



CATHOLIC ACTION LEAGUE of Massachusetts
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Most Reverend George W. Coleman, D.D.
Bishop of Fall River
47 Underwood Street, P.O. Box 2577
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Your Excellency:

There is a growing awareness and an increasing concern among faithful Catholics over the case and the fate of Reverend John P. Harrington of the Diocese of Fall River. At a time, lamentably, when the Catholic priesthood in America is suffering from a crisis of reputation, one would think that those in positions of authority in the Church would rally to the defense of an innocent priest who has been the victim of a malicious fabrication impugning a heretofore unsullied reputation. Disturbingly, the Diocese of Fall River seems to have taken a very different attitude in this matter.

Father Harrington has a right to his good name. In justice he has a legal right, under both civil and canon law, and a moral obligation to defend himself, his character and his priesthood against a defamatory attack, even if the origin of the calumny can be traced to another member of the clergy. Sadly, it appears Father Harrington is being punished for having the temerity to appeal for public exoneration, which might be reasonably expected of any innocent person.

One hopes that Father Harrington may attain the prompt and complete vindication which he seeks and deserves from his superiors in the Church. If that vindication is not forthcoming however, he would be justified in bringing his case into a public forum. The Catholic Action League of Massachusetts and, I believe, others would be prepared to support Father Harrington in that endeavor. I urge therefore, that justice be done and be seen to be done in the case of Father John Harrington.

Sincerely,

C. J. Doyle
Executive Director