

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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The Most Reverend Andrew H. Cozzens

March 7, 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

One of the things I have heard from you and from the priests of the diocese in my first few months as bishop of Crookston is about the need to restore trust in diocesan leadership. This has come up quite clearly in the first three Synod Prayer and Listening Events, and I expect it to come up in the others. I know from my previous experience in ministry how important it is to act on principles which can help to restore this trust — principles like listening to victim/survivors of abuse and putting their needs first, involving qualified laity to help make decisions, and being transparent about decisions and the reasons for them.

I have prayed and consulted about how to do these things, and today, in the spirit of that transparency, I write to offer clarity about questions which remained regarding the statuses of Monsignor Roger Grundhaus and Bishop Michael J. Hoeppner.

Last summer, Bishop Richard E. Pates, while serving as Apostolic Administrator for the Diocese of Crookston, shared that Archbishop Bernard A. Hebda of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, determined that the status of Monsignor Roger Grundhaus would remain as it had been since May of 2017, that he was not permitted to engage in public ministry.

Archbishop Hebda had been delegated to determine the case by the Holy See. At the time, the Diocese of Crookston's Ministerial Review Board (MRB) was under the direction of Judge Timothy O'Malley, Director of Ministerial Standards and Safe Environment for the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. Archbishop Hebda consulted the MRB and concurred with the recommendation that Monsignor Grundhaus should not be considered suitable to return to public ministry.

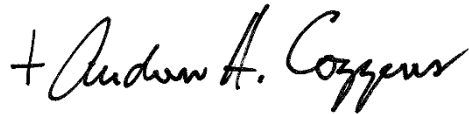
The MRB found insufficient evidence to form a basis that Monsignor Grundhaus engaged in behavior that constituted sexual abuse under canon law or a crime under civil law. However, they concluded that Monsignor Grundhaus engaged in inappropriate activity that showed poor judgment and some level of impropriety with a young man. Judge O'Malley oversaw the investigative process on behalf of Archbishop Hebda and assisted our MRB, reviewed the case extensively and concluded that it is clear Monsignor Grundhaus acted highly inappropriately and in a way that caused lasting harm to individuals and scandal in the diocese. Judge O'Malley agreed that Monsignor Grundhaus' previous misconduct and the resulting consequences are serious enough to prohibit him from engaging in public ministry.

Based on my own review of the entire affair, I agree with this assessment. Monsignor Grundhaus does not have faculties for public ministry in the Diocese of Crookston. This declaration remains in effect for one year and will be reviewed at that time to determine if it should continue.

The circumstances surrounding the situation involving Monsignor Grundhaus do not fit our definition of a credible claim of sexual abuse against a minor so his name will not appear on the list of disclosures found on our diocesan website (www.crookston.org/victims).

Additionally, I want to clarify two aspects about Bishop Hoepfner. When he was departing the Diocese of Crookston last April, Bishop Hoepfner publicly stated that he hoped to return to the diocese at the invitation of the new bishop. I have spoken with him, and he has agreed to not return to do any ministry in the Diocese of Crookston. Also, the diocese has been asked about the financial arrangement for Bishop Hoepfner in his retirement. Last November, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops published renewed "Guidelines for the Provision of Sustenance for Bishops Emeriti." For the first time, it contains a section with special guidelines for "bishops who resigned or were removed from their ecclesiastical office due to grave acts of commission or omission as stipulated in universal law." This section has reduced benefits recognizing the fact that the bishop emeritus will not be doing any public ministry. The Diocese of Crookston Finance Council has approved using these guidelines for Bishop Hoepfner's retirement benefits.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Andrew H. Cozzens". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. To the left of the signature is a small, stylized cross symbol.

The Most Rev. Andrew H. Cozzens, S.T.D., D.D.
Bishop of Crookston