

Reverend Paul R. Shanley

On Tuesday, September 19, 1995 I met with Father Shanley at Leo House in New York City. I had requested this appointment to discuss Father Shanley's future, in light of changing circumstances at Leo House. Monsignor Edward D. O'Donnell, Vice Chancellor for Priests' Personnel of the Archdiocese of New York, had planned to be with us but was detained.

Father Shanley is currently assistant to the Director at Leo House. The Director has announced his intention to resign and there is a possibility that Father Shanley will be asked to accept the position. Leo House is a small hotel on West 23 Street in New York, between Seventh and Eighth Avenues. It was founded as a safe and quiet place for pilgrims and travelers to stay at a reasonable rate. Its clientele is varied and international, mainly Catholic lay people, with a number of priests and a few bishops. Father Shanley provided me with a summary of recent visitors, which I include in the record.

Father Shanley greeted me warmly and gave me a tour of the Hotel. It is a clean and quiet place with an old-world atmosphere. It needs an update in some areas, which is being put off until some legal problems with tenants are resolved. A group of sisters live on the top floor and provide breakfast to the guests. There are approximately 33 employees, all of whom are members of minority groups. The hotel was busy while I was there, with guests coming and going, and preparations for a Board of Directors meeting.

After our tour it became apparent that Monsignor O'Donnell was going to be delayed to the point where the three of us would not be able to meet together. Father Shanley and I discussed the situation at Leo House. At this point Father Shanley is running Leo House on a day-to-day basis. He is functioning as a layman. The current director, Mr. Frank Pilecki, who was present on Tuesday in preparation for the Board meeting, has some medical problems which led him to seek Father Shanley's help. Mr. Pilecki was accused in the past of sexual misconduct and found not guilty. In the process of dealing with this situation he was a patient at McLean Hospital, a psychiatric facility in greater Boston. Father Shanley was chaplain at the Hospital at that time.

Father Shanley realizes that it is not acceptable to Cardinal Law or Cardinal O'Connor that he be the Director of Leo House. The current situation will be manageable until December 31, when it is expected that Mr. Pilecki will resign formally. At that time the Board will have to search for a new Director. There is neither the need nor the funds for a Director and an assistant director. Father Shanley recognizes that he will have to move on at that time.

We discussed his options. Father Shanley became guarded at this point. He acknowledges that he will survive. He recognizes that he could not live in New York on the salary the Archdiocese provides. He has a plan to live in an unnamed country with a post office box in the States, which would secure anonymity for him. Given his resourcefulness and independence, I think this is probably a good plan for him.

Father Shanley had to leave me to go to the Board of Directors Meeting. Monsignor O'Donnell arrived shortly afterwards. We discussed the situation briefly over dinner and agreed that Leo House is a good place for Father Shanley at the moment, that his being Director would not be acceptable, and that he would move on in December.

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