

*St. Peter's - New Westminster, B.C.*

OBLATES

402 ROYAL AVENUE

TELEPHONE 521-4078 <sup>4111</sup>

May, 24, 1976

Most Reverend Cornelius M. Power, D.D.,  
2838 East Burnside,  
Portland, Oregon, U.S.A. 97214.

Your Grace:

Please accept my sincere greetings. The information I am about to give, I do so with the greatest regret and sorrow, for yourself and all who will be affected.

I have been given the following information by a most reliable source and feel that it must be passed on to you.

PHILIP STEIGERWALD, presently working in Queen of Peace, Salem, Oregon, scheduled to be ordained to the Priesthood on the 20th day of June, 1976, is an avowed homosexual. He rationalizes that neither the world nor the Church, at the present time, understands the beauty and good in such a relationship. His companion, at the present time, is an other seminarian at Mount Angel, Philip has practiced homosexuality since thirteen years of age and claims to have been initiated into this practice by his confessor at that time.

This situation is known to his mother, some of his family and, at least two or more seminarians.

I would prefer you did not divulge the source of your

PD 0216

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TELEPHONE 521-4878 <sup>4111</sup>

- information, not for my sake, but for the sake of my informant, whose identity would immediately be known to Philip, were he to know the location of the information. This could pose some rather serious problems. However, that I would leave to Your Grace's discretion. Should you require further information, such as the name of the informant, I have been given permission to provide such information. If so, please phone me at (area code 604), 521-4111.

Respectfully yours in J.C. & M.I.



(M. Power O.M.I.)

PD 0217

ARCHDIOCESE OF PORTLAND IN OREGON

2136 EAST BURNSIDE, P.O. BOX 351  
PORTLAND, OREGON 97207

OFFICE OF  
AUXILIARY BISHOP

November 5, 1981

INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: ARCHBISHOP POWER  
FROM: REV. JOHN BROUILLARD  
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT  
RE: REV. PHIL STEIGERWALD

I think that I should pass this confidential information on to you in the event that it might be helpful. The source of this information is Father Emmet Harrington.

As you recall, Phil Steigerwald was stationed with Emmet in Eugene. Prior to his departure from that area, Phil publicly announced that he was "gay". Obviously, this was damaging enough. However, during this time in Eugene, he frequently associated with a young man in the parish, who is not of the same sexual persuasion, and who, until the disclosure, was unaware. Nevertheless, since Phil's departure from the Eugene area, this young man has been suffering some psychological problems as a result of his association and the disclosure by Phil. The boy's mother is likewise experiencing difficulty in dealing with this situation. Both have received psychological, professional help. Emmet is handling the situation as best he can, but not without difficulty.

As a result of all of the above, Emmet feels that serious consideration should be given if Phil ever requested to return to this Archdiocese. Emmet is of the opinion that scandal has been given and harm caused to this boy, his mother and the community. As I say, I thought you should be aware of what transpired.

PD 0218

Received 8-9-82  
-lml

**Our Lady of the Rosary Church**

703 C Street  
Union City, California 94587  
(415) 471-2609

August 3, 1982

Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon  
Archbishop Cornelius M. Power  
2838 East Burnside Street  
Portland, Oregon 97214

Dear Archbishop Power:

Warm, sunny, summer greetings from Union City, California in the east Bay area of San Francisco. I hope your July vacation was a good one, although I am sorry that I missed you during that time.

I returned from Boston on June 30 and then discovering I had arrived during your vacation time, I made an appointment with Bishop Waldschmidt.

Thank you very much for your warm letter welcoming me back to Oregon. I appreciated it more than I can adequately tell you. It arrived the day before I left Boston.

While I am sure that Bishop Waldschmidt has filled you in about our meeting, I would like to do so also myself.

After making the decision to return to the active priesthood, I have given much thought and

prayer to the wisdom of that return being to minister in the Archdiocese of Portland.

As likely you are aware, since I left Oregon last year, many rumors have been spread about me both by lay people and sadly, also by a number of our own priests. The rumors seem to have basically been about things I have supposedly done and said both before and after leaving. That very much saddened, hurt, and angered me.

Bishop Waldschmidt and I discussed the rumors and I was able to clarify them so he could know personally from me their untruth in fact.

Praying very hard about this, Archbishop, I truly believe that it is not wise and not prudent for me to return to the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Portland. I believe I can best serve the gospel of Jesus when I do not have to expend, likely much energy dealing with what people falsely have come

to believe about me because of the gossipy tales, unlovingly, unchristianly told both by priests and by people alike.

If I were not returning to the priesthood, I would remain in Boston whose beauty and whose sons and daughters have captured my heart. However, to return actively to the priesthood must mean for me the Church on the west coast.

For many years I have continued to hear very good things of the life and faith of the Church of Oakland. This year has also confirmed for me how energized I become by the hustle bustle life of a nearby major metropolis. Given the size then of the Diocese of Oakland and the vibrance of this Church, I am choosing to closely look at and consider seeking to minister here.

Since returning to the west coast, I have a few weeks ago spent five days in Oakland with a priest who himself formerly worked in Massachusetts. At that time I was offered the possibility of spending a few more weeks in this diocese in Our Lady of the Rosary parish in Union City, helping out on weekends while the pastor is on vacation. I accepted and am using the week days to meet more people of the diocese in order to continue to get a feel for the Church here.

After spending some time visiting my family in British Columbia, I arrived in Union City this past weekend.

Yesterday I contacted the Chancery here in order to make an appointment with Bishop Cummins.

Arch Bishop, please continue to pray for me

especially during these next few weeks as I try to make a decision.

If I do decide to pursue the Diocese of Oakland, I am sure that Bishop Cummins will be in touch with you. At the end of this time here, I too would like to meet personally with you either way and look forward to seeing you again.

As I have already said, thank you for welcoming graciously me back to Oregon.

I am hoping that you will agree with my decision not to return ministerially to the Archdiocese of Portland, and understand the reason for my decision.

I shall be in touch.

Gratefully,

Philip J. Steigerwald



September 29, 1982

Most Rev. John Cummins  
Bishop of Oakland  
2900 Lakeshore Ave.  
Oakland, California 94610

Dear Bishop Cummins:

A couple weeks ago Father Philip Steigerwald, a priest of the Archdiocese of Portland, visited me to let me know that he had been temporarily assigned to Our Lady of the Rosary Church in Union City, California, and that he was very pleased to be in the active pastoral ministry once again. I understand that Bishop Paul E. Waldschmidt has talked to you about Father Steigerwald, and perhaps you also have been able to talk to Father Steigerwald himself. I assume, therefore, that you know a little bit of his history.

Briefly, however, I feel that you should know that Father Steigerwald took approximately one year off from his assignment here in the Archdiocese of Portland so that he could "sort things out." He has known, I suppose, for quite awhile that he has an homosexual orientation. He needed some time away from the pastoral ministry to reflect upon this discovery and to decide what to do about it, and whether this condition was compatible with the priestly life.

He spent most of the period of his leave in the Boston area, where he received counseling and spiritual advice from a priest and from other resource people. Before returning to Portland during the summer, he wrote to me from Boston to say that he was convinced that his paramount desire is to continue as a priest in pastoral ministry. Feeling that he could do so wholeheartedly better in new surroundings than in the Archdiocese of Portland, he asked permission to seek pastoral work in some other diocese on the west coast. He heard many good things about the Diocese of Oakland, and therefore made some contact with a priest in your diocese to see whether he might have some chance of being assigned to a parish. This led to some substitute work at Our Lady of the Rosary Parish in Union City, and eventually to a temporary assignment as associate pastor, I believe.

Father Steigerwald is a very sincere young priest. He is personable, warm and friendly in his relationships with people, and effective in the parish ministry. He has always been honest with himself and with his superiors.

PD 0224

Most Rev. John Cummins  
September 29, 1982.

I am deeply grateful to you for placing your trust in him. He probably already has selected a strong spiritual counselor, but if he has not already done so I would suggest that you or the Personnel Director, or even perhaps the pastor, urge him to put himself under the direction of some priest as soon as possible. You will find him very sincere and serious about his priesthood.

With kindest personal regards and best wishes, I remain

Faternally yours in Christ,

+Cornelius M. Power  
Archbishop of Portland

September 30, 1982

Very Rev. George E. Crespín  
Chancellor, Diocese of Oakland  
2900 Lakeshore Ave.  
Oakland, California 94610

Dear Father Crespín:

Two great minds run in the same channel! Only yesterday I wrote to Bishop Cummins about Father Philip Steigerwald, just a few hours before your letter arrived in Portland. I enclose a photocopy of that letter.

When I talked to Father Steigerwald on September 14, we did not discuss excardination/incardination. I would therefore say that this matter perhaps should be left for a later time when it will be more clear to you and to him what course should be followed. In the meantime I hope that if incardination into the Diocese of Oakland should eventually be considered his service to the Diocese would be calculated from his first assignment. However, this must be determined according to your policy in such matters.

~~I personally am deeply grateful to you and Bishop Cummins for your willingness to give this young priest an opportunity to serve the people in your Diocese. He was involved in no scandal in the Archdiocese of Portland, and I feel sure that he will serve the people of Union City and the people of any other parish to which he may be assigned in an effective and satisfactory way.~~

With kindest personal regards and best wishes, I am

Faternally yours in Christ,

+Cornelius M. Power  
Archbishop of Portland

enc s. (copy of Fr. Steigerwald's personal record form enclosed)

March 27, 2002

Archbishop John Vlazny  
2838 E Burnside St  
Portland OR 97214

COPY

Your Excellency,

This is a hard letter for me to write, however, because of the past and current events concerning sexual abuse by Catholic Priests I feel it is necessary for me to ask your advise. I am and have been since birth, sixty two years ago, a practicing Catholic. I have four children, three boys and one girl. All attended Catholic schools for twelve years.

My reason for writing is my second son, \_\_\_\_\_ and my third son, \_\_\_\_\_ attended St. Paul's Grade School in Eugene, Oregon in the seventies. At that time Rev. Emmert Harrington was the pastor and Rev. Phil Steigerwald was Associate. My concern is that both Father Phil and our family moved to St. Paul's approximately the same time. Our family more or less "adopted" Phil. We welcomed him into our home and felt very pleased that a priest wanted to be a part of our family.

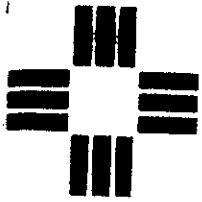
Now the "bad part". He appeared to be very fond of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and to us that was the greatest. We felt, as we had been taught, that there was nothing better than the influence of a priest in a young man's life. Well on a trip, with Father Phil, Phil made a sexual advance toward \_\_\_\_\_ mentioned it to me and not wanting to believe it I told him I thought he was imagining it because NO priest would do such a thing. It was left at that.

A couple of years later Phil left the priesthood and moved to San Francisco. He announced he was homosexual. Meanwhile \_\_\_\_\_ had moved to Texas and Father Harrington called my son \_\_\_\_\_ and me and asked us to come to the rectory to talk to him. He told us he wished \_\_\_\_\_ was there but he wanted to assure us he did not know that Phil was homosexual and wanted to know from \_\_\_\_\_ if anything had happened to him. \_\_\_\_\_ said no but he thought something might have happened to \_\_\_\_\_. I said nothing. Father Harrington proceeded to tell us that the Archdiocese knew before they ordained Phil that he was homosexual. My question if it was known, why did they send Phil to a parish with a grade school and why wasn't the pastor informed. I feel a great injustice was done to \_\_\_\_\_ and I would like to know what we should do or how \_\_\_\_\_ should proceed.

I will be looking for an answer from you as soon as possible.

Original sent  
to Bulette  
4/26/02

PD 0227



ARCHDIOCESE  
OF PORTLAND  
IN OREGON

Office of the Vicar General

COPY

April 2, 2002

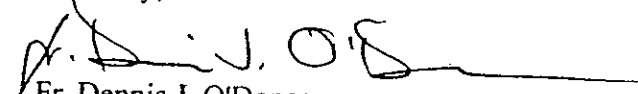
Dear Mrs.

Archbishop Vlazny is out of town, so I am answering your letter on his behalf. Actually it is a little difficult to answer your letter or the questions you pose. As you may be aware, the former Father Philip Steigerwald left the Archdiocese of Portland in 1981 and subsequently died in May of 1992 when apparently he was hit by a car crossing a street in San Francisco. As you also may be aware, Father Emmet Harrington died in July of 1997. With both of these deaths, it is difficult to tell what might have been known when. I do know that up to this point we have had no claims regarding Philip Steigerwald.

If your son was harmed in any way by the former Father Steigerwald, I would urge him to call our Abuse Contact Line (503-416-8810). Dr. Peter Okulitch, who is an independent clinical psychologist, answers that line and can begin a process of providing whatever help is useful. You or he are also welcome to call me here at the Archdiocese of Portland (503-234-5334); or if you simply want to provide me with your phone number, I will be glad to get back to you as we find any further information in this matter.

I am also in this letter including a small pamphlet describing our child abuse policy.

Sincerely,

  
Fr. Dennis J. O'Donovan  
Vicar General

Enc.