



October 26, 2002

Mr. Bill Beardmore
1205 Noble Hills Pl
Boone, IA 50036-7569

Dear Mr. Beardmore:

Bishop Harrington has forwarded to me the letter and materials you sent him, received here October 21, 2002. As Vicar General for the Diocese of Winona, I am a member of our Sexual Misconduct Team that is charged with investigating complaints of sexual misconduct by priests.

The Diocese of Winona considers any allegation of sexual misconduct by a cleric to be a very serious matter. We have made great strides in how we address this matter and are currently using the third edition of our policy on how to handle such complaints: "Instruction for Reporting and Responding to Sexual Misconduct." This Instruction states that "Each reported incident will be investigated as soon as reasonably possible following a formal complaint with care taken not to interfere with any criminal investigation. A high level of Christian care, concern, and confidentiality for the alleged victim, the family of the alleged victim, the person reporting the incident, and the alleged perpetrator should be exercised." It is in the vein of this care that I write to you.

Step #1 outlined in our Instruction directs that when an allegation is received, "Diocesan officials will carefully interview the alleged victim(s) and/or persons who bring forth an allegation. The purpose of such an interview is to get as complete a picture as possible of the nature and extent of the alleged inappropriate behavior; to identify other potential victims; and to make a strong case for an intervention with the accused if indicated."

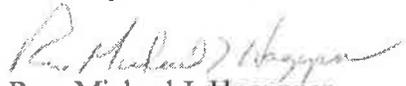
I therefore write to ask what a good time would be for us to meet with you for this interview. The interview could take place here in Winona at the Pastoral Center, at some other city in the Diocese of Winona (the 20 southern counties of Minnesota), or closer to home for you, in Iowa. I did not find in your letter or the materials you sent the name of the priest you are accusing of sexually abusing you. Of course, we will have to know who it is you are referring to. The purpose of the interview, then, will be to gather all important facts and get a clear picture of the misconduct you are alleging took place. As our Instruction states, this is a first step in responding to your accusation.

Please let me know when and where you would like to be interviewed. Please, also, know of my concern for you. Bishop Harrington and the church of the Diocese of Winona is sincerely sorry for all the harm that has been caused to people abused by clergy and church personnel.

I hope to hear from you soon. In the meantime, I will consult with our Diocesan attorney and have him check his records for any record of the interview you said you had some time ago with

the Diocese of Winona attorney.

Sincerely, In Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Rev. Michael J. Hoepfner".

Rev. Michael J. Hoepfner

Vicar General

cc. Fr. Donald J. Schmitz, St. Mary's Parish, Caledonia