

[REDACTED]  
New York, NY [REDACTED]

June 20th, 2016

Bro. Thomas J. Cleary, S.M  
President  
Chaminade High School  
340 Jackson Avenue  
Mineola, NY 11501

Dear Brother Cleary,

I know that you are a busy man, with a lot of responsibilities. I also realize that my letter of April 18th, dredging up 45 year old history, was dropped in your lap out of nowhere.

I completely understand this. It couldn't have been a pleasant experience to receive my letter and I appreciate that I am not the only former student who has brought to light inappropriate behavior on the part of a Chaminade employee. Just a few weeks after receiving my letter, Chaminade revealed the case involving Father James Williams. I am also aware of another example of this kind of behavior involving Mr. Lind which occurred the year after I graduated. I know of this because the individual involved confided in me after he learned of my experience from the article published in Newsday on May 16th.

However, what I do not understand is your lack of response to my subsequent letter asking you for more than just the obligatory recognition of material receipt of my letter.

The effects of childhood trauma of this kind are well documented. And so is the path survivors must follow (if they are lucky enough to find it) to recover their self worth and a modicum of serenity in their adult lives. As described in my original letter, I have known the dark side of this journey and now gratefully count myself among the fortunate to have emerged on the other side, in the light. My letter itself was part of that process of becoming whole again, as is this one.

In stark contrast to your reply, I received a letter from the Nassau County District Attorneys Office, Special Victims Bureau, reaching out to me to acknowledge my ordeal and to offer me support. I have subsequently met with them in person. I must say, it was a much more compassionate and human response than the one I got from Chaminade.

There should be no doubt in your mind that the events I recounted in my letter actually occurred. The memories of that time in my life were repressed for two decades, but never forgotten. It all happened as I related it. The result being, rather than sending me out into the world prepared to make my mark on it, I was instead crippled by my time at Chaminade.

I believe that Chaminade should have protected me. And yet, I also appreciate that it was very different 45 years ago and institutions like Chaminade might not yet have been aware of the epidemic of hidden abusers in their ranks. I truly believe that the school was not aware of what happened to me, at any time up until receiving my letter this April. I have no desire for retribution, only closure. I have found my peace.

But this in no way means that I would not still welcome the recognition that something evil and impactful happened 45 years ago. And, that through no fault of my own I have had to spend nearly three quarters of my life struggling to accept that I was not to blame for the grooming and sexual abuse perpetrated on me by a predator employed by my school. I fully believe that such an acknowledgment would be wholly appropriate.

My labors are far from done. I am making an attempt to locate Frank Lind, solely as a contribution to my own healing. There is nothing for me to gain in retaliating against a man who, I would have to imagine, is a very sad creature, if even still alive. I would like to be an advocate for and a support to survivors who have yet to see the light at the end of the tunnel. And I have personal amends to make to family, friends, associates and employers whom I have harmed over the course of my life as a direct or indirect consequence of my not being able to come to terms with what happened to me during that pivotal year.

You will, in the end, respond to this letter (or not) in the way you deem most fitting, given your responsibilities and all that you have learned. My hope is that you can respect the man who has reached out to you and somehow acknowledge the young boy who had the misfortune to actually go through this horror.

Respectfully,

Brian Richard Toale