

HSK&G
ATTORNEYS AT LAW
Huberstrub, Sullivan, Keating, & George, LLP

William J. Huberstrub
Shawn P. Sullivan

Douglas J.
Teressa E.

August 9, 2010

Mr. Bas Wiersma
Executive Director
Homeless Child
Sint Jozefstraat 2
6245 LN Eljssen
NETHERLANDS

RE: Father Joseph Maurizio

Dear Mr. Wiersma:

This matter has been referred to me as Solicitor for the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown. Please be assured that the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown takes seriously credible allegations involving one of its diocesan priests. As with every other diocese in the United States of America, the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown subscribes to the Charter and Essential Norms for the Protection of Children adopted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2002. Under the Charter, this diocese has established a review board of lay and religious members to hear the tales of victims who have suffered abuse, sexual or otherwise, at the hands of our diocesan priests. The model used by the diocese has worked very well and has been cited as an example for other dioceses in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania by the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference.

The diocesan review board would welcome the opportunity to meet with any of the children who claim that Father Maurizio has sexually abused them. This offers the opportunity for the review board to question the children in order to ensure the credibility of the claims being made. Unfortunately, it does not appear that these boys are able to appear before our diocesan review board. Therefore, and appropriately, this matter is in the hands of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, which, to my knowledge, is the sole United States agency with jurisdiction to investigate this matter. The diocese has also learned that Honduran officials have been notified. Given the gravamen of the allegations being made, it seems appropriate that authorities in Honduras would want to investigate as well. That is a not a process in which the Diocese would have any authority to intervene.

As Monsignor Servinsky informed you in his letter of April 27, 2010, the office of the District Attorney for Somerset County, the county in which Father Maurizio's parish duties lie, has been notified of the allegations. That office, because it does not have jurisdiction over the matter, will not become involved. Further, there have been no allegations or complaints made concerning Father Maurizio either

Altoona Office

3615 Burgoon Road, Altoona, PA 16602
Phone: 814.944.9486 or 814.944.0300
Fax: 814.944.4299 or 814.944.3200

Martinsburg Office

115 S. Market Street, Martinsburg, PA 16662
Phone: 814.793.7904
Fax: 814.793.2673

within this diocese or from any other of the foreign destinations in which Father Maurizio has ministered.

The diocese cannot act on unverified allegations. Further, the diocese has no evidence that Father Maurizio presents a danger to the children of his parish. He has been a diocesan priest since 1987 and, as stated before, there has been no allegation of any nature made against Fr. Maurizio by any parishioner or member of the general public within the diocese, or, except for the allegations you present, by anyone outside of the diocese. As you admitted in your letter dated January 30, 2010 to Monsignor Servinsky, you have no authority over the assignment of Father Maurizio. This rests solely with the diocesan bishop. It is a responsibility that our Bishop Joseph takes very seriously, considering what is most beneficial for his priest and his diocesan flock.

There is one other matter which I feel compelled to address on behalf of the diocese. This subject was also addressed in your letter dated January 30, 2010, to Monsignor Servinsky. It deals with the loss of donations from the ministry of Father Maurizio and his benefactors. That ministry is not a diocesan ministry. It was a private ministry of Father Maurizio for which he developed private benefactors. It is not the place of the bishop or any other diocesan official to direct the activities of a private enterprise or private charity. Both Father Maurizio and those individuals who support his ministry are free to examine their own consciences to determine what would be appropriate. Bishop Joseph will not interfere with that.

It would be helpful, and most appropriate, if all future correspondence which you wish to have addressed by the diocese concerning this matter be directed to me.

Sincerely yours,

Haberstroh, Sullivan, Keating & George, LLP



By: Shawn P. Sullivan, Esquire

SPS/sir
Cc: Rev. Msgr. Michael E. Servinsky