

## **Public Apology**

April 10, 2008

As Archbishop of Dubuque, I make this public apology to all persons who as minors suffered sexual abuse by priests ministering in the Archdiocese of Dubuque in years past. In a special way, I apologize to those who participated in the recent settlement with the Archdiocese.

I have listened to the DVDs which you made and read the depositions taken by legal counsel. I strive to appreciate the pain and the hurt involved. Many of you also indicated the effect of abuse on spouses and other members of your families. I extend this apology to them as well.

You may feel the need for counseling and therapy. It is my hope that you will find this helpful and affirming. If you desire a personal visit with me, I stand ready to listen. As I have done many times in the past, once again I want to express and offer support for all survivors of sexual abuse perpetrated by Archdiocesan church personnel.

The trust you had in God and in the Catholic Church and its leaders may have been weakened or destroyed because of the abuse you suffered. I pray to God that it may be restored.

Please know that I encourage all our parishes to include victims and survivors of sexual abuse in their prayers. Especially in this month of April, which has been designated "Child Abuse Prevention Month," every parish has been asked to publish a weekly bulletin announcement about care of children and prevention of abuse. Here are some excerpts from these announcements:

### **April is Child Abuse Prevention Month: Listen to Your Children**

This summer, when your children are out of school and on different schedules, meeting new people and going to new places, make sure that you talk to them about their experiences and the people they've met. Listen carefully to your children. If possible, observe and get to know the other children and adults who are part of your children's summertime fun. Above all, communicate your safety concerns to your children. Make sure they know that they can come to you with any concerns they may have about the people with whom they interact. And if you hear of or observe behaviors that may be inappropriate, make sure to communicate your feelings to people who are in a position to intervene. Communication is key to creating and maintaining a safe environment all year round.

When any adult in the faith community has reason to suspect that a child is being or has been abused, he or she has a moral (and often a legal) responsibility to report those suspicions to civil authorities. Reporting suspected abuse takes courage. However, adults who take a stand for children and make the call are often responsible for saving a child

from terrible torment. To report any and all child abuse, contact the Iowa Department of Human Services Hotline: 1-800-362-2178. Their Web site address is:

[www.dhs.state.ia.us/consumers/safety\\_and\\_protection/abuse\\_reporting/childabuse.html](http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/consumers/safety_and_protection/abuse_reporting/childabuse.html).

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In closing, allow me to recognize the courage and strength you showed in coming forward. You help all of us address the suffering which sexual abuse brings. You help us recommit ourselves to the task of making the way safe for all God's children in today's churches, families, and the world.

Please pray for me as I do for you.

Most Rev. Jerome Hanus, O.S.B.  
Archbishop of Dubuque