



## DIocese *of* LACROSSE

OFFICE OF THE DIOCESAN ADMINISTRATOR

April 29, 2010

### USCCB NATIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Attention: Ms. Diane M. Knight, Chair  
3211 Fourth Street Northeast  
Washington, DC 20017

Dear Diane and Members of the USCCB National Review Board:

I write in response to an email dated April 26, 2010, from Father James E. Connell regarding the Diocese of La Crosse. Currently the Diocese of La Crosse is without a Bishop and I am the Diocesan Administrator.

While the Diocese intends to respond more fully to Father Connell's letter, let me immediately dispel you of several uninformed and unfounded statements Father Connell has made.

It is untrue that Father Connell's concern was not promptly addressed. Upon Father Connell's first communication, the Diocese took the following immediate steps.

1. The Diocese immediately contacted Archbishop Jerome E. ListECKi, the Bishop who most recently was the Bishop of the Diocese of La Crosse, to inform him of Father Connell's concern regarding the Safe Environment Compliance Program in the Diocese of La Crosse. Please understand that Bishop ListECKi is very familiar with the stringency of the application of the Safe Environment Program in the Diocese and of our practices and procedures. In addition, we requested that Father Connell be assured that our procedures have been reviewed during each audit and found to be satisfactory, that no pedophile priest is loose because of having been found not guilty by the La Crosse Diocese of La Crosse Sexual Abuse Review Board and that the canonical standard, which he challenges, was drafted by Archbishop Raymond L. Burke, a well respected canonist, and currently appointed the Prefect of the Apostolic Signatura in the Roman Curia.

2. The Diocese submitted Father Connell's letter to the La Crosse Diocesan Child Sexual Abuse Review Board for review, consideration and recommendation at its April 8, 2010 meeting, the first meeting following the receipt of Father Connell's email.

3. The Diocese directed the Board's Canonical Advisor to research and study Father Connell's letter and opinion and report back to the Board at its upcoming May 6, 2010 meeting.

It was our understanding that Archbishop ListECKI communicated to Father Connell that the matter was being reviewed and specifically assured him that there was no child in danger in the Diocese of La Crosse.

While we don't question Father Connell's sincerity, we do question his impatience and judgment asserting unfounded facts, drawing outrageous conclusions and disregarding the information conveyed by our most recent Bishop and now his Archbishop in Milwaukee.

While we are uncertain of the National Board's jurisdiction or authority to act on Father Connell's letter, we intend to respond in detail to Father's letter after our Board's review to dispel any doubt about the integrity of the Diocese of La Crosse Safe Environment Program and the safety of its children.

In reviewing Father Connell's latest email, we note that he references that he has already had contact with the National Board and that the National Board has responded to him. Is there a reason why the Diocese of La Crosse was not immediately informed of Father Connell's contact and its communication with him? If you have any questions regarding our intended procedures, please notify me.

Yours sincerely in Christ,



Msgr. Richard W. Gilles  
Diocesan Administrator

cc: Father James E. Connell  
Archbishop Jerome E. ListECKI  
Archbishop Raymond L. Burke