



CONFIDENTIAL

August 12, 1999

Monsignor Steven P. Rohlfis  
Catholic Diocese of Peoria  
412 N. E. Madison  
Peoria, IL 61603

Aug 17 1999  
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RE: CONFIDENTIAL

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Dear Monsignor Rohlfis:

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Our names are [redacted]. We are parishioners of Epiphany Catholic Church in Normal. Our children have been enrolled at Epiphany School for the past six years. This year our son will enter Central Catholic High School as a freshman.

For reasons that we will make clear to you, this is a very difficult letter that we attempt to write. We have prayed about whether we should write this letter as well as asking for God's words as to the letter's content. Today, we asked God for confirmation, and God led us to Galatians 6:1 "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently." It is the words "restore him gently" that ring in our ears as we place our concerns before you. Our prayer for you is that you will seek God's direction regarding discretion, confidentiality, and the appropriate action to take.

Our concern is with Father Maloney of Epiphany Parish. First, we begin by telling you that our intention is not to judge Father Maloney nor to be critical of him or to shame him; but in using the Holy Spirit's gift of discernment, to intercede on his behalf, and thus, we proceed with this letter.

Back in March of this year, Father Maloney held confession for the Epiphany students in preparation for Easter. It was after our son, an eighth grade student, received this sacrament, that he came to us and in an uneasy manner, discussed the conversation he had with Father Maloney during his confession. During the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Father Maloney proceeded to inappropriately discuss with our son the sexual acts of a fellow priest. (As we are uncertain as to the handling of this letter, we have chosen not to disclose the exact content or language of their conversation.) It was during this talk with my son, that we began to ask questions regarding the details of every moment to be accounted for in the confessional. Some other areas of concern came forward. We were not aware that our children are not allowed to confess their sins. They are presented with a format of questions: "Have you disobeyed your mother and father? Do you fight with your brothers and sisters? Do you swear?" (etc.) The children are made to go face to face. Also during this particular confession, Father Maloney took a call on his cell phone. My son estimates he was probably in the confessional for twenty minutes. We do not know what Father Maloney's intention was by stating these graphic details to a 13 year old boy. We only know what we've been taught -- that the Sacrament of Reconciliation is a time of confessing one's sins in a reverent and holy manner for the purpose of seeking forgiveness. This was not to be during this particular confession.

We're sure you are wondering why it has taken us so long to inform you of this matter. There are many reasons -- First, our original intention was to go directly to Father Maloney. My husband and I have a good rapport with Father Maloney as we have served on the Epiphany School Club for the past two years. However, we decided to wait until our son had graduated. We were concerned about the consequences to our children and thought it would be best handled when school was out of session. But the longer we waited, the harder it became. We have no hatred for this man. He is after all, like each of us, a sinner. God says, "Love the sinner, hate the sin." And as you are well aware, Father Maloney has suffered a heart attack. We cannot, in good conscience, present this to him at this time. And yet, school is again fast approaching, and we have a duty and a responsibility to other children. We do not presume anything; but in this position of Priest and Pastor of our parish, why would he want to set himself up for even the smallest accusation? There has been enough damage to our Catholic heritage through the sins and wrongful conduct of other Catholic leaders.

We are fully aware that we have not walked in this man's shoes nor can we possibly imagine the responsibilities to which he is accountable. When we pray for Father Maloney, we thank God for all the unseen things that this man has done whether it's in visiting the sick, counseling the down-hearted and grief stricken, lifting up the weak with a kind word, or spending countless hours overseeing our new addition which includes a new junior high building and a spectacular gymnasium. We recognize his duties are enormous, and this is one of the reasons for our asking for your wisdom in dealing with this fragile matter.

We humbly and sincerely ask that you look into this most serious issue at hand. We are not asking for Father Maloney's removal from our parish; but we are asking for intervention of some kind. Our parish is large and the needs are great. Possibly, an assistant pastor would help to relieve some of the burdens of our growing parish and help to hold others accountable. We will continue to pray and thank God for Father Maloney and for the circumstances to which our church and school have been placed for the bible says "Be joyful always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). We especially pray that you will see our comments not as condemnation but as a plea for help.

Please know that we have anguished over our decision to communicate this with you. Even now we are uncertain and fearful about the potential consequences and repercussions to our children if our names should be given to Father Maloney. So for this reason, we ask for the utmost confidentiality. Also, there is a part of us that wants to defend the character of our son so that you will not doubt the truthfulness of this letter. But we have decided, that although you have never met him, his character needs no defending.

If you should need to contact us, we can be reached at [redacted] Thank you for your time.

In Him,  
[redacted]