



St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood

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His Grace Jovan, Bishop of Western America
Serbian Orthodox Diocese of Western America
2541 Crestline Terrace
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December 13/26, 2001
St. Herman of Alaska
Five Martyrs of Sebaste
St. Lucy of Syracuse

Your Grace,

Bless, Master!

In response to the letter that you received regarding questions about the St. Herman of Alaska Monastery, I wish to provide the following information:

This morning at 10:35 I called the California Department of Justice and spoke to investigator Jeff Lierly. He knew of the case. He stated that first, the girl's body was not found on monastery property. It was found miles away on State Highway 36. The officer said that the fathers at St. Herman of Alaska Monastery most certainly did cooperate with the investigation and that he found that the replies that were given were satisfactory. He said that whoever it was that provided such information did not know what they were talking about. I gave him my name and my legal name as well as well as our phone

number and told him that I would be most cooperative with any aspect of such an investigation. [Evidently this investigation took place in 1996 or 1997]. He may be reached at (530) 225-2830.

The young man referred to in the second question (2) is the son of my good friends. They are parishioners in good standing of St. Andrew Orthodox Church in Redding, California. When we began making inquiries into actions of the former Abbot, Father Herman, I spoke in 1999 to this young man's stepfather. His stepfather told me that he had asked the young man if Father Herman had inappropriately touched him. The young man said, "No". Then in late November or early December 2000 his mother informed him about why Father Herman had stepped down and she asked her son on the telephone if Father Herman had inappropriately touched. He then said, "Yes," but did not articulate many details. About ten days after this, that is, in December 2000, I met with his mother and stepfather and they told me what they knew. This young man did not have any contact with Father Herman after November or December 1997 except perhaps by letter. It is unfair to state that his parents did not intervene to protect him from Father Herman, who was the young man's godfather or baptismal sponsor, because as soon as they did learn of this tragedy they did something about it.

On my part I was ordained to the priesthood in January (new style) 1995. I did not begin to hear confessions until January 1996 when I went to Alaska. I stayed there until June 1998. This young man turned eighteen years of age in March 1996. He was no

longer a minor. He stayed with us on Spruce Island from late June 1996 to August 1996. However, he did not ever confess to me that he had ever been inappropriately touched by Father Herman. He usually wrote confessions to Father Herman by mail, but would sometimes confess before me. Again, he stayed with us on Spruce Island from about August 1997 to March 1998.

I did not learn that anything foul had taken place until his parents told me this in December 2000. I tried to contact him then by telephone both from St. Herman of Alaska Monastery and when I was in Kodiak between December 26, 2000 and January 4, 2001. He either was unable to reach me or did not want to do so. I attempted to do the same thing in September 2001 but he never called me back and failed to find me when I was in Kodiak. He visited the monastery with his parents during October 2001. I loaned him our monastery car for several days while his was being repaired. I expected him to return the car and have an opportunity to speak with him privately, but he left town before I was able to arrange this. He is presently residing in Texas.

The non-Orthodox clergyman is Bishop Waggener (Anglican Province of Christ the King) and the lay person or people are currently parishioners of St. Luke's Anglican Church in Redding, California, one of whom is a close friend of the mother of the young man. This is the exact route of the miscommunicated information in question.

My close friend David Coleman, a parishioner in good standing of St. Andrew Serbian Orthodox Church in Redding spoke with this young man in October of this year

(2001). David Coleman stated that it is very unclear what kind, if any, molestation took place other than inappropriate physical contact and in what years it took place. He said that the young man was not able to be specific.

The last point is that the wife of the author of the letter works for the social services and, most likely, she is the source of this information to the social services and not vice-versa. I believe that this is fair for me to state this.

I ask your hierarchical prayers and intercessions.

In Christ,

Sinful abbot Gerasim

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