

Father Rachett

“You shouldn’t be obsessed with pursuing this, you know”

He had been sitting with eyes downcast while recounting the upsetting events of the past week. Now he froze in mid-thought and looked up at her.

“What?”

“That letter didn’t sound so bad. And the process has actually helped you. It’s time to move on. I’ve had clients who’ve gotten over homicides within the family. Surely you can get over this.”

He sat there silent, motionless. After a brief pause, she continued, but he was only half hearing now. A week earlier his Church had sent him a letter at the end of an abuse investigation, saying that they were not going to tell him the results. And now their therapist was telling him that his outrage was a personality defect.

Perhaps it was. After all, he *was* feeling crazy when he went to the Church for help with his “demons” – anger, anxiety, and despair. He had doubts about the process, but had been assured he would be told the results. So he poured his heart out to the investigator and therapist, talking about things he hadn’t ever before, opening himself up in the faith that they were helping him.

But when he asked to speak to the review board, he was denied. Only the investigator would decide what they heard. And now came the Archabbot’s letter, saying that the recommendations would “forever remain confidential”.

He kept wanting to speak, but couldn’t. Every thought led to a short circuit, a dead end. Nothing made sense. The Church was using a therapist that they picked and paid to convince him that he was the one with a problem, part of a scheme to cover up clergy abuse. Either that, or he truly was crazy. Either way, it was beyond what his psyche could handle.

Once again, he felt the abyss. All thought was crashing, descending into a bottomless pit. Darkness, darkness. His body clenched, cringed, shriveled.

“So how are you feeling?”

How could he have been so trusting, so willing to tell them so much? He had hoped for some sort of meeting, some resolution, some real counseling. But now, to be dismissed outright, then told it's all in his head?

“There's a lot to think about.”

“So we'll schedule for next week then?”

“I'll think about that.” Then “I'll call you soon to confirm” as she started to protest. By then, he was afraid to say another word. She could, after all, have him committed. And if he was honest about his state of mind right then, she might have.

For he was now a danger to himself.

Outside, he leaned against his van, just staring into space, oblivious to the sights and sounds around him. Every thought kept crashing. So much of his life spent living a sham, trying to compensate for the effects of abuse. Lately he had become more isolated, hopeless. That's why he had gone to them for help.

But there was no help. Every fear, every anxiety, every doubt swirled in his head. Deeper, deeper into the abyss. Every thought was so painful. He slouched against the van and began to sob. This will never end, he thought, this never will end.

Well, there was one way to end it.

He straightened up, walked to the driver's side, ignoring the car that swerved to miss him. Nothing else mattered now. He started the van, pulled out, and headed north . . .