

MEMORANDUM

To: Archbishop Flynn
From: Timothy Anderson
Date: February 26, 1997
Subject: Dahlheimer/Gillespie Lawsuit

Archbishop,

The lawsuit filed against Benedictine Fathers Dahlheimer and Gillespie has reached a key juncture at which we as an Archdiocese must consider whether it is in our best interest to notify the members of St. Bernard's, Saint Paul, and Saint Mary's, Stillwater about the matter. Normally common sense would dictate that we withhold the information from the public for at least two good reasons. First, the lawsuits may be settled outside of court and not become a matter of public record. And second, an early release of the information gives the media a longer period of time to sensationalize the story.

[REDACTED] The Archdiocese has been portrayed in the past as an institution which attempts to conceal information regarding sexual abuse among clergy. In the current case, our decision to come forward early to explain the facts as we know them may help to end the erroneous belief that the Archdiocese only admits wrongdoing when drug before the court of public opinion. And second, previous efforts at early disclosure in affected parishes has been received very positively.

Summary

I recommend that the Archdiocese prepare a statement explaining the accusations which have been made against Dahlheimer and Gillespie. The statement could be prepared by Father McDonough and myself and be read at all Masses at St. Bernard's and St. Mary's.

Please advise. Thank you!