

July 2010.

Fr. Desmond McCaffrey O.C.D.

Answer to the letter of Dr. Rosaleen Eileen McHugh, M.D.

Background: I had a stroke about 5 or 6 years ago. I was in Salamanca, Spain at the time. My brother, Fr. Eugene, was with me. He was giving some lectures in English to a group of priests. At the time I was quite confused. They took very good care of me. I was kept in hospital for some time. Fr. Eugene anointed me. All I remember is my own surprise, possibly because I did not know why. I had good insurance, was flown home to Dublin with Fr. Eugene and a male nurse. I spent some time in a nursing home. I returned home to St. Joseph's where I was conventual. I was then assigned to St. Teresa's, Clarendon Street. Fr. Jim Noonan was prior. He was extremely kind to me. He did not allow me to do any work for 3 years. I said Mass privately and prayed privately and went for about 1 hour to the local park 1, 2 or 3 times a day depending on weather. I offered to say Mass in the Church. ~~I offered to say Mass in the Church~~ Fr. Jim refused so I accepted that. When Fr. David became prior and I could see the shortage of priests I offered again. Fr. David allowed me to say an evening Mass and to do two sessions of confessions each week.

I offer this background not as an excuse for what has happened, but an explanation for the poverty of this letter and the fact that I do not type as I once did.

The main point of this note:

1. Dr. R. E. McHugh is correct. I did what she said I had done. I am guilty. I now offer Dr. McHugh <sup>my</sup> sincere apology. I thank her for forgiving me.
2. There are some points I have to question. She mentioned a few priests, all Opus Dei I think. Fr. Richard Mulcahy I met once in Rome. I have no recollection of seeing him in Ireland. I have some recollection that he is dead, but I'm not sure. Fr. Oliver Powell: I generally searched my mind and memory. I can not remember him. He is quoted as coming to see me. I should remember him, but I cannot. My attitude to him is quite unusual to say the least. I cannot believe that I would be annoyed with him. Certainly if he came as a friend with fraternal advice I would at least have listened to him. However, Dr. McHugh believes my attitude to him was inadequate.

I have no recollection of an evening devotion to lay people and nuns. But it is easy to forget such a thing even for people with good memories.

I do remember being in the car with Dr. McHugh. My memory is that Dr. McHugh invited me into her flat, not for tea but for beer. What brand of beer I cannot remember. I recollect it was fairly light in colour. We did not drink too much, I should say two bottles each.

I remember we were both lying on her bed. We talked about sex. I remember some of the things she told me. I will not repeat them and never have. I became excited, opened the front of my trousers. She did not touch me. The action was entirely mine. I take full blame for it. And now I apologise again.

I cannot remember ever seeing a young woman for spiritual direction, taking off my clothes and going to bed. And I certainly never baptised all of the children of any woman. I did baptise the occasional child of people that I know, but it was very rare even the children of family. I have 2 brothers priests and we took turns as we were available.

I did phone Dr. McHugh. I never tried a second time.

Again, the basic statement of Dr. McHugh is true. I have <sup>told</sup> ~~to tell~~ the truth in all I have written here.

To return to the background: Dr. Kelly, Mater Hospital, has told me that I have recovered from 80% of my stroke.

It has taken several hours spread over a few days to write this. I am quite exhausted after the effort. But if there is any point that needs further explanation I will certainly help.

J. Desmond M<sup>c</sup> Caffrey, o.c.d. 13<sup>th</sup> July 2010.

Appendix :

Today, July 13<sup>th</sup>, in the meeting with Dr Merry she reported on her interview with Fr. Powell. He stated two things in relation to his visit to me :

1. I did not appreciate the value or place of his "fraternal correction".
2. I did not appear to be able to see the seriousness of my sexual behaviour with Dr. R. E. McHugh.

I have no remembrance of Fr. Powell's visit. It is probably my fault not that of Fr. Powell

*Fr. Desmond Mc Caffrey, O.C.D. 13 July, 2010*