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Abbot John Klassen
St. John's Abbey
Collegeville, MN 56321

Abbot John:

It is with dismay and disbelief that I received a report of your decision to delete or exclude names of monks credibly accused for sexual violations from the new list required by your recent settlement accord. Your agreement with victims to publish a complete list, but to exclude names previously acknowledged (your letter April 15, 2011) is disingenuous and frankly dishonest and destructive. Neglect to include names of other credibly alleged violators is unconscionable and duplicitous.

First, I will address only the two monks I knew listed by you in 2011 to be excluded from the new list—Abbot John Eidenschink and Brother Isaac Connolly. I interviewed some of their victims.

Second, I will address two other monks not listed—Abbot Timothy Kelly and Fr. Thomas Andert who have known allegations against them. Their victims have been credible and I interviewed them and referred them to appropriate authorities. Their histories are not unknown to you or the community.

Third, I will point out how destructive to the whole community the coverups have been and continue to be. This is a cancer that eats at the very heart of all the good the Abbey and community have done.

In regard to John Eidenschink: In 1971 two men who were members of the abbey traveled with great effort to Baltimore to consult with my wife, a psychiatrist, and me about sexual activity imposed on them by John who was Sub-Prior and their confessor at the time of their assaults.

Subsequently I learned of three other men who had been monks who received the same kind of treatment from John. I know that the monastery has made cash settlements with several of the men who chose to leave the community. I know that there are men who remain monks that John

subjected to similar treatment.

Brother Isaac Connolly abused a college student with whom he had maintained a friendship since the boy was a freshman in Prep School. When the victim was completing his studies during summer break, Isaac took him nude swimming in the college pool. He supplied alcohol and took the student to shower where he essentially raped him. These were Isaac's words: "I have waited eight years for this."

I was present at the mediation settlement of Isaac and several other victims in a Minneapolis law office. This victim was awarded 90K. During the day long meetings several other victims, not previously known to me, spoke to me about their abuse. All had been college students at the time.

My understanding is that your rationale for not listing the two above mentioned monks is because their victims were over 18 years old. What a subterfuge.

More college-aged men have been abused already at St. John's than is yet public. Monks should not be having sex with their institution's students and justifying the contact because it "may not be criminal". This is not what most parents send their sons to your care.

You know that the power differential between a priest or brother, and teacher with a student or worker defies the limit of age and consent —the person becomes vulnerable. Intimidation by a religious especially in a closed institution can be daunting.

John's and monks' consensual sex with other members of the community is a problem that continues within your cloister walls. John was one of the central figures that lead this Trojan horse into your courtyard.

Several ex-monks, good serious members of the community, contacted me after they left the abbey. They told similar stories: a monk friend told them that they needed some sexual experience to be mature and complete. They were willing and able to supply the experience. This drove some good men out the monastery.

If you are to be honest, Abbot John Eidenscink's name needs to be on your list of credibly accused abusers, as does Brother Isaac's. Anything less is

dishonest.

Now, two names that you cover up hold vital importance for the integrity of monastery—Abbot Timothy Kelly and Prior Thomas Andert.

Abbot Timothy has been credibly accused of abusing four minors while he served as assistant pastor at St. Anselm's parish in Bronx, N.Y. The primary victim contacted me because of my WEB page information. I interviewed him many times via phone and finally in person. There is no doubt in my mind he is telling the truth. I referred him to appropriate agencies and I know that you received his allegations.

I do not know Thomas Andert personally, but you have to be aware of my previous reporting. I am frankly encouraging men who were abused by Andert to come forward.

You said that two monks, Rene and D. Ward, evaluated Ben S's allegations and found "nothing" happened. That and nothing else you said has convinced me that a fair and thorough examination was made. Neither I nor members of my family who had first hand reports from Ben were consulted. I would hope to see this adjudicated in a court of law.

I fail to understand how you feel that the persistent dodging and cover up of sex and abuse at St. John' is beneficial or helpful to the progress and healing of the community.

Fr. Roman Paur and William Skudlarek have had their own burdens to conceal (The latter recorded in Paul Mark's archive at Notre Dame. Paur's background behavior at Catholic U stands.)

When the abbey called me in 1993-4 and requested help to deal with the sex abuse scandal I responded with my time, heart and soul. The 1994 National meeting of victims provided a springboard of good publicity for Collegeville.

In 1994 the Board of ISTI elected me chair of that group for a two-year tenure. I penned articles in national publications extoling the leadership St. John's was taking in the fight against child abuse. I thought you were leaders.

At a press conference I was asked why these initiatives held more hope than previous failed attempts. My response was that with ISTI “St. John’s had not invited lap dogs, but guard dogs to their effort.” [*dominicani* =dogs of the lord]

I accepted the 1993 commission from the concerned monks as a vocation and not merely a task.

The longer I was involved with the structures at St. John’s the clearer became power dynamics and forces of denial, obfuscation and obstructionism.

I confront you as clearly and respectfully as I can with my view and experience of your scandal problems and the essential corrupting dynamics that infest the structure of your institution.

These thoughts come with an abiding love of St. John’s and prayer for courage.

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