



September 14, 2018

Dear Bishop Ricken,

I write to you today with a heavy heart and great sorrow. In light of the recent public revelations of past abuse in the church and the call for more accountability on the part of bishops, I feel that my own actions are no less subject to scrutiny than those of other bishops. I failed to report to local authorities an incident of abuse of a minor by a priest in 1979 and, as a result, this priest was able to abuse again several years later. Because of this, I voluntarily request a withdrawal from all public ministry. I intend to spend my time in prayer for all victims and survivors of sexual abuse and I will do corporal works of mercy in reparation for what I failed to do.

Looking back, I should have handled this situation differently than I did at the time. At the time, I was asked by the family of the victim to arrange an apology from the offending priest, which I did. I felt at the time I had done what was asked of me by helping the parties to reconcile. The measures taken were ultimately insufficient to protect others from abuse from this same priest. I very much regret and apologize for this, especially to those victimized following my mistake in this regard.

I take full responsibility for my failures in this matter and ask for forgiveness and prayers for healing for all who were harmed. I apologize to all those who put their trust in me.

Peace in the Risen Lord,

The Most Reverend Robert F. Morneau  
Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus of Green Bay