



DIOCESE OF VENICE IN FLORIDA

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July 15, 1985

Most Reverend Thomas C. Kelly
Archdiocese of Louisville
P. O. Box 1073
Louisville, KY 40201

Dear Archbishop Kelly:

I am writing this message before departing for overseas. The meeting at Collegeville was rather heavy in schedule which didn't offer an opportunity to meet most of the bishops except in passing or on committees. The subject matter discussed in Executive Session regarding our brother priests has caused most of us, I am confident, to take preventive measures. For this reason I would appreciate your personal comment about my suggestion relating to Father Thomas P. Creagh whom we are expecting at the end of July at the parish of St. Andrew's in Cape Coral. We welcome him and will do our best to assist him in his priesthood.

My main concern about present and future problems discussed by the bishops is the much-needed documentation for personnel files on any treatment that was offered, accepted, and completed on behalf of an individual priest. If Thomas P. Creagh had received treatment, would it be possible to have a statement for our files? It would seem that the advice offered us at the Bishop's meeting by legal and medical professions about processing of cases involving our priests, it would benefit us to have supporting evidence regarding the emotional health of any priest who has been charged or accused of immoral actions. In view of recent articles and television programs, I have the strange feeling that the past of some priests may continue to haunt them. Thus my suggestion to the Venice presbyteral is that we have medical and psychological statements on file that any said priest has been treated accordingly and is ready for assignment. Consequently, if any person(s) should be vindictive enough and plan to cause a priest more heartaches, we would be ready to come to his defense and support him in every way. For this reason it would be helpful to have a psychological statement about Thomas Creagh. If that is not available, would it not be a protective measure for the Archdiocese of Louisville and for Venice to explain to Thomas the seriousness of the new trend in our nation towards the Church — even if

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a priest is unjustly accused — and to have a psychological report or some other professional statement showing that he has been evaluated as fulfilling all necessary treatment and ready for assignment.

As I said initially in my remarks, we are ready to accept Thomas Creagh. However, after last week's session I believe that prudence dictates that a policy should be drafted which is both fraternal and helpful to a priest. One that is caring toward a family which believes that it has been offended by the Church, and at the same time protective of the Church from public scandal and expected law suits.

Tom, I would appreciate your comments not only regarding Thomas Creagh but the overall approach suggested to us last week.

May you have an enjoyable summer and don't hesitate to come to Venice for a restful vacation, anytime. God bless you.

Sincerely in our Lord,



John J. Novins
Bishop of Venice in Florida

JJN:dn

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