

Bishop Frank Dewane  
1000 Pinebrook Rd.  
Venice, Florida 34285

June 24, 2011

Dear Bishop Dewane:

I have tried to rationalize your decision to fire Chris Wilson as a teacher. It seems to me the guide lines for sexual abuse situations called for notifying the Bishop and also public authorities. As a parent, I would have done exactly what Chris Wilson did. He is a father of two girls and of course would be concerned as to what this Priest was asking of them in confession. As I remember, confession was for a person to confess THEIR sins and not for a Priest to ask questions that I feel are inappropriate.

The girls had every right to go to their parent and or a trusted teacher. Do you not understand the trauma that can be caused by young girls being asked questions like this? Do you really think this is going to make them stay in the Catholic Church as adults? They will never forget this violation. Really, Rev. Mayer as director of vocations should know better.

Mr. Wilson should sue you for \$150,000.00 for unjust firing and not a mere \$15,000.

Gladys Verplanke  
25806 Cockleshell Dr. C315  
Bonita Springs, Fl 34135

CC: Rev. Pietro Sambì, Nuncio to US  
New Press Ft. Myers  
Bonita Banner  
Naples Daily News



---

DIOCESE OF VENICE IN FLORIDA  
*OFFICE OF THE BISHOP*

---

Prot. No. 10,312/11

August 1, 2011

Ms. Gladys Verplanke  
25806 Cockleshell Drive  
C315  
Bonita Springs, FL 34135

Dear Ms. Verplanke:

With this letter, I wish to acknowledge receipt of your June 24, 2011 correspondence, regarding a civil lawsuit filed by a former employee of Bishop Verot High School.

This opportunity is also taken to inform you that the dismissal to which you refer involved a history of disciplinary issues. After being turned down for the position as Principal of Bishop Verot, Mr. Wilson began to show himself as a disgruntled employee and his frustration with the administration had steadily increased.

Many of your other stated concerns stem from inaccuracies or deficiencies in what much of the media has reported or what is contained in the lawsuit. Please know that immediately following word that some students felt uncomfortable with questions asked of them during Confession, both male and female students who went to Father for Confession were interviewed by the Principal. Not one of them reports feeling anything "inappropriate" happened, but only that some were "uncomfortable."

Feeling uncomfortable in Confession is not entirely unexpected; this is because any time we sin against God and must humbly ask for his forgiveness we are put in an uncomfortable situation. This situation—humbly confessing our sin—is also what liberates from evil and brings us closer to the life to which Christ calls us.

The role of the priest while hearing Confessions is not just to sit quietly and listen. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church says, the priest must, "...lead the penitent with patience toward healing and full maturity (1466)." This is a difficult task with high school students. While they are being educated by the

Ms. Gladys Verplanke  
August 1, 2011  
Page Two

Church and their Catholic school on the moral life expected of them, they are at the same time confronted with a culture that scoffs at sexual sin.


From the testimony of the students who were interviewed, the Principal learned that Father seems to have guided the penitents through the 10 Commandments, which are often used as a tool for examining one's conscience. Under the 10 Commandments, most questions regarding the moral life can be found: even sexual sins. Given the testimony of the male and female students interviewed, Father guided the penitents through a self-examination of their conscience, with the supposed expectation that they could make a full recounting of their sins.

The Florida Department of Children & Families found no evidence of abuse, the police found no evidence of anything criminal having happened, the Diocese found no evidence of wrong-doing, and the Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator has not been contacted by either the students or their parents. I assure you that the staff of our Diocese works very hard to ensure that all children, whether in our parishes or in our schools, are protected from any form of abuse or misconduct.

To be told two different stories relating to how this situation was handled is probably confusing and frustrating. Hopefully my words here have been clarifying and of comfort to you.

I take this opportunity to thank you for sharing your concerns with me regarding Bishop Verot High school and the current lawsuit.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

  
+ Frank J. Dewane  
Bishop of the Diocese of  
Venice in Florida

FJD/clc