

ARCHDIOCESE OF MILWAUKEE
OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

Jerry
7/0

March 20, 2003

Dear Mr. [REDACTED]:

I am very grateful for the copy of your March 10, 2003, letter to Jerry Topczewski which you kindly sent to me. Coming from a committed Catholic and experienced attorney like yourself makes it all the more compelling.

It also provides me the opportunity to clarify a number of matters. Contrary to The Journal Sentinel, our mediation proposal does envision "restorative justice" as part of a process of emotional, pastoral, and spiritual healing. That means, in your terms, that some "payment of money" could be an outcome of that process. Secondly, although our process -- formed with the guidance of professionals at Marquette University -- does not foresee attorneys at the table, both parties would certainly be free to consult their lawyers prior to any resolution. In particular cases, when asked, we would also consider both sides having legal counsel present, provided they agree that the mediator, not the lawyers, remain in control of the process.

As to the release of the names of priests who have abused in the past, you are correct that I have made the decision not to release them. It was a tough call, with cogent reasons on both sides of the issue. My decision was based on the following factors: one, the majority of the names are already known; two, those not known are either dead or long retired or resigned; three, some victim-survivors asked me not to release the names for fear that, in some instances, the publicity would also hurt them; four, our list would only be of diocesan priests, which would still leave it incomplete; five, some of the alleged abusers have threatened suits against us if we publicize the names any further; six, to release such a list would only drag the Church and the priesthood through the mud for another series of media-stories.

Instead, I decided to release all the names to the District Attorney, which has been done, and asked him to review each of the files of offending priests, which has also been done.

Regarding [REDACTED] and the selection of possible mediators, I personally don't know [REDACTED] but I was advised that [REDACTED] has no formal mediation training and that others with this background might be better suited for this process. A list of five potential mediators was compiled through wide consultation and that list includes names recommended by victim-survivors. Based upon that, I am confident that the selection of a mutually-acceptable individual with past mediation experience should not be an issue, but, if it is, we remain open to consideration of other qualified people.

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