

Whilst I hope that there will not be a prosecution, we could be placed in a more difficult position, in that event. I understand from our telephone conversation that the Archbishop has received some letters containing allegations which he finds rather worrying, and I think that it is possible that Bishop Peter has been indiscreet. He told me that he had been "very foolish". If it is decided not to prosecute, could/should Bishop Peter be permitted to return to his diocese as though nothing had happened?

The point to make here is that conduct that amounts to less than the criminal offences of indecent assault, or gross indecency, might be considered by the general public to be scandalous, and also might amount to the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure offence of "conduct unbecoming the office and work of a Clerk in Holy Orders".

As you know, I am worried that the News of the World, or some similar newspaper, might interview the young man who laid the original complaint, or some of the other young men who have been associated with Bishop Peter, and then publish stories of "romps", or something, which cannot be denied, and which certainly would not be understood by most of the people of Gloucestershire. We must do our best to ensure that this is not likely to happen, by which I mean that we must ascertain - in the first place by asking Bishop Peter himself - whether there has been anything that might be reported in this way, and the points made in the letters should also be put to him. If there has been anything, then I think that resignation must be considered. Quite apart from anything else, such conduct would probably not be in accordance with the mode of life for the clergy that is laid down by the Canons, and would amount to "conduct unbecoming".

There remains the question of what you should do with regard to those who have written to the Archbishop. I remain reluctant to do anything other than acknowledge their letters at the present time. It may be necessary to interview them, or even to make further enquiries, at some time in the future, but we must remember that if they make allegations that Bishop Peter denies, we could be in a very difficult position indeed. We do not want another "Tyler" situation if we can possibly avoid it.

I hope that this is of some help.

Yours sincerely

**DR FRANK E ROBSON**