdiocese, a couple of Vicars for Priests, Cardinal Bernardin, a couple of [REDACTED], Fr. Frank Cimarrusti and assorted pastors did a great deal to attempt to help Jim. [REDACTED] Jim clearly had a problem with gambling and there is reason to suspect heavy drinking may have been a problem as well. But his drinking problem was not nearly as well substantiated as was his attraction to gambling.

Until the second arrest Jim was rather secretive about where he spent his time while he was away from the parish. When questioned he was usually evasive claiming to visit friends, sometimes admitting to playing cards, but not getting at the truth of the matter. There appears to be reason to believe that he was/is a gambling addict. Steel probably dropped several thousands of dollars over the years. Although he denies it, there is reason to suspect he may have fabricated insurance claims for the loss of monies allegedly stolen



from his room. Jim likewise denied any pilfering of the church collections or other church money.

Somewhere along the way the "Priest Perceiver" was administered to Jim. I think it was by Frank Cimarrusti. This is an instrument that is used to show an individual's attraction to certain aspects of the priesthood. Jim Steel scored near the bottom of every category the instrument measures.

For your purposes, there is no indication of a complaint that he has ever had any problem of a sexual nature with minors. There was a complaint from Frank Cimarrusti that at a wedding reception in 1991 Jim Steel was flirting with three of the girls in the wedding party. He was allegedly kissing them and inviting them to the bar. Their ages do not appear in the file. The young ladies were contacted by the Vicar. They said they were a bit disturbed by Fr. Steel's behavior but did not wish to pursue the issue.

Case Number: RM04 - 02301

On follow-up investigation, Investigator Parenteau traveled to Illinois to interview DONALD RYNIIECKI and JAMES STEEL. On Monday, July 18, 2005, in the later part of the afternoon, Investigator Parenteau headed for Illinois, stopping to spend the night in New Lisbon, Wisconsin. On Tuesday, July 19, 2005 at approximately 4:00 a.m., Investigator Parenteau headed to Hebron, Illinois to the Donald Ryniecki residence. At approximately 8:05 am, Investigator Parenteau arrived at [REDACTED] Hebron, Illinois - Mr. Ryniecki's residence. Investigator Parenteau went to the door of Mr. Ryniecki's residence and knocked on the door. A male individual answered the door. At that time, Investigator Parenteau asked the individual if Donald Ryniecki was at the residence. The male individual informed Investigator Parenteau that he was Donald Ryniecki. Investigator Parenteau introduced himself to Donald Ryniecki and advised that he was the one that had spoken with him on the phone approximately one month ago. At this time Investigator Parenteau advised Mr. Ryniecki that he would like to speak with him in reference to the allegations made and Mr. Ryniecki stated that would be fine. Mr. Ryniecki invited Investigator Parenteau into the house. Once in the house, Investigator Parenteau and Mr. Ryniecki sat at the kitchen counter, where Investigator Parenteau began his interview. Investigator Parenteau asked Mr. Ryniecki if he remembered a student by the name of [REDACTED]. Mr. Ryniecki stated he did remember [REDACTED]. Investigator Parenteau asked Mr. Ryniecki if he recalled ever taking [REDACTED] to his cabin on Long Lake in Washburn County. Mr. Ryniecki stated yes, he remembered the incident and because Investigator Parenteau had called him one-month prior about the incident, he was trying to remember more things. Mr. Ryniecki informed Investigator Parenteau that his mother died a couple of years ago from Alzheimer's and that he hoped that he could remember things that happened up north and hoped that he was not developing Alzheimer's. Throughout the conversation with Mr. Ryniecki, Mr. Ryniecki would make comments about hoping not to have Alzheimer's because he just cannot remember certain things. Investigator Parenteau asked Mr. Ryniecki how often he took children from Illinois up to his cabin. Mr. Ryniecki stated he took different children to his cabin just about every summer. Mr. Ryniecki advised that he also invited the children's families to his cabin and that there were some parents that would come and that he had never had allegations made against him for assaulting anyone. Mr. Ryniecki rambled on that he was very hurt that someone had brought allegations of him having sexual contact with a minor. Mr. Ryniecki stated he could not understand why anyone would say anything like that about him, as he has never done anything like that and never would. Mr. Ryniecki stated he was sixty-seven years old and retired seven years ago. Mr. Ryniecki stated he retired on his own and that he was not forced to retire. Mr. Ryniecki told Investigator Parenteau that he was welcomed to look up his records to verify his story. Investigator Parenteau asked Mr. Ryniecki if he could remember anything about the summer that [REDACTED] had stayed at his cabin with him. Mr. Ryniecki stated he could recall some of that year. Mr. Ryniecki stated he remembers bringing up a motorcycle for [REDACTED] to ride. Mr. Ryniecki stated he remembers [REDACTED] parents coming to the cabin for a few days. Mr. Ryniecki stated he remembers JAMES STEEL and believes that the secretary for James Steel and another couple had also come up that summer. At this time, Investigator Parenteau asked Mr. Ryniecki if James Steel

had something going on with the secretary from the church. Mr. Ryniecki stated he believes so. Investigator Parenteau asked Mr. Ryniecki if he could recall the sleeping arrangements when everyone stayed at the cabin. Mr. Ryniecki stated he was not certain where everyone slept. Investigator Parenteau spoke with Mr. Ryniecki approximately one hour and twenty-five minutes. In that time, Mr. Ryniecki stated he never, ever, had any sexual contact with any juvenile at anytime and was very hurt that this was brought out in the open. Investigator Parenteau asked Mr. Ryniecki if he had ever shown pornographic tapes to any juveniles that he took to the cabin on Long Lake. Mr. Ryniecki stated he never did that either and he never would. Whenever Investigator Parenteau would ask Mr. Ryniecki a question in reference to sexual assault of a minor, Mr. Ryniecki would grab his hair and state that he cannot believe that anyone would make these allegations against him. Investigator Parenteau asked Mr. Ryniecki if had spoken with James Steel lately. Mr. Ryniecki stated he has not spoken with James Steel for quite sometime. At that time, Investigator Parenteau made one more attempt and asked Donald Ryniecki for the truth in reference to any sexual assault that took place at his cabin on Long Lake in Washburn County. Mr. Ryniecki informed Investigator Parenteau that there was never anything what so ever like that, that took place at his cabin on Long Lake in Washburn County or anywhere else. Mr. Ryniecki stated he would never ever touch any juvenile, male or female, and he knew it was wrong.

At approximately 9:35am, Investigator Parenteau headed from Hebron, Illinois to Wheeling, Illinois and at approximately 11:30am arrived at the Wheeling Police Department and met with OFFICER JIM PLOVANICH. Investigator Parenteau had been in contact for several weeks with Officer Plovanich. Officer Plovanich had conducted a follow-up investigation and courtesy interviews for Investigator Parenteau. Officer Plovanich indicated he had the location for FATHER JAMES STEEL and would go with Investigator Parenteau to Father Steel's residence. Officer Plovanich stated it was only 5.3 miles from the Wheeling Police Department. Investigator Parenteau and Officer Plovanich went to the James Steel residence located at [REDACTED] Palatine, Illinois 60074. Once at the location, Investigator Parenteau and Officer Plovanich were let into the apartment complex by maintenance and preceded to apartment 210. Once at the door of apartment 210, Investigator Parenteau knocked on the door. There was no response. At that time Investigator Parenteau advised Officer Plovanich that he had James Steel's phone number and Officer Plovanich advised that he had a cell phone. Officer Plovanich called the residence of James Steel and James answered the phone. Officer Plovanich advised Mr. Steel that himself and Investigator Parenteau were at his door and asked him to answer his door. At that time, James Steel opened the door and Officer Plovanich introduced himself and Investigator Parenteau to James Steel. Investigator Parenteau asked Mr. Steel if he was at one time the Catholic Priest at the Catholic Church located in Wheeling, Illinois. Mr. Steel advised yes he was. Investigator Parenteau then advised he was the one who spoke with him on the phone approximately five weeks ago. Investigator Parenteau asked Father Steel if he would be willing to speak with Investigator Parenteau and Officer Plovanich. Father Steel invited both Investigator Parenteau and Officer Plovanich into his apartment where they sat at the kitchen table. Investigator Parenteau asked Father Steel if he has been in contact with Donald Ryniecki. Mr. Steel stated no, he has not been in contact with Donald Ryniecki.

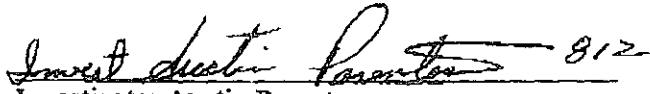
since speaking with Investigator Parenteau five weeks ago. Father Steel stated he contacted Mr. Ryniecki right after speaking with Investigator Parenteau. Investigator Parenteau asked Father Steel if Mr. Ryniecki had contacted him on today's date. Father Steel stated no, he has not. Investigator Parenteau asked Father Steel if he were to subpoena his phone records, there would not be any phone calls to or from Donald Ryniecki. Father Steel stated there would not be any phone calls to or from Mr. Ryniecki. Investigator Parenteau asked Father Steel if he was aware why Investigator Parenteau and Officer Plovovich were at his residence. Father Steel stated no, he was not certain why they were there. Investigator Parenteau asked Father Steel what Mr. Ryniecki had told him at the time of their phone conversation. Father Steel stated that Mr. Ryniecki had advised him that there was some type of sexual allegations made and not to worry about it. Father Steel stated he took Mr. Ryniecki's word for it and did not worry about it. Investigator Parenteau asked Father Steel how long his conversation was with Mr. Ryniecki. Father Steel stated approximately three minutes and that was it. Investigator Parenteau once again asked Father Steel if he were to subpoena his phone records, would that phone call only show three minutes. Father Steel stated yes, as that was about all he talked to him. Investigator Parenteau informed Father Steel that he did not believe him, as he very much so wanted to get Investigator Parenteau's reason for calling him prior to Father Steel's trip to Alaska. During that phone conversation, Investigator Parenteau had advised Father Steel that he wanted to speak with him in person and would inform him what he needed to speak to him about when they could meet. Investigator Parenteau was well aware that Donald Ryniecki knew what the allegations were and as bad as James Steel wanted to get the information from Investigator Parenteau during the phone conversation, does not believe he would be satisfied with the little bit of information he received from Donald Ryniecki. Investigator Parenteau believes Father Steel would have wanted more information and that the phone conversation between Donald Ryniecki and Father James Steel would have been longer. Father Steel stated he had no reason to make the conversation any longer because he trusted what Donald Ryniecki had told him. Father Steel stated Donald Ryniecki told him there was nothing to worry about so he took his word for it. Officer Plovovich spoke in length with Father Steel in reference to telling the truth and about an elderly nun that worked at church. Father Steel recalled working with the elderly nun. Investigator Parenteau spoke with Father Steel about Donald Ryniecki and advised the reason he and Officer Plovovich were at his residence was because there were allegations made against Donald Ryniecki for having sexual contact with a juvenile, named [REDACTED] at Donald's cabin on Long Lake in Washburn County. Father Steel stated he did not recall knowing [REDACTED] but more than likely he did go to their school. Father Steel informed Investigator Parenteau and Officer Plovovich that he is in charge of the church more so than the school. Father Steel stated he did not have much to do with the school, that the school was run by the principal. Investigator Parenteau asked Father Steel about his office being open for the kids to come and speak with him. Father Steel stated his door was always open. Investigator Parenteau asked Father Steel if he remembers a student coming to him in reference to Donald Ryniecki sexually assaulting him - the student. Father Steel stated he does not remember anything like that what so ever. Investigator Parenteau asked Father Steel if this is something that he would remember because it would be very strange and not something that happens every day. Father Steel

agreed with Investigator Parenteau that this would be something he would remember and not forget, and that he definitely does not recall anyone ever coming to him and speaking to him in reference to Donald Ryniecki sexually assaulting him or her in Illinois or Wisconsin. Father Steel asked Investigator Parenteau and Officer Plovovich why they were there again. Investigator Parenteau advised Father Steel that the individual making the allegations against Donald Ryniecki mentioned talking to him - Father Steel - and confiding in him what Donald Ryniecki had been doing to him. At this time, Officer Plovovich read part of the statement in reference to [REDACTED] speaking to Father Steel about what Donald Ryniecki was doing. After Officer Plovovich read the part in the statement to Father Steel, Father Steel once again stated he does not recall [REDACTED] coming to him and speaking to him in reference to that incident. At that time, both Investigator Parenteau and Officer Plovovich spoke with Father Steel in reference to Donald Ryniecki. Investigator Parenteau reminded Father Steel that when he mentioned Donald's name to him when speaking to him five weeks ago, Father Steel asked if Donald was still alive. Father Steel had made it seem like he did not know Donald Ryniecki, when indeed he did, as he had explained to Investigator Parenteau and Officer Plovovich that he had been in touch with him, had his phone number, has not been to his new residence but knows his address because he sends Donald a Christmas card every year. Father Steel advised that he and his wife use to socialize with Donald Ryniecki and other couples. Investigator Parenteau advised Father Steel that he believes that Father Steel was more than just a co-worker with Donald Ryniecki, that he was indeed also a friend with Donald Ryniecki. Father Steel agreed with this statement. Investigator Parenteau informed Father Steel that sometimes friends tell their friends things they will not tell anyone else. Investigator Parenteau advised Father Steel that he believes he knows more than what he is stating. Officer Plovovich asked Father Steel if he would be willing to take a polygraph test in reference to him recalling the conversation with [REDACTED]. Father Steel stated he would take the test right now. Officer Plovovich stated he would not be able to take the test until tomorrow's date, as he needs time to set it up. After speaking with Father Steel more on the incident, Investigator Parenteau and Officer Plovovich expressed that they did not believe his story; that they believe he knows more than he is stating, as it is definite in his actions and his face. At this point, Investigator Parenteau and Officer Plovovich were ready to depart and Officer Plovovich advised Father Steel that he would set the polygraph up for tomorrow and contact him with the time. Father Steel stated that would be fine. As Investigator Parenteau and Officer Plovovich were walking towards the door, Father Steel asked if he should get an attorney. Investigator Parenteau and Officer Plovovich advised Father Steel that a polygraph was inadmissible in court and that it would just tell if he was lying or not about the conversation with [REDACTED]. Father Steel stated he wanted to hold off on the polygraph testing until he had time to speak with someone. Father Steel stated he would contact Officer Plovovich. At this time, Investigator Parenteau and Officer Plovovich exited the residence of Father Steel and returned to the Wheeling Police Department.

Investigator Parenteau, along with Officer Plovovich, believe something possibly has happened in reference to the allegations made by [REDACTED] but it is very obvious that Donald Ryniecki and Father Steel are not about to admit to anything. Without any evidence or admission, this case will be very difficult to solve. Officer Plovovich advised

he would conduct a couple more courtesy interviews with a few more students that attended the same school and were in the care of Donald Ryniecki and Father Steel

On July 28, 2005, Investigator Parenteau spoke with Officer Plovnich. Officer Plovnich advised that everyone he has interviewed in reference to [REDACTED] have all stated Donald Ryniecki nor Father Steel ever touched them or done anything to them, nor were they ever aware of any sexual activities going on between Donald Ryniecki or Father Steel and any of the students. Officer Plovnich states that no one has heard of anything about this before and all are stating, "No. No. No. There was never any sexual abuse by either man in either Wheeling, Illinois or Washburn County, Wisconsin.

  
Investigator Austin Parenteau  
Washburn County Sheriff's Office

SIEBEL, REV. JAMES A.

May 2, 1968



James Steel

Nationality			
Date Appointed	Assignment	Charge	Date Left
5/31/68	St. Tarcissus	Assistant	11-11-68
11-11-68	St. James Church, Highwood	Associate	6-7-74
Ltr 6-7-74	St. Stephen Protomartyr, Desplaines	Associate	TCC eff:6-11-79
TCC eff:6-11-79	St. Joseph the Worker, Wheeling	Associate	6/12/84
6/12/84	St. John Brebeuf, Niles	Associate	5-18-87
5-18-87	St. Hilary, Chicago	Associate	4/20/88
4-30-88	St. Bonaventure	Associate	
11/18/89	St. Bonaventure	Temp. Administrator	1/8/91
05/13/92	Left Active Ministry		

Extraordinary Appointments

Sec. Sec #



# ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

Office for Canonical Services  
Rev. Patrick R. Lagges, J.C.D.  
Phone: (312) 751-8384  
e-mail: plagg@archdiocese-chgo.org



155 E. Superior St.  
Chicago, Illinois 60611

Fax: (312) 751-8314

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Rev. Jeremiah Boland, Priests' Placement Board  
Rev. Lawrence McBrady, Vicar for Priests  
**FROM:** Rev. Patrick R. Lagges, Delegate for Laicizations *PL*  
**RE:** Rev. James R. Steel  
**DATE:** 6 June, 2001

This is to inform you that Rev. James R. Steel, a priest of the Archdiocese of Chicago, has received a dispensation from the obligations of the clerical state.

The decree from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (P.N. 2492/00/S) was dated 2 March, 2001. A copy of it has been delivered to James Steel, and accepted by him. The church where he was baptized has been notified.

I would appreciate you making any notations which might be necessary in your files.

Thanks.

AOC 005035





**ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO**

VICAR FOR PRIESTS

645 NORTH MICHIGAN AVENUE, SUITE 543

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60611

Off: (312) 642-1837  
Fax: (312) 642-4933

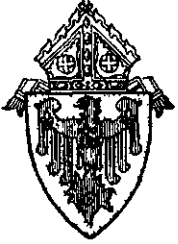
**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Rev. Patrick Lagges  
FR: Rev. Lawrence P. McBrady  
DT: June 7, 2000  
RE: Jim Steele

In response to your memo of June 2, I offer the following. Jim's file indicates that chronic gambling problems prevented him from being effective in his ministry and his unwillingness to accept long-term treatment as recommended by [REDACTED] led to his resignation from the active ministry. The file shows a pattern of denial that he had a problem with gambling [REDACTED]

My read on the available information would indicate that it was not possible for Jim to meet the expectations of the Archdiocese in terms of a parish ministry, while being unwilling and/or unable to admit his gambling addiction and seek treatment for same.

I hope this is helpful. If you have any additional questions, please let me know.



**ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO**

VICAR FOR PRIESTS

645 NORTH MICHIGAN AVENUE, SUITE 543

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60611

Off: (312) 642-1837  
Fax: (312) 642-4933

July 21, 1992

Rev. James Martin  
St. Benedict the African Parish  
6012 South Laflin Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60636

Dear Jim,

I wish I could give you the address of Jim Steel but I do not have it at this time. About a month or so ago Jim resigned from the priesthood, was to set up a new apartment, but left me no forwarding address. Fairly typical of Jim, I guess. If I hear anything I'll let you know.

Fraternally yours,

Rev. Patrick O'Malley  
Vicar for Priests

AOC 005037



**ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO**

VICAR FOR PRIESTS

645 NORTH MICHIGAN AVENUE, SUITE 543

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60611

Off: (312) 642-1837

Fax: (312) 642-4933

Memo

From: Rev. Patrick O'Malley

To: Rev. Patrick Pollard, PRMAA

Date: May 22, 1992

Re: James Steel

As of May 31, 1992, James Steel will no longer be residing at Little Flower Rectory. I have informed Fr. Kaminski that Jim will be in his own apartment at that time.

We therefore will no longer be paying room and board for Steel at Little Flower. Please make the necessary adjustments. And thank you for your attention to this matter.

AOC 005038



Off: (312) 642-1837

## ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

VICAR FOR PRIESTS

800 NORTH CLARK STREET, SUITE 311

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60610

TO: File (P. O'Malley)

DATE: Jan. 4, 1992

RE: James Steele

1. Jim Steele came in to see me on Friday, Jan. 3 to talk about his situation. As we discussed it, there are two options for him.

2. One, if he is to remain in the priesthood, he must undergo an in-patient treatment at either St. Barnabas or St. Luke's which will take several months and then to get on a 12-step program for the rest of his life, presumably. I told him that if he were to do that, maintain his therapy, get an assignment and do well in the assignment, that somewhere down the line there's no reason why he shouldn't be considered for a pastorate. Men who have an alcoholic addiction certainly have done that in the past. I used the alcoholic addiction program as an analogy for Jim's situation. I do not know how he felt about that analogy. We did not talk about his addiction to gambling.

3. The second option was that he resign from the priesthood. I explained to him what the steps would be -- a letter to the Cardinal, the Cardinal's acceptance of it, then working out an exeat package, and if he so desired, an application for a laicization. Jim then got interested in what that package would be and I just talked in general figures, said we would consider the areas of financial package, a training package for change of job status, health insurance and car insurance.

4. I recommended to him that he contact Marty Burns who might help him draw up a package. I personally do not want to get into the specifics of such a package and if he contacts Marty [REDACTED]



Off (312) 642-1837

**ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO**

VICAR FOR PRIESTS  
800 NORTH CLARK STREET, SUITE 311  
CHICAGO ILLINOIS 60610

TO: File (P. O'Malley)

DATE: Nov. 5, 1991

RE: James Steel

1. Frank Cimarrusti, pastor of St. Bonaventure, called today to tell me about an incident that took place about [REDACTED] 1990. Jim Steel had performed a wedding [REDACTED]. At the wedding reception, according to one of the women involved, he had singled out three of the girls in the wedding party and was teasing them, etc., kissing them, and invited them into the bar. Frank believes he was drinking at that time.

2. In talking about it later, the girls were surprised that a priest would do that and they said they felt as if they were being propositioned. That's how they would have felt if it were not a priest. They told Frank Cimarrusti recently and he thought it might be helpful in our dealing with Jim Steel. I asked Frank to contact the girls and see if they would be willing to call me and fill me in. They indicated to Frank they did not wish to pursue this as any kind of case against Fr. Steel, but might pursue it if they thought he could get some help.

3. Frank will call them and see if they are interested in going any further with it, and if so, we will take it from there.

**AOC 005040**



ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

VICAR FOR PRIESTS  
800 NORTH CLARK STREET, SUITE 311  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60610

Off (312) 642-1837

June 3, 1991

Rev. James Steel  
St. Therese Rectory  
8026 South Wood Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60620

Dear Jim,

I am enclosing your check for the month of May. As I mentioned to you in my letter of May 21, I did speak to the Cardinal about your status. He agreed that we should consider you as being on a leave of absence and the six-month leave will expire July 31, 1991. Your salary will also be discontinued at that time, and it will be presumed that you have resigned from the active ministry.

I really wish that you would reconsider what you are doing to yourself. During this past week I have received several calls from creditors of yours, and it seems clear that you are putting yourself hopelessly into debt. You obviously need professional help to get at the root of your problems, and I just want you to know that the offer still stands, should you be willing to enter into the in-patient program offered by the St. Barnabas Center in Oconomowoc.

With prayers that God's grace will accomplish in you what we have not been able to bring about, I remain

Fraternally yours,

  
Rev. Raymond Goedert

AOC 005041



ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO  
VICAR FOR PRIESTS  
800 NORTH CLARK STREET, SUITE 311  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60610

Off (312) 642-1837

TO: File (R. Goedert)

DATE: May 24, 1991

RE: James Steel

1. Mr. John O'Brien, the one who leases the automobile to Jim, called. He said that he had been in conversation with Jim last night. Jim is in arrears again. Jim told him that he would be meeting with me soon in order to get his check.
2. I told John that I sent the check to Jim on May 21 and that he should be getting it in the mail either today or tomorrow. So John had better keep tabs on Jim in order to get his money.



ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

VICAR FOR PRIESTS  
800 NORTH CLARK STREET SUITE 311  
CHICAGO ILLINOIS 60610

Off (312) 642-1837

TO: File (R. Goedert)

DATE: May 24, 1991

RE: James Steel

1. The Cardinal called. He read my memo and agreed with it whole-heartedly. He said I would fully support whatever action I take. I told him I would probably draft a letter for his signature formalizing what I already threatened in my letter to Jim.





Off (312) 642-1837

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

VICAR FOR PRIESTS  
800 NORTH CLARK STREET, SUITE 311  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60610

TO: Mr. Fred Van den Hende

FROM: Rev. Raymond Goedert *R.G.*

DATE: March 9, 1991

RE: Rev. James Steel

1. Rev. James Steel, a client of mine, is on a leave of absence and living at Little Flower Rectory, 8026 S. Wood St., Chgo., IL 60620, [REDACTED]. I have been trying to get in touch with him, but for some reason or other, he refuses to return calls. As a result of his behavior, I have asked Ray Ranas to send his monthly salary directly to me and I am going to hold on to it until he does respond to my calls.

2. I have also been receiving phone calls from a Mr. [REDACTED] who leases cars to priests, among whom is our friend, James Steel. Evidently Fr. Steel was involved in a hit-and-run accident and from what Mr. [REDACTED] tells me, Steel is the one who did the hitting and the running. Evidently the police tracked the car back to [REDACTED]'s leasing firm. [REDACTED] tells me that the owner of the other car is a [REDACTED]. [REDACTED]'s phone number is [REDACTED]. From what [REDACTED] says, [REDACTED] keeps calling him wanting to know how to reach Steel so that he can get his car repaired. I am not sure whether you should do anything or not, but thought that you might want to call AETNA to see whether or not Steel ever made a report. It would seem to me that we ought to try to take care of [REDACTED]'s car just to save the Archdiocese the embarrassment of a priest evading his responsibility. At any rate, I thought I would pass the information along to you and you can let me know what you think ought to be done.

AOC 005044



ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO  
VICAR FOR PRIESTS  
800 NORTH CLARK STREET, SUITE 311  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60610

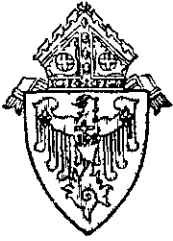
Off: (312) 642-1837

TO: File (R. Goedert)

DATE: March 6, 1991

RE: James Steel

1. I received a call from [REDACTED] who states that he is a cousin of Jim Steel. He says that Jim usually spends Christmas with him and his family and he did tell them that he would be leaving St. Bonaventure. But he cannot locate him now and wonders how he is doing, etc.
2. I told [REDACTED] that Jim is living at Little Flower, I gave him the telephone number and told him to feel free to call him there. But I also indicated that I am not having any luck in having Jim Steel to return calls, so he may run into the same problem. [REDACTED] telephone number is [REDACTED]
3. I spoke to Tom Kaminski later on and he said he doesn't know what is going on either. Jim did have dinner with them at the rectory and Tom has brought it to his attention many times that he should call me and Jim usually puts it off with some comment to the effect that he has something to do and he'll get to it later.
4. I called Bonnie Connor at St. Luke Institute in Washington and told her to forget about holding a room for Steel any longer. I told her I didn't know whether or not he will agree to treatment, but there was no point in her holding the room for him.
5. I also returned [REDACTED]'s call [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] still has heard nothing from Jim Steel. [REDACTED] says that his understanding of the hit-run accident is that Steel is the one who did the hitting and the running. Evidently the man he hit, [REDACTED], has a witness.
6. [REDACTED] said that he will have to repossess the car, if he doesn't get payment. I told him to go ahead and do whatever he felt he had to do. I also indicated that I would probably try to call AETNA or ask Fred Van den Hende to call AETNA to look into the matter and take care of [REDACTED]'s car. [REDACTED]'s phone number is [REDACTED].



ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

VICAR FOR PRIESTS

800 NORTH CLARK STREET, SUITE 311

CHICAGO ILLINOIS 60610

Off (312) 642-1837

TO: File (R. Goedert)

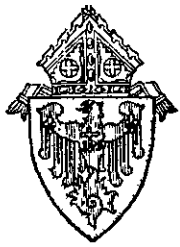
DATE: Feb. 1, 1991

RE: James Steel

1. It was my understanding that Jim would call me today to let me know whether or not he was going to go into treatment. As of 5 P.M., he had not called, so I called the rectory. They said that he was not there, or at least was not answering his phone. I then spoke to Frank Cimarrusti. Frank said that Jim has not let on at all as to what his decision is going to be.

2. Frank has insisted that Jim leave tomorrow, regardless of his decision. Jim has been packing and moving things out, but he has not let on at all as to where he is going. Whether or not it is Little Flower, Frank doesn't know, but he doubted if Jim would want to live in that area. He thinks Jim would be afraid of it.

3. I asked Frank to be sure to leave a message for Jim to try to reach me tomorrow either here at the office or later in the evening at the rectory. I need to know so that I can make a reservation at St. Luke, if necessary.



ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

VICAR FOR PRIESTS

800 NORTH CLARK STREET, SUITE 311  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60610

Off (312) 642-1837

TO: File (R. Goedert)

DATE: Jan. 7, 1991

RE: James Steel

1. Jim came in after his court date. As predicted, all charges were dismissed and it was all over with in a matter of a few minutes. Evidently the records will all be expunged and that will be the end of it.
2. With regard to Jim's departure from St. Bonaventure, he indicated that he had not received any letter from the Cardinal. I called Ken Velo right away and Ken was unaware of the letter. Later on in the afternoon, Ken talked to the Cardinal and the Cardinal asked if I would draft a letter for his signature. A secretary will drop it off at the rectory later this evening.
3. With regard to treatment options, I told Jim that the two places that I would favor were St. Luke Institute and Villa St. John. While Southdown sounded pretty good, the fact is they have a waiting list of some six months and I thought that would be too long. I gave Jim Bonnie Connors telephone number at St. Luke Institute and asked him to call her directly to ask any questions that he had. I tried to reach her, but evidently there was a snow storm in Washington and all of the employees were allowed to go home early. I figured it would be better for Jim to ask whatever questions he had and then he can make up his mind as to whether or not he will go for the assessment. Jim promised to call me by 3:00 tomorrow to let me know his answer. He said he wanted to think about it and talk it over with someone. He realizes that this is a time when maybe he ought to look at his whole life and decide whether or not he wants to remain in priesthood. He asked about the possibility of a leave of absence and I told him that while it is possible, I'm not sure I would support it, since it would appear as though he would have another six months to do nothing and not to deal with his major addiction. On the other hand, if he really is doubtful about remaining in priesthood, then maybe we would have to go along with a leave.
4. Jim brought up the idea of storage again. I think by now he understands that that is his problem, not mine, because he immediately said, "But that's not your concern." I assured him that it wasn't and that I wondered why he continued to carry so much stuff around with him from place to place.
5. I also called Tom Kaminski to see whether or not he could take Jim in, in the event there is a waiting period either before or after the assessment. Tom said that he could take him in immediately. I told Tom that Jim's major problem was a gambling addiction. I did not tell him anything beyond that.
6. Jim said that he spoke at all the Masses this past weekend and said good-bye to the people. He still has not had a conversation with Frank as to the meeting with the Cardinal, the arrest, or anything like that. He claims that the opportunity never presented itself. I suggested that he go home and talk it over with Frank, and that he check out to see if there is room for storage there at St. Bonaventure.

AOC 005047

**ST. BONAVENTURE RECTORY**  
**1641 West Diversey Parkway**  
**Chicago, Illinois 60614**  
**281 - 6588**

To: Ray Goedert

From: Frank Cimarrusti



On Saturday, Dec. 15 I spoke to a couple I've come to know and respect here at St. Bonaventure. They had just attended Jim Steel's mass. Knowing them and their hopes and noting their seeming disappointment as they were leaving church I asked them if they could offer some observations about the mass in writing. They agreed but said they wished to be anonymous. I told them I would respect this request. Attached is the letter they sent me.

On Wednesday, Dec. 19 at 6:20 am the phone rang. I answered and the parish housekeeper said she had just received a call from Fr. Steel. He told her to go to the church and cancel the 6:30 mass since he couldn't be here on time. She called here upset and concerned. She felt very uncomfortable calling but more uncomfortable about having to go to the church and tell people the mass was being canceled.

For-my part, I am very angry. Jim could have called the rectory because both Frank Spellman and I leave our phone on through the night. Putting the housekeeper on the spot like that is really unfair to her. For the record, Jim left here on Tuesday night before 8:30 pm, I believe. I left here Wednesday morning at about 9:00 and he still hadn't returned.



ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

POST OFFICE BOX 1979

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60690

COPY

*Office of the Archbishop*

November 27, 1990

Dear Jim,

Based on a recent conversation with your pastor, I think it is time for you and me to sit down again. You will recall that our last meeting was on May 31, 1990. At that time, I discussed with you the various concerns that have continued to manifest themselves in each of your assignments. Basically, these issues boil down to the questions of your commitment to parochial ministry, your habitual absence from the rectory during the evening hours, and your unavailability for the most part during the day.

When I appointed Father Cimarrusti to the pastorate of St. Bonaventure, I talked to him about these concerns with the hope that he would be able to turn things around for you. But evidently that has not happened. In speaking to him recently, I was saddened to hear that the same old patterns of behavior remain unchanged.

I think it is time, Jim, for you to make some serious decisions about the direction of your life. I cannot allow you to remain at St. Bonaventure and impede whatever progress Father Cimarrusti might be able to make in the midst of a difficult enough situation. At the same time, I cannot ask any other pastor to subject himself to the frustration of dealing with a relatively inactive associate. I wish I knew what the problem was, Jim. You seem to be gifted in so many ways, but there is a big block somewhere that prevents the best of you from coming forth.

Ken Velo will be contacting you in the near future to arrange an appointment. Inasmuch as Ray Goedert has worked with you on previous occasions, I have asked him to be present at our meeting.

Asking Our Lord to assist the three of us in discerning what is best for you and for the Archdiocese, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Archbishop of Chicago

Reverend James Steel  
St. Bonaventure Rectory  
1641 West Diversey  
Chicago, Illinois 60614

bc: Father Goedert  
Father Velo

AOC 005049



Off: (312) 642-1837

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

VICAR FOR PRIESTS

800 NORTH CLARK STREET, SUITE 311  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60610

TO: Cardinal Bernardin

FROM: Rev. Raymond Goedert *RG*

DATE: Nov. 20, 1990

RE: James Steel

1. At our meeting on Nov. 10, you asked if I would prepare a draft of a letter to Jim Steel. You further requested that I read it to Frank Cimarrusti before you would send it to Jim. I have done this and the letter which I am suggesting was approved completely by Frank on Saturday, Nov. 17. Interestingly enough, Frank had just concluded a meeting with Jim Steel earlier Saturday and, in effect, had told Jim that he wanted him to leave as soon as possible. Frank intends to send to me a summary of that meeting with Jim, together with documentation to support his concerns.

2. If you agree, therefore, I would suggest you send the following letter:

Rev. James Steel  
St. Bonaventure Rectory  
1641 West Diversey  
Chicago, Illinois 60614

Dear Jim,

Based on a recent conversation with your pastor, I think it is time for you and me to sit down again. You will recall, our last meeting was on May 31, 1990. At that time, I discussed with you the various concerns that have continued to manifest themselves in each of your assignments. Basically, these issues boil down to the questions of your commitment to parochial ministry, your habitual absence from the rectory during the evening hours, and your unavailability for the most part, during the day.

When I appointed Fr. Cimarrusti to the pastorate of St. Bonaventure, I talked to him about these concerns with the hope that he would be able to turn things around for you. But evidently that hasn't happened. In speaking to him recently, I was saddened to hear that the same old patterns of behavior remain unchanged.

I think it is time, Jim, for you to make some serious decisions about the direction of your life. I cannot allow you to remain at St. Bonaventure and impede whatever progress Fr. Cimarrusti might be able to make in the midst of a difficult enough situation. At the same time, I cannot ask any other pastor to subject himself to the frustration of dealing with a relatively inactive associate. I wish I knew what the problem was, Jim. You seem to be gifted in so many ways, but there is

a big, big block somewhere that prevents the best of you from coming forth.

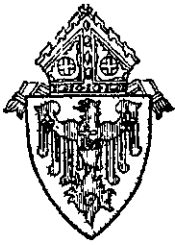
Ken Velo will be contacting you in the near future to arrange an appointment. Inasmuch as Ray Goedert has worked with you on previous occasions, I have asked him to be present at our meeting.

Asking Our Lord to assist the three of us in discerning what is best for you and for the Archdiocese, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Archbishop of Chicago





Off (312) 642-1837

## ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

VICAR FOR PRIESTS

800 NORTH CLARK STREET, SUITE 311

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60610

TO: File (R. Goedert)

DATE: Dec. 21, 1990

RE: James Steel

1. The Cardinal met with James Steel today at 2:45 and I was also present. The Cardinal began the discussion by indicating his concern that the same problems that he had outlined to Jim before were still unchanged. The Cardinal stressed especially the fact that Jim is away from the rectory all through the night hours into the morning. And that this night life prevents him from entering into the activities of the parish.
2. Jim responded that he did do everything that was expected of him in the parish, but by design he has held himself back since Frank's taking over the parish because he wanted to let the new pastor have his own style of leadership, etc. It was a feeble effort to explain why he doesn't do anything around the parish other than the absolute essentials. I mentioned that if just saying Mass is what parish ministry is all about then his notion of priesthood is quite different from mine.
3. Eventually the Cardinal confronted Jim with the information that we knew that he had been arrested on Dec. 18 at 4904 W. Diversey. We further knew that the gambling game in which he was involved was a high-stakes game and very likely connected with the Mafia. Jim did not deny that he was arrested. He then began to talk rather freely about it, describing the club that he was at and how they have to buzz you in the door, because they don't just let anyone come. He claimed that all of the people he gambles with are his friends. He then elaborated on his own upbringing. He said that his father gambled like this all the time as far back as Jim can remember. As a little boy, there was always gambling going on and card playing, etc. So Jim has it in his blood and he admitted that he gambles probably five times a week.
4. I told Jim that I did not think that the gambling he did was the variety that we used to engage in. Back in seminary days we would play poker and it was always \$2 pauper. The most you could lose was \$2. I facetiously asked if that was the kind of poker he was engaged in. He admitted that it was not. When I asked him whether he could win or lose \$200, \$300, \$500 he readily said, "Oh yes, without any problem." In other words, he is playing in what I would consider high-stakes games. Jim countered with the thought that "high-stakes" is a relative term. What might be high to one is not to the other. I got the impression that to lose \$500 in a night is a drop in the bucket, as far as Jim is concerned.
5. I then raised the question as to the source of the funds. Anyone who knows what a priest earns knows that there's no way he could afford to lose \$500 a night, even though he presumably wins on occasion. I said that the only thing that most people would conclude is that Jim is stealing from the collection. That would be a grave source of scandal for the people. And

AOC 005052

even if he is using his own money, which Jim claims is his through an inheritance, it would still be scandalous for the people to see a priest engage in such high stakes games. The cops would not have raided a mom and pop type poker game.

6. This was the first time Jim was even in any way talkative. Usually you had to pull absolutely every piece of information out from him. And even then you never came up with much. But he seemed free with the information he was giving and perhaps it was because he knew that we knew he had been arrested.

7. The Cardinal said that Jim will have to leave St. Bonaventure. Originally the date would have been Jan. 4, but Jim said his court date is Jan. 7, so the Cardinal said he would make the departure effective Jan. 8.

8. Between now and then, I will have to come up with some options as far as treatment is concerned. I told the Cardinal that I did not think individual treatment on an out-patient basis would be effective at all. I think it has to be long-term in-patient therapy and I will check out what treatment centers are available.

9. The Cardinal assured Jim that if he cooperates with us and if he enters into a treatment program and comes through it successfully, he could be re-assigned. On the other hand, if he refuses, or if the treatment doesn't work, then the Cardinal does not think that he could assign him anywhere.

10. I will have to determine a place of residence during the interim leaving St. Bonaventure before entering a treatment program. I will have to call Jim to see whether or not he has any particular place in mind where he would prefer to stay. He said he has no place of his own. He also asked about storage. He said he has a lot of things and he already is paying for storage from the last move. He wondered if the diocese would take care of this. I didn't make a commitment and the Cardinal didn't want to get bogged down on a minor detail like that, but upon further reflection, it bothers me to think that we would be paying for storage, but he could be willing to blow \$500 a night in a poker game. If he has that much money through his inheritance, why shouldn't we insist that he pay for his own storage.

11. The meeting itself went reasonably well. The Cardinal was very kind and gracious to Jim, but also very definite about the necessity of him undergoing treatment before he can expect another assignment.

12. On Saturday, Dec. 22, I called Frank Cimarrusti. He said that Jim said absolutely nothing to him about the meeting with the Cardinal. I told Frank that the date has been pushed off to Jan. 8. That was acceptable to him.

ST. BONAVENTURE RECTORY  
1641 West Diversey Parkway  
Chicago, Illinois 60614  
281 - 6588

October 30, 1990

His Eminence  
Joseph Cardinal Bernardin  
Archbishop of Chicago  
155 East Superior Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60611

Your Eminence,

Welcome home! I hope your time in Rome was positive and satisfying. I hope too that even though the work was constant the change of pace and scenery were helpful to you.

When I met with you in August one topic of discussion was Fr. James Steel. I'd like to now update you as per our conversation:

1. On three to five nights a week Jim leaves the rectory between 7 PM and 11 PM. He usually returns between 4:30 and 5:30 AM. However sometimes he's in at 2:30 or 3 AM. Other times he's in after 9 or 10 AM and as late as noon.
2. When assigned, Jim offers Mass, has breakfast and then closes himself off in his room. On occasions he comes out around lunchtime. But ordinarily he isn't out until 2 or 3 in the afternoon.
3. I believe he spends most of his day sleeping since he often doesn't answer his "com line". Other time is evidently spent watching TV, reading the newspaper from cover to cover and snacking.
4. Jim has done a number of Baptisms and two weddings since I arrived here. But other than those functions, his celebrating Mass four or five times per week, attending a monthly Transition Team meeting and sometimes attending a weekly staff meeting, he does little else here. In fact his contribution to the parish is so minimal I would say that the average full-time student priest in residence at a parish probably does as much if not more than Jim does here.

His Eminence  
Joseph Cardinal Bernardin  
Archbishop of Chicago  
Page Two

When I first arrived I thought maybe Jim was shy. But at this point I feel certain he is just lazy. Jim will hardly lift a finger to help anyone here. If he does it is only to show the person how to do something so he himself won't have to do it in the future. He talks a good game but does little of substance. I don't believe he torpedoes anything I am about, but he is not a member of the team. On my part I have not done much to call him to be a member. With his late hours, his unavailability, his reputation as a gambler, and the smell of liquor around him frequently I don't really want him to be a part of my team. Given the above I don't trust him either with money or other responsibilities.

Various priests, as well as parishioners have wondered out loud, when he would be leaving here. Bishop Lyne asked me to call Ray Goedert. Larry Maddock concurred. I do have a call into Ray. I have also spoken informally to Ray Cusack.

I can give you a more complete outline of Jim's comings and goings if you wish. At this point I need to tell you that I would like to see Jim out of here as soon as possible (by the end of November if that can be arranged). Or, if he could not be moved by then, I would ask that he be given "resident" status in this parish. Then I would not have to pay him a salary I can't afford and which is not earned. Also, Jim could seek weekend ministry at other parishes. His liturgical presence is not one that encourages people to return to celebrate liturgy again. Consequently visitors looking for a parish are not apt to become new members here if they have attended a Mass he has celebrated.

I do have some positive suggestions for his future and possible action you might wish to take. I will share those with you if you wish.

Thank you for considering this letter. Needless to say, I am very anxious to see some action on this matter. Many positives are coming about here at this parish, but I am a long way from feeling secure about the parish future. Know that you are in my prayers and that I ask for yours.

Sincerely,



Rev. Francis A. Cimarrusti  
Pastor

ST. BONAVENTURE RECTORY  
1641 West Diversey Parkway  
Chicago, Illinois 60614  
281 - 6588

December 13, 1990

Dear Ray,

The last time we spoke you asked if Jim Steel had improved any since my meeting with him. I quickly answered "no". Later I had a twinge of conscience and felt maybe I had spoken rashly. I began to take note again of Jim's comings and goings. Here they are.

Sunday, Dec. 2: Jim left at 10 PM

Tuesday, Dec 4: he returned in time for the 8:30 AM Mass  
Jim left after 7:30 PM

Wednesday, Dec. 5: he returned around 6 AM  
Jim left before 8 PM

Thursday, Dec. 6: he returned at 3:30 PM

Friday, Dec. 7: Jim left before midnight

Saturday, Dec. 8: he returned about 8 AM  
Jim was at a parish party until 11 PM, then left at midnight

Sunday, Dec. 9: He returned at 7:50 AM, did the 8:30 Mass and left before 10 AM. He returned at 2 PM and left again at 8 PM

Monday, Dec. 10: Jim returned at 12:30 PM and left again at 7 PM

Tuesday, Dec. 11: He returned during the night before 5 AM  
Jim left, I'm not sure of the time

Wednesday, Dec. 12: He began 8:30 AM Mass about 15 minutes late  
Jim left around 6 PM.

Thursday, Dec. 13: It is 4:30 PM he has not returned. He did ~~not~~ ask Frank Spellman to say the 6:30 AM Mass for him

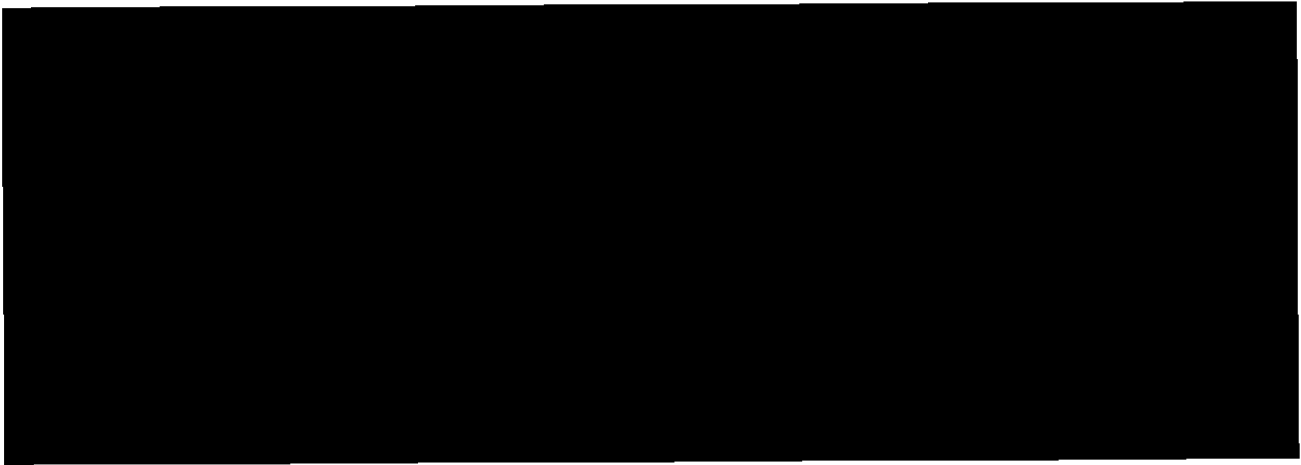
AOC 005056

One other thing I've noticed is that Jim goes through great pains to be able to enter either by the back kitchen door or the boiler room door. He has to make sure locks are set properly and needs to carry an extra key to get in through those more out of the way entrances. It seems to be sneaky or furtive.

I hope this is helpful. Take good care of yourself.

Sincerely,

*Frank Cimarruto*



**ST. BONAVENTURE RECTORY**  
**1641 West Diversey Parkway**  
**Chicago, Illinois 60614**  
**281 - 6588**

November 18, 1990

Rev. Raymond Goedert  
Vicar for Priests  
Archdiocese of Chicago  
800 North Clark #311  
Chicago, Illinois 60611

Dear Ray,

Today I spoke with Jim regarding his presence here. I want to highlight the main points for you now. I'd be happy to talk at length about our conversation. The following is not necessarily in order in which things were discussed.

I told Jim that:

1. I wanted him to leave here as soon as possible.
2. "the Cardinal had asked me about him when we met in August. That I told the Cardinal I would be open to him" and "that I recently written the Cardinal saying I thought he (Jim) should leave here quickly."
3. I thought he needed to ask himself some questions about his role as priest in any parish setting, whether he was an associat pastor or resident.
4. I needed to build my own team and I didn't see him as a part of that. My perceptions of him were that he was not doing bad or mean things in the parish but that he wasn't motivated about the parish or the people. He needed to look at his role as priest to see if he himself was motivated.
5. That I see no reason to pay him a salary that cost the parish so much since he only was doing Mass, some Baptisms and weddings.

Some of Jim's responses were that:

1. He was ready for this. That there is a lot to be said for whole staffs offering their resignations when a pastor comes.
2. That he was hand-picked for this place, given his difficulties in the past.

3. That the way things were done here have changed and that he needed to change too. But that he'd laid back so that I could put my stamp/mark on the parish.
4. That maybe he had to ask other questions and check out all of his options.
5. That he wasn't ready to respond right now to all of this.

Jim did ask what he should do: call the Board, etc.? I told him that I thought since I had written the Cardinal, the Cardinal would probably contact him. I added that if he wished, he could contact the Board. That is his prerogative. He thought he'd wait for the Cardinal.

While Jim was not surprised by this I believe he was upset about it and that he kept a great deal of anger in. I think this is very painful for him but he tried to appear cool and calm. He smiled a lot during the thirty minute session.

An important item for you: the comments about the Cardinal in this letter are the complete extent of my comments about him to Jim.

Ray, thanks for all your support on this. Keep up the great work. A word too about Greeley's article - it stunk! I really appreciate Joe Ruiz's letter to the editor.

Prayers,

*Frank*





Off (312) 642-1837

## ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

VICAR FOR PRIESTS  
800 NORTH CLARK STREET, SUITE 311  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60610

TO: File (R. Goedert)

DATE: May 31, 1990

RE: James Steel

1. Mike Murray called. He wanted to know if I was aware of the fact that Jim Steel had asked [REDACTED] to resign. I told him I knew nothing about it. He said that he had just called Ray Cusack to ask him the same question and Ray also said he knew nothing about it. For some reason, Mike presumed that we both were aware of it and that [REDACTED] herself must have told it to us when we met there on March 20. I checked my notes from that day and there was no indication at all that she had said anything. I suggested to Mike that he advise [REDACTED] not to resign unless Jim gives very definite reasons and even then she ought to maybe call me before she resigns. I would be inclined to refer her to the Office of Conciliation, but I don't want Mike to get caught in the middle of this.
2. After talking to Mike, I called the Cardinal on another matter and asked him whether he had succeeded in talking to Jim Steel. He said that he did have a meeting with him and had the same problem that I do in trying to get out of him exactly what goes on when he leaves the rectory every night. Jim did admit that he plays cards and denied any gambling. But the Cardinal was left with the impression that he wasn't telling the whole truth. The Cardinal intends to send a follow-up letter to Jim about this. I suggested that he include something to the effect that until this matter is cleared up to his satisfaction, he can't very well appoint Jim as a pastor.
3. As an aside, the Cardinal wondered whether we ought to hire an investigator to follow Jim to find out for ourselves exactly what is going on. The Cardinal is concerned not just about appointing him a pastor, but allowing him to function as a priest at all, if in fact, he is into something that he shouldn't be. I thought it might be better to wait until Frank Cimarrusti takes over the parish and see how he and Frank get along. If Frank experiences the same thing, I didn't think Frank would be as tolerant as Mike and others may have been. And if Jim starts to behave in the same way, then maybe we can reconsider what we can do about him at that time.

MEMO

To: FILE

cc: Fr. Ray Goedert  
Vicar for Priests

From: Cardinal Bernardin

Date: May 31, 1990

Re: REVEREND JAMES STEELE

I met with Jim on May 29. He was nervous about being called in (he had spoken with Ken Velo about this the day before) but I told him I wanted to speak with him only because I was concerned about his well-being.

I told him I knew about his staying out all night many nights of the week. This causes rumors: Is it because of gambling or other kinds of improper behavior. I indicated that it would not be possible to consider him for a pastorate unless I knew what he was up to. So I asked him to tell me, in confidence: (1) whether he did stay out all night on many (most) nights of the week and (2) what he did on those occasions.

He seemed to place great stress on confidence but then what he told me did not seem to be of a confidential nature. (1) Yes, he does stay out all night, not every night but many nights. (2) All he does is play cards with some friends. Playing cards is something that runs in his family. Furthermore, he said, frequently there is no fellowship in the rectory and he is forced to go elsewhere for it. He also said that he attends to all his parish obligations. I asked him when he slept. He said he needed less sleep than others but admitted he slept a bit during the day.

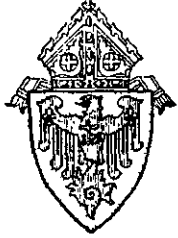
When I asked about the incident last year when he picked up a woman early one Sunday morning and was stopped by police (and the woman was arrested) he admitted that this was true. He simply gave someone a ride, he said, not knowing she was a prostitute.

I told him that if he were ever a pastor, he could not spend most nights outside the rectory. He understood that and said that indeed he would stay home.

I found the meeting difficult in that I felt I had to pull everything out of Jim. In all honesty, I did not feel that he was telling me the truth. Even if what he said was basically true, there is something strange about the man. Somehow, we must find out what the real story is so we can decide what to do with him in the future. I plan to send him a letter as a follow-up to the meeting. I need to seek more advice before doing so.

I am enclosing a memo for the file summarizing what happened in my meeting with Jim Steele. Would you be good enough to call me so we can discuss the matter further? Many thanks.

AOC 005061



Off: (312) 642-1837

**ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO**

VICAR FOR PRIESTS

800 NORTH CLARK STREET, SUITE 311  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60610

TO: File (R. Goedert)

DATE: May 4, 1990

RE: James Steel

At a meeting with the Personnel Board, Jim Steel's name was presented and I was asked for whatever information I could give. I indicated to the Board that I really did not have any information on Jim that I would be free to discuss, but I wondered what the purpose of the question was. I asked point-blank if Jim was being considered for the pastorate at St. Bonaventure or any where else. The Board indicated that Jim's inability to speak Spanish would probably eliminate him from consideration for St. Bonaventure. That being the case, I told the Board that I would have to send a memo to the Cardinal expressing my thoughts with regard to Jim's pastorability. It will be up to the Cardinal to talk to Jim to see whether or not the Cardinal shares my concerns.

**AOC 005062**



Off: (312) 642-1837

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

VICAR FOR PRIESTS

800 NORTH CLARK STREET, SUITE 311  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60610

TO: File (R. Goedert)

DATE: July 10, 1989

RE: James Steel

1. Jim came in at my request. I wanted to confront him on the report given to me by Captain [REDACTED]. I focussed our conversation in the form of questions, to which Jim responded. The questions were as follows:

Q. According to the police report, you were stopped on Sunday, May 7, at 5:20 AM in front of 4350 N. Broadway. Do you care to tell me where you were that night?

A. I was at a friend's house. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I see them every couple of weeks. They live in Rogers Park [REDACTED]. I was on my way home from their house. [REDACTED]

Q. Why would you pick up anyone at 5:20 AM? Did this woman flag you down or what?

A. She was walking along and sort of thumbing a ride at the same time. I simply stopped to pick her up. I had no evil intent. I do occasionally pick up hitchhikers, men and women, young and old. I had no idea who she was.

Q. Was it your intent to pick her up for the purposes of having sexual relations with her?

A. No, I had no evil intent whatever. I had no idea who she was. I never gave this a thought.

Q. Please explain just what happened between you and her and the police.

A. It all happened so quickly. She had hardly closed the door and the police were there. No words were exchanged between her and myself. There just wasn't any time. I got out of the car and I told the police who I was. One of the policemen asked me for my license and after he realized who I was, he told me to leave. I left and went back to the rectory. I don't know what happened to her.

Q. My reason for bringing you in, Jim, was to give you whatever help you might need in the event you do have a serious problem along the lines as are suggested by this incident. Do you, in fact, have any problem or sexual disorder that would benefit from counseling?

A. No, I really don't need any help. That is not anything that I am into. The whole situation was just a fluke. I can't deny what happened, the sequence of events or anything like that. But I really don't have a problem of that

nature. I was not looking for a prostitute at the time I let her in my car.

Q. The appearance of what the police captain told me is that you were definitely picking up a prostitute and that your intention would have been to have sexual relations with her. At 5:20 AM on a Sunday morning, it is most difficult to imagine any reason why a priest would be on the street other than a sick call or some other emergency situation. So the appearance of all of this is quite bad. Once again, was there any intent on your part to engage in sexual acts with this woman?

A. I categorically deny that I had any such intent. And I state again that I do not think that I need any help, because I do not perceive this as a problem for me.

Q. It is necessary for me to act in a responsible way. If you are in need of help, then it would be my responsibility to provide it for you. Also, if you are in any way engaged in activities that would be inappropriate for a priest, then I would have a responsibility to see to it that you were relieved of ministry. However, in the light of your answers today, you are stating clearly that there was no evil intent on your part, that this is not something that you would do, and that you do not need any counseling or therapy. As far as you and I are concerned, am I to consider the matter closed?

A. Yes.

2. After the above interrogation, I engaged in conversation with Jim. I told him that I felt badly, because all of the reports I was getting about his role at St. Bonaventure were very positive and I was feeding them to the Personnel Board as I was anxious to build up a good record for Jim in the event they should consider him for a pastorate. I have to admit that this recent incident has put the same old doubts in my mind as to what Jim does when he goes out late at night. Jim still did not give me a reasonable explanation of how he spends his time. He did indicate that the rectory situation at Bonaventure's is not all that good in the sense that it doesn't lend itself to a gathering of the priests and socializing. There just isn't the physical facilities for that and besides, with Mike's sickness and Frank's age, they are not inclined to socialize any way. Jim said that if you don't get it one place you look for it in another. However, this doesn't explain the same kind of behavior in two or three previous rectories.

3. I told Jim that I am going to consider the matter closed and that I do intend to put in the record exactly what he said. But I also added that that doesn't necessarily mean that I believe everything. I felt I owed it to Jim that the story still doesn't sound all that good to me.



Off: (312) 642-1837

## ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

VICAR FOR PRIESTS  
800 NORTH CLARK STREET, SUITE 311  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60610

TO: File (R. Goedert)

DATE: June 30, 1989

RE: James Steel

1. I spoke to Jim today about the allegations given to me concerning an incident on May 7. At first, Jim indicated an unawareness of any such event. But then as we talked a bit, he did say something to the effect that she was only in his car for a few seconds. He said that he does drive around that neighborhood from time to time. That is where he grew up. When he asked me when the incident is supposed to have happened, I told him it was on Sunday, May 7. He said that he wouldn't be able to remember what he was doing on that day. I then told him it was at 5:20 AM in front of 4350 N. Broadway. It was at that point that he indicated that she was only in the car a few minutes at most. That is probably true, as the woman is a known prostitute and the police were watching her. As soon as she would get into a car and make a deal, they would move in to arrest her.

2. I had the impression that Jim was trying to figure out a way of not admitting this, but he was caught off guard and couldn't very well. I suggested that he come in to see me and we would talk about it. We made an appointment for July 10 at 10 AM. He is supposed leave today on vacation and will return on July 8.



Off: (312) 642-1837

## ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

VICAR FOR PRIESTS

800 NORTH CLARK STREET, SUITE 311

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60610

TO: File (R. Goedert)

DATE: June 1, 1989

RE: James Steel

1. Captain [REDACTED], the police commander, called today. His telephone number is [REDACTED]. Captain [REDACTED] wanted to pass information along to me just in case we can help one of the priests to straighten his life out. He has sat on this information for several weeks, but finally decided to call. I had met with him in another case and he understood the nature of my job, etc.

2. According to the case report given to him, Officers [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] made an arrest on Sunday, May 7, 1989, at 5:20 AM, in front of 4350 N. Broadway. Officer [REDACTED], who is a trainer, was on patrol with Officer [REDACTED], a recruit. They observed a known prostitute, [REDACTED], get into a vehicle. They approached the vehicle and the driver identified himself as James R. Steel. The address he gave is that of St. Bonaventure rectory. [REDACTED] was charged with flagging down a lone male driver. Actually, this is technically called soliciting on a public way and is really a traffic violation. Everyone at the station knows [REDACTED]. Captain [REDACTED] has been there for about eight months and she has been brought in at least twenty times.

3. Captain [REDACTED] said the officers reported to him what they had done and asked whether they had acted properly. They actually let James Steel go, once he identified himself. They could have arrested him [REDACTED] on charges of dealing with a known prostitute. Fr. Steel's name does not appear anywhere in the report and there is no record of the incident. No one else knows about it other than the two officers, Captain [REDACTED] and now myself.

AOC 005066



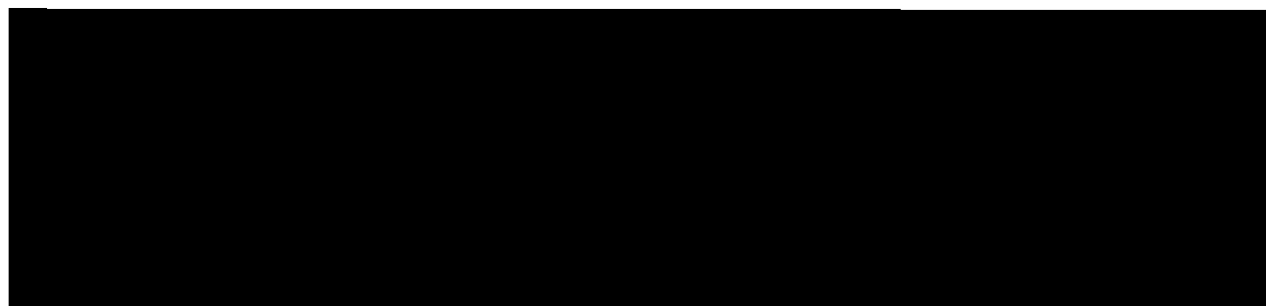
# ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

POST OFFICE BOX 1979

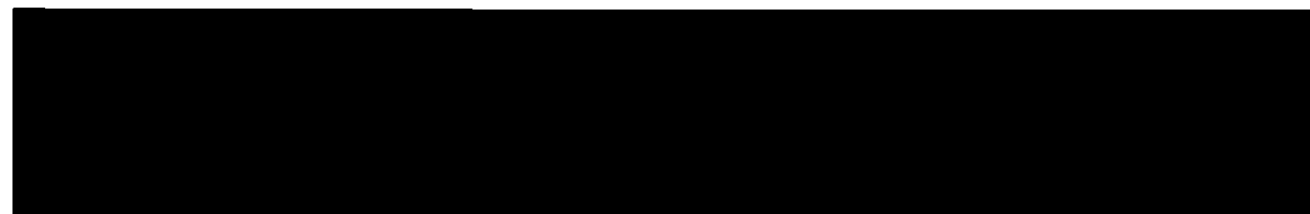
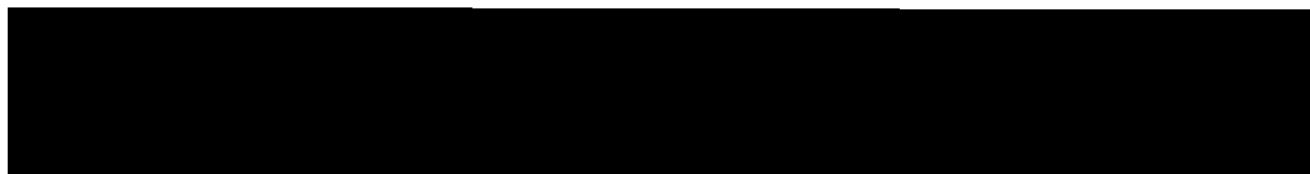
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60690

*Vicar for Priests*  
00 North Clark Street, Suite 311  
Chicago, Illinois 60611  
Off: (312) 642-1837

TO: File  
DATE: August 15, 1988  
RE: Mike Murray/JAMES STEEL



2. While talking to Frank, I asked how things were going and he raised a question about Jim Steel and his evening habits. He wanted to know if anyone had ever confronted Jim about what he does late at night, as that still seems to be his pattern. I told Frank that we had talked about this a number of times, but Jim simply doesn't open up. However, I said that as soon as Mike gets out of the hospital and is back on the job, I will try to meet with the Staff and discuss all of this, including Jim's late night exploits. I told Frank that we have suspected that he is a gambler, and as long as we are not sure, my guess is the Personnel Board would be very reluctant to name him a pastor.







ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

POST OFFICE BOX 1979

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60690

*Vicar for Priests*  
*800 North Clark Street, Suite 311*  
*Chicago, Illinois 60611*  
*Off: (312) 642-1837*

TO: Mr. Ray Ranas

FROM: Rev. Raymond Goedert

DATE: April 12, 1988

RE: Rev. James Steel

I received your recent memo concerning priests on leave under the Vicar for Priests account. I wish to inform you that Rev. James Steel should be removed from the payroll, as he is presently assigned to St. Bonaventure parish. He should be receiving his check from the parish covering the month of April and thereafter.

## AGREEMENT

On the 26<sup>th</sup> day of March, 1988, Rev. James Steel hereby enters this agreement with Rev. Michael Murray, the pastor of St. Bonaventure parish, Chicago, Illinois. The provisions of this agreement are as follows:

### I. Liturgical Responsibilities:

- (1) Sunday Mass - Alternate on a systematic basis with the rest of the priests. Take your turn at the Saturday evening Mass and the Sunday evening Mass.
- (2) Weekday Masses - Alternate the Mass schedule. Private Masses with intentions are available.
- (3) Funerals - Fr. Spellman and Fr. Steel will alternate on funerals. The priest who has the funeral is expected to attend the wake and go to the cemetery. Fr. Murray will take funerals at the request of the family.
- (4) Weddings - Whoever is on call will take the wedding unless a specific request is made for a certain priest. The priest who takes the wedding also does the preparation work and the rehearsal.
- (5) Children's Masses (School Masses) - These will be alternated -- all priests are expected to participate.
- (6) Baptisms - The priest who celebrates the 11:45 Mass on Sunday is responsible for the baptisms that are scheduled for that day. The priest on call who receives the request for baptism is expected to give the instructions for the parents and god parents.
- (7) Mass at Conrad Senior Citizen's Home - Third Wednesday of the month -- we will alternate until Fr. Delire is ready to resume.
- (8) Confessions - Priest having Saturday evening 6:00 Mass hears confessions in the afternoon from 4 to 4:30 and again after the evening Mass.
- (9) Novena - Priest having the 8:00 Mass on Tuesday morning takes the Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help after the Mass. The Tuesday evening Novena Services are alternated among all the priests.
- (10) Greeting - You will be expected to greet the people in the back of the church after the Mass you celebrate, at least every other Sunday. At other times, when greeting the people after Sunday liturgies, clerical garb should be worn.

### II. Rectory Living:

- (1) Private Rooms - Please make it convenient for the housekeeper to clean or straighten your room daily.
- (2) Evening Meals - The customary time for the evening meal is 5:30, except Friday and Saturday when it is at 5:00. There is no dinner on Sunday (we help ourselves). If you are unable to be at dinner, please let the cook know.

- (3) Dinner Guests - You are free to have dinner guests at any time. If you wish privacy, inform the pastor so that a different dinner time for the other priests can be scheduled.
- (4) On Calls - Each priest will be on calls two days a week.
- (5) Phone Calls - Door Bell - Please accept all phone calls and office calls the secretary or housekeeper direct to you. If no one is in the house who regularly answers either the phone or door, the priest on call is expected to answer.

III. Other Responsibilities:

- (1) During Carnival time, we would hope you would walk the grounds as much as possible, making yourself visible. Optional: wear black shirt and/or collar to be easily identified as a priest.
- (2) Visit the sick in the hospitals. You are expected to go when requested
- (3) Communion Calls - take when requested.
- (4) Occasional appearance in school and CCD would be appreciated.
- (5) Vacation time - you are welcome to have at least three weeks in winter and three weeks in summer. The times of vacations should be agreed upon at staff meetings to insure fairness to all.
- (6) Food Pantry - consider helping Fr. Delire reopen his food pantry and help screen the people coming for help.
- (7) Bulletin - contribute articles, new items for the bulletin, Fr. Delire is in charge.
- (8) Youth Group - help to form a youth group if so inclined
- (9) Personal Life - it is expected of all of us that our personal life and the hours we keep must not present a scandal to the parishioners. If complaints are made, the matter will be referred to the Vicar for Priests.
- (10) SECURITY - THIS IS MANDATORY: Be aware of security at all times in the rectory, church and school. Lock all doors, etc. Close and lock the church and shut off all lights if you have the last Mass on week-days and if you have the 11:45 on Sunday or the 5:00 PM on Sunday evening.

Rev Michael Murray  
Rev. Michael Murray

Rev James L. Steel  
Rev. James Steel

Witnessed by

Rev. Lucius B. Delire  
Rev. Lucius Delire

Rev. Frank Spellman  
Rev. Frank Spellman

Rev. Raymond Goedert  
Rev. Raymond Goedert



## ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

POST OFFICE BOX 1979

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60690

*Vicar for Priests*  
0 North Clark Street, Suite 311  
Chicago, Illinois 60611  
Off: (312) 642-1837

TO: File  
DATE: March 12, 1988  
RE: James Steel

1. I met with Mike Murray, the pastor of St. Bonaventure, today. Frank Spellman, retired, who is living there, also sat in for part of the meeting. Both Mike and Frank are willing to accept Jim Steel as the associate pastor. I spelled out for them some of the concerns that we have, the results of [REDACTED] and the comments made by Jack Fahey. I did not want Mike to be taken by surprise, nor did I want him to be naive about any of the things that might happen in the future. Mike was appreciative and at the end of my presentation he was still quite willing to accept Jim.

2. Mike said that a number of his classmates and others with whom he talked all warned him against accepting Jim, but Mike and Frank were both willing to give Jim a chance. They feel that they might be able to provide Jim with a congenial atmosphere that might help to bring him out of himself.

3. I suggested to Mike that he spell out carefully the specifics about what his expectations would be of Jim. Mike agreed to do this and he will get in touch with me when he has finished. I will review them with him and then arrange an appointment for Mike, Frank, Jim and myself to get together and to finalize the agreement. I felt that this would be very important, as it gives us something against which to measure Jim's performance. I also told Mike that I would be checking with him every three or four months just to see how things are going.

4. I spoke to Frank Cimarrusti and he assured me that the Personnel Board would be in agreement, if the appointment is going to be made. I also spoke to Jack Fahey so that he would be aware of what was taking place. Finally, I spoke to Jim Steel on Monday, March 14 and explained everything to him and he was very pleased.

5. With regard to financing Jim's salary, Mike did not think this would create a problem for the parish. They are a grant parish already, so whether or not he pays it, or the PRMAA it is all coming out of the same source. So Mike will take care of this himself.

AOC 005071



## ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

POST OFFICE BOX 1979

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60690

*Vicar for Priests*  
*North Clark Street, Suite 311*  
*Chicago, Illinois 60611*  
*Off: (312) 642-1837*

TO: File  
DATE: Feb. 27, 1988  
RE: James Steel

1. Frank Cimarrusti called today. The Personnel Board decided against Steel's going to St. Mary of Celle. They just didn't think it would be fair to Cy Nemecek. Frank had talked to Cy and Cy wondered whether Steel would be there for the full five years. In view of the number of changes he had had, he would not want to run the risk of having Steel come and then within a few months or a year decide to leave. Frank could not give him any guarantees. Moreover, in view of [REDACTED], the Board did not think it was fair to subject him to the stress that living with Jim Steel might cause.

2. The Board is willing to allow Steel to go to St. Bonaventure. Mike Murray is open to taking Steel, although he reported to Frank that his classmates warn him against it. Jim is willing to go there and Frank told Mike that he should talk to me.

3. Frank will talk to Jim Steel, Mike Murray, and John Fahey and let them know that I am going to be on Retreat but as soon as I return I will be in touch with them.

AOC 005072

JAMES STEEL: Priest Perciever

Can Do - is he able to do it.

Presence:

Jim has found God in his sickness, in the hospital, and in others - although that reference was vague.

Enabler:

Jim has the ability to help people move from anger and frustration to see things in a different fashion.

Relator:

Jim's talent in this area lies in his ability to learn the names of people quickly. Another area is his desire to be liked and respected by people.

Empathy:

Jim is a good listener, watching the speaker and allowing the speaker to tell his/her story. He is able to understand the sick and the hurting.

Courage:

Jim wants to convince people to his way of thinking if the area is important or has substance.

Will Do - he may be able to do it, what if he doesn't want to do it?

Mission:

Jim's mission seems to be the growth of people. He feels the concern of staff should be for people and for one another.

Hope:

Jim is hopeful. He loves living. He shows his hope by helping people talk about their future.

Loyalty:

Jim is loyal to the Church in that he sees the need for obedience but not blind obedience.

Ego Awareness:

Wants to be trusted and he does seek interaction.

Community:

Jim can give ownership to people. In this theme his strength is in his effort to resolve conflict and bring people together.



## ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

POST OFFICE BOX 1979

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60690

*Vicar for Priests*  
300 North Clark Street, Suite 311  
Chicago, Illinois 60611  
Off: (312) 642-1837

TO: File  
DATE: Jan. 7, 1988  
RE: James Steel

1. John Fahey, the pastor of St. Clement's, called today to discuss the case of Jim Steel. John reiterated that the primary purpose of the assignment of Jim to St. Clement's was that the staff would provide a genuinely supportive environment for him and for Jack Fahey himself to be in touch with Jim on a weekly basis. Jack has done this, having lunch alone with Jim almost every week.
2. Jack found Jim to be a very pleasant man. There was no anger or resentment on Jim's part.
3. Jack tried to encourage Jim to take the initiative with the staff at St. Clement's, to show interest in what they were doing, to talk with them, etc. But Jim hasn't really done any of this. Jack also tried to encourage Jim to take the initiative with some of his contemporaries. He asked him about his priest friends and Jim's response was that all of his friends had left the active ministry. Jack found Jim to be very much out of touch with his contemporaries. Unfortunately, Jack does not think Jim made any efforts along these lines either. There is no resistance to what is suggested, but there is also no follow-through.
4. Jim is always very pleasant at meals. In fact he couldn't be more pleasant, but the lack of initiative is very evident. Jack said that Issel was quoted as saying at the recent Cardinal overnights something to the effect that he is "looking at a lot of anger and apathy" in the clergy. Jack said that this fits Jim to a T, as far as apathy is concerned.
5. Jim has done some good things. For instance, he saw a doctor. He hasn't had a physical since he went to Mundelein. Jim does go to family gatherings, but there seems to be no reaching out.
6. Jim assures Jack that there is no woman in the background. But he still is out nights, enough for Jack to notice it. One time Jack and Bob Oldershaw were doing their running around 7:00 in the morning and Jim was just coming home. Jack feels that there is something that Jim is simply not forthcoming about.
7. With regard to future assignments, Jack feels that if Jim goes into a house with two or three other priests, he'll just do the same as he did before. Jack could not see Jim as a pastor. He is gentle and engaging. There is a pleasant, affable quality about him. But Jack is amazed that Jim can sit around all day long and watch TV and not feel restless or impatient. This is amazing to Jack. Booze does not seem to be the problem.
8. Jack also mentioned incidents that happened. Jack was taking care of someone in the parlor when a call came in from Grant Hospital. Jack asked Jim if he would take it. Jim readily agreed. When Jack finished with his appointment in

AOC 005074

the parlor, the secretary informed him that there was no need to go to Grant Hospital because the patient had died. Jack confronted Jim about this and Jim simply said that he had forgotten. He had the piece of paper in his hand and then got a phone call. When he finished the phone call, he proceeded to watch TV and completely forgot to go to the hospital.

9. Jack thinks that maybe he ought to be sent to a place where there are all kinds of activity going on and where a pastor would not be getting an associate otherwise.

10. There seems to be a whole aspect of Jim's personality that has atrophied.

11. I asked Jack about Jim's participation in the liturgy. He said that they only allowed him to celebrate a few times, although he certainly could have celebrated privately or concelebrated any time he wanted. Jack just doesn't remember how the liturgy went on those few occasions. He would have to ask Oldershaw about it.

12. Jack suggested that we talk to Issel about what he meant by "apathy". Jim's feeling level has been turned down so low that he doesn't have the normal reactions to situations.

13. Jack feels that there is more to the night visiting, but he just doesn't know what it is. He can't put his finger on it.

14. Jack really thinks that we ought to put the burden on Jim himself to find a job. Maybe he ought to go into a secular job for a while and see if he can function well in that. But even if we are not prepared to go that far, maybe we shouldn't try to find a place for Jim, but simply give him the names of places that are looking for associates and see whether he can find someone who is willing to take him in. Maybe if the full burden were put on Jim, he would begin to assume some responsibility for his life and his behavior.

15. I asked Jack whether he would be agreeable to keeping Jim at St. Clement's until we found another place for him. Jack agreed that he would allow Jim to stay another month. He will communicate this to Jim.





## ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

POST OFFICE BOX 1979

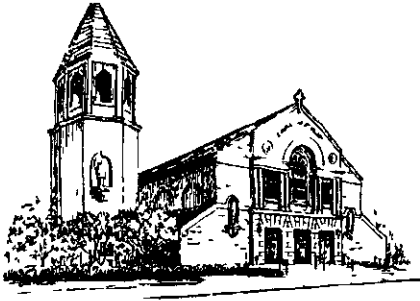
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60690

*Vicar for Priests*  
00 North Clark Street, Suite 311  
Chicago, Illinois 60611  
Off: (312) 642-1837

TO: File  
DATE: Sept. 22, 1987  
RE: Jim Steel

I met Ed Duggan, the former pastor at St. John Brebeuf, today at the Weakland lecture. I asked him about Jim Steel. He confirmed the allegation that Jim is out every night, not two or three times a week but every night from approximately 9:30 to 6:00 AM. Ed did feel that Jim had a lot of redeeming qualities. He is very good with people on a one on one basis. He gives people his undivided attention. But on the other hand, he is completely closed mouthed as far as himself is concerned. You can never get inside to know what is going on inside Jim Steel.

AOC 005076



## ST. HILARY PARISH

5600 N. Fairfield Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60659 — 312-561-3474

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September 18, 1987

Rev. Raymond Goedert  
Vicar for Priests  
800 North Clark Street  
Suite 311  
Chicago, Illinois 60611

Dear Ray,

Having shared the correspondence that has passed between me and the Clergy Personnel Board concerning the case of Jim Steel-St. Hilary, you also must recognize that with all fraternal charity we have indeed been more than sympathetic and patient. I am writing to you now to emphasize our position. We see the issue to be his removal from here as well as his placement elsewhere, and one should not necessarily be dependent upon the other. The delay of over two-and-a-half months has created a situation that has gone from one of kindness to that of detriment to all involved.

"As quickly as possible" is no longer a consideration. My main responsibility is the good of St. Hilary Parish. Therefore, upon the advice of my entire staff, I once again request his immediate removal. Please consider us as much in need of healing as Jim.

Sincerely,

Rev. Robert G. Darow  
pastor

P.S.

Upon consultation with and advice from Charlie Cronin (Dean of our area) and Frank Cimarrusti (Executive Secretary of the Clergy Personnel Board), I have informed Jim that St. Hilary Parish will be paying him a resident's stipend. This means that his September check will reflect only his resident status and Mass Stipend contract, i.e. \$200 and \$200.

cc. Rev. Francis Cimarrusti

AOC 005077



# ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

POST OFFICE BOX 1979

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60690

*Vicar for Priests*  
*0 North Clark Street, Suite 311*  
*Chicago, Illinois 60611*  
*Off: (312) 642-1837*

TO: File  
DATE: Sept. 14, 1987  
RE: Jim Steele

I spoke to [REDACTED] this morning to see whether or not Jim Steele had made an appointment. [REDACTED] indicated that Jim was supposed to see him on this coming Wednesday, Sept. 16. I subsequently called Jim and he also indicated that he was doing everything that I asked. Bob Darrow hasn't said anything to him about getting out, but I told Jim that apparently Bob would like him to leave in the near future. As soon as I hear something from St. Clement's I will then get back to Jim on it.

AOC 005078



## ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

POST OFFICE BOX 1979

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60690

*Vicar for Priests*  
*80 North Clark Street, Suite 311*  
*Chicago, Illinois 60611*  
*Off: (312) 642-1837*  
*Res: (312) 528-0540*

TO: File  
DATE: August 30, 1987  
RE: Jim Steele

I talked to Frank Cimarrusti today. I asked him to check their files and send me anything at all that is pertinent about Jim Steele's record over the nineteen years.



## ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

POST OFFICE BOX 1979

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60690

*Vicar for Priests*  
10 North Clark Street, Suite 311  
Chicago, Illinois 60611  
Off: (312) 642-1837  
Res: (312) 528-0540

TO: File  
DATE: Aug. 17, 1987  
RE: Jim Steel

I received a phone call from Frank Cimarrusti this morning. He said that he had a conversation with Jim Steel and suggested strongly that he take St. Clement's as his place of residence. Jim seemed hesitant about going to either Fahey's or Goedert's. Frank also said that the Personnel Board met on August 7 and agreed that they would not re-assign Jim Steel until he had completed the 3-part evaluation (psychological, physical and spiritual).

Frank said that in his conversation with Bob Darrow, Bob had indicated that someone had told him that Jim had a serious gambling problem. Bob did not feel free to give this person's name to Frank, so we cannot follow up on that. Frank himself thinks Jim may have a drinking problem. I will have to call Jim in and set up an interview with [REDACTED]. With regard to the spiritual, I will have to provide him with a few names, presuming that there are some who are willing to take Jim on.

AOC 005080



# ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

POST OFFICE BOX 1979

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60690

*Vicar for Priests*  
00 North Clark Street, Suite 311  
Chicago, Illinois 60611  
Off: (312) 642-1837  
Res: (312) 528-0540

## MEMO

To: Rev. John Fahey (St. Clement)  
Rev. William Goedert (St. Germaine)

From: Rev. Raymond Goedert

Date: July 24, 1987

Subject: Residence for Rev. James Steel

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I wish to thank you both for your willingness to consider your parish as a possible residence for Father Jim Steel on a short-term basis. I asked Jim to contact each of you to talk over the situation.

As I understand the problem, the Personnel Board is reluctant to appoint Jim to a full-time associate pastor position at this time. Jim was at St. Hilary for less than two weeks in his most recent appointment and was at St. John Brebeuf before that. Obviously, there are two sides to every story, but in both parishes the pastors did raise questions about Jim's personal life style, his liturgical style and his commitment to the activities and organizations of the parish.

I am leaving on vacation tomorrow. Because of this, I have asked Jim to let Frank Cimarrusti know his decision, after he has met with each of you. Upon my return, I will be in touch with Jim and it might be a good idea if he, I and the pastor of his choice sat down and worked out the specifics of the living arrangement, my expectations, your expectations and Jim's own hopes and concerns.

cc Rev. James Steel  
Rev. FRank Cimarrusti

AOC 005081



# ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

POST OFFICE BOX 1979

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60690

*Vicar for Priests*  
10 North Clark Street, Suite 311  
Chicago, Illinois 60611  
Off: (312) 642-1837  
Res: (312) 528-0540

## MEMO

DATE: July 16, 1987  
SUBJECT: James Steel

Jim Steel called to make an appointment. Frank Cimarrusti had met with him and told me that Jim is more than willing to leave St. Hilary. He sees no sense in fighting it. Frank does not think that there is any possibility of reconciliation. Frank intends to recommend to the Personnel Board that Bob Darow, Jim Steel, Cimarrusti and I should meet together to talk about what went wrong with the interview process and what is the future. Frank said that he talked to Jim about his personal appearance and lifestyle but Jim didn't respond. Frank thinks we ought to put him in a rectory where he can receive some supervision and perhaps he ought to be evaluated, etc.



## ST. HILARY PARISH

5600 N. Fairfield Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60659 — 312-561-3474

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- JUNE 22 - When Fr. Steel moved in I mistakenly offered him an extra set of rooms for his office. I say mistakenly, because he chose to use them instead for storage. He now had (read "has") four rooms and a corridor filled with belongings. It is obvious that we don't have room for everything, even counting the storage space in the basement.
- JUNE 23 - Meeting with Fr. Steel and Diane Brumbach (Business Manager). (It is my policy to have Diane present at all meetings dealing with personnel. Not only is she a witness to all statements, but she also serves to keep the meeting on track.)
- #1 My request - clear the corridor and two extra rooms of boxes and loose items which had been piled 6 feet high and 3 feet deep. I would like that done within 2 weeks.
- His response - "That's unreasonable."  
(When asked what would be reasonable, he claimed a year.)
- My counter-offer: Take 3 weeks. Decide what is important to you, then store or dispose of the rest away from here.
- His response - "I have to take my time in going through the boxes, since a check from St. John Brebeuf's is missing."
- My response - call them to void it and have them issue another.
- His response - well, actually it was two or three checks. (One week later, still no change.)
- #2 My request - please assume a professional appearance.
- a) Get a haircut.
- His response - no time.  
Parishioner offers to cut his hair for free at his convenience.  
His response - she's jealous.  
My response - get serious.
- #3 My request - dress clerically for and near liturgical functions, e.g. wear a collar when standing in front of church on Sundays, when attending wakes, burials, and also when setting up for weddings, e.g. one does not wander around the sanctuary when lay people are trying to present themselves at their best, only to have their priest looking worse than the maintenance man.
- His response - I don't have a collar, much less a





## ST. HILARY PARISH

5600 N. Fairfield Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60659 — 312-561-3474

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black suit. My weight fluctuates so much, I don't want to waste the money.

My response - a clergy shirt won't break the bank even on a priest's salary.

#4 My request - be discreet about late night comings and goings. I don't want to know where or when anyone leaves or returns, but nightly trips well into the wee-hours necessarily result in next morning sleep-ins, e.g. I didn't see Fr. Steel till 1:30 PM on Saturday, June 20.

His response - what else is there to do?

My response - work on my first request.

#5 My observation - Fr. Steel has no initiative or ambition. He hasn't offered to do anything, much less the things I've requested.

His response - you can't rush into things.

#6 My request - don't bother the secretaries, especially the teen help at night and on weekends.

His response - it's my way of finding out what's going on.

My response - teenagers are not the informed source.

#7 - My observation - a 3 minute homily on Sunday and no homily during the week is not exactly a preacher (Cf. Vatican II).

His response - people don't like to listen to sermons they would regularly call St. John Brebeuf's to ask what Mass I had.

My response - this is St. Hilary's.

(At 11:00 PM, Fr. Steel and I sat at the same table in the parking lot for one hour as the last touches were made in preparation for the next day's Carnival Opening. I left at midnight; Fr. Steel stayed.)

JUNE 23 - 9:30 AM - I asked Fr. Steel to come along to the Al;shore Nursing Home, where he would offer a Mass with the patients our weekly responsibility. I would drive ahead of him, show him the way, set up the altar, introduce him to the patients and Pastoral Care Ministers, then leave to visit our parishioners at Swedish Covenant Hospital.

11:45 AM - Upon my return, Fr. Steel is seated at the secretary's desk. He had just recounted the events of the previous evening. Late Monday afternoon, it seems that "something" dropped on the floor and possibly rolled under the bed. When he went to retrieve it, he noticed his metal box and pouch. He keeps his money in the box (he remembers having a little over \$200 in currency) and change in the pouch (he remembers having about \$75 in coins). Inside the box, he also had a ring which he



## ST. HILARY PARISH

5600 N. Fairfield Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60659 — 312-561-3474

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was holding as collateral against a \$1000 loan he had made to someone. The box was previously kept in a locked cabinet, to which only he has the key. The cabinet was still locked. All the contents of the metal box were gone. He did note, however, that right on top of the cabinet in full view was a box containing all the envelopes he had received upon his departure from St. John Brebeuf's.

Fr. Steel shared all this information with one of the parishioners Monday night, a policeman who happened to be working on the carnival set-up. Fr. Steel says he he was on the phone all night with the police, reporting the theft. They could only file a report, since the theft was said to have happened somewhere between Friday and Monday.

My observation - nothing else was taken from any part of the rectory. My room wasn't touched, nor was anything missing from any of the offices. If something like this happened three times previously, why did he have to consult with the policeman at the carnival, much less a parishioner? I saw Fr. Steel Monday night and Tuesday morning. At no time did he mention the missing property. If I had suffered such a loss, I would have been ready to tell everyone else in the house at the first chance I had - if for no other reason than to ask if anything was missing.

Additional observation - for all Fr. Steel's lack of initiative and movement in everything else, it was surprising he had a letter to Gallagher-Basset within 2 hours.

JUNE 26 - Fr. Steel gets his hair cut...a bit shorter, but neater. Marc Reszel returns from CPE in Boston for carnival weekend. Upon meeting him, Fr. Steel's opening comment was concerning the objects in the corridor. He let it be known that they were his and they would stay until he decides to move them. As for Marc's presence, he is "free, white and 21" and can do whatever he likes, wherever he likes.

Fr. Steel cashes a \$1000 check with the Carnival Finance Committee.

Overwhelmed by the reactions and comments of the parishioners and staff, it is evident that there is little if anything I can do to change his personal habits and priestly style. I therefore request a severance of our agreement to his assignment to St. Hilary's. I realize that this leaves me alone, but I would rather live and work solitarily than under the present conditions.

Bob Bauzin

re Jim Steel

NP 1-09-87

1. Confronted Jim. It went well. He will transfer.  
Basis: professional. He does not have the skills for this parish. He is more interested in administration and that is already covered here. Jim will initiate the request.
2. He very much wants to be a pastor. Should he be?  
Could he be unless this is addressed?
3. He does not interview as part of the transfer process
4. Personal concerns of Bauzin: him all night absence & sleeping many afternoons.  
Jim's reply: I've done this for 15 years. No one has called me on it. Why are you making a fuss about it? Vicar or Cardinal can ask me about it if they want. I'm not going to change.
5. Professional concerns: What do you make of a priest who does not want to a) preach b) visit the school c) visit hospitals d) work with parish organizations. He is essentially a parish business manager with a Roman collar?

action: TV call him after January 25, 1987.

Bauzin may inform P. Board of his concerns.

Bob Prozin

re: Jim Steelo

- 5-87
- Jim is a "problem." Disfunctional.
  - He does the basics (daily Mass, weddings, baptisms Sunday Mass)
  - Sunday sermons are 1 minute. No homily at Weekday Mass.
  - He leaves each night at 9 pm and is away until morning. He does morning Mass and then sleeps all afternoon.
  - He resists work in the school, hospital, parish groups.
  - He is uncomfortable to be with for his colleagues
  - Bernardino ~~to~~ said he is aware of this & asked Prozin to contact Ventura.
  - He always "passes" at staff sharing sessions
  - In a 3 week period he claimed he has been "robbed" twice of \$300.00 each time. He notified police & insurance. He said "Jim lucky they didn't get the other \$5,000"
  - He took a Las Vegas vacation in Oct. & returned early. Does he have a gambling problem.

Action

- 1) Prozin prepare letter to P. Board requesting transfer for Bob.
- 2) Show it to Bob. any reaction from him?
- 3) Tell him he spoke to TV. focus on professional concerns, not personal.
- 4) send the letter.
- 5) TV available as needed.

# ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Office of Professional Responsibility

Leah R. McCluskey, MSW, LSW  
Administrator  
312-751-5205  
lmcccluskey@archchicago.org

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Post Office Box 1979  
Chicago, Illinois 60690-1979  
1-800-994-6200  
312-751-5279 (fax)

November 20, 2006

Cardinal Francis George, O.M.I.  
Archbishop of Chicago  
155 E. Superior Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60611

Dear Cardinal George,

Please be advised that the Professional Responsibility Review Board met on November 18, 2006 and conducted a Review for Cause of [REDACTED] allegation of sexual misconduct against the former Rev. James Steel pursuant to Article §1104.9 of the Review Process for Continuation of Ministry. Mr. Steel is a resigned and laicized priest of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

The Board made the determination that in light of the information presented, there is reasonable cause to suspect that the alleged misconduct occurred. The Board recommended that no further action be taken due to the fact that Mr. Steel is resigned and laicized, except to provide appropriate outreach to those affected by the alleged misconduct.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [312] 751-5205.

Sincerely,

*Leah McCluskey* <sup>LMR</sup>

Leah McCluskey  
Professional Responsibility Administrator

*I accept this  
recommendation*

*T. Henry  
Nov 21, 2006*

Cc: Rev. Vincent Costello, Vicar for Priests  
Rev. Daniel Smilanic, Cardinal's Delegate to the Review Board

RECEIVED

DEC 11 2006

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO  
OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

AOC 005088

**JACK BURKE & ASSOCIATES, LTD.**

19 South LaSalle Street, Suite 505  
Chicago, Illinois 60603  
312 . 372 . 5500  
312 . 372 . 8526 (fax)

August 29, 2006

Leah McCluskey  
Professional Responsibility Administrator  
Office of Professional Responsibility, Archdiocese of Chicago  
P.O. Box 1979  
Chicago, IL 60690-1979

**RECEIVED**

**SEP 05 2006**

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO  
OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

*Re: Allegation of sexual abuse of a minor, [REDACTED] against Fr. Steel*

Dear Ms. McCluskey,

On April 13, 2006 Jack Burke & Associates (hereinafter "R/I") was engaged by the Office of Professional Responsibility to investigate allegations of sexual misconduct of a minor made by [REDACTED] against the former Reverend James Steel ("Steel" or "Father Steele"). We were asked to speak with the current pastor at St. Joseph the Worker in Wheeling, conduct an on-site visit of the rectory and identify what would have been Father Steel's office and private quarters. In addition we were asked to speak with law enforcement in both Wheeling and Wisconsin identified in police reports, identify and speak with clerics assigned with Father Steel at the time of the alleged abuse, identify and speak with teachers who were at the school at the time of the alleged abuse and to identify and speak with the nun who released [REDACTED] from her classroom to see Father Steel in the rectory. What follows is a summary of our efforts to date.

**FINDINGS**

After reading the file material and being furnished with background information by the PRA, the R/I took investigative steps that the R/I believes were appropriate and prudent under the circumstances known/learned to date in order to establish the facts. As in any investigative assignment, particularly where the goal is to establish if an event occurred or did not occur, if additional interviews had been conducted or if additional leads had been known/developed, these investigative findings could have been different.

In the R/I's opinion there is reason to believe the accused engaged in inappropriate sexual abuse of [REDACTED]. The detail of [REDACTED] statement, the corroboration of time and place by former school principal Donald Ryniecki and the opinions of law enforcement officers from Wheeling, IL and from Washburn County, WI support this finding.

**ALLEGATION BACKGROUND**

The allegation was made in October 2004 to the PRA of the Office of Professional Responsibility by [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The report [REDACTED] filed with the Wheeling police department shows that the assaults began when he was a seventh grader at age 14 between 1982 and 1983, however, the 53 page typed transcript of [REDACTED] statement and the PRA's memorandum of an October 24, 2005 meeting suggest that the assaults began when [REDACTED] was 13 years of age. Based upon [REDACTED] date of birth and date of graduation it would appear that the alleged abuse began Memorial Day of 1982, not 1983. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] alleges that physical abuse by Father Steel began following a 1982 [REDACTED] actually says 1983) Memorial Day weekend trip with former Principal Donald Ryniecki ("Ryniecki") to Long Lake in Birchwood, WI. During this trip [REDACTED] alleges that he was sexually abused by Ryniecki.

[REDACTED] purports that following the trip he met with Steel at the rectory and attempted to discuss the abuse by Ryniecki. Father Steel allegedly told [REDACTED] that this was normal and then proceeded to sexually abuse (anal penetration) [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] alleges that during the summer of 1982 [REDACTED] actually says 1983) he went back the cabin at Long Lake in Wisconsin with Ryniecki. [REDACTED] stated that 4 or 5 other boys also went to the cabin for the summer. [REDACTED] alleges that the abuse by Ryniecki continued.

During the fall of 1982 ([REDACTED] actually says 1983), [REDACTED] Steel asked [REDACTED] how his summer went and told him to come to the rectory around 4:00 or 4:30 pm [REDACTED] went back to the rectory and alleges that sexual abuse by Steel (digital and anal penetration) occurred.

[REDACTED] states that following this incident of sexual abuse, Father Steel would send a note about once a week to [REDACTED] teacher Sister Laurita asking for [REDACTED] to meet Steel in the rectory. [REDACTED] alleges that the sexual abuse continued by Steel throughout the fall (1982) and ended around May of 1983 when Father O'Malley had been assigned to take over the church. [REDACTED] also suggests that Steel was often intoxicated in the rectory.

[REDACTED] stated that following his graduation from [REDACTED], during the summer of 1983 [REDACTED] says 1984 in his statement), Ryniecki took [REDACTED] alone (without any other children) to the cabin at Long Lake in Wisconsin. [REDACTED] alleges that during the rest of the summer Ryniecki sexually abused him either anally or orally.

Around July 4<sup>th</sup> that same summer, Ryniecki allegedly told [REDACTED] that a surprise visitor, Father Steel, was coming to the lake. A couple of days later Father Steel arrived intoxicated with [REDACTED]. When Ryniecki left to run an errand Steel summoned [REDACTED] to the guest house and sexually abused him anally. Father Steel allegedly told [REDACTED] that [REDACTED] was not present because she was drunk at a Lincolnwood resort. Later that evening [REDACTED] alleges that Ryniecki abused him sexually and asked if Father Steel was having a good time. [REDACTED] says that for the next three days he was abused by Steel in the afternoon and Ryniecki in the evening. [REDACTED] says that Steele left and Ryniecki continued the sexual abuse throughout the summer. [REDACTED]

Archdiocesan Archives show that Father Steel was ordained in 1968 and was assigned to St. Joseph the Worker from June 1979 to June 1984. Steel left active ministry on May 13, 1992.

### **INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

What follows is merely a brief summary of investigative steps taken and is not intended to be all inclusive of all steps.

On May 12, the R/I met with St. Joseph's the Worker current pastor Michael Bonner, SVD at the rectory in Wheeling. Father Bonner could not provide any direct or anecdotal information as he was not assigned to St. Joseph the Worker at or near the time of alleged abuse.

Father Bonner took the R/I to the old rectory and to the school, which is no longer open. The classrooms are now used by various CCD classes in the evenings and on weekends. Father Bonner stated that when he took over as pastor none of the St. Joseph the Worker school records were present and only graduating class photographs from several years remained on the walls of the school.

The R/I noted that the old rectory is a separate building across the driveway from the gymnasium and school on the northern portion of the property. Until recently, the rectory was being used by nuns who resided there. The church contemplated renting the property out as a private rental. The old rectory is a two-story structure with a top floor consisting of 1 bedroom to the southeast, 1 bedroom to the northeast, 1 bedroom to the west and 2 bedrooms to the east. The first floor consists of what was once office space and the basement consists of a great room with a fireplace and a smaller room. It is unknown what bedroom Father Steel occupied at the time of the alleged abuse.

The R/I was also taken by Father Bonner to the school, which is consistent with the L-shaped structure (almost a u-shape) [REDACTED] described in his statement. One wing consists of four offices with separate doors, two bathrooms and 8 classrooms followed by front doors and a gymnasium/rec room and then 4 separate classrooms.

The R/I asked Father Bonner if there were any clerics who were assigned to St. Joseph the Worker at the time of the alleged abuse whom were still residing in the parish.



Father Bonner informed the R/I that he knew that Father James O'Malley resided in the St. James parish in Highwood and Deacon Peery Duderstadt was still assigned to St. Joseph the Worker and still resided in the surrounding area. Father Bonner stated that he would pass my telephone number on to Deacon Duderstadt. Father Bonner informed me that he was unaware of any of the teachers whom taught at the school at the time of the alleged abuse.

On July 12 the R/I spoke with former Sister Laurita Sanders (85 years of age) by telephone at her Des Plaines residence. Sister Laurita verified that she taught seventh and eighth grade at St. Joseph the Worker from 1982 to 1984. The R/I asked if she recalled [REDACTED] Sister Laurita stated that she did not specifically recall [REDACTED] because it was a long time ago, but remembered Reverend Steel although she did not know him very well. Sister Laurita categorically denied that she ever received notes from Father Steel to send [REDACTED] or other students to the rectory on any occasion and certainly not once a week. Sister Laurita recalled no "off-color" behavior by Steel and knew only that Principal Ryniecki and Father Steel were friends. Sister Laurita stated that she had been interviewed by a Wheeling policeman and gave him the same information. Sister Laurita purported to have never heard of allegations of abuse against Father Steel until the Wheeling police officer contacted her. Sister Laurita purported not to remember the names of other teachers at St. Joseph the Worker.

On July 21, after several phone calls, the R/I reached Investigator Audie Parenteau of the Washburn County, WI Sheriff Department. Investigator Parenteau informed the R/I that [REDACTED] had filed a police report on December 17, 2004 and that the sexual assault case was now closed. Investigator Parenteau stated that the Washburn County District Attorney would not prosecute the case because there was no physical evidence. Investigator Parenteau stated that he did travel to Illinois to interview Donald Ryniecki and James Steel.

Per his report, Investigator Parenteau told the R/I that he interviewed Ryniecki and he was incredulous that allegations had been made against him. Ryniecki recalled that he had taken [REDACTED] to his cabin at Long Lake in Wisconsin. Ryniecki stated to Investigator Parenteau that he often took children up to the cabin during summers and that he invited the children's families as well. Ryniecki also stated that one summer when he brought [REDACTED] up to the cabin Father Steel and [REDACTED] and another couple had also come up to the cabin that summer. Ryniecki also thought that [REDACTED] had come up for a few days during that summer. Ryniecki denied that any sexual assault had taken place in his cabin. Ryniecki denied having any recent contact with Father Steel (although Steel later admitted that the two had been in contact with each other following phone calls by Investigator Parenteau).

Investigator Parenteau stated that he had been in contact with Wheeling Police Department Officer Jim Plovovich and together they interviewed Steel at his residence. Investigator Parenteau described Steel as extremely nervous, consistent with someone whom was not being truthful. Steel initially denied recent contact with Ryniecki, but later amended this statement and stated that they had spoken 'for three minutes' about the investigation by Parenteau and Plovovich. Steel never admitted to the sexual abuse.

On July 28, after several phone calls, the R/I spoke with Officer Jim Plovovich of the Wheeling Police Department by telephone. Officer Plovovich stated that [REDACTED] filed a sexual assault report on March 25, 2005 and that the case was now closed. Officer Plovovich stated that the Cook County State's Attorney could not prosecute the case because the statute of limitations had expired. Officer Plovovich stated that as a courtesy he had performed a series of interviews to aid the Washburn County, WI Sheriff Department with their investigation.

Officer Plovovich stated that he had interviewed Sister Laurita Sanders who did not remember receiving notes from Father Steel summoning students to the rectory. She did recall that the principal would at times send notes to her asking for a student to come to his office. Officer Plovovich believed, as did Investigator Parenteau, that Steel was extremely nervous during their interview and he felt that Steel was not being truthful. Officer Plovovich also interviewed several of [REDACTED] classmates, but was unable to confirm the presence of other victims or corroborate the abuse by Steel of [REDACTED]. Officer Plovovich also informed the R/I that he had interviewed by telephone another former St. Joseph's priest Vincent McCaffrey, still imprisoned in Massachusetts for sexual abuse of minors. McCaffrey offered no useful information on the actions of Steel.

Archdiocesan Archives show that Vincent McCaffrey was assigned to St. Joseph the Worker from 1981 through 1987. Due to the continued incarceration of McCaffrey and the lack of information he provided to Officer Plovovich, R/I made no attempts to interview McCaffrey.

Deacon Peery A. Duderstadt II never contacted the R/I and on July 26 the R/I performed a commercial database search and located the home address and phone number for Deacon Duderstadt. The R/I attempted several times to contact Deacon Duderstadt by telephone and left voicemail messages for him at his home at [REDACTED]. His phone number is believed to be [REDACTED] although he never responded to any phone messages.

On August 1, after repeated calls, the R/I spoke with retired Father James O'Malley by telephone at St. James in Highwood. Father O'Malley stated that he was aware of the allegations made by [REDACTED] against Father Steel. He stated that he never saw or was aware of any allegations or suggestions that Steel sexually abused any minor. Father O'Malley stated that he came to take over the parish at the end of the 1983 school year and he knew that Steel was disappointed that he didn't get the parish. Furthermore, Father O'Malley was aware that Ryniecki had a cottage that belonged to his mother in Wisconsin and that students would be invited to the cottage.

Father O'Malley recalled that Steel enjoyed card games, but not to the point of compulsion. He said that he was not aware that Steele overindulged in alcohol. Father O'Malley did not believe that Steel and McCaffrey were two "peas in a pod" and were sexually abusing minors.

Father O'Malley recalled [REDACTED]. He described [REDACTED] as [REDACTED] and knew that [REDACTED]. Father O'Malley stated that he previously became aware of [REDACTED] sex abuse allegations after being confronted by [REDACTED]. Father O'Malley [REDACTED].

██████████ was confronted at the rectory by ██████████ who asked why O'Malley never inquired of ██████████ about being abused. Father O'Malley said he then explained to ██████████ that it was the first he'd heard of any abuse and was surprised by ██████████'s confrontation.

The R/I asked Father O'Malley if there were any other clerics or teachers that the R/I should speak to regarding Steel and the alleged abuse. Father O'Malley suggested that the R/I speak with former 8<sup>th</sup> grade math teacher ██████████ (DRE) who was good friends with Steel ██████████. Father O'Malley thought that Steel and ██████████ were now ██████████. ██████████ is believed to have been ██████████ but we do not have parish records to confirm this independently.

On August 1 the R/I accessed a commercial database on ██████████ and learned that ██████████ resides with Father Steel at ██████████. The answering machine at the residence is for ██████████ and Jim and it would appear they are still married. The R/I decided that at this time it was inappropriate to contact Mrs. Steel.

## CONCLUSION

The report and detailed statement by ██████████ as well as the observations and the interviews made by law enforcement from Washburn County, WI and from Wheeling, IL appear to support his allegations that he was sexually abused by Father Steel. Former Principal Ryniecki corroborates ██████████'s assertion that Steel visited the Long Lake cabin with his rectory secretary during one of the summers ██████████ was staying with Ryniecki at the cabin. Additional interviews of classmates of ██████████ may or may not corroborate ██████████'s allegations, however, at this time they are beyond the scope of the investigative steps the PRA has requested to date.

Evidence of other inappropriate behavior by Steel has already been documented by the archdiocese. It is known that Father Steel was arrested once for picking up a prostitute and another time for gambling at a known, high stakes gambling location used by organize crime. Steel was believed to have a drinking problem and there were other instances of anecdotal inappropriate behavior by Father Steel.

This concludes the R/I's efforts to date in this matter. If you have any further instructions or requests, please feel free to contact me at ██████████.

Sincerely,



Brett K. Starr

Reporting Investigator to the Office of Professional Responsibility

# ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Office of Professional Responsibility

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312-751-5279 (fax)

## Memorandum

To: File – PFR-280

From: Review Board Meeting

Re: Steel, Rev. James [REDACTED]

Date: November 18, 2006

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A summary of the discussion at the Review Board Meeting on November 18, 2006:

The Review Board conducted a Review for Cause of [REDACTED] allegation of sexual misconduct against the former Rev. James Steel. A summary of the allegation is as follows: repeated abuse [REDACTED] that took place at St. Joseph the Worker rectory as well as at the summer home of the principal of the school.

In a 5-3 vote in light of the information presented, the Review Board determined that there is reasonable cause to suspect that the alleged misconduct occurred.

AOC 005095

# ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



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## MEMORANDUM


To: File – PFR-280

From: Leah McCluskey, Professional Responsibility Administrator 

Re: Steel, Rev. James [Resigned/Laicized] 

Date: August 9, 2006

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As requested by the independent Review Board, PRA reviewed the former Rev. James Steel's respective files in the Seminary, the Chancellor's Office, and the Vicar for Priests Office. This request was made by the Board in connection with Mr.  allegation of sexual abuse against Fr. Steel. PRA reviewed the aforementioned files on May 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> 2006.

### Review of Seminary File

- **1964:** evaluation by Theology teacher that Steel was "...not too bright—seems to be trying...average initiative and leadership...below average intellectual ability..."; in reference to his vocation, was noted "...ok if his grades are good enough..."
- **June 13, 1962:** letter from the rector [Lyons] to the rector of St. Mary of the Lake Seminary, "...quite, distant, and immature...lacks some seriousness of purpose...received one of poorest reports for a student who was not voted on."
- **1963:** evaluation by Philosophy teacher [Dunst], "...some misconduct. But chiefly because he has a certain impenetrability about him...will need watching..."; also expressed concern about Steel's vocation
- **1964:** second semester evaluation by Philosophy teacher noted that he was not impressed by Steel during conferences; told Steel that he should go [leave the seminary] and that he [Steel] had no enthusiasm; also expressed opinion that Steel "...does not act as if he has conviction about the priesthood..."; under section of evaluation titled "Reliability and Stability of Purpose," evaluator noted, "I have my fears. I am not pleased. I doubt that over the long run he [Steel] will hold up [in the priesthood]."

AOC 005096

- **March 1, 1968:** form entitled “Deacon Program 1967” and completed by Rev. Thomas J. Curley; Fr. Curley noted that Steel enjoyed work “...especially with children... [and that he] does a good job with them...”; also noted Steel’s lack of attendance at daily mass and on Sunday
- **1966-1967:** Steel’s work included time at Angel Guardian Orphanage
- **April 1966:** “Faculty Evaluation” form completed; 2 noted that they did not recommend Steel for the priesthood, 2 abstained, 1 did recommend Steel for the priesthood; comments included that Steel was “...weak academically...needs constant prodding and supervision...”; PRA noted that there were no positive comments to describe Steel
- **1961-1961:** “Confidential Investigation” concerning Steel completed by Rev. Thomas P. Byrne at Our Lady of Mount Carmel; question #14, “How does he [Steel] conduct himself in the company of boys and young men? With members of the other sex?; response to question #14, “I have never seen him except with men and boys in the neighborhood. And I thought his conduct was very normal.”
- **June 2000:** letter from Rev. Patrick Lagges, Judicial Vicar to Rev. John Canary [at the time, rector of the seminary] regarding Steel’s seminary file due to Steel’s request for laicization

#### Review of Chancellor Misconduct File

- Nothing present in file except for Fr. Steel’s [REDACTED]
- June 2000 memorandum from Fr. Lagges requesting information due to Fr. Steel’s request for laicization
- Copy of PRA memorandum regarding Mr. [REDACTED] allegation against Fr. Steel

#### Review of Chancellor File

- **September 8, 1982:** letter to Fr. Steel from Cardinal Bernardin noting that despite good reports at St. Joseph the Worker, he could not be named pastor
- **May 7, 1990:** memorandum from the Vicar for Priests regarding the same information summarized in Rev. Vincent Costello, Vicar for Priests memorandum dated October 6, 2005
- **1991:** suggestion made by Vicar for Priests that Fr. Steel participate in an inpatient treatment program and psychological evaluation; Fr. Steel chose to not participate, which resulted in his leave of absence from the priesthood from February 1, 1991 through July 31, 1991
- **May 12, 1992:** letter from Fr. Steel to Cardinal Bernardin notifying his resignation from the priesthood
- **October 1, 2000:** letter from Fr. Steel to Pope John Paul II requesting laicization because he was getting married; laicization granted on March 2, 2001

#### Review of Vicar for Priests File

- See Fr. Costello’s October 6, 2005 summary of the Vicar for Priests file with issues beginning in January 1987
- **August 18, 1987:** [REDACTED]

- **August 30, 1987:** memo to file regarding the last three options of parishes to “take” Fr. Steel
- **September 22, 1987:** [REDACTED]
- **December 21, 1987:** Priest-Perceiver test arranged
- **January 26, 1988:** Priest-Perceiver test results included the comment, “Jim is the lowest person [he] ever coded.”; notation that the [Priest]Personnel Board feels that Fr. Steel, “...is just not cut out for the priesthood.”
- **March 26, 1988:** new parish with signed agreement by Fr. Steel and the pastor
- **May 31, 1990:** Cardinal Bernardin memo to file regarding his May 29, 1990 meeting with Fr. Steel; the Cardinal asked Fr. Steel about his playing cards, staying out all night, and picking up a prostitute; the Cardinal felt that the meeting with Fr. Steel was difficult and he did not feel that the cleric was telling him the truth; the Cardinal noted that he felt as if there was “...something strange about the man [Fr. Steel]...”
- **November 9, 1990:** memo to file that included notations that the same complaints about Fr. Steel’s behaviors were in his new parish as well; the Vicar for Priests suggested to Cardinal Bernardin that Fr. Steel be given the option of long-term inpatient therapy or “...seeks other employment...”
- **November 20, 1990:** memo to file that Fr. Steel’s pastor felt that alcohol “...is more of a problem [for Fr. Steel] than he had been aware of before...”; noted Fr. Steel’s gambling and anger and rage
- **December 19, 1990:** memo from the Vicar for Priests to Cardinal Bernardin which noted the need to address issues with Fr. Steel; suggestion that the Cardinal direct Fr. Steel that if he wished to remain in the priesthood that he [REDACTED]; suggestion to the Cardinal that if Fr. Steel could not accept this condition, that the cleric be placed on administrative leave and would be required to support himself until he either agreed to treatment or to resign
- **January 1991:** [REDACTED]
- **February 1991:** Fr. Steel was not making payments on his car; also the Vicar’s office received phone calls that Fr. Steel had been involved in a hit and run [car accident]
- **March 1991:** Fr. Steel did not enter treatment
- **March 1991:** Fr. Steel experiencing issues with paying his credit car and car payment
- **May 21, 1991:** letter from the Vicar for Priests to Fr. Steel noting that the cleric was not responding to the Vicar, was not being cooperative, and that he had not yet entered treatment
- **June 3, 1991:** letter from the Vicar for Priests to Fr. Steel informing him that his leave of absence would expire on July 31, 1991, which is when his salary would be discontinued and with the presumption that he would then resign from ministry
- **November 5, 1991:** pastor at St. Bonaventure Rev. Frank Cimarrusti called the Vicar; Fr. Cimarrusti informed the Vicar of an incident that took place in September 1990 when Fr. Steel performed a wedding and his inappropriate

behavior with one of the three girls in the [REDACTED]; was reported to Fr. Cimarrusti that one of the three girls reported that Fr. Steel teased her, kissed her, and invited her into the bar; Fr. Cimarrusti noted his feeling that Fr. Steel was drinking during the reported incident; reported to Fr. Cimarrusti that after the [REDACTED] the girls felt that they were being propositioned by Fr. Steel

- **July 12, 1992:** memo to file that Fr. Steel stated that he would resign and would be effective as of May 13, 1992
- **March 2, 2001:** Fr. Steel was laicized
- **September 2005:** information on the receipt of the allegation against Fr. Steel made by Mr. [REDACTED]
- **October 23, 2005:** letter from Mr. [REDACTED] regarding the alleged abuse by Fr. Steel

Cc: Rev. Daniel Smilanic, Cardinal's Delegate to the Review Board  
Rev. Edward D. Grace, Vicar for Priests



# ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

Office of Professional Responsibility



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www.archchicago.org

## MEMORANDUM

To: File – PFR-280

From: Review Board Meeting

Re: Steel, Rev. James (Laicized) [REDACTED]

Date: April 8, 2006

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A summary of the discussion from the Review Board Meeting on April 8, 2006:

The Review Board conducted an Initial Review of the allegation made by [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. The allegation is as follows: repeated abuse [REDACTED] that took place at St. Joseph the Worker rectory as well as at the summer home of the principal of the school.

In a 7-0 vote in light of the information presented, the Review Board recommended that this matter warrants additional investigation. The Board also recommended the following:

- That PRA review Fr. Steel's seminary files, as well as the Chancellor's files and the Vicar for Priests files.
- That PRA identify and speak with clerics assigned to St. Joseph the Worker with Fr. Steel as well as with teachers at the school during the time frame of the alleged abuse.
- That PRA attempt to speak with the nun who would excuse Mr. [REDACTED] early from class to meet with Fr. Steel.
- That PRA contact Mr. [REDACTED]'s civil attorney Jeff Anderson and request any mental health records and/or therapy notes.
- That PRA attempt to obtain information on Mr. [REDACTED] educational background.

AOC 005100



Off: (312) 642-1837

## ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

VICAR FOR PRIESTS

800 NORTH CLARK STREET, SUITE 311

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60610

TO: Cardinal Bernardin

FROM: Rev. Raymond Goedert 

DATE: May 7, 1990

RE: James Steel '68

1. At a meeting with the Personnel Board on May 4, I was asked about the pastorability of Jim Steel. Evidently Jim had applied for the pastorate of St. Bonaventure. Although the Board was not seriously considering him for that particular position which seems to require a bi-lingual person, they wondered what I thought about Jim's chances of being a pastor elsewhere.

2. I expressed the view that by reason of age, experience and talent, I would see no reason why Jim could not be a pastor. However, I did say I had some reservations which I was not free to share with them, but would pass them along to the Cardinal so that between the Cardinal and the Board, the determination of Jim's pastorability could be made.

3. Jim has been a client of the Vicar for Priests Office since January, 1987. At that time, the pastor of St. John Brebeuf, Bob Banzin, complained to Tom Ventura that Jim does the basics, but does not invest himself in full parish life. A significant complaint which seems to run through all of Jim's assignments regards his mysterious behavior in the evenings. He will frequently leave the rectory and not return until the morning in time for his Mass. And then after Mass he catches up on the sleep he lost the night before. When confronted by Bob Banzin on this, Jim responded that he had done this for 15 years and that no one had ever called him on it and that he really did not intend to change.

4. Another concern which also seems to pop up at each of his assignments deals with alleged robberies. At St. John Brebeuf he claimed to have been robbed twice of \$300 each time. He notified the police and the insurance and apparently was reimbursed. A similar incident happened at St. Hilary. It has given rise to the question in my mind as to whether or not Jim has a gambling addiction.

5. Jim left St. John Brebeuf and was transferred to St. Hilary parish where he lasted less than 3 weeks. The pastor, Bob Darrow, kept a log of events. The attached copy will give you an idea of some of the concerns with regard to Jim's liturgical style, personal appearance and money problems.

6. Rather than to assign Jim to another Associate Pastor position, the Board and I agreed that he would live at St. Clement's under the supervision of the pastor, Jack Fahey, until such time as we felt he was ready to resume parish ministry on a full-time basis. I am attaching a copy of my August 24, 1987 memo which again indicates the problem of gambling which he finally began to bring out in the open, but only after I dragged the information out.

of him.

7. I had an opportunity to talk to Ed Duggan, the former pastor of St. John Brebeuf, and he confirmed the allegations of others that Jim is out every night. Ed said it is not two or three times a week, but every night from approximately 9:30 P.M. to 6 A.M. Ed also had an interesting insight into Jim. He said Jim is very good with people on a one-on-one basis. He gives people his undivided attention. But on the other hand, he is completely closed-mouthed as far as himself is concerned. You can never get inside to know what is going on with Jim Steel.

8. As Jim's stay at St. Clement's was drawing to a conclusion, I asked Jack Fahey, the pastor, to give me an assessment. The attached memo of Jan. 7, 1988 reveals again the mysterious goings on night after night, about which Jim is completely incommunicative.

9. Jim was subsequently appointed to St. Bonaventure on April 20, 1988. I must say that Mike Murray, the pastor, has always spoken very favorably of Jim. Jim has been most kind to Mike in his illness and he seems to have performed reasonably well as Administrator. However, the late night pattern continued and Frank Spellman, who lives at St. Bonaventure, mentioned this to me on several occasions.

10. Things seemed to go along reasonably well until a phone call I received from the local Police Captain on June 1, 1989. I am enclosing the correspondence on that particular incident. It seems to throw a little light on at least some of the activities of Jim late in the evening. I really felt badly about it when I had to confront him, as I was hoping that he could have a good enough record at St. Bonaventure to permit me to endorse him for a pastorate. But this last incident, coupled with Jim's inability to come clean and simply admit what is going on in his life, makes me wonder if the Church should risk the potential scandal.

11. I regret giving you so much material to read through, but I don't know how else you can make a judgement about Jim's pastorability. My own recommendation at this time is that you should call Jim in, confront him with the basic issues that keep coming up and see whether or not you can get him to respond to your satisfaction as to what is going on in his life. If he is addicted to gambling, and is not dealing with that addiction, to put him in charge of parish finances would be foolhardy. And if late night womanizing is also a problem, then the situation is potentially scandalous enough as an associate pastor, but would be devastating if it became known that he was appointed a pastor in spite of our knowledge of his propensities. The difficulty in all of this is that we have a lot of very serious allegations, but no admission on Jim's part to any of it. If you can break down the barrier, maybe we can help him.

12. In summary, therefore, unless the veil can be lifted on Jim's late night activities, I have to presume that he has a problem either with gambling or with women or with both and therefore could not in conscience recommend that he be named a pastor. I really wish that I didn't have to take this position and I hope that you are able to get somewhere with him. Depending on what your own conclusion is, I would ask that you communicate it to Ray Cusack and Ed Fialkowski so that they will know whether or not they are able to propose Jim Steel's name for any future pastorate.

Clergy Personnel Board of the Archdiocese of Chicago:

This is a copy of the statement I made and put in writing to Fr. Steel this afternoon. The remaining pages recount the background which led me to this action.

Respectfully,

*Bob Darow*

St Hilary Rectory

5600 NORTH FAIRFIELD AVENUE

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60657

(312) 561 3474

June 29, 1967

Jim:

As a follow-up to our meeting of Monday, June 22, and after only two weeks of your being here it should be as apparent to you as it is to me that we cannot live and work together amicably. Rather than entrench ourselves in any strained and prolonged situation, it would be advantageous to everyone involved - from the staff and the parish to you and me - to sever our agreement as to your assignment to St. Hilary's.

I am sending a letter to this effect to the Archdiocesan Clergy Personnel Board informing them of our status. The sooner a mistake can be corrected, the better.

I regret the inconvenience this may cause you, however, the parish will pay for your moving expenses.

Regretfully,

*Bob*

M I N U T E S

Meeting: #62 - Twelfth Board

Date: January 11, 1991

Place: Pastoral Center

Present: Reverends: John W. Calicott, Edward R. Fialkowski,  
James P. Finno, Michael W. O'Connell,  
Victor J. Sivore, Kenneth J. Velo.

Absent: Revs. George J. Kane & Donald J. Nevins

I. Minutes: Accepted 6 - 0

II. Reports:

1. James Steel '68: Jim has left St. Bonaventure effective 1/8/91  
to go on [REDACTED] leave.

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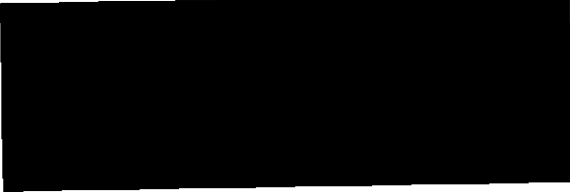
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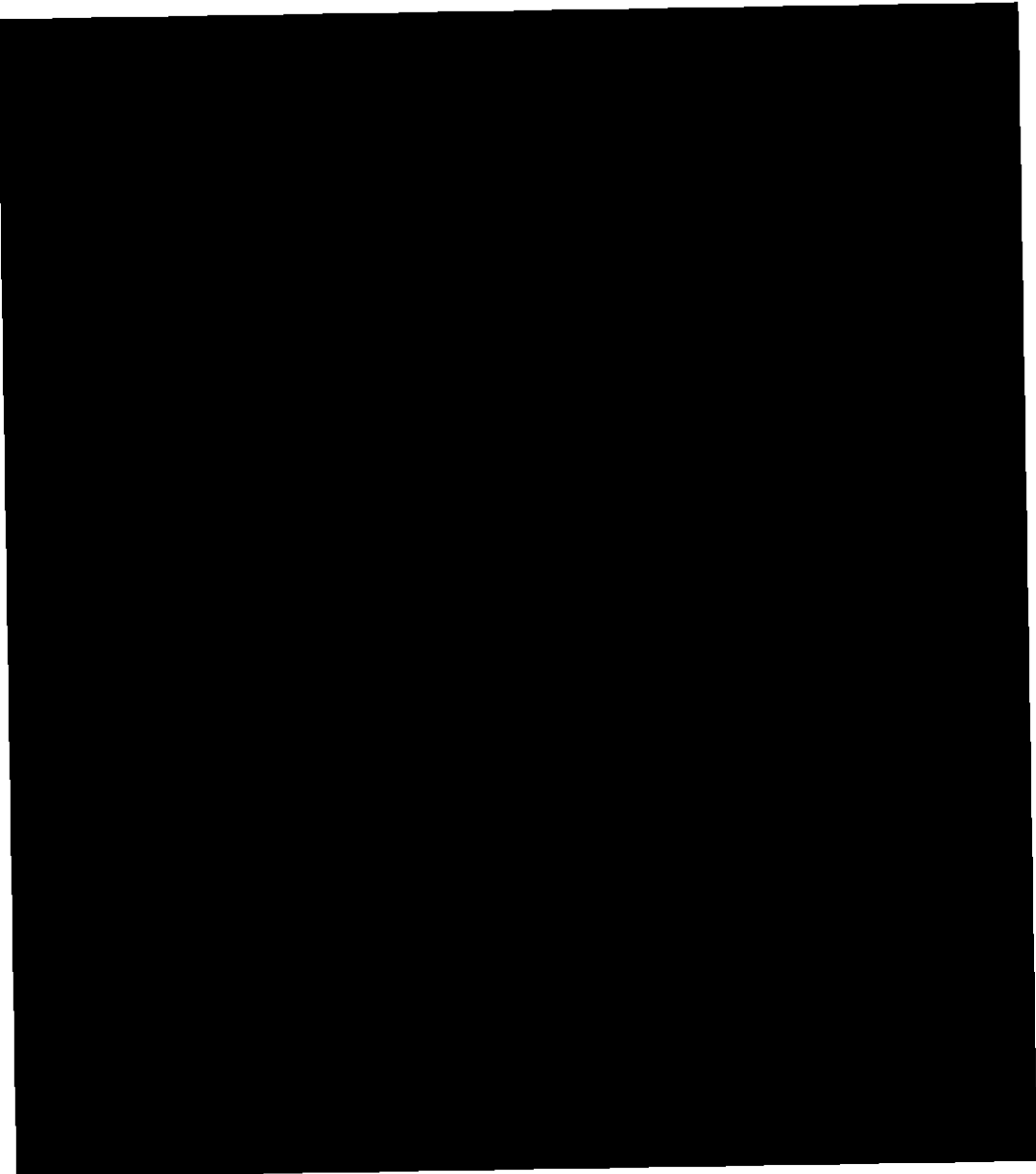


IV. Acceptance of Agenda: Accepted 6 - 0 with additions.



V. Business:

A.



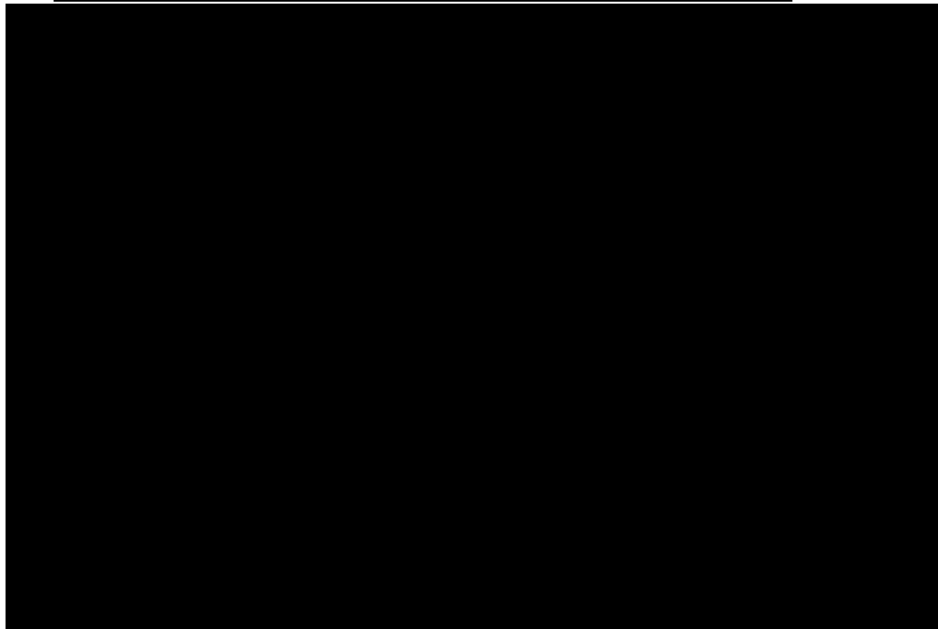
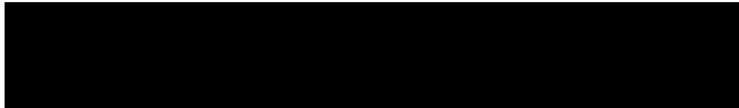
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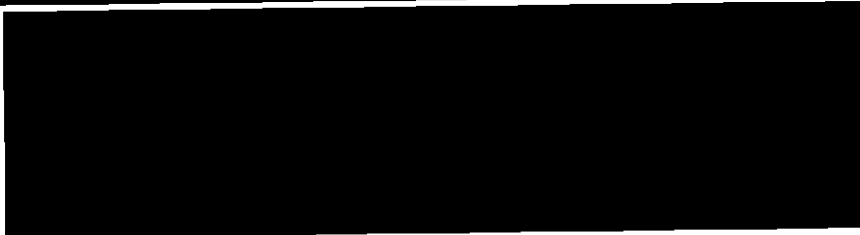
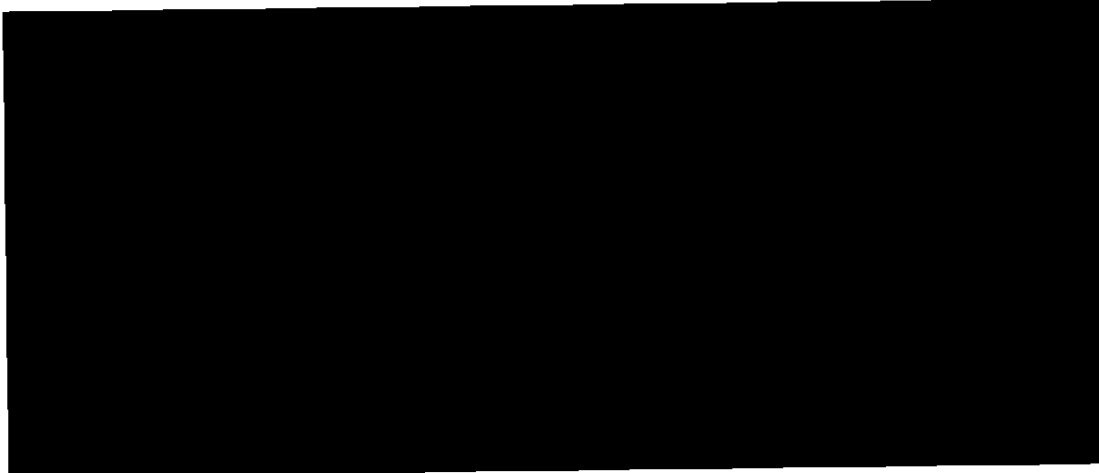


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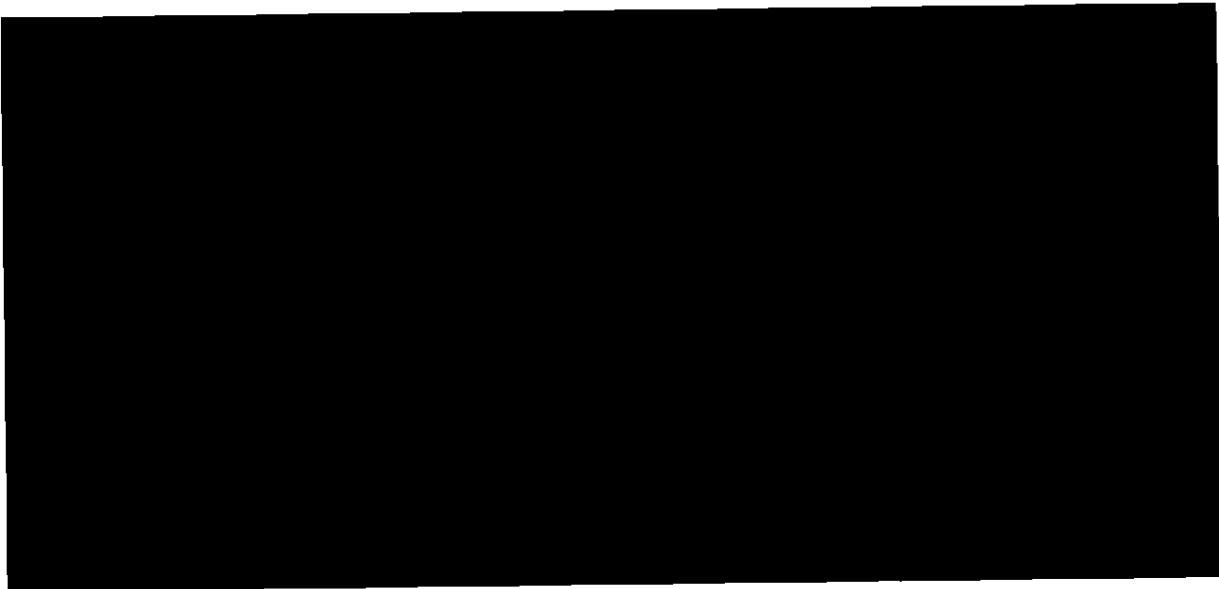


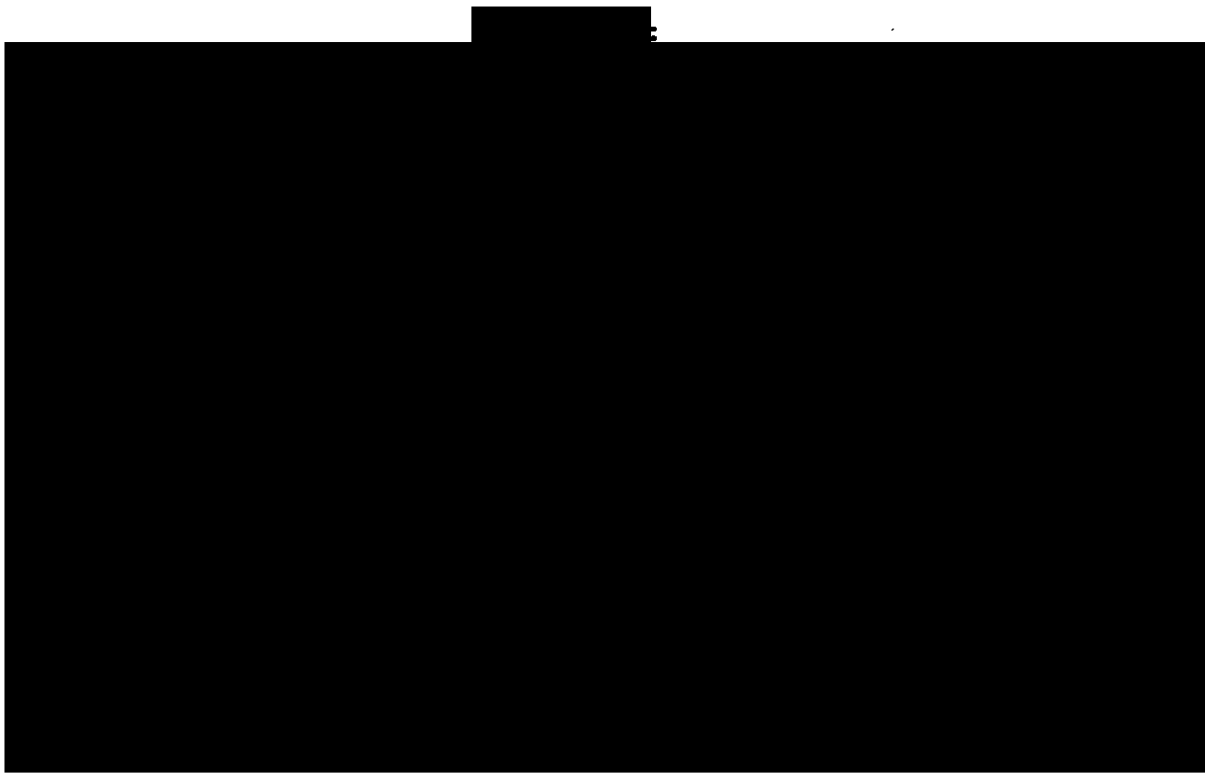


VI. Old Business: None discussed.

VII. New Business: None discussed.

VIII. Adjournment: MOTION: 6 - 0 2:30 P.M.





MINUTES

Meeting: #61 - Twelfth Board

Date: January 4, 1991

Place: Priests' Personnel Board

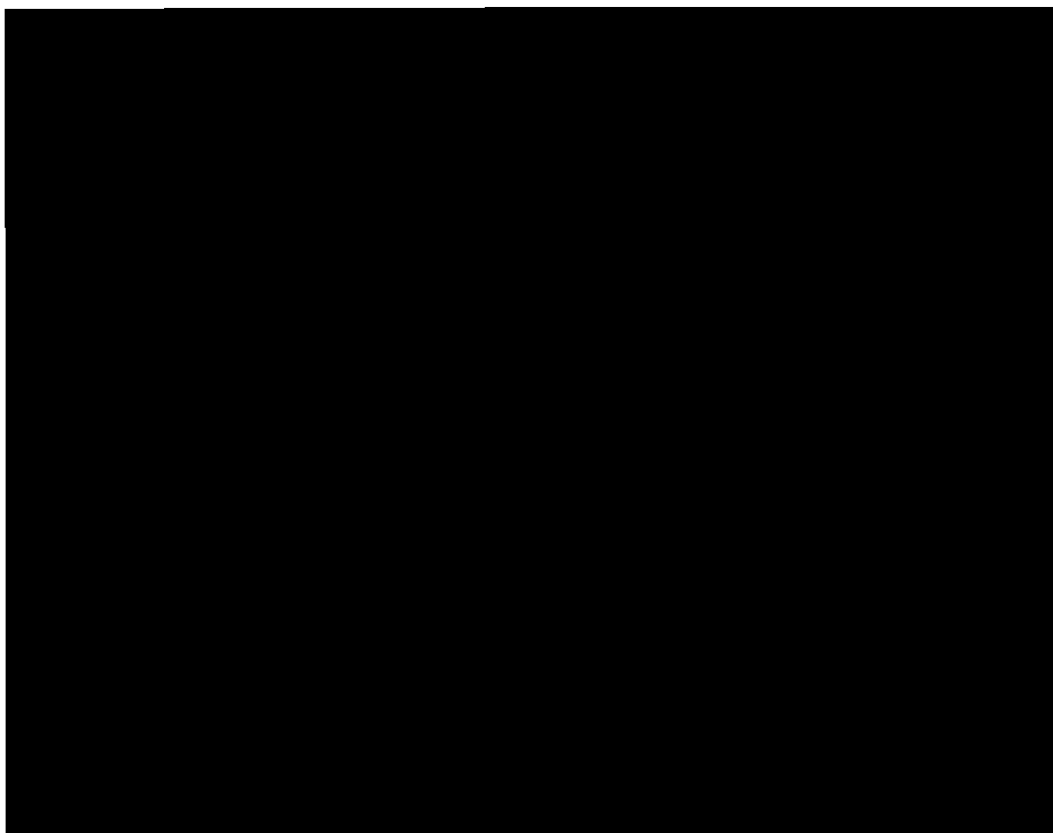
Present: Reverends: John W. Calicott (arriv. 10:46),  
Edward R. Fialkowski, James P. Firno,  
George J. Kane, Donald J. Nevins,  
Michael W. O'Connell, Victor J. Sivore,  
Kenneth J. Velo.

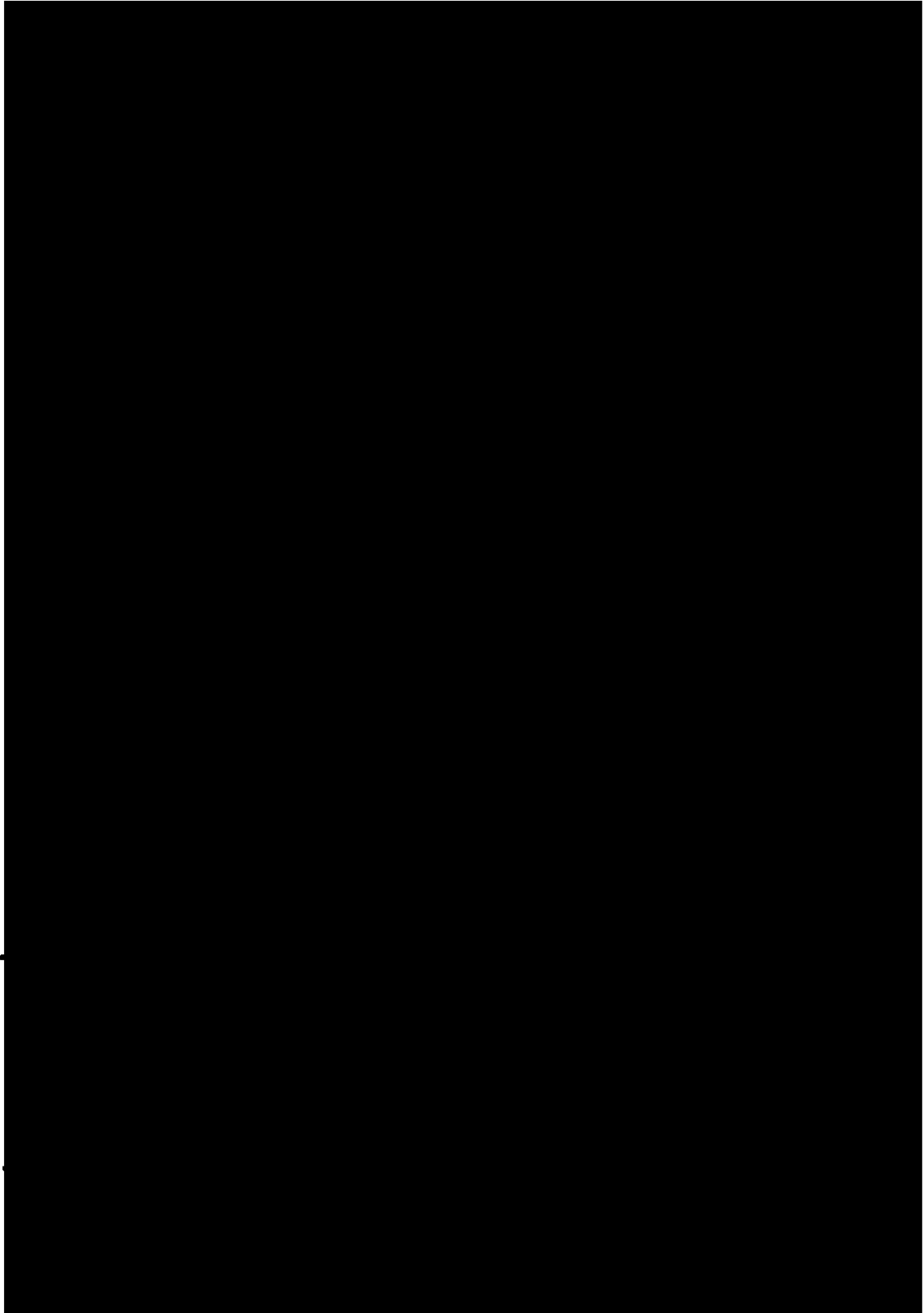
I. Opening Prayer: Rev. Edward R. Fialkowski 10:30 A.M.

II. Minutes: Accepted with corrections 6 - 0 - 1

III. Reports:

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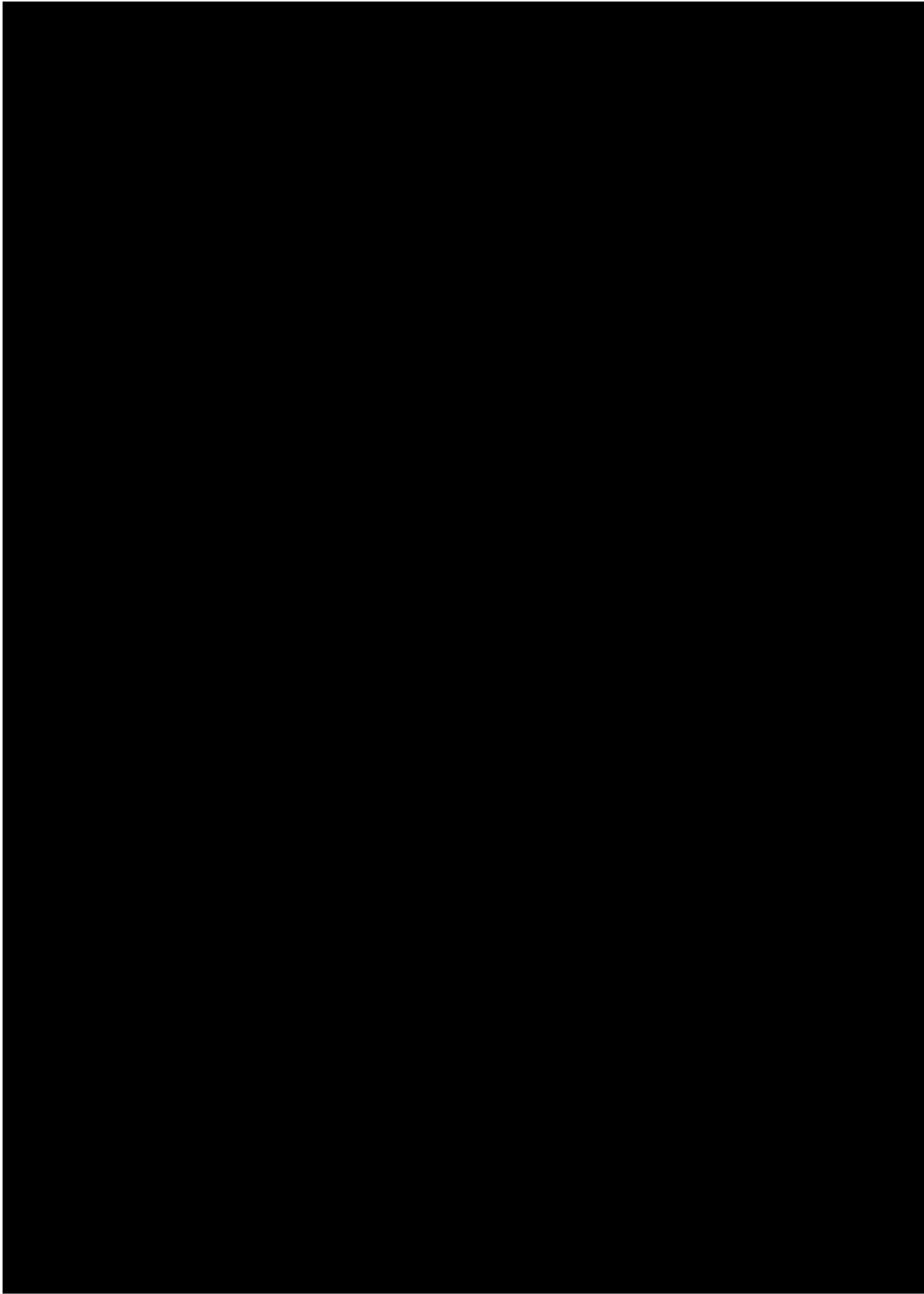
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14. James Steel '68: The Cardinal and Ray Goedert met with Jim on 12/21/90. In the course of the meeting Jim was instructed to [REDACTED] or lose his faculties. He is to leave St. Bonaventure 1/9/91.

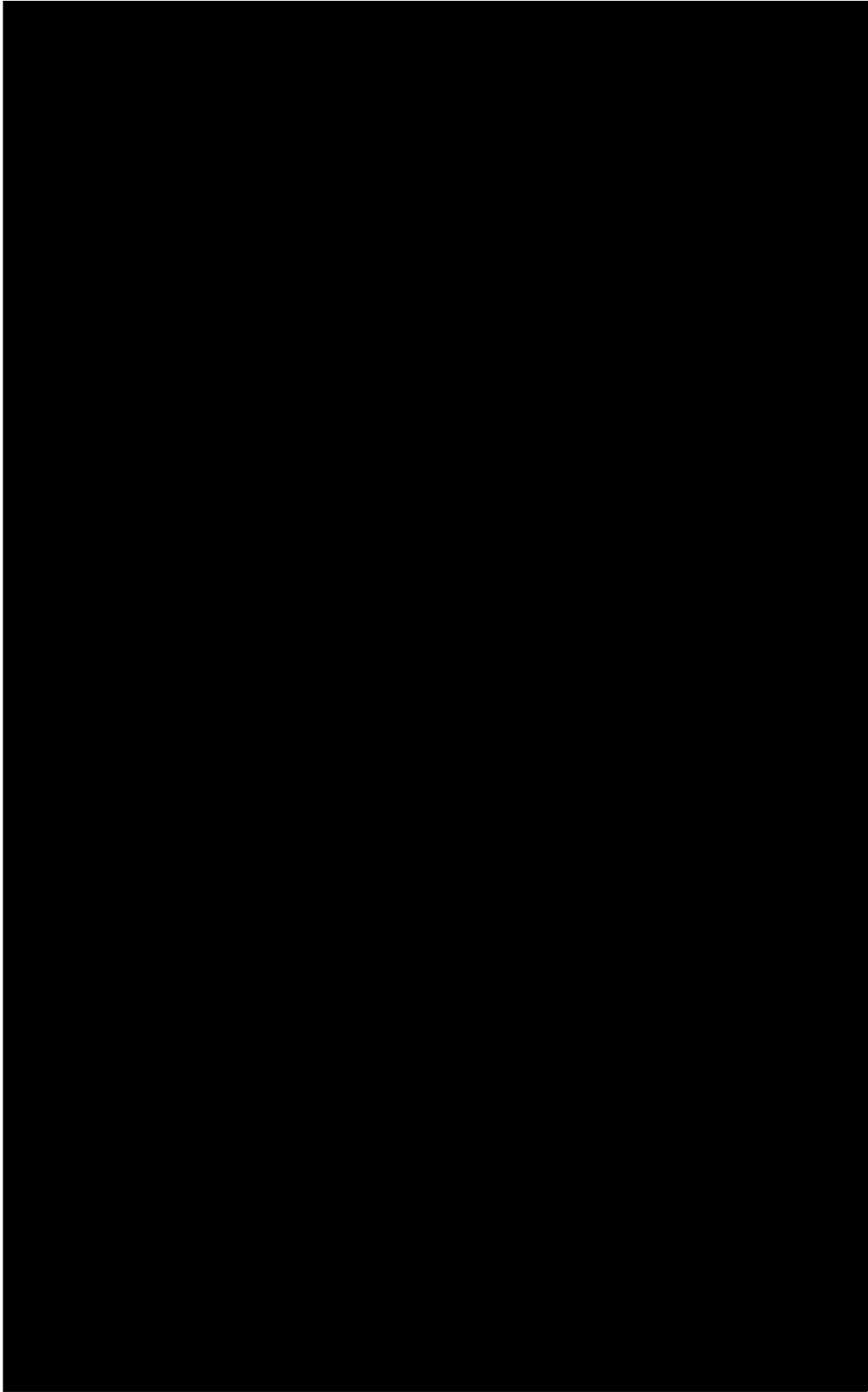
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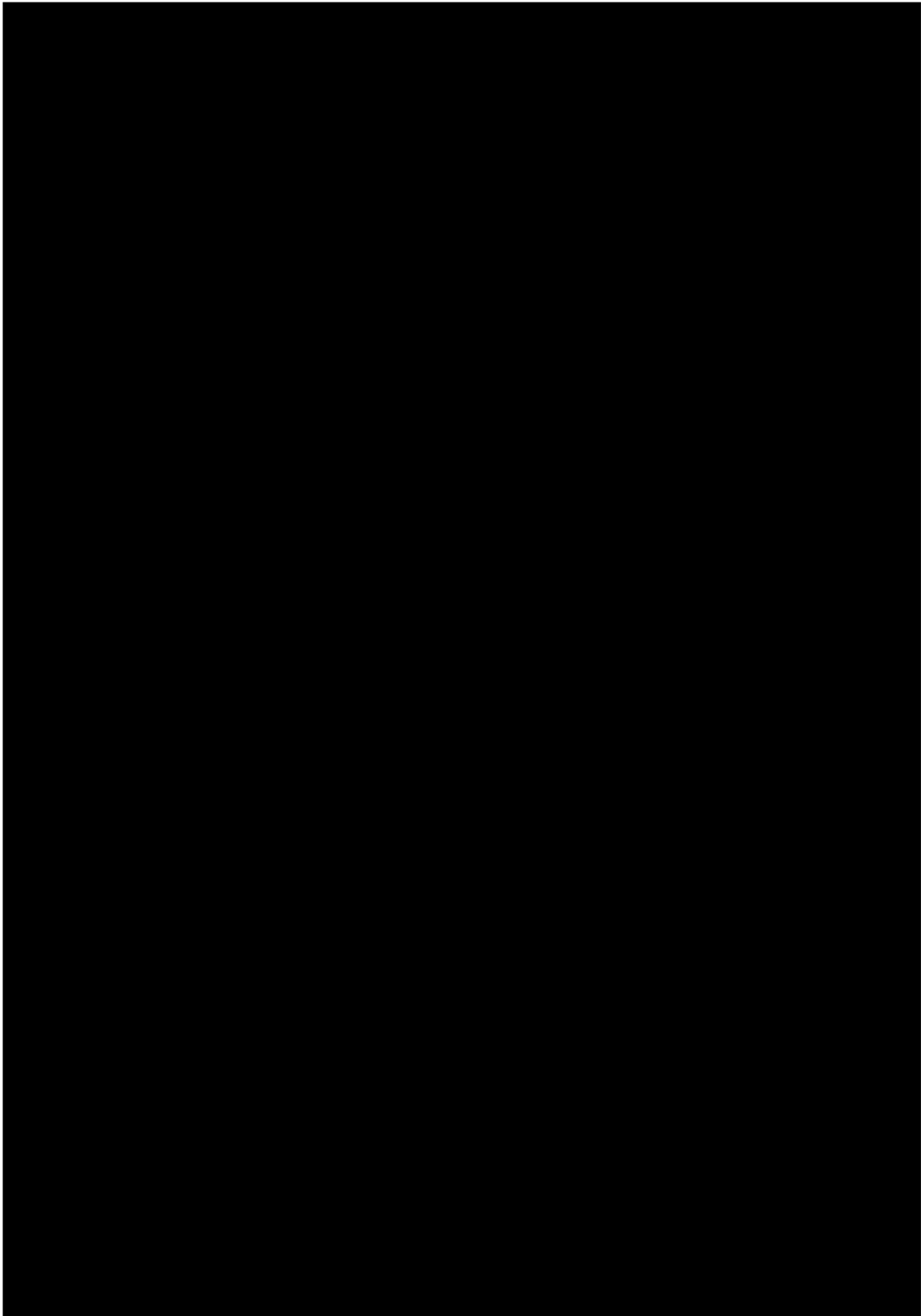
IV. Acceptance of Agenda: 7 - 0 with additions

V. Business:

A. [REDACTED]



B.



C.

D.

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F.



G.



VI. Old Business:



VII. New Business: None discussed

VIII. Adjournment: 12:30

MOTION: 8 - 0





MINUTES

Meeting: #58 - Twelfth Board

Date: December 7, 1990

Place: Priests' Personnel Board

Present: Reverends: John W. Calicott (arriv. 10:45), Raymond L. Cusack,  
Edward R. Fialkowski, James P. Finno,  
George J. Kane, Donald J. Nevins (arriv. 10:35),  
Michael W. O'Connell (arriv 10:35), Victor J.  
Sivore, Kenneth J. Velo.

I. Opening Prayer: Rev. George J. Kane 10:25 A.M.

II. Minutes: Accepted 6 - 0 - Cardinal's Minutes 11/16/90  
Accepted 6 - 0 - November 30th Minutes

III. Reports:

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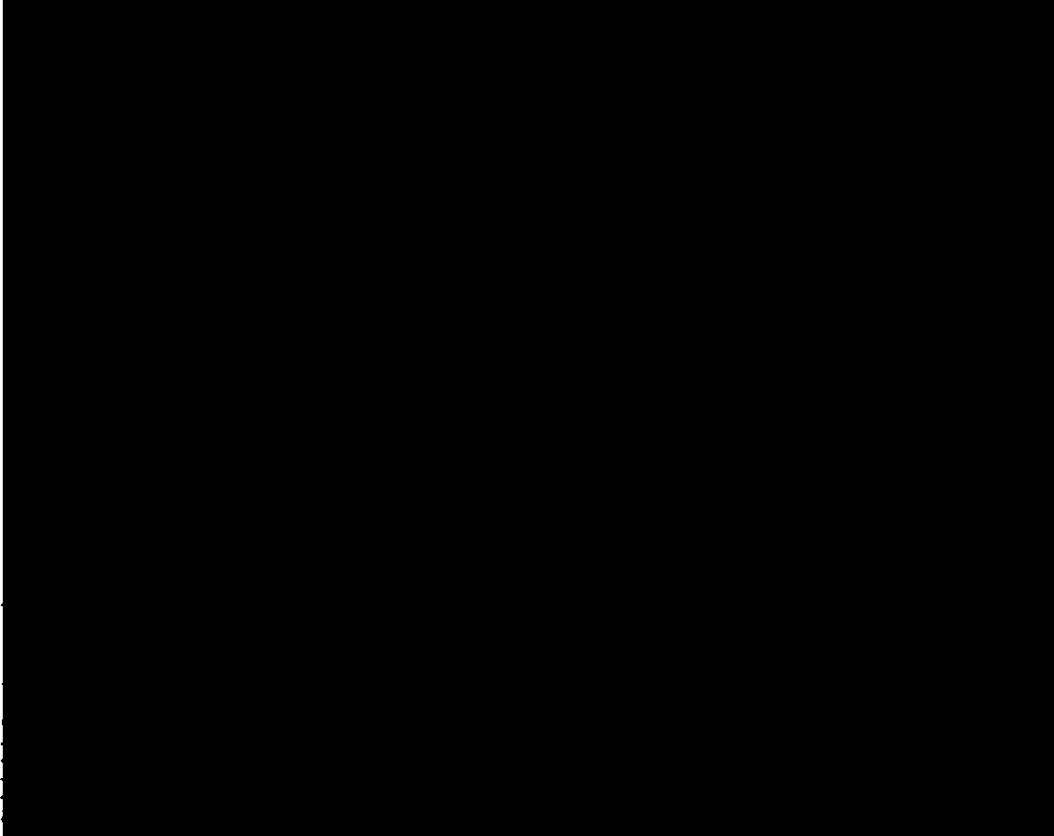
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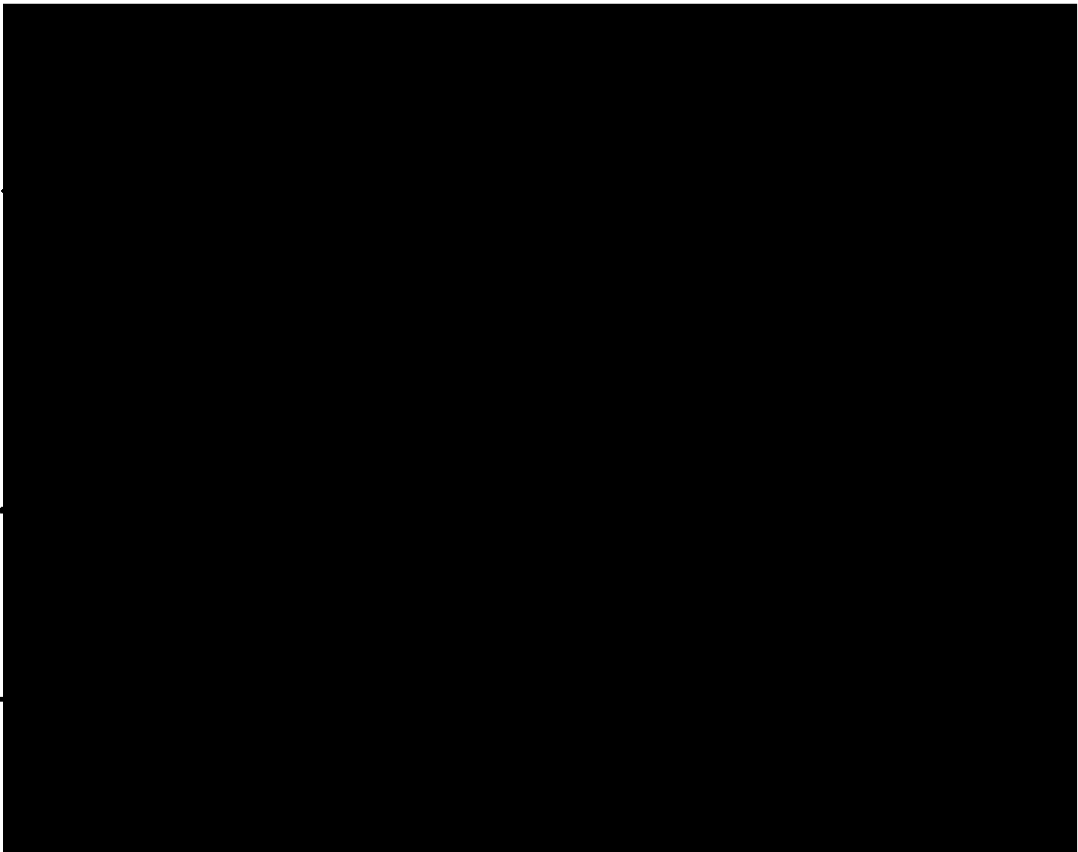
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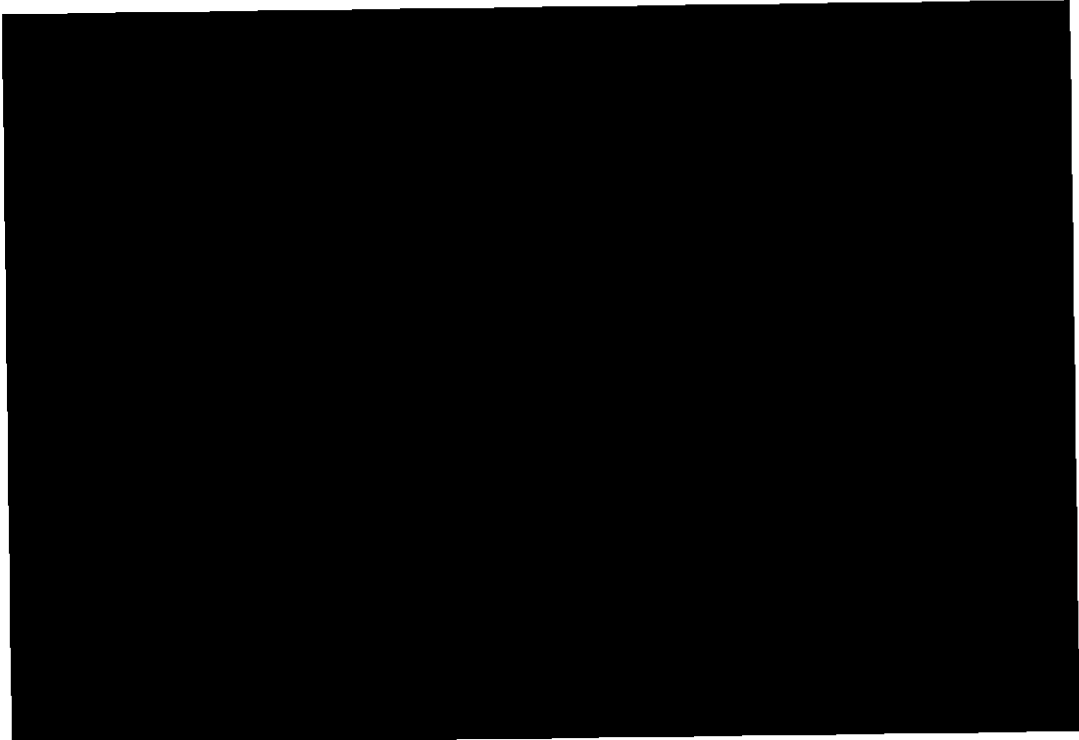
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17.

18.

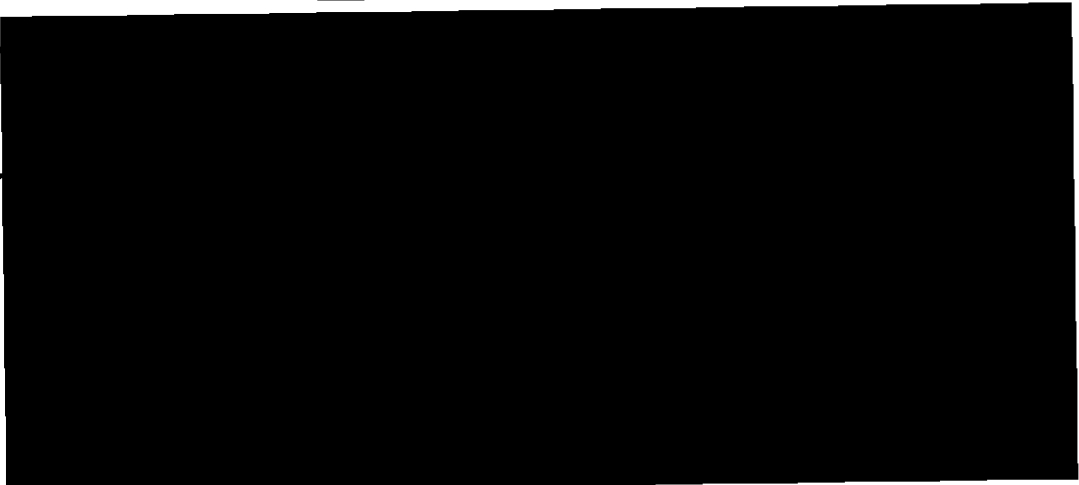
19.

20.



21. James Steel '68: Ray Goedert [Vicar for Priests] and the Cardinal are meeting with Jim 12/8/90 to discuss with him their concerns about his [redacted]

22.



23.

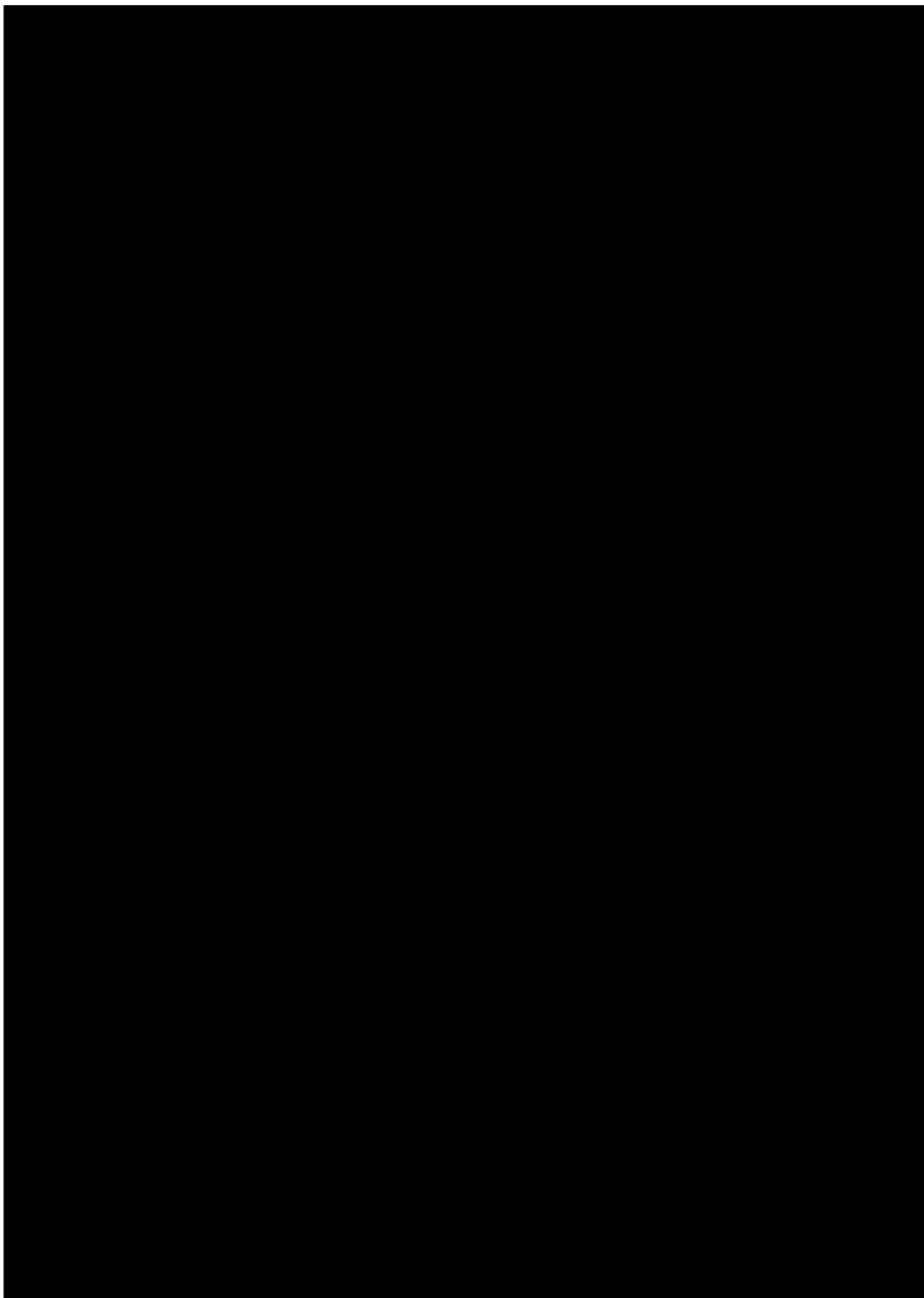
IV. Acceptance of Agenda:



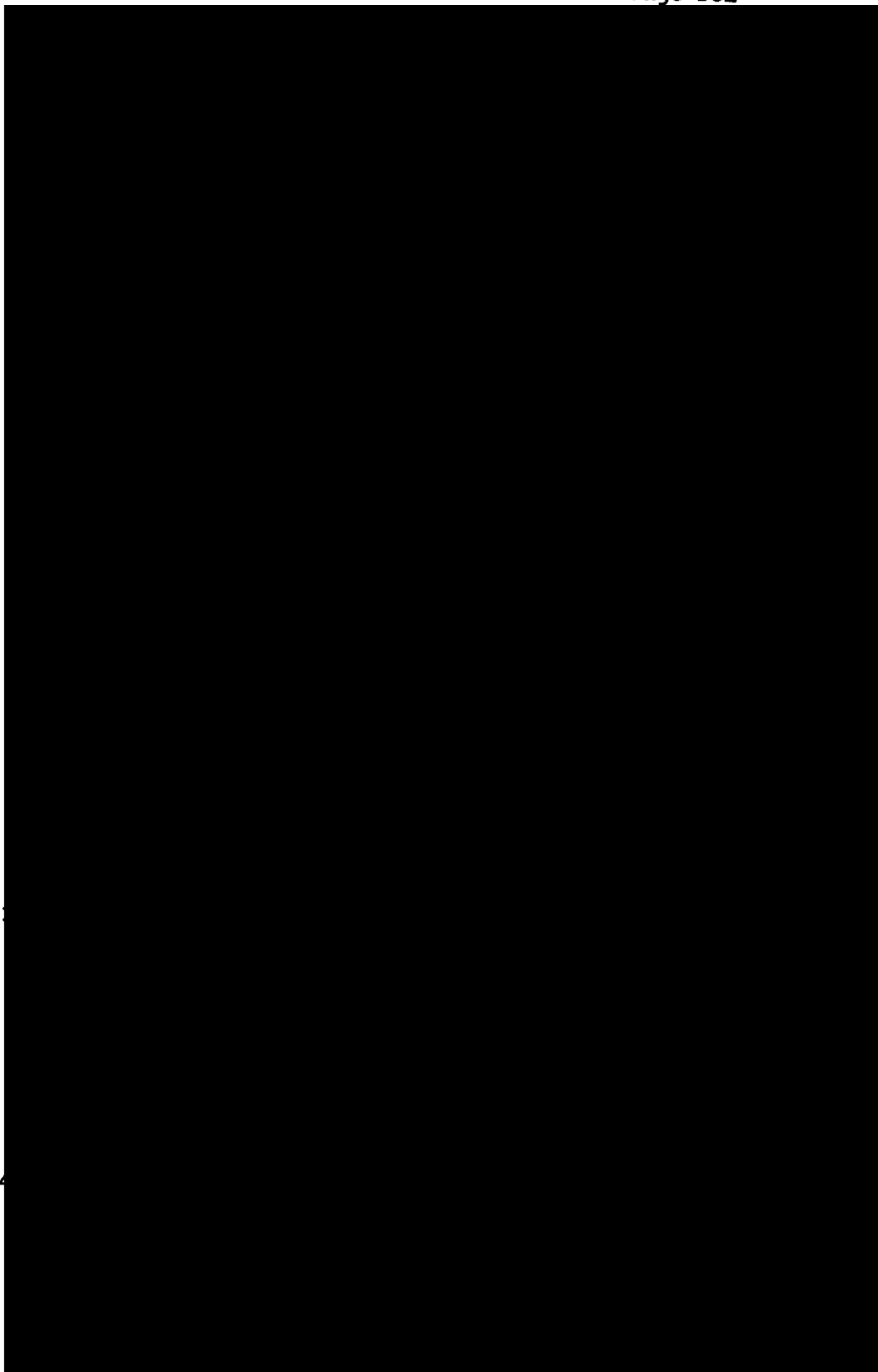
V. Business:

A.

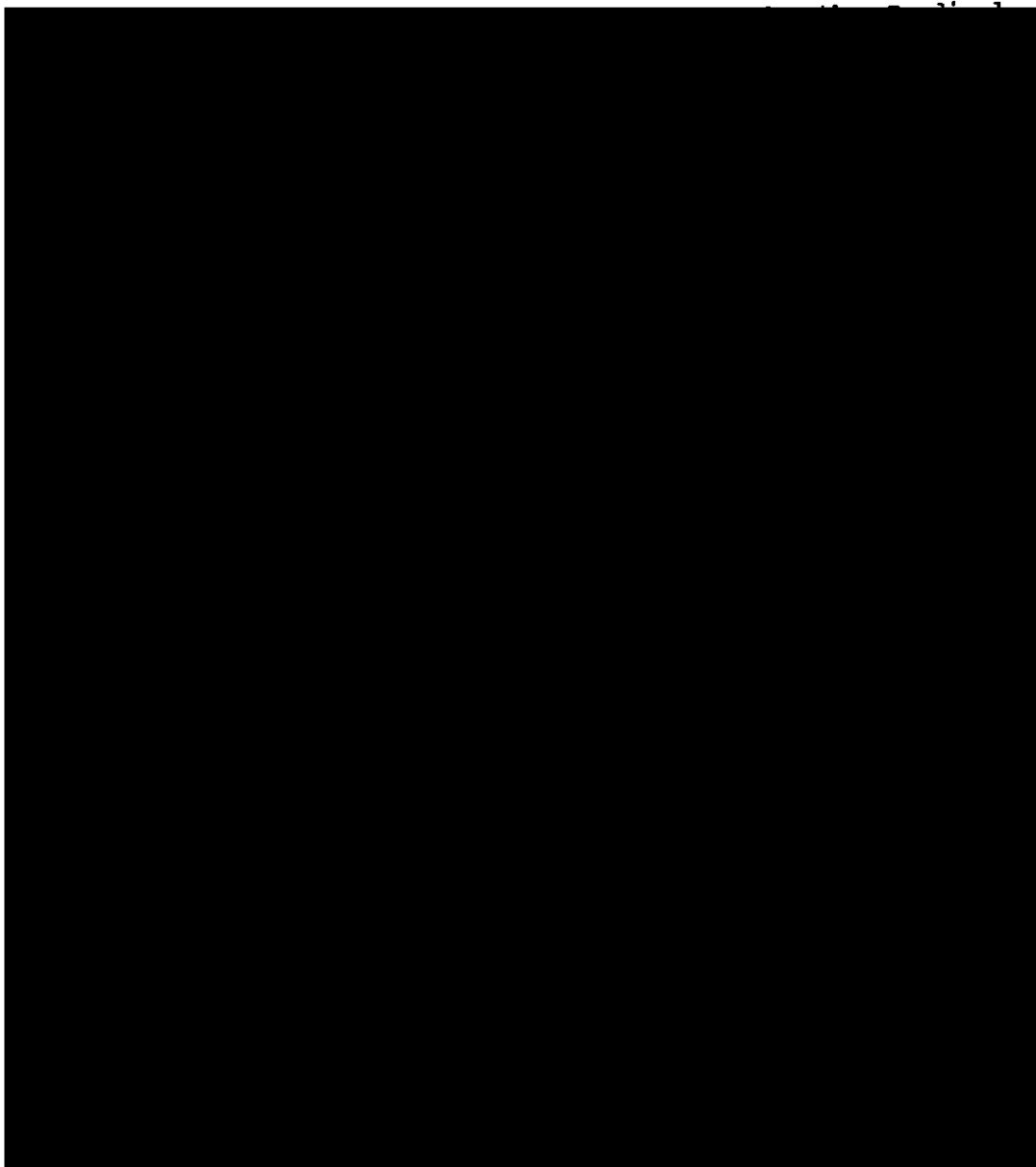






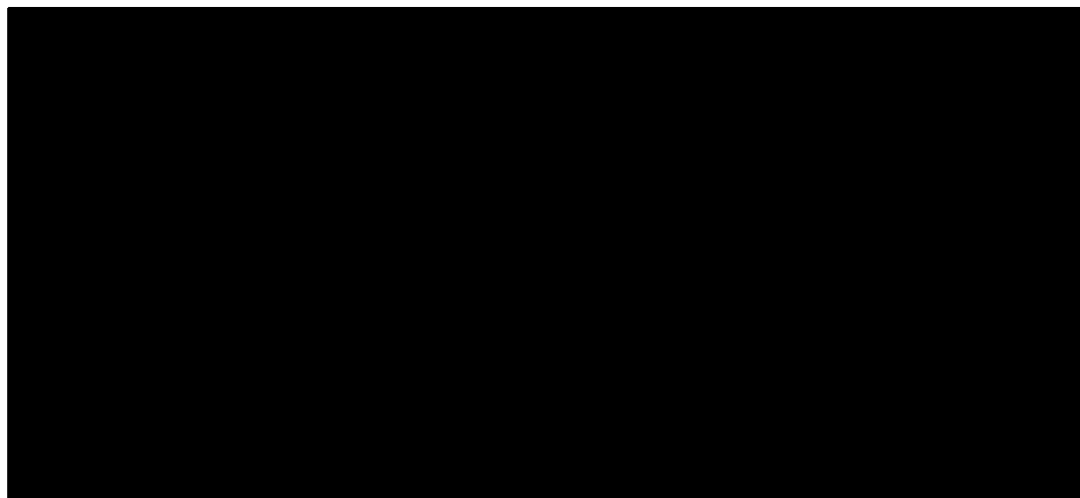


B.

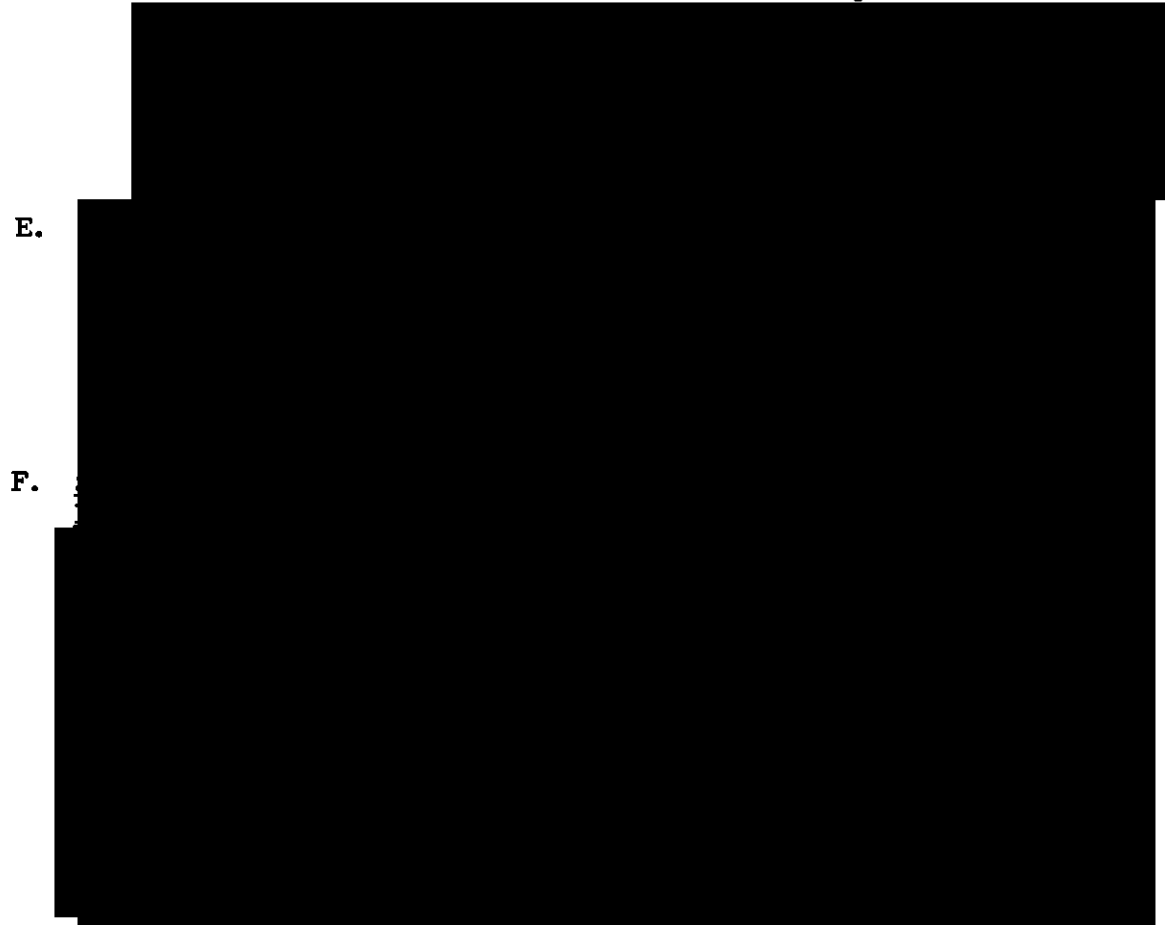


C.

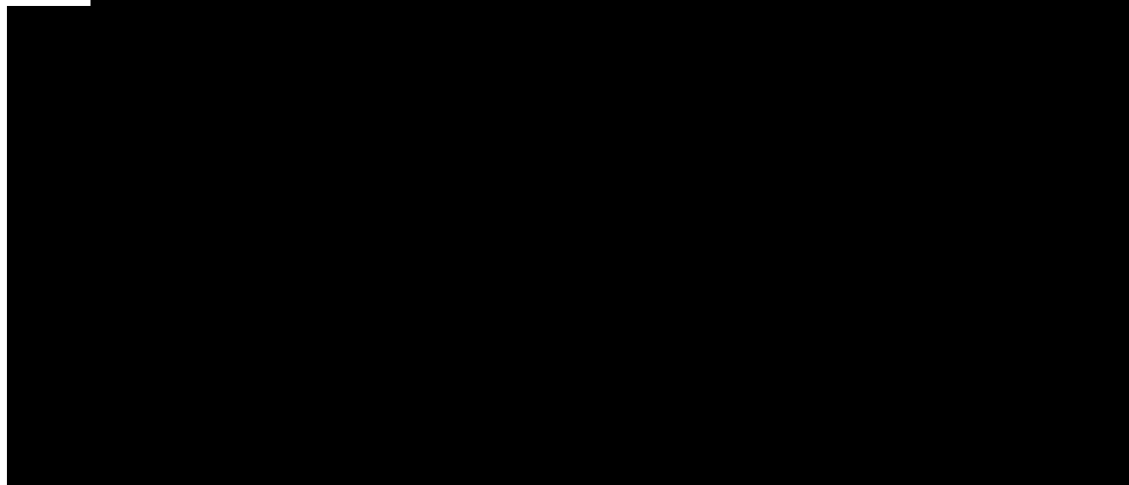
D.



E.



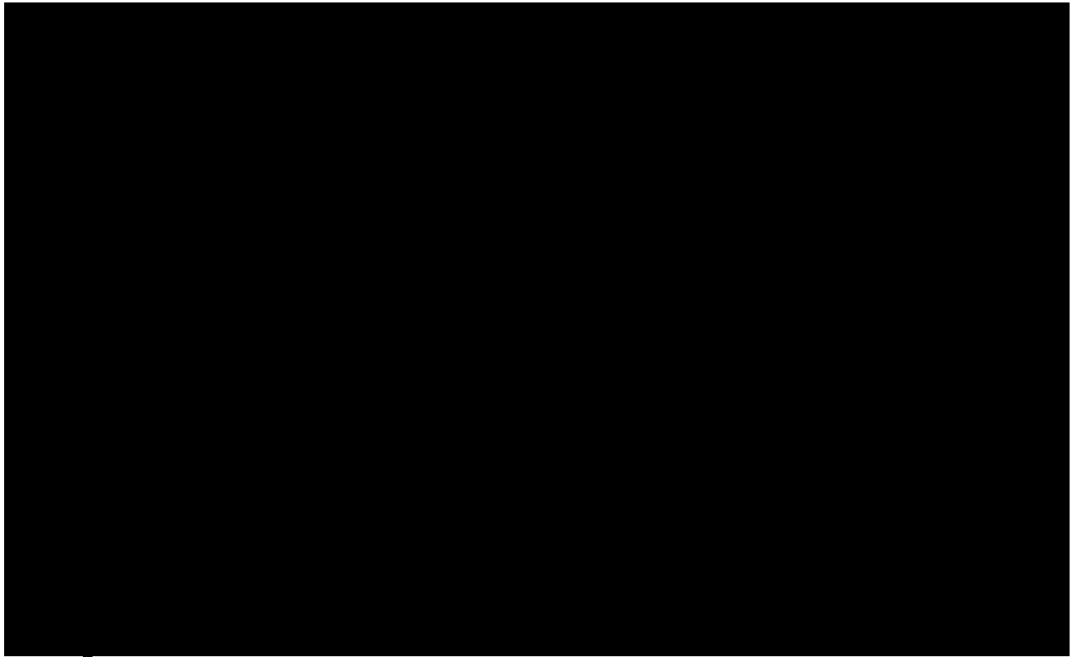
F.



G.



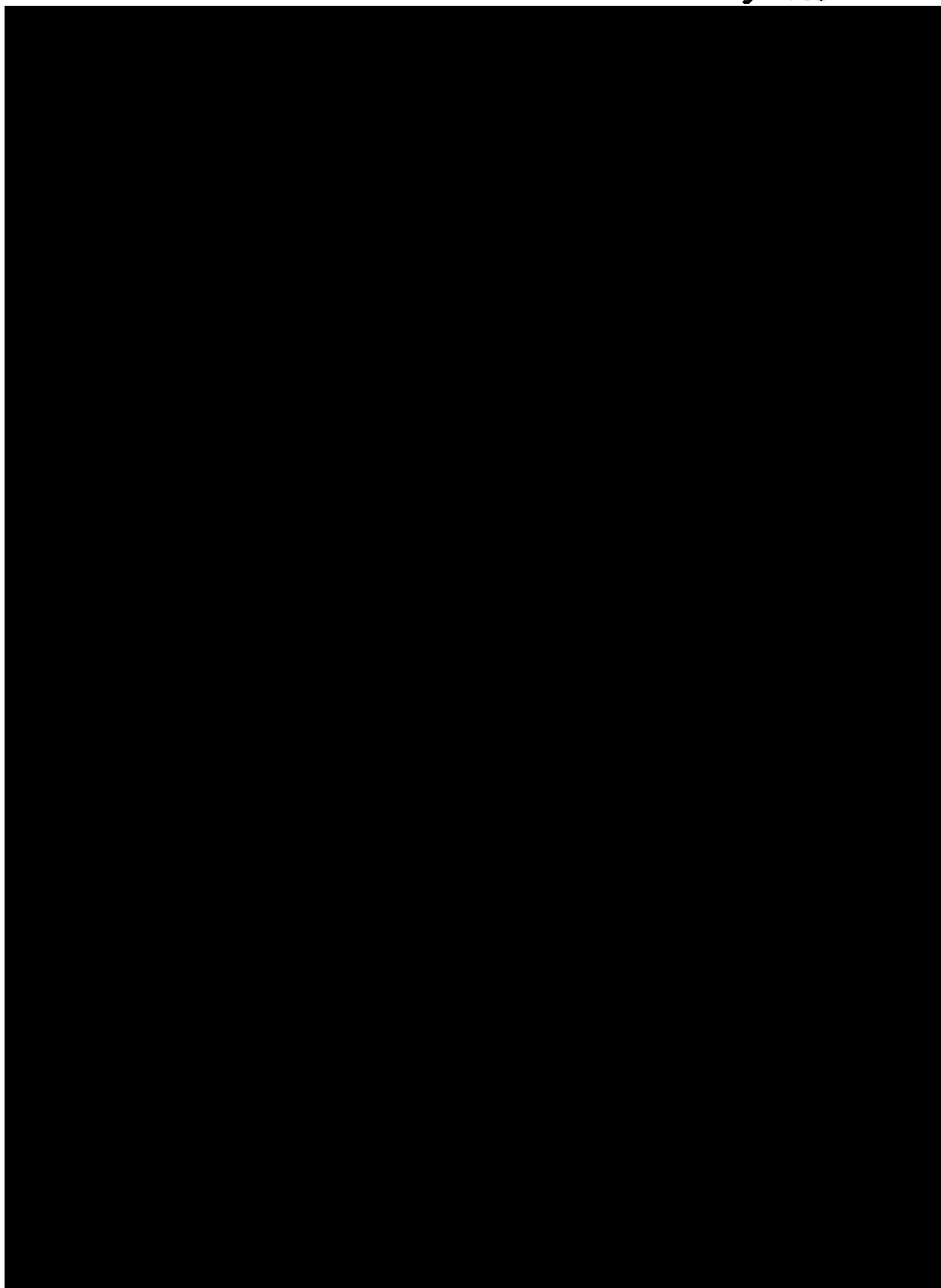
H.



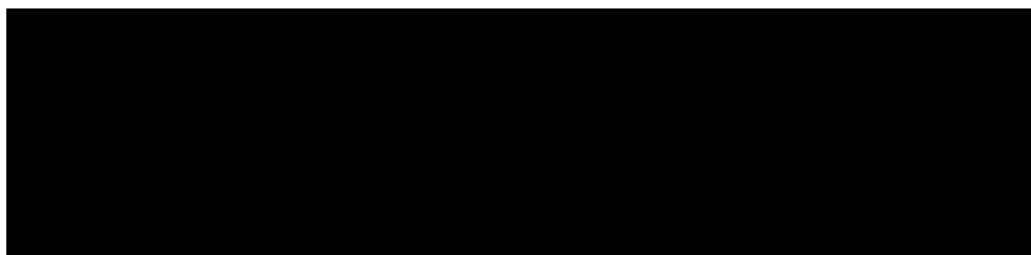
I.

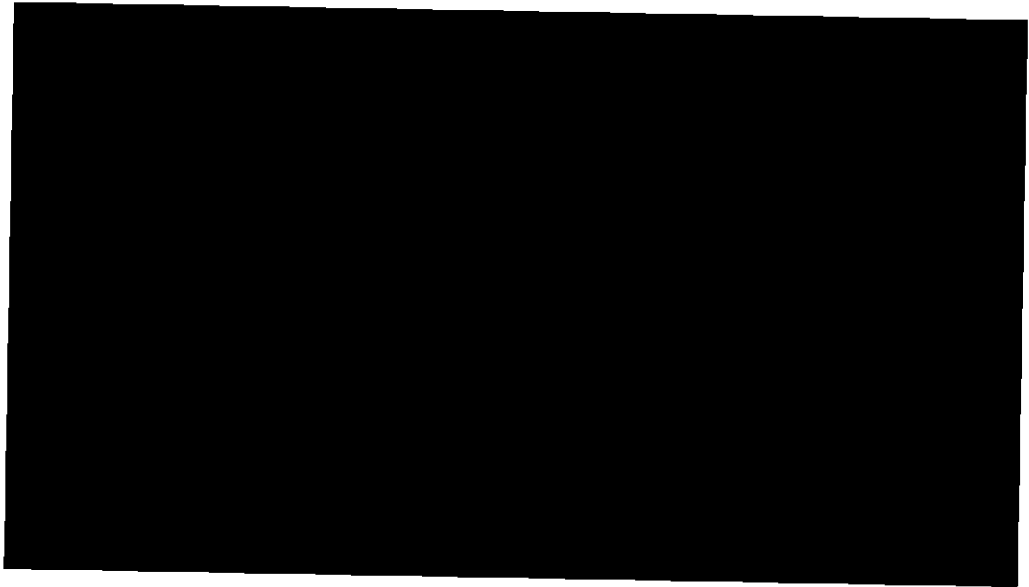
J.





II. Parishes:

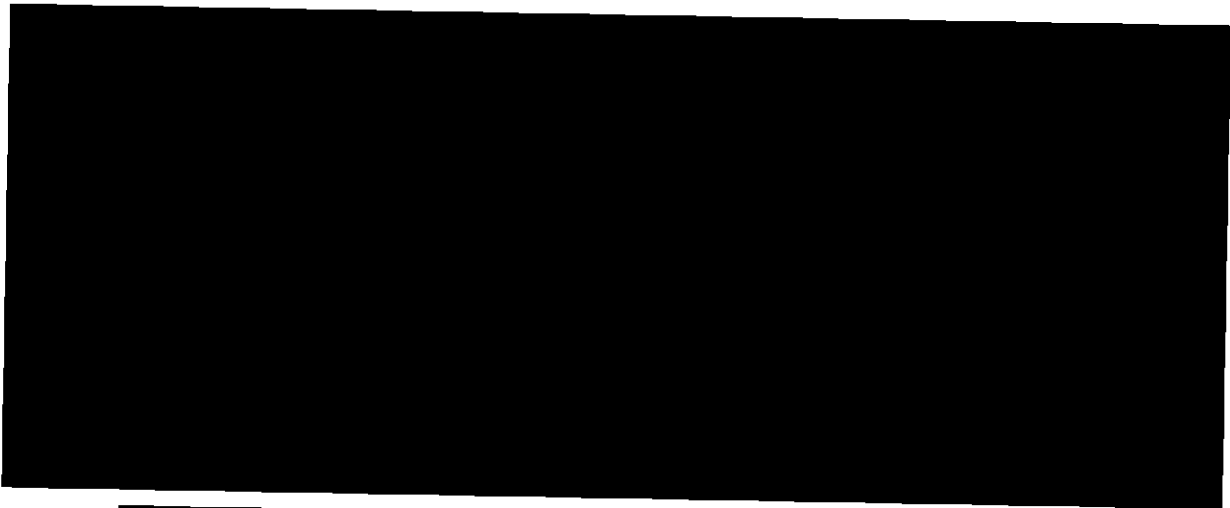




VI. Old Business: None discussed.

VII. New Business: None discussed.

VIII. Adjournment: 3:08 P.M.  
MOTION: 9 - 0





MINUTES

Meeting: #34 - Twelfth Board

Date: May 4, 1990

Place: Priests' Personnel Board

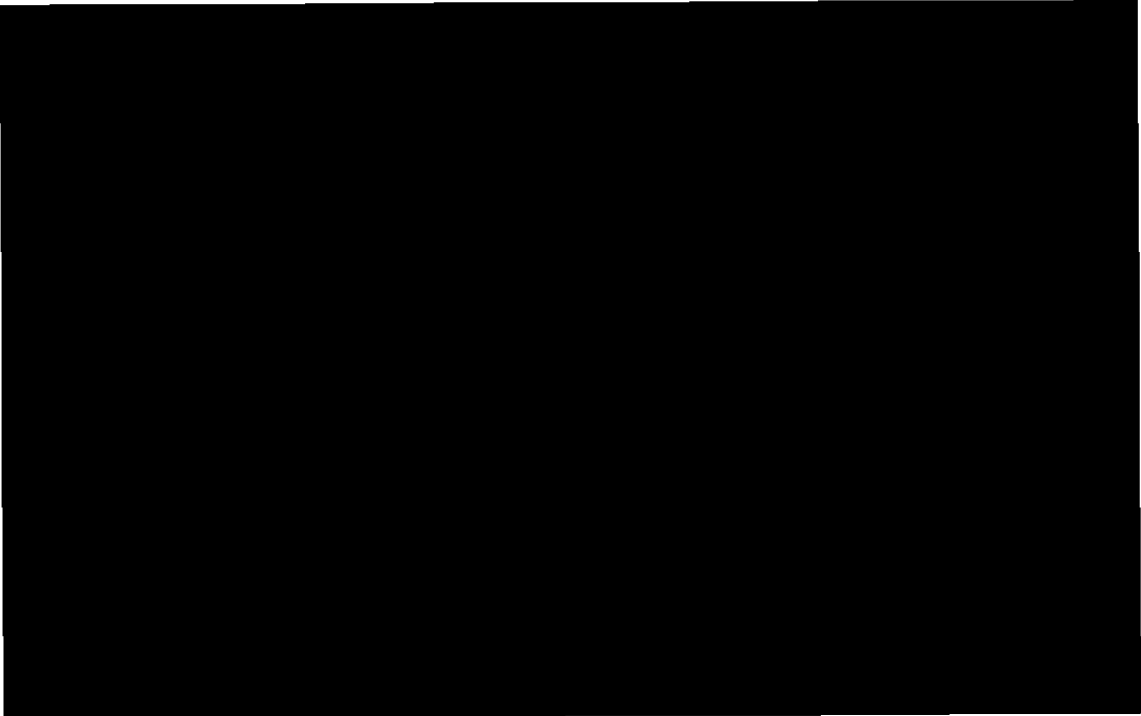
Present: Reverends: John W. Calicott(arriv.10:55 am),Raymond L. Cusack,  
Edward R. Fialkowski, James P. Finno,  
George J. Kane, Donald J. Nevins,  
Michael W. O'Connell(arriv. 10:30), Kenneth J. Velo.

Absent: Rev. Victor Sivore

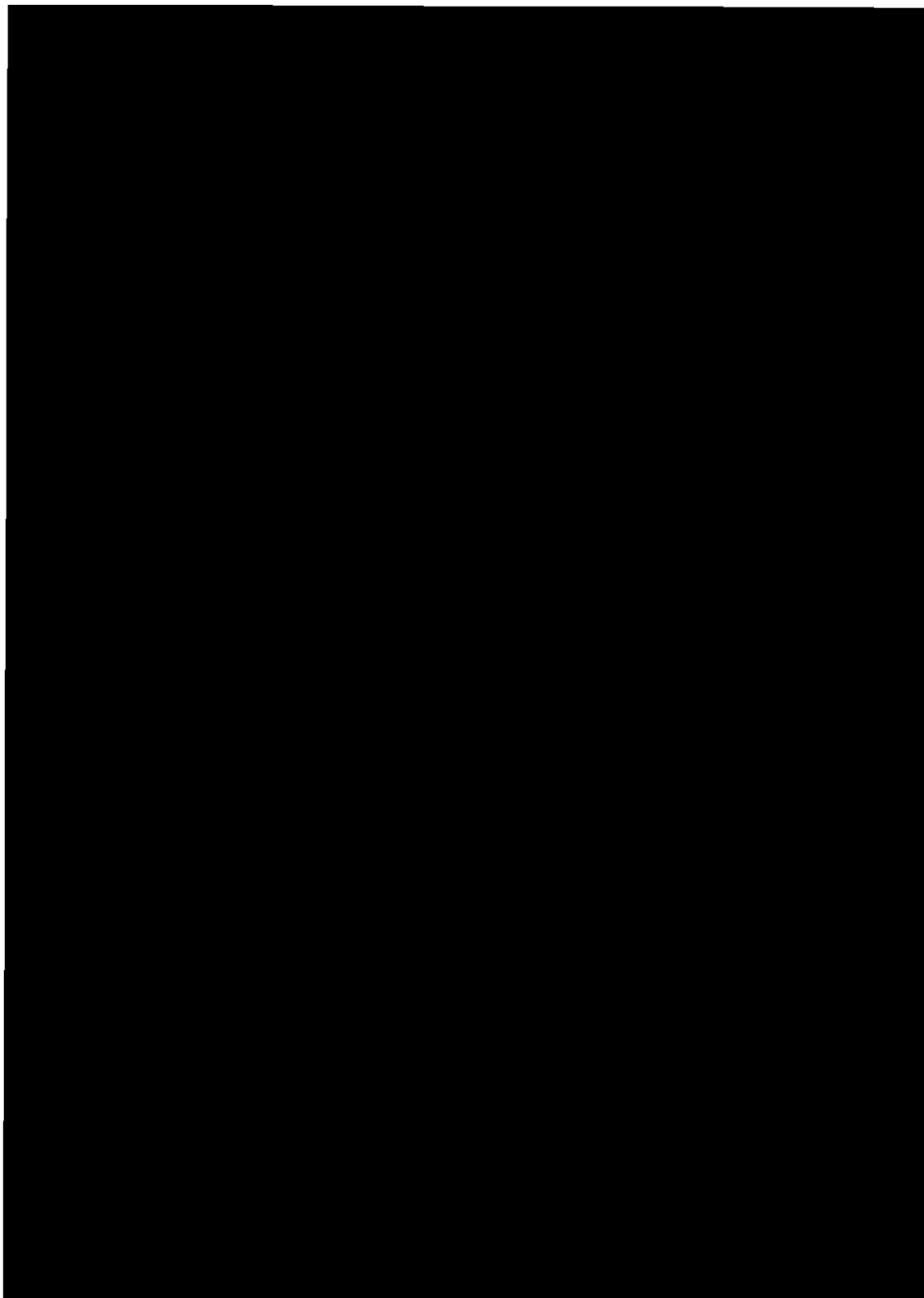
I. Opening Prayer: Rev. Raymond L. Cusack 10:27 A.M.

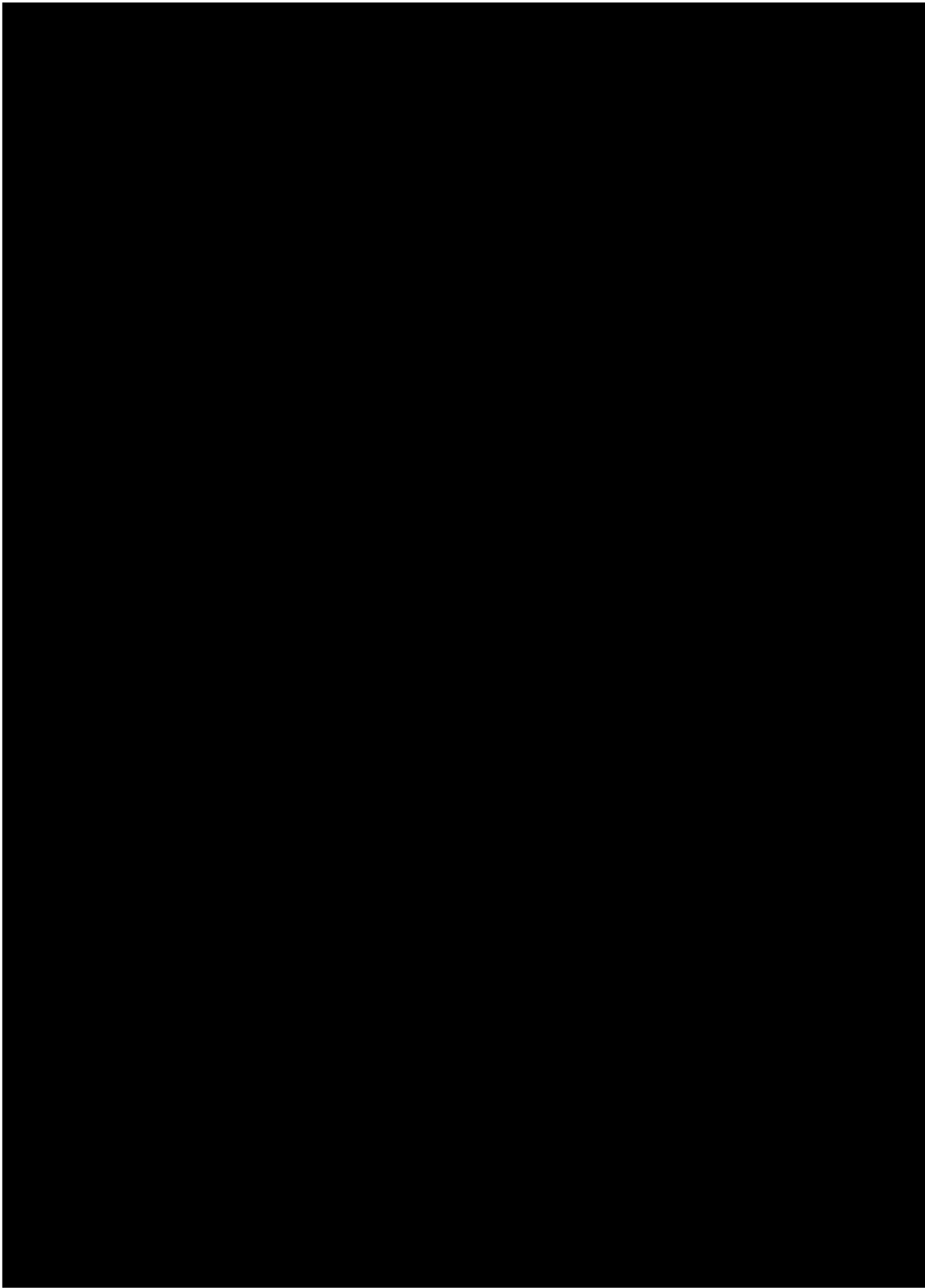
II. Minutes: Approved 7 - 0

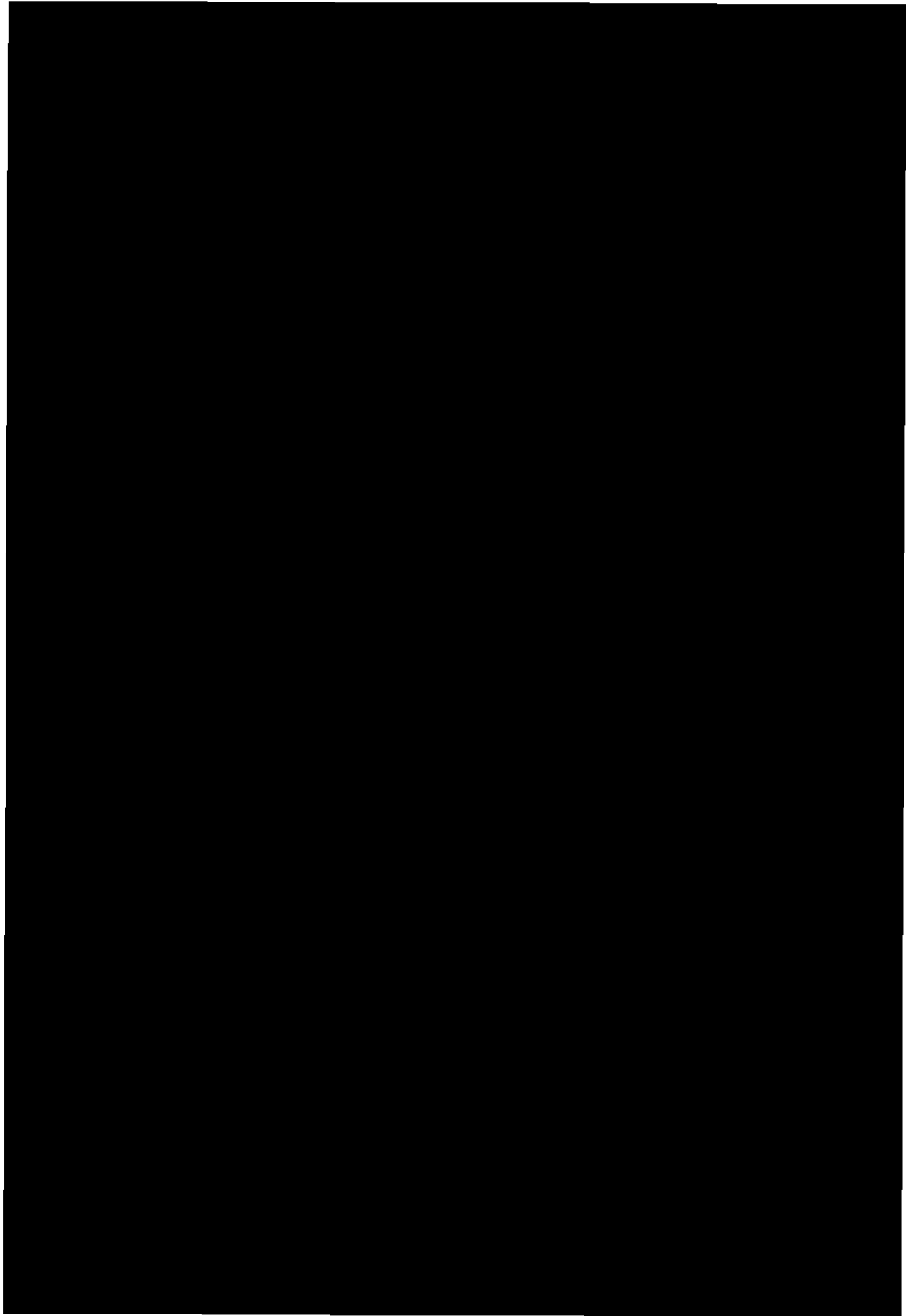
III. 







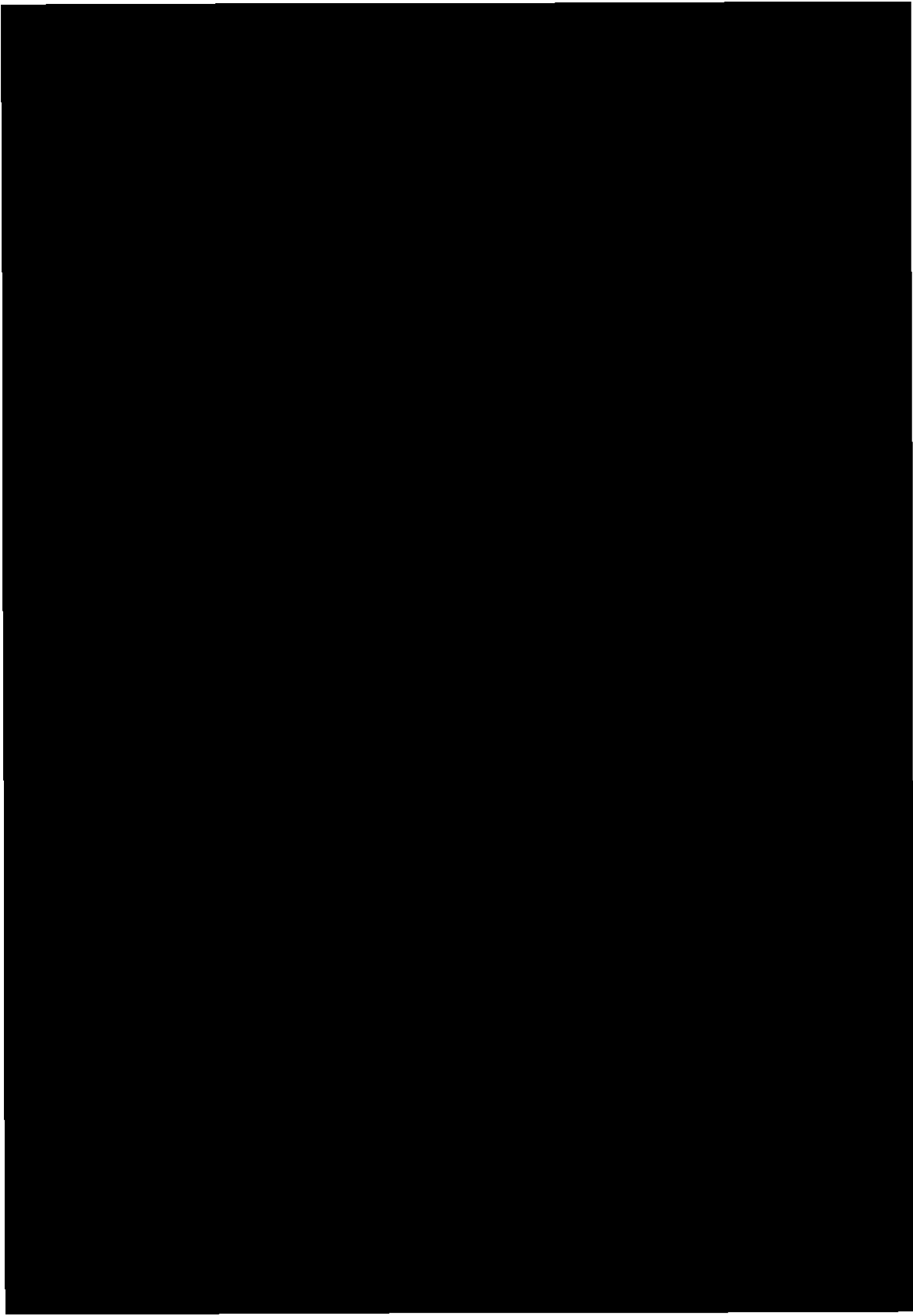


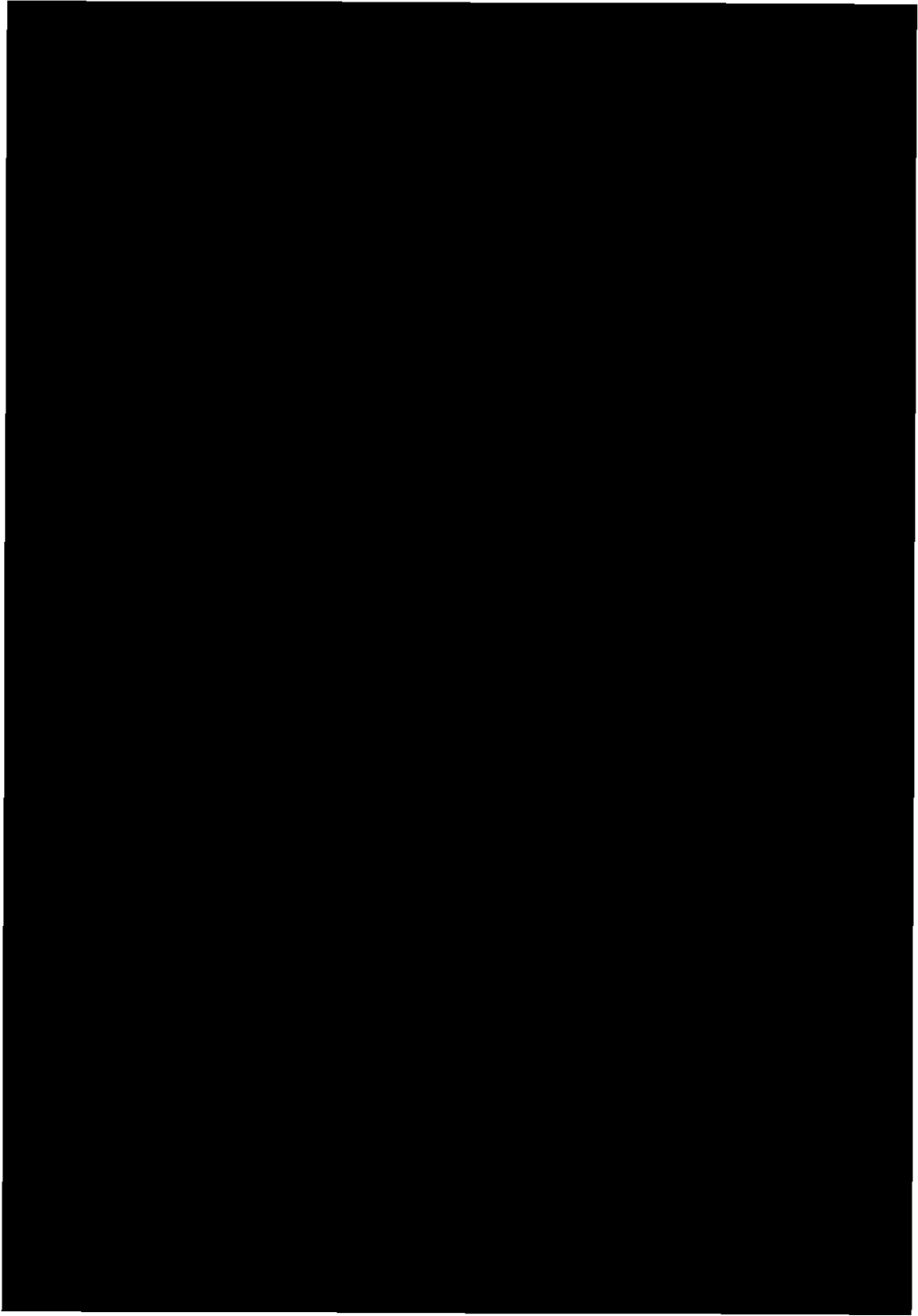


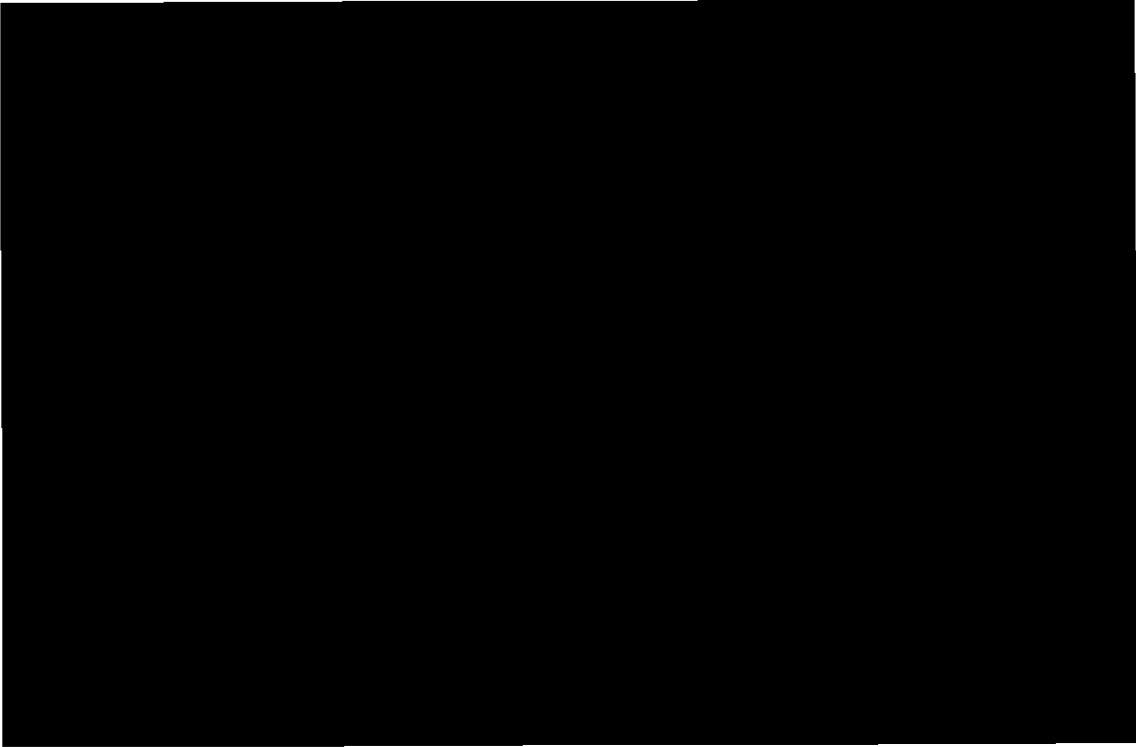
J

J

J





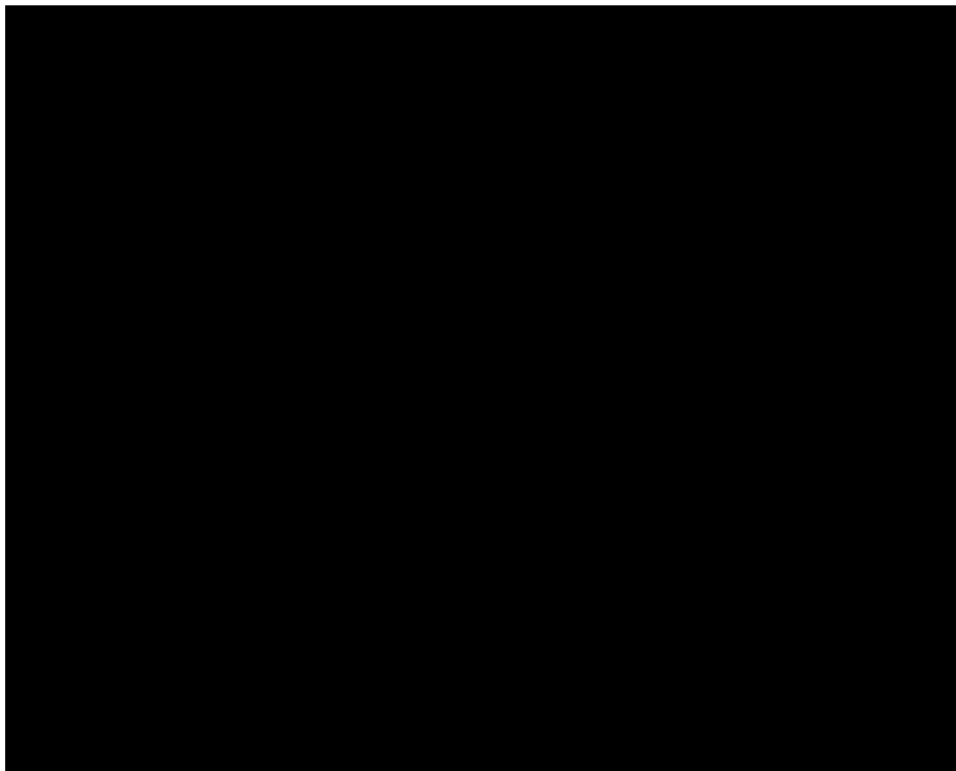
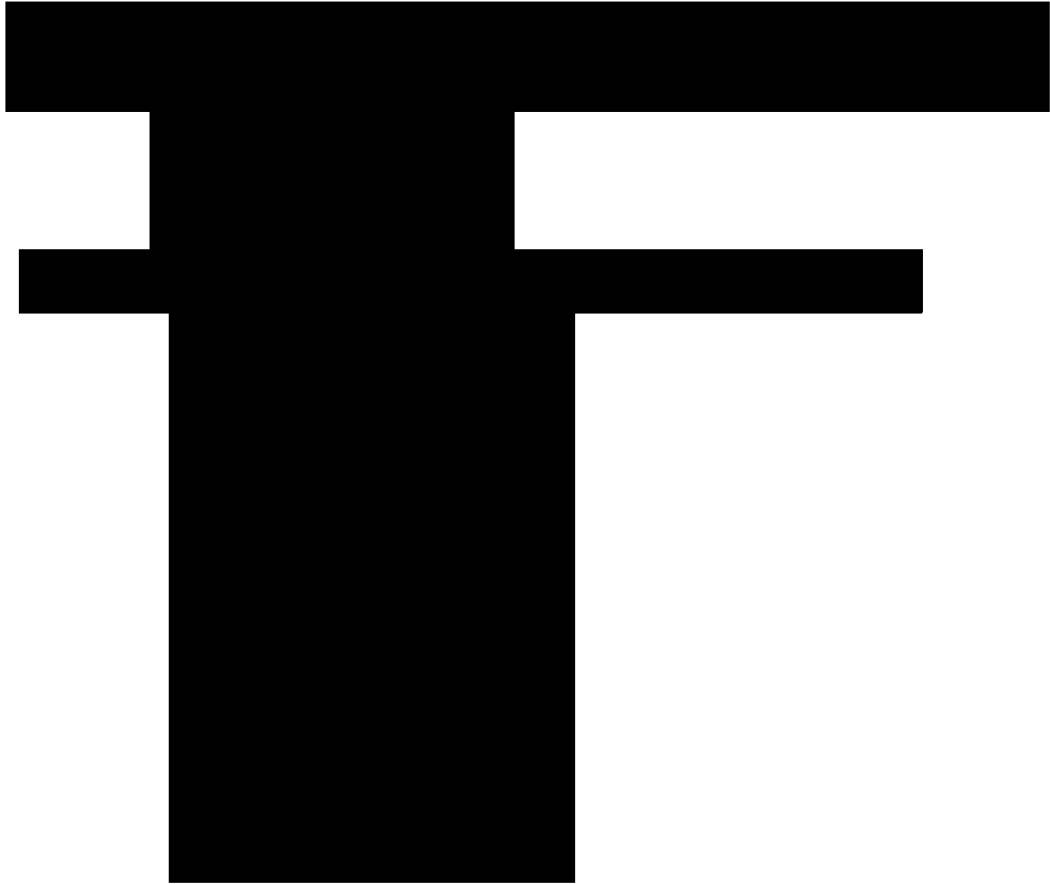


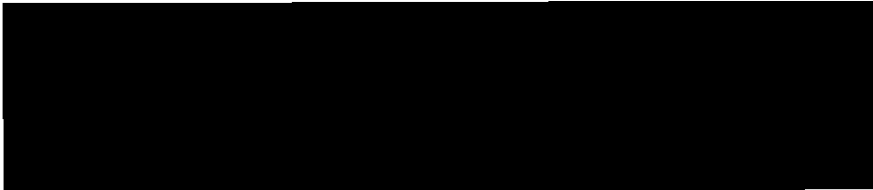
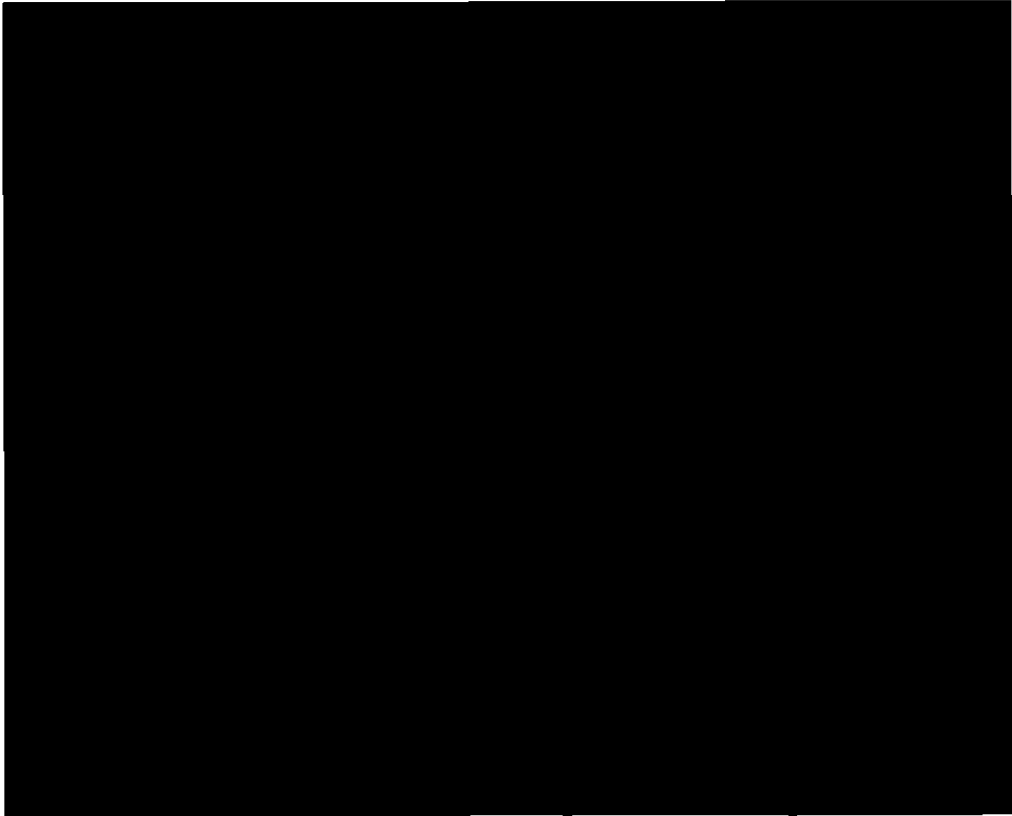
IV. Acceptance of Agenda: Approved 8 - 0

V. Business:

A.



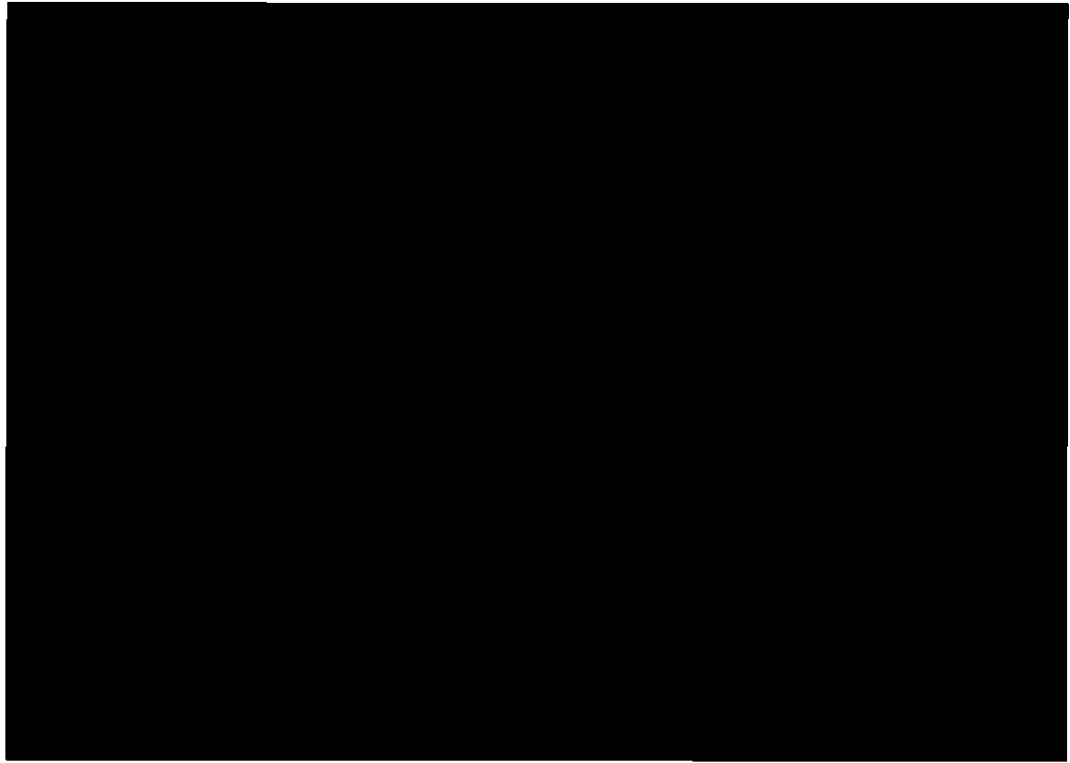




B.







c.

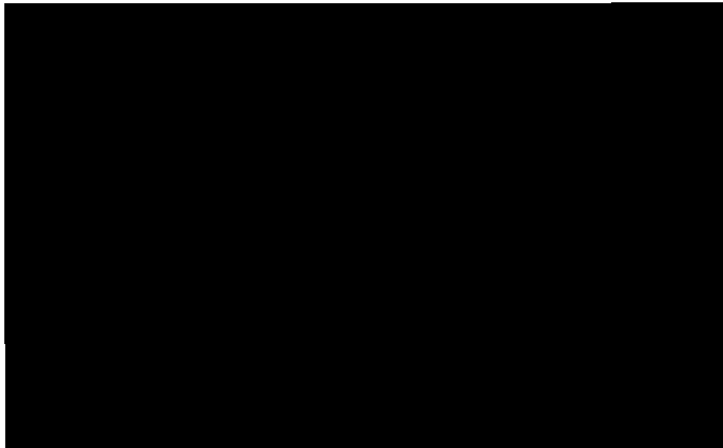




D.



E.



F.

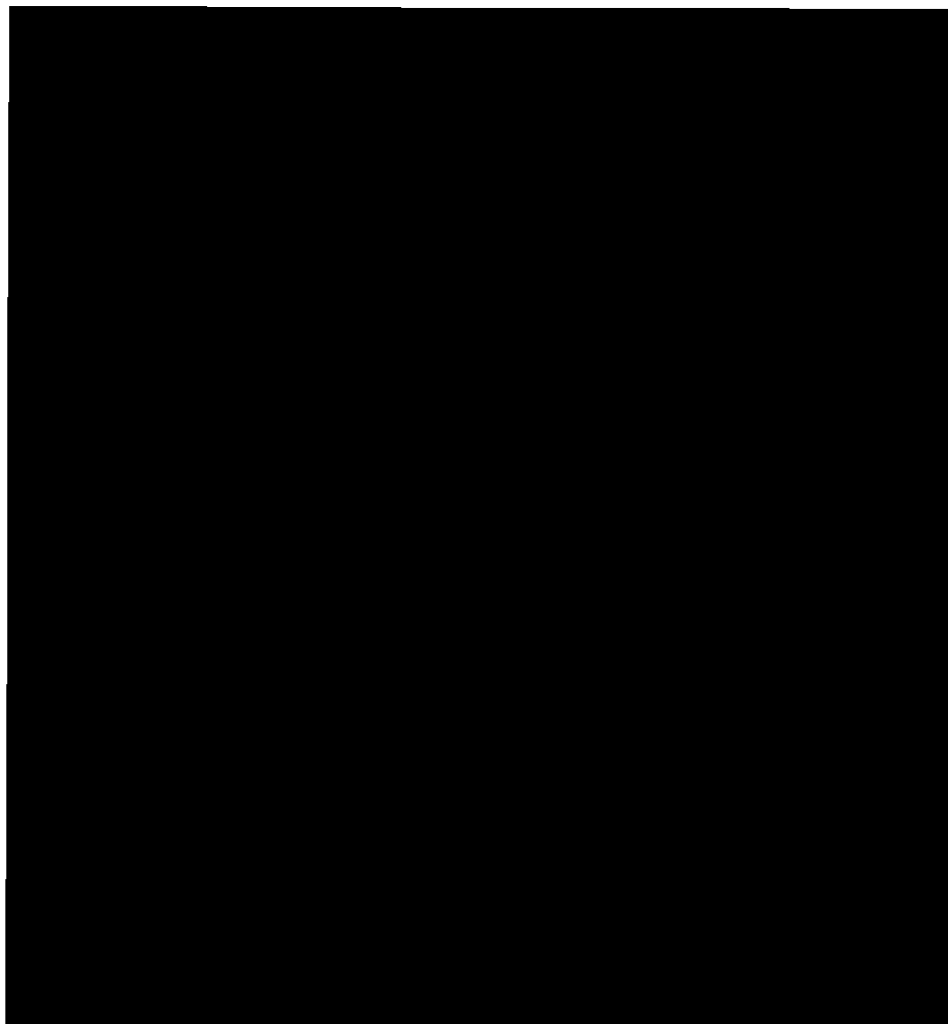


G.



H. 11:15 -12:15 Meeting with Vicar & Associate Vicar for Priests:

1.



2.

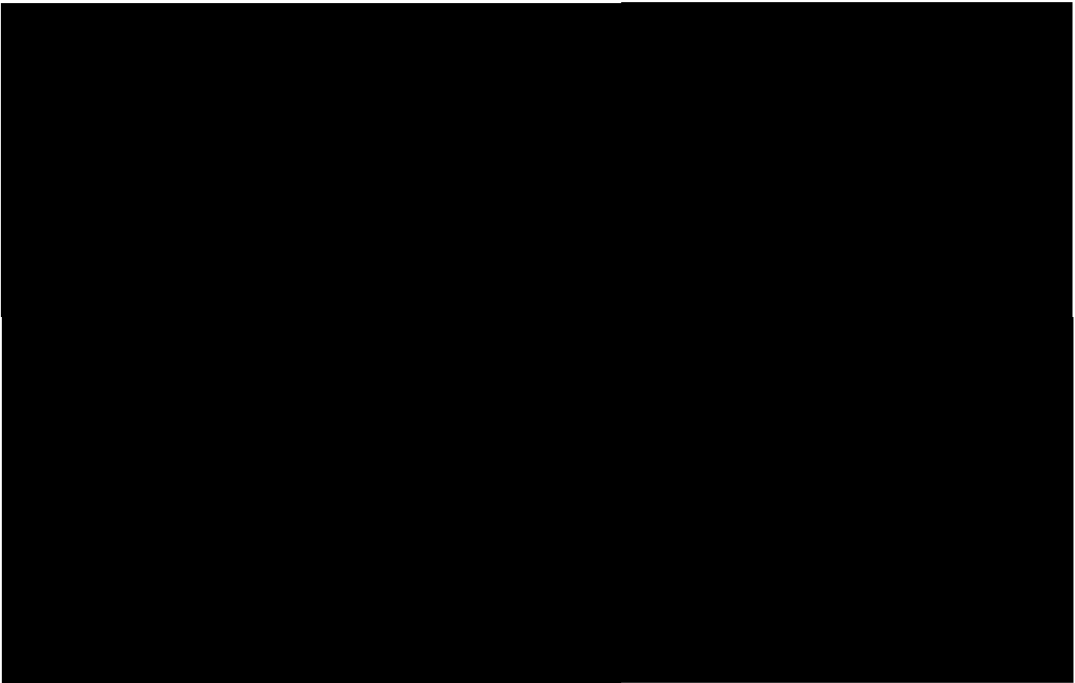
3.

4.



5. James Steel '68: Ray Goedert informs the Board that it should contact Frank Spellman about Jim's pastorability.

I.



J.

VI. Old Business: None discussed

VII. New Business: None discussed

VIII. Adjournment:

MOTION: 7-1-0 To adjourn 3:20 P.M.

