



Diocese of Davenport

WALKING TOGETHER IN FAITH

News

For Immediate Release

DATE: February 14, 2008
TO: Media
FROM: Deacon David Montgomery
Diocese of Davenport
montgomery@davenportdiocese.org
PHONE: 563-324-1911
FAX: 563-324-5842

RE: Contributions from parishes toward bankruptcy settlement. Report regarding Fr. Gerald Stouvenel

Note: The Diocese of Davenport cannot comment beyond the information given below due to the bankruptcy proceedings.

During several years of litigation involving claims of sexual abuse, and during the bankruptcy proceedings, the Diocese of Davenport has taken the position that the parishes are totally separate legal entities. In fact, the parishes are separate legal corporations and they own title to their real estate.

During settlement negotiations in the bankruptcy, the Diocese was informed that several Catholic entities would be sued, if the parishes and other entities weren't included in the bankruptcy settlement. To avoid these suits, the Diocese agreed to pay an additional \$5.5 million to protect all of them from future lawsuits. In effect, the Diocese bought an "insurance policy" for every parish and all other Catholic entities in the Diocese. If the Diocese had not made this agreement, they could have been sued. Their status as independent entities would also have been contested in the bankruptcy proceedings. Legal fees alone would have been ruinous and it is highly likely that the lawsuits would be lost, threatening the very survival of these parishes and other entities.

The Diocese has asked some of the parishes where serious abuse occurred to help pay for the cost of the settlement. These parishes were specific targets for lawsuits because they have sizable assets which could be taken. The contributions that have been requested by the Diocese are far less than the consequences of being sued.

From Most Rev. Martin Amos, Bishop of Davenport:

The Diocesan Review Board has recommended that I request the Vatican to laicize Father Gerald Stouvenel. I have accepted this recommendation and the request is being sent to the Vatican for review and decision. During this process, Fr. Stouvenel will continue his leave from ministry while working at the St. Vincent Center in Davenport where he is being supervised.

Four persons have made claims in bankruptcy against the Diocese that Fr. Stouvenel sexually abused them, as minors, over 30 years ago. This came forward through the bankruptcy claimant process.

According to the Diocese of Davenport *Policies Relating to Sexuality and Personal Behavior*, I placed Fr. Stouvenel on administrative leave effective July 27, 2007, while a full investigation was being done regarding the credibility of the allegations. The Diocese forwarded these reports to the Scott County Attorney, as required by the *Memorandum of Understanding*. Please continue to pray for all people who have been abused and for the people affected by abuse.

Fr. Stouvenel was ordained August 12, 1972. His assignments include: associate pastor of Sacred Heart Cathedral, Davenport; faculty member of Assumption High School, Davenport; associate pastor of St. Mary, West Point; and pastor of St. Joseph, Montrose; St. James, St. Paul; St. Mary, West Point; Church of the Visitation, Camanche; St. Mary, West Burlington; St. Mary, Dodgeville; St. Patrick, Burlington; Ss. Mary & Patrick, West Burlington; and Sacred Heart, Ss. Mary & Joseph, Fort Madison. He had served as dean of the Keokuk Deanery since July 2005.