

took his final vows in 1973 and was ordained in 1975. After completing a one year post-graduate Certificate in Education he returned to teach in his old school, which was an all boys school taking day pupils. He taught in the Senior School from 1976-83, being Head of Year for 13-14 yr olds from 1978-83. which he described as having responsibility for disciplinary issues and pastoral overview. From January 1984 until December 1992 he was head of the Junior School, since when he has had no teaching responsibilities, having become Bursar in 1993. This post is understood to have involved financial management in respect of the School, Parish and Monastery. Although initially seeing this as a new challenge he found the changed relationship with both parents and staff inherent in the post to become increasingly uncongenial due to the need to pursue parents for fees and the task of balancing the sometimes conflicting financial needs of School, Parish and Monastery.

4.3 Since 1999 Fr Pearce has been Novice Master, having no contact with the school whatsoever. He has been on administrative leave since April 2004, following the most recent allegation and subsequent police investigation which is understood to have concluded in November. Whilst not effecting his role as Novice Master it has of course meant that he has been unable to celebrate Mass publicly although he is able to serve Convents in this capacity. He has kept himself busy by assisting the Guest Master with some clerical duties and engaging in further study in addition to continuing his role as Novice Master. He indicated that he has friends outside the Abbey who are aware of his situation and able to offer pastoral support

4.4 In terms of his psychosexual development Fr Pearce stated that he became aware of his own sexual feelings around the age of seventeen, which he considered to be late in terms both of others at the time and by today's standards. He had friends who were girls, but stated that he has had no sexually intimate experience with either males or females.

4.5 He drew a clear distinction between suppression and repression of sexual feelings. He indicated that he had, particularly when younger, had masturbatory fantasies which would have focused on heterosexual relationships within marriage. He stated that in his thirties he became more aware of the implications of celibacy in terms of seeing contemporaries getting married, his married sister having children,

6.5.3 The MMPI (2) test results indicate Fr. Pearce's responses reflect either a direct attempt to "fake good" or are indicative of a severe lack of awareness and insight. On the basis of other measures and my interviews with him the indications are that it is the former rather than the latter. On the Paulhus scale his scores are very low in terms of self deception but elevated in terms of impression management. It is considered that the consistency of this "fake good" presentation means that the scores on all other measures are unreliable.

## **7. Conclusion:**

7.1 Denial, which often takes the form of rationalization and minimization, is a common defence mechanism. Laws (2002) suggests that it is helpful to regard denial "to be distributed along a continuum from categorical denial to full admission. Between these two poles lies a graded continuum containing various degrees of minimization and other self-protective statements". The greater the divide between the individual's moral code and the abusive behaviour, the greater the likelihood of recourse to denial. Denial can be seen as a state subject to the influences exerted by situational and interpersonal factors in the person's environment, serving to protect from unpleasant emotions such as shame, guilt and from interpersonal or societal criticisms, e.g. blame, labeling, judgement, criminal sanctions. (Mann, 1996). These are considerations which need to be born in mind in any risk assessment, whether or not, as in this case, there is total denial of any impropriety. What a risk assessment cannot do is determine the truth or otherwise of allegations.

7.2 A major concern in this case, notwithstanding Fr. Pearce's consistent denial of any inappropriate behaviour, is the fact that there are four separate allegations of such behaviour, all of which relate to boys of a similar age. There is nothing to indicate that there has been any collaboration between the complainants and Fr. Pearce is at a loss as to explain why such complaints should have been made. It is in relation to one complaint only that he acknowledges that there was physical contact with the boy concerned and that with hindsight his behaviour was inappropriate, though not abusive.

7.3 In all of the cases he was in a position of authority in relation to the children, as a teacher and priest, or as a trusted family friend and all four cases relate to situations in which he had frequent access to children. Without making any judgement about the truthfulness or otherwise of the allegations it is clear that his access to the children concerned was facilitated by his role as teacher and family friend, and doubtless his position as a priest is likely to have enhanced the trust placed in him at the time. As such it is considered that there is just cause for concern regarding his contact with children and that this must inform any decisions regarding the circumstances in which he performs his priestly ministry. In terms of managing any risk, it is therefore considered that Fr. Pearce should have clear boundaries set in terms of the way in which he exercises his ministry.

7.4 Whilst he finds the restrictions placed on him in terms of his priestly role as "quite a loss", Fr. Pearce appreciates that it would be inappropriate for him to engage in parish ministry, and indeed has no desire to do so. He sees his future as remaining within the monastic community where there will be no contact with children and where he would be able to fulfill a non-executive role within the life of the Abbey in addition to continuing with his research. Serving as chaplain to other religious communities, such as convents, would seem to provide an entirely appropriate avenue for him to fulfill his priestly role without compromising the need to protect either the public or the integrity of the Community of which he is a member.

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