



DIOCESE OF GALLUP

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COPY

June 4, 1997

Rev. James Burns
PO Box 2155
Wickenburg, AZ 85378-2155

1997

Dear Jim:

I trust you are well and surviving the now very hot weather of Wickenburg.

I'm sorry about having to write this letter. However, on May 23, 1997 Brother Duane received a phone call and a faxed letter from Father Michael Diskin, assistant chancellor of the Diocese of Phoenix. He was informing us that he had been in contact with Father Faustina and that Father John had admitted that you had been helping with the ministry in his two missions over the past year. In a later conversation with Father Diskin, Father Faustina said it happened only "four or five times." At the urging of Bishop O'Brien Father Diskin was contacting us to inquire, once again about your current status as a priest in the Diocese of Gallup.

Needless to say, I was very disappointed to learn that you have been deliberately acting contrary to the decision we had to make about your priestly faculties, following the very strong recommendation from Father Peter Lechner and the Servants of the Paracletes. You are personally and fully aware of what prompted this recommendation. And so, for you to act contrary to that decision is to put yourself, the Diocese of Phoenix and the Diocese of Gallup at a very great risk. I am very disappointed.

I believe I need to remind you once again that one of the individuals who accused you of sexual abuse and who is himself an attorney has continued to warn us that should he hear that you are ministering as a priest anywhere in the State of Arizona he would turn you in to the state officials. You have been aware of this over the years and yet you deliberately act contrary to what we agreed.

Over the last few days, I have had occasion to discuss this matter with with Bishop O'Brien. He too is very unhappy about this and insists that you

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cannot do priestly ministry in his diocese. I have also discussed this matter with our personnel board and they too concur.

I plead with you to abide by the decision we had to make when you left Blanco, New Mexico. Should you continue to disregard our decision this will have serious implications for you and probably Father Faustina.

Jim, I am sorry that I have had to write this difficult letter. You served many, many years as a good, hard-working priest of the Diocese and we are grateful for that. You know how I admired you and your ministry from the moment of my arrival in Gallup in 1986. Unfortunately, some very sad and tragic things occurred in the early years of your ministry and now you are being held accountable for these actions. I wish it was otherwise. But because of the very serious implications involved I have to insist once again that you live up to the agreement we made when you left Blanco.

I know how painful this will be for you and so I sincerely assure you of a regular remembrance in my prayer and at my Eucharist.

Fraternally in Christ,

**Most Rev. Donald E. Pelotte, SSS, Ph.D.
Bishop of Gallup**