



ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

VICAR FOR PRIESTS

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February 3, 2006

His Excellency Bishop Dale J. Melczek  
Bishop of Gary, Indiana  
9292 Broadway  
Merrillville, Indiana 46410

Dear Bishop Melczek,

Thank you for the very helpful conversation we had earlier this afternoon. I am writing this letter at your request in order to help clarify the situation regarding Father Joseph Bennett.

Because Father Bennett is involved in an ongoing investigation of allegations of sexual abuse of minors, Cardinal George has determined that it would be the best for all parties involved that Father Bennett absent himself from Holy Ghost Parish in South Holland, Illinois.

Father Bennett owns a home in your diocese. The address is [REDACTED]. His telephone number at that residence is [REDACTED]. Because of the current circumstances we believe that this would be an appropriate place for him to live until his case is resolved. I know the Archdiocese of Chicago would be extremely grateful if you could designate a priest in the area to serve as his monitor. I would ask that the monitor make contact with Father Bennett and meet with him periodically. If Father Bennett has any plans to leave the [REDACTED] area he should share that information with his monitor including where he plans to go, when he intends to leave and return, and in whose company he will be during his time away. Even more specifically, may I request that the monitor help to insure that Father Bennett comply with the following restrictions placed upon him by Cardinal George:

1. That Father Bennett absent himself from Holy Ghost Parish in South Holland and not enter any edifice on the property of Holy Ghost Parish.
2. That he not be alone with anyone under 18 years of age unless a responsible adult is present.

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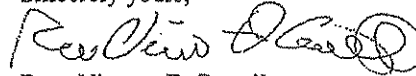
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3. That he neither preside at, nor concelebrate at, the public celebration of the Eucharist, nor provide pastoral care in any form to the faithful.
4. That he not publicly celebrate any sacrament of the Catholic Church or engage in any behavior anywhere which might seem to be sacred ministry.
5. That he abide by the monitoring protocols and the residence arrangement that the Vicars for Priests will provide for him.

Cardinal George has also dispensed Father Bennett from wearing ecclesiastical garb during this time, and we desire that refrain from doing so lest someone be confused and consider him a priest with faculties.

Bishop Melczek, please accept my personal gratitude and that of the Archdiocese of Chicago for your gracious assistance in this matter. If you or the monitor have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,



Rev. Vincent F. Costello,  
Co-Vicar for Priests

Cc: Cardinal George, Bishop Rassas, Father Ed Grace, Father Smilanic, Mr. Jimmy Lago, Mrs. Colleen Dolan, Mr. John O'Malley, Ms. Leah McChuskey, Mr. Ralph Bonaccorsi

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