



Province of St. Barbara

FRANCISCAN FRIARS

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November 21, 1993

Dear Robert

Peace. I hope you are well; please be assured always of my love and support.

As you know, the Santa Barbara situation is fast coming to a close. With this letter I would like to bring you up to date on happenings.

The Board of Inquiry has issued two reports: an Internal Administrative Report to me which contains all the pertinent information and details of the allegations; a public report which will be presented to the public (whoever comes) on Monday evening, November 29th, at the Goleta Valley Community Center in Santa Barbara. The public report is about eighty pages long, and it does contain a section listing the number of friars reported (12), the number of victims (35), and a description of the behavior involved. No names are used.

There is also a series of five composite portraits (sort of like case studies) of the types of abuse that occurred. This is followed by a description of the impact of the actions on the victims. There is a brief description of the actions the fraternity and the provincial minister have taken with respect to the friars reported. This is generic and I do not think anyone will be able to identify the individual friars from what has been said. With respect to yourself, the text reads, "Two friars have been completely removed from ministry and are currently enrolled in sexual offender treatment programs known to be rigorous. They are forbidden contact with minors, required to participate in therapy, and have a local monitor."

The report concludes with some recommendations to the fraternity, the laity, and the administration. Overall, it is a good document, but parts of the text are very difficult to read, very explicit and jarring. Many of us have worked long and hard to get it in this shape and to protect as much as possible the good name of the fraternity and the identity and dignity of the friars involved.

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Given the circumstances, we have done the best we could.

As you know, your name has been publicly identified in the papers, and I have no idea how much further exposure will be given. I think we have taken all the best steps to move the situation forward, and I am deeply grateful for your cooperation. Certainly, under no circumstances should you return to Santa Barbara County at this time. Probably, if the people ask there about your disposition explicitly, I will give them as much information as is warranted. I am grateful for your release in this area. I want so much to treat you with the respect and dignity you deserve. We know that this has happened, Robert; but I also know, that there is so much more to you than this--and you are good.

I know that the press will be present when the report is released; this event will probably be covered on local tv, the newspaper, possibly the LA Times, and the National Catholic Reporter. We have little control over what will be reported. It is my hope that they will indicate how well the friars have responded: the fraternity in helping the victims and friars, the composition and establishment of the Board, the willingness to be honest about this problem in our midst, the adoption of a continuing mechanism for addressing this problem, the cooperation of the friars who have been reported, etc. But, I do not know that these positive notes will be reported in the press. I do think that all of us, including yourself, can say that we did the best we could and acted in the best Christian and Franciscan way.

Thanks, Robert. Let us remember each other in prayers.

Fraternally,


Provincial Minister

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