



## DIocese OF SUPERIOR OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

November 30, 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Diocese of Superior:

As Bishop, I write to you in response to the recent news about former diocesan priest Thomas Ericksen. The arrest and criminal child sexual abuse charges in Sawyer County causes us to grieve with the victims, and pray for justice and healing.

Mr. Ericksen was ordained in our Diocese in 1973. Our Diocese removed him from active priestly ministry in 1983 as a result of credible allegations of sexual abuse of minor boys. The Diocese pursued the lengthy process of laicization, and Mr. Ericksen was permanently removed from the priesthood by the Vatican in 1988. Mr. Ericksen was sued in 1987-1989 by four of his victims. The Diocesan attorney and insurance company were involved, and Mr. Ericksen had his own separate attorney. The Judge approved financial settlements with the victims, and additional terms that prohibited any discussion of the details.

Thank you to Fr. Jerome D'Souza, the Parochial Administrator of our Winter – Radisson parish cluster, for his genuine apology this past weekend, on behalf of the Church, to the innocent victims, and to the parishioners who will now have to re-live Mr. Ericksen's horrific sins and abuses. As I have said before, I am committed to a "no cover-up" policy regarding Church abuse complaints. Please, if you or someone you know, has been sexually abused by anyone associated with the Catholic Church, I urge you to report the abuse to your local law enforcement. Also, please contact Kathy Drinkwine, our Safe Environment Coordinator, at confidential phone (715) 718-1110, or email [kdrinkwine@catholicdos.org](mailto:kdrinkwine@catholicdos.org). I promise that any report to the Diocese will be received respectfully, investigated, and dealt with promptly and appropriately.

In order to consider future transparency, I have begun the process of reviewing priest personnel files. I promise that as a Diocese we will do everything possible to prevent future abuse.

Please join me in prayer for the victims of Thomas Ericksen, their families and friends. I also ask for your continued prayers for me as I strive to lead our Diocese during these difficult times. And please continue to pray for our good and faithful priests and deacons, and for those who are discerning their vocations to ordained ministry, that they may have the strength and courage to answer God's call. St. Augustine, patron of our Diocese, pray for us!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

  
Most Reverend James P. Powers  
Bishop of Superior