



DIocese OF DAVENPORT

January 31, 2004

My Dear People of Sts. Philip and James:

Let me begin by saying that we want the same goal. I pray for the much-needed healing in our Church and work towards that end. I do hope that our conversation last week was a step in that direction and opened up the lines of communication. In the future, if you believe there is a need to express to your Bishop, I encourage you to speak to me. I intended my visit to be a visible sign to you that I am here, I am open to speak to victims and to parishes as needed.

With regard to the parishioners you were writing to support, I too have been supportive. When Donald Green came to the Diocese in 1996 with his report that he had been sexually abused by Fr. James Janssen, we responded with compassion and with action. Diocesan staff and I have had several meetings with the Greens. The Diocese provided assistance for Mr. Green and his family ever since. At the request of the Greens, the Diocese also sent Fr. Janssen for counseling. In addition, on April 1, 1996, I ordered Fr. Janssen to cease any public activity of a church nature. This order was in addition to actions taken by Bishop Gerald O'Keefe, in 1990, when he placed Fr. Janssen on indefinite leave of absence. Fr. Janssen has had no assignment from the Diocese since 1990.

I have not previously spoken publicly about the Green family out of a desire to respect their privacy. When Mr. Green filed a lawsuit for money damages, it was my understanding that it was inappropriate to publicly discuss the facts of that case. In response to their needs and requests, we provided assistance as they proceeded in their recovery process. I applaud your willingness to support one another as a faith community and encourage you to continue to do so.

You suggest that the Diocese of Davenport has not been following its policies, including the "Communication Policy & Response to Those Impacted by the Pain of Sexual Misconduct." That is not the case. We are following our policies. The sections of the policy quoted in your letter refer to situations in which an accused is removed from current ministry. However, in the spirit of our policies, in May of 2002, I went out to Sts. Philip and James and addressed your parish regarding allegations against a former pastor. I encouraged individuals to contact the Diocese of Davenport with any accusations. No one did.

You critique me for not naming the priest. As I explained to you in our meeting, one reason for not naming the priest was to be certain to give all of you an opportunity to bring to me any accusation of abuse by any priest. It was intended to encourage the report of any and all accusations.

What I want to emphasize is that I am open to communicate with individuals and groups. I have met with and are continuing to meet with victims of abuse, including several of the persons who have filed lawsuits against the Diocese. We encourage any victims of abuse and their families to

come for help. To facilitate that communication, it is best if those needing to communicate with me, whether an individual, a family or a parish, call the Diocese directly. I will deal as openly as possible with members of the community while respecting confidentiality. Our policy gives examples of when I may not be as open as people may want. These include matters under litigation and information we were told in confidence.

I also learned that there is some misunderstanding regarding the *Protecting God's Children* program and who is invited to it. Let me strongly state once again that I believe all adults should attend this training. There is prevention in awareness.

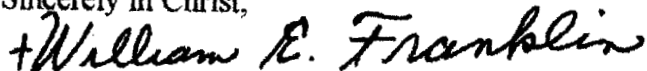
When meeting with you, I did not want to make any premature announcements about plans that were not yet complete. Irene Prior Loftus, my Chancellor, has been serving as Victim Assistance Coordinator. She recommendations to me and the Diocesan Review Board to enhance our victim assistance program and these have been authorized. All components of the plans are in place and now ready for announcement. I attach our media release to explain. Much of what you want is part of our enhanced program. We have been working with professionals to initiate support groups. Support groups will be established where need is expressed. These professionals will also facilitate a parish meeting at Sts. Philip and James if you would find it helpful.

In the very near future, we will be making a report after completing the review of the files of priests who served the Diocese for the past 50 years. I do hope this release answers your questions about how the Diocese has responded to allegations of sexual abuse. I intend to restore trust and foster healing.

I do believe my coming out to visit was beneficial to all of us. In the future, if you or anyone else believes that communication has broken down, get in touch with us through your pastor or directly. Pastoral work is meant to be achieved on a personal basis. I ask you to keep those personal lines of communication open, also. Please let me know if you would like the parish meeting I suggest.

I apologize for all of the harm resulting from sexual abuse by priests. In Grand Mound, I see your pain. I also see how you are coming together as a strong faith-filled community to support one another in this grief and pain. As Bishop of the Diocese of Davenport, together with our priests, I truly pray for the victims and families who have been so sadly hurt by one of our priests. Ultimately, it is by working together, in union with God's grace, that we will be able to move forward in the years to come.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William E. Franklin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

(Most Rev.) William E. Franklin  
Bishop of Davenport