

# Dallas Morning News

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## Documents show bishops transferred known abuser Church officials say policies have since changed

By Brooks Egerton

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A National Conference of Catholic Bishops leader and several other top clerics knowingly allowed a child-molesting priest to work for at least 20 years in Massachusetts, New Mexico, West Texas and Colorado, their correspondence shows.

Repeated transfers of the now-imprisoned Rev. David Holley provide a case study in how bishops have cooperated to protect pedophiles in the priesthood, say experts who have tracked hundreds of clergy-abuse cases around the country.



The Rev. David Holley ... the priest received 275 years in prison for molesting boys in New Mexico.

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Catholic Church officials dispute that assertion, saying they lacked knowledge about pedophiles' incurability until the early 1990s and now are moving to flush

out "wolves in sheep's clothing."

Indications that bishops understood the danger much earlier appear in their own writings, which were in personnel files that some of Father Holley's former parishioners obtained in litigation a few years ago. *The Dallas Morning News* recently reviewed the documents, whose contents were sealed under out-of-court settlements and have never been made public.

"This man has been ... [accused of] molesting teenage boys on at least two occasions — most recently in a hospital from which he has been barred — and Please see MISSIVES on Page 34A.

# Missives trace path of priest

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with carrying around and showing to these boys pornographic magazines and books," wrote Worcester, Mass., Bishop Bernard J. Flanagan in a 1968 therapy referral.

Those allegations and similar ones forced Father Holley out of his home diocese of Worcester and led to a series of transfers in the Southwest, the correspondence shows.

In 1982, Bishop Joseph A. Fiorenza wrote that he knew of Father Holley's "past difficulties" and stated: "With our shortage of priests, I am willing to risk incardinating him" — which means formally making him a priest of the Diocese of San Angelo, Texas.

At the time, Bishop Fiorenza headed that diocese. Today, he governs the Diocese of Galveston-Houston and, as vice president of the national bishops group, is expected to become president next year.

Bishop Fiorenza, 66, declined interview requests, saying through spokesman Ron Regan that he didn't want to revisit old traumas. "The church needs to move beyond this," Mr. Regan said Thursday.

Father Holley isn't the only child molester whom Bishop Fiorenza has allowed to continue working. After going to Houston in 1985, the bishop reassigned a priest caught in the act of abusing a girl and offered her no help, according to published reports that his spokesman doesn't dispute. The woman who discovered the abuse said the diocese pressured her not to tell police.

Mr. Regan said the Houston diocese, like the Catholic Diocese of Dallas and many others, now has a policy of investigating all abuse allegations and putting anyone accused on leave.

Father Holley, 70, didn't respond to interview requests. He was sentenced to prison in 1993 for molesting young boys in Alamogordo, N.M., two decades earlier. He is serving a maximum sentence of 275 years at the Western New Mexico Correctional Facility in Grants, N.M.

During Father Holley's 30-year career as a priest, bishops sent him for inpatient psychiatric treatment at least twice, then institutionalized him again when abuse allegations resurfaced in the early 1990s after he'd retired.

One of the hospitalizations was initiated by Bishop Fiorenza's now-deceased predecessor in San Angelo, Bishop Stephen A. Leven, who wrote in 1977 that Father Holley was "a calculated risk."

Other revelations in the bishops' correspondence:

■ Bishop Flanagan, now retired, wrote in 1970 that he would help Father Holley find "a benevolent bishop who could use his services" after evidence of molestation emerged in three Massachusetts parishes. The first record of abuse in his personnel file was made in 1968, though Father Holley has testified that it was reported to Bishop Flanagan during his first parish assignment, from 1962 to 1964.

Bishop Flanagan was unavailable for comment because of poor health, said Worcester Diocese spokesman Ray Delisle. Other top church officials in Worcester also were unavailable, he said.

■ Worcester Auxiliary Bishop Timothy J. Harrington, who later became head bishop and recently died, wrote a few months earlier in 1970: "Bishop Flanagan and I have had such serious doubts about Father continuing in the priesthood that, at one time, it was suggested that he seek a dispensation and return to the lay state. . . ."

"People have been so greatly disturbed by his behavior that we would wonder whether he can avoid his reputation going before him in any area of this compact diocese. We also question whether we can chance the possibility of his having another relapse."

■ Wilmington, Del., Bishop Thomas J. Mardaga refused to take on Father Holley but expressed openness to other priests "who have experienced difficulties in their own communities. This has been our policy . . ." Bishop Mardaga died more than a decade ago.

■ Father Holley ended up at an Albuquerque retreat house run by the Servants of the Paraclete, a Catholic order that aids priests plagued by everything from sexual misconduct to addictions. All those under Paraclete care "go out to neighboring parishes on weekends," Father Holley wrote to superiors in Worcester in 1971.

In recent years, the Paracletes and higher church officials have settled several dozen lawsuits over abuse committed by these priests. The policy allowing sex offenders to minister

Please see BISHOP on Page 35A.

# Bishop wrote in '77 he thought priest was 'a calculated risk'

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in parishes was changed.

While under Paraclete care, Father Holley served as an assistant pastor at an Alamogordo church until the mid-1970s. His personnel file contains no record of allegations being made against him then, but his immediate supervisor, the Rev. Wilfrid Diamond, later testified that several victims' families told him of abuse at the time. Father Diamond — who said he himself was once put under Paraclete care for having sex with a woman — is now dead.

In El Paso, where Father Holley went next, Bishop Sidney M. Metzger removed him from his first parish job because of more molestation allegations. He put him at another church in the city that was described by the first pastor, the Rev. A. Dixon Hartford, as needing help. "Bishop, I know what I'm proposing is very risky..." wrote Monsignor Hartford, now pastor at another church. He could not be reached for comment Friday; Bishop Metzger has since died.

After being forced out of El Paso, Father Holley went to the Diocese of San Angelo in 1977. Court records say he worked at churches in McCamey and Garden City. Repeated recurrences of "his past problems" led to Father Holley's expulsion by Bishop Fiorenza in 1984, church correspondence shows.

Father Holley ended up working later in the 1980s for short periods at an Amarillo church and as a chaplain at hospitals in Albuquerque and Denver, where church records indicate he last worked in 1988.

The records do not specify why Father Holley left those posts, although Amarillo Bishop Leroy T. Mathiesen once told *The Boston Globe* that Father Holley had been accused of making sexual advances toward another priest's nephew in 1985. The bishop said he ordered Father Holley into counseling.

Bishop Mathiesen could not be reached for comment Friday. An Amarillo diocese spokesman said he could find no record that Father Holley had worked there.

The Archdiocese of Santa Fe, of which Albuquerque is a part, likewise said it could find no records on Father Holley and wouldn't comment.

Denver archdiocesan officials said they granted Father Holley the right to work at a Catholic hospital after the Worcester diocese assured them that he was a priest in good standing. Mr. Delisle, the Worcester spokesman, said he didn't have access to the priest's personnel file and couldn't comment.

In the early 1990s, Father Holley and some who supervised him were sued in New Mexico and Massachu-

setts. More than a dozen Alamogordo victims later received undisclosed amounts from the Diocese of Worcester, as well as the Diocese of El Paso, of which Alamogordo once was a part; the Servants of the Paraclete; and a clinic to which the order sent Father Holley.

Separately, four Massachusetts men received settlements from the Diocese of Worcester, according to published accounts. One man has said he got \$12,500; the other amounts weren't disclosed.

The Alamogordo suit led to criminal charges of sexual assault and sodomy, to which Father Holley pleaded guilty. Before being sentenced, he told the judge that he empathized with the young men who had testified against him.

"When they shared their pain, their embarrassment, their anguish, their suffering, I was able to identify with them," The Associated Press quoted the priest as saying.

One of the victims, Robert Curtis, said Thursday he never felt that Father Holley had taken responsibility for his actions. But the greater crime, he said, was committed by the bishops who "shuffled him around to unsuspecting little towns."

"Those people deserve to be in jail, too, as far as I'm concerned," said Mr. Curtis, who was an 11-year-old paperboy when Father Holley first approached him in the early 1970s. "They were consenting to what he did. They put every one of those kids in harm's way, including me."

To this day, he said, none of those clergymen has apologized personally to him.

The Rev. Thomas Doyle, a church-law expert who formerly worked in the Vatican Embassy in Washington, D.C., said Father Holley worked in an unusually large number of dioceses. But the broad outlines of his story, Father Doyle said, are not unusual.

"In numerous dioceses in this country, priests reported for sexual misconduct with children were transferred not only once but often several times," he wrote in a 1996 report for lawyer Sylvia Demarest. She is one of the plaintiffs' attorneys who recently won a \$119.6 million judgment against the Diocese of Dallas and suspended priest Rudolph "Rudy" Kos.

In a confidential 1985 report to all U.S. bishops, Father Doyle warned of the emerging pedophilia scandal and offered advice on combating it. After the document's key recommendations went ignored, he began working as an expert witness for victims suing the church — a role he played in the Dallas trial.

In a recent interview, Father

Doyle said he did not believe bishops transferred molester priests out of ignorance of pedophilia's seriousness.

Such an argument "is absolute lunacy," said Father Doyle, now a chaplain at Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma City. "Everyone knows it's a felony" to sexually abuse a child. Yet, church officials, he said, long failed to report cases to police.

No record could be found that Father Holley's supervisors ever reported him to secular authorities. Texas and New Mexico required such notification.

In 1992, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops first spoke with one voice about abusive priests; some bishops also met with a group of victims. That same year, Cincinnati Archbishop Daniel E. Pilarczyk, then president of the bishops group, issued this statement:

"In the matter of priests and sexual abuse, undoubtedly mistakes have been made in the past. Until recently, few in society and the church understood the problem well. People tended to treat sexual abuse as they did alcoholism — as a moral fault for which repentance and a change of scene would result in a change of behavior....

"Where lack of understanding and mistakes have added to the pain and hurt of victims and their families, they deserve an apology and we do apologize."

Archbishop Pilarczyk called for "far more aggressive steps... to protect the innocent, treat the perpetrator and safeguard our children."

He said new policies were already in place, "notwithstanding the fact that such sexual misconduct has involved relatively few priests measured against 53,000 priests in our country."

Father Doyle said nearly 1,000 pedophile priests have been identified over the last 15 years, most through criminal or civil charges. Knowledge of the problem was already widespread when he worked in the embassy a decade ago and sent the Vatican information about cases as they came to light, he said.

"In numerous dioceses across the United States from the 1970s through the early '90s," his report to Ms. Demarest states, "complaints of child abuse were handled in such a unified fashion as to indicate a meeting of the minds as to how best to prevent public knowledge of the abuse, avoid criminal prosecution and suppress potential claims....

"How was such a commonly practiced plan of action arrived at? The bishops' activities in and through the National Conference of Catholic Bishops/United States Catholic Conference would provide an informal forum."

That line of thinking initially led Ms. Demarest to name the bishops group as a defendant in the Kos case. The group resisted in pretrial motions, and she backed off — fearing, she said, that she couldn't prove it had a duty to her clients, at least as that term has been interpreted by the Texas Supreme Court.

Still, she noted Friday, "the Dallas jury found that there was a conspiracy" to cover up abuse by Mr. Kos. "The question arises: Is the conspiracy limited to the Dallas diocese and the parties from outside the diocese who cooperated with them?"

Ms. Demarest said she still struggles to fathom why the church she was raised in has harbored child molesters.

"They needed the bodies" because of the priest shortage, she said. "They were very confident they would be able to prevent the public from finding out."

Former priest A.W. Richard Sipe, who worked at one of the hospitals where Father Holley was institutionalized and has counseled hundreds of pedophile priests, advanced another explanation in a report for Ms. Demarest: that bishops simply didn't consider molestation a major sin, even though they felt it needed to be concealed "to protect the reputation and finances of the Catholic Church."

"After I was ordained in 1959, I learned that some priests had sex with adults and even minors, and to some degree this was taken for granted by church authorities," he wrote.

"The secret world of sexual activity, including sexual activity with minors, was known by the Catholic hierarchy, and though considered unfortunate and morally wrong, was accepted as an inevitable and easily forgivable failure of some priests."

Sister Mary Ann Walsh, a spokeswoman for the bishops' conference, rejected that assessment, although stressing that she didn't know enough about the Holley case to address its specifics.

"This criminal activity is absolutely appalling and always has been," she said. Asked why clerics long failed to report the crimes, she suggested that both they and the priests' victims didn't want to call public attention to "something that was rightly considered sordid."

The bishops' conference now calls for all dioceses to comply with reporting laws and develop abuse-prevention strategies. Since 1992, it has also continued to elaborate on guidelines for dealing with victims, the accused and the community.

Both of the molestation cases that Bishop Fiorenza is known to have dealt with in Houston surfaced in

1986. And both involved priests caught in the act of molesting children, the *Houston Chronicle* reported in 1992.

The bishop wouldn't talk to the Houston newspaper, which said its calls to him were returned by Monsignor Daniel Scheel, then the diocese's chancellor.

The monsignor wouldn't discuss details of the cases then and maintained that "things were a lot different" when the crimes occurred. "We didn't know about the tendency of these people to repeat their acts."

One case occurred in Navasota, where social worker Ramona Ybarra reported finding the Rev. Fernando Noe Guzman on the floor, pants down, with a 13-year-old girl. Ms. Ybarra told the *Chronicle* that she later met with Monsignor Scheel, who urged her not to cooperate with police and who transferred Father Guzman to a Galena Park parish.

In a deposition, Monsignor Scheel said he accepted Father Guzman's characterization of the girl as a "prepubescent child who came on to him." He said he didn't ask her name or age, so the diocese didn't contact her to offer counseling.

Bishop Fiorenza, in his deposition, said he had left the matter in Monsignor Scheel's hands.

The story was unpublished for a few years, until Father Guzman impregnated a Galena Park church secretary. After she sued, the priest acknowledged the 1986 abuse and was criminally prosecuted. He served 90 days in jail but was not defrocked, the *Chronicle* reported.

In the other case, a Houston police officer discovered his own priest performing a sex act on an 11-year-old boy in a van. The *Chronicle* quoted another officer as saying that the Rev. Donald L. Stavinoha laughed about his arrest and predicted that nothing would happen to him because "I'm a priest."

The boy's family sued the diocese and won payments for counseling. Father Stavinoha, stripped of most priestly powers, later pleaded guilty to sexual assault and was imprisoned for a little more than a year.

The two priests' whereabouts are unknown, said Mr. Regan, the diocese spokesman.

His diocese's chancellor, the Rev. Frank Rossi, issued a statement late Friday saying that "bishops do well to directly remind their priests of the responsibility they have to conduct their lives with the greatest of human dignity and virtue...."

"When acts of sexual misconduct do occur, the diocese strives to respond with compassion and healing love."

Bishop Fiorenza — the first from a Southern diocese elected to a top post

in the bishops conference — is a native Texan who has stressed social justice issues.

He headed the church's national anti-poverty program, the Campaign for Human Development, in the early 1990s. He has called for breaking the cycle of poverty and helping the poor build "a better life for themselves and their children."

In an interview with *The Morning News* last year, Bishop Fiorenza talked about the rapid growth in many of his parishes and the corresponding shortage of pastors. He said he hoped that his flock would be inspired to bring forth new priests.

"We would like to emphasize strengthening family life, bringing moral teachings into the public arena..." the bishop said. "We believe it's a biblical value to welcome the stranger and care for the poor. And of course a high priority is the reverence for life, particularly the unborn child."

In a 1993 affidavit in the New Mexico lawsuit, Father Holley testified that "my psychosexual disorder first began to manifest itself in approximately 1962." That was the year Bishop Flanagan accepted him in the Diocese of Worcester on a trial basis from the Benedictine order, in which he'd gotten his start as a priest in 1958.

Well before he was officially made a diocesan priest in 1967, he testified, "Bishop Flanagan had received reports that I had sexually molested boys" in three parishes. "On at least two occasions Bishop Flanagan called me in to discuss the allegations, cautioned me against causing a scandal in the church, but he expressed no comments about my victims."

Almost 30 years later, four middle-aged men came forward, trying to get the Worcester Diocese to acknowledge the abuse they suffered as boys. They said the church told them in 1993 to sue if they wanted compensation for therapy, according to *The Globe*; diocese officials declined to comment on that allegation.

Months earlier, at their general assembly, the nation's bishops had passed a resolution saying that they'd "reflected — once again and more deeply — upon the pain, anguish and sense of alienation felt by victims...."

"We pledge ourselves to one another to return to our dioceses and there to examine carefully and prayerfully our response to sexual abuse; to assure ourselves that our response is appropriate and effective; and to be certain that our people are aware of and confident in that response."

Staff writer Michael D. Goldhaber contributed to this report.

# PATH OF A PEDOPHILE PRIEST

Top Catholic officials knowingly allowed the Rev. David A. Holley to work in more than a dozen parishes or hospitals in Massachusetts, New Mexico, Texas and Colorado, according to church documents reviewed by *The Dallas Morning News*. Here are excerpts from their correspondence about and with Father Holley, who is now in prison.

**Aug. 17, 1968  
WORCESTER, Mass.**

Letter from Worcester Bishop Bernard J. Flanagan to the Rev. Jerome Hayden, a Catholic therapist in Holliston, Mass., referring Father Holley for treatment.

"This man has been ... [accused of] molesting teenage boys on at least two occasions — most recently in a hospital from which he has been barred — and with carrying around and showing to these boys pornographic magazines and books. Although the ... [accusations] were established beyond any doubt in the judgment of the priests who assisted me in the investigation as well as myself, Father has denied any wrongdoing."

(A quarter-century later, Father Holley submitted a sworn affidavit stating that "my psychosexual disorder first began to manifest itself in approximately 1982," the year Bishop Flanagan accepted him in the Diocese of Worcester on a trial basis.

Before he was officially made a diocesan priest in 1967, he testified, "Bishop Flanagan had received reports that I had sexually molested boys" in three parishes. "On at least two occasions Bishop Flanagan called me in to discuss the allegations, cautioned me against causing a scandal in the church, but he expressed no comments about my victims.")

**July 27, 1970  
WORCESTER**

Letter from Worcester Auxiliary Bishop Timothy J. Harrington to Dr. Louis Cleary, clinical director of Seton Psychiatric Institute in Baltimore.

"Bishop Flanagan and I have had such serious doubts about Father continuing in the priesthood that, at one time, it was suggested that he seek a dispensation and return to the lay state.

"His last three parochial assignments were among those that priests would consider ideal. In each place Father's difficulty came to the fore and caused us to give him leaves of absence. He was referred for therapy after the first incident, and he continued in therapy with Father Jerome Hayden until his hospitalization at Seton. During this time, he was transferred to two other parishes where his problem became even more public and a wake of trouble ensued.

"People have been so greatly disturbed by his behavior that we would wonder whether he can avoid his reputation going before him in any area of this compact diocese. We also question whether we can chance the possibility of his having another relapse."

**Nov. 25, 1970  
WORCESTER**

Letter from Bishop Flanagan to Dr. Chung-wuk Kang, Father Holley's therapist at Seton Institute.

"I presume that Father David Holley has informed you that we met in Washington last week and that I confirmed the decision ... that he not return to active ministry in this diocese."

"We would be willing, of course, to help Father find a benevolent bishop who could use his services. ... To this end, it would be important to have a report from you or an authorized person at Seton Institute which could be used with the greatest confidentiality."

**Dec. 24, 1970  
BALTIMORE**

Letter from Dr. Kang and Dr. Cleary to Bishop Flanagan, summarizing the results of more than a year's inpatient treatment.

"For quite some time during his hospitalization Father Holley was resistive. ... He had great difficulty in recognizing his problems, and consequently in being motivated

## SOME OF THE REV. DAVID HOLLEY'S SUPERIORS

**WHERE FATHER HOLLEY WORKED**

- 1. Worcester 1962-69
- 2. El Paso 1976-77
- 3. Alamogordo 1972-75
- 4. San Angelo 1977-84
- 5. Albuquerque 1971, 1986-87
- 6. Amarillo 1984-85
- 7. Denver 1987-88

**THE REV. DAVID HOLLEY'S SUPERIORS**

- The Rev. David Holley
- Worcester Bishop Bernard Flanagan, now retired
- Worcester Bishop Timothy Harrington, now deceased
- The Rev. Dixon Hartford, El Paso
- El Paso Bishop Sidney Metzger, now deceased
- Galveston-Houston Bishop Joseph Florence, formerly San Angelo bishop
- Amarillo Bishop Leroy Mathiesen

Mardaga, discussing the possible transfer of Father Holley.

"We have a priest who we do not feel should resume his ministry here after spending about 15 months at Seton Institute. ... Previous to his hospitalization, there were at least two incidents which, though they did not evoke wide public scandal, did become known to several priests and lay people. In this very compact diocese, it is practically impossible to transfer a priest to a place where his previous history is not known — at least by the priests of the diocese."

**March 2, 1971  
WILMINGTON, Del.**

Letter from Bishop Mardaga to Bishop Flanagan, rejecting the transfer.

"Despite the unfavorable decision in this particular case, I trust that you will realize that we are still sympathetic to requests regarding the placement of priests who have experienced difficulties in their own communities. This has been our policy and we are determined to continue it. Regrettably, Father Holley's case presented a greater problem than we could handle, at least with the present prognosis."

**March 15, 1971  
WORCESTER**

Letter from Bishop Flanagan to Father Holley, telling him that he'd been rejected by the Wilmington diocese and probably by Boston, too.

"In discussing the problem with Bishop Harrington, we agreed to suggest that you accept the idea of going to one of the houses of the Paraclete Fathers [an order of priests] — either Via Coeli in New Mexico or one of their other hospices. They now have some professionally directed programs of therapy, so that you could continue whatever treatment is indicated. Also, by reason of their many contacts with bishops who are in need of priests, they are able to find openings for their guests after a reasonable period of time.

"If you are willing to do this, we will make the arrangements for you and provide for your care. I do hope that you will accept the suggestion since it would appear to me as the best possible solution to helping you return to an active ministry."

**Sept. 30, 1971  
WORCESTER**

Letter from Bishop Flanagan to the Rev. Joseph McNamara, supervisor at Via Coeli, accompanying Father Holley's records.

"His past history would seem to give us little hope of his being able to resume an effective ministry for a long time, if ever."

Flanagan.

"My visits to the Lovelace Clinic in Albuquerque [which provided psychiatric services under contract with the Paracletes] have been very beneficial and I am grateful for the therapy from Dr. [D.H.] Cummings. I have worked in three local parishes on weekends and occasionally during the week."

**March 28, 1972  
ALBUQUERQUE**

Letter from Father Holley to Bishop Flanagan.

"Since my last letter to you, I have heard from the Veterans Administration in Washington. There are no vacancies at present but they are retaining my application for a chaplaincy for future consideration.

"Dr. Cummings at the Lovelace Clinic and the new superior at Pius XII Villa both approve my desire to work in this [military] apostolate. There was only one question about medical history on the application which I showed to Dr. Cummings. He said that the question did not affect me and there was no need to volunteer information about my past problem.

"In regard to my present status, I wrote that I am on a special assignment outside the diocese working as an assistant. I was advised to do this by the chaplain at the local V.A. hospital."

"I am most eager to return to full active duty as soon as possible and can finally say that I have conquered the tragedy that has plagued me in the past. ... Thank you for your charity and understanding of a priest in need."

**July 3, 1975  
ALAMOGORDO, N.M.**

Letter from Father Holley to Dr. Cummings, requesting release of records to the Diocese of El Paso, with which the priest was seeking an assignment.

"Perhaps you remember that I have been assisting the pastor at St. Jude Mission in Alamogordo. At first, I came only on weekends from Pius XII Villa in Albuquerque. Father [Wilfrid] Diamond then asked me to stay for longer periods of time. ... For the past three and a half years, I have been at St. Jude almost continuously."

(Nearly 20 years later, after Father Holley and church leaders had been sued by 16 young men over alleged molestation in Alamogordo, Father Diamond testified in a deposition that: "Two hundred to 300 priests under Paraclete care — for problems ranging from alcoholism to pedophilia — helped him over the years. There were no [other] priests available."

He got permission from top church officials in El Paso to use the priests under treatment. "They said, 'Sure, what the hell. Go ahead.'"

grant of priestly powers to Father Holley.

"Since for the good of souls it is necessary that we provide ... [an assistant pastor] for the Church of St. Raphael's in the city of El Paso, and having confidence in your knowledge, piety, prudence, experience and general character, we ... [are] granting you the necessary rights and powers. ..."

**April 27, 1976  
EL PASO**

Letter from the Rev. A. Dixon Hartford, pastor of St. Raphael's, to Bishop Metzger.

"I informed Father that his assignment at St. Raphael's is immediately terminated and that I would have his things packed and shipped to wherever he wished. Of course, Father was deeply humiliated and mortified and very apologetic. ...

"I know that Father [Carlos] Frias could use help at the Immaculate Conception [in El Paso]. I propose that you send Father to the Immaculate with the understanding that Father Frias knows what the problem is and that Father Holley and myself will have a regular schedule of appointments. I feel that my training in Reality Therapy could be of some use to Father.

"Bishop, I know what I propose is very risky and if you think it is worth merit, I would suggest that one or two others from the Priests Personnel Board be consulted."

**Dec. 30, 1976  
EL PASO**

Letter from Bishop Metzger, addressed to Father Holley at Immaculate Conception.

"It gives me great pleasure to give you the appointment as associate pastor of the Church of Our Lady of the Valley, El Paso. ... With the grace of God you will succeed."

**May 23, 1977  
EL PASO**

Letter from Bishop Metzger to Father Holley.

"I have come to the painful decision that you will no longer be permitted to function as a priest in the Diocese of El Paso. ...

"We do not intend to pass judgment on you or your actions, realizing that many past events have had an impact on your life.

"It is my suggestion that you remain with your family and seek employment as a layman. ...

"I hope that you will not think harshly of us. ..."

**Sept. 20, 1977  
EL PASO**

Letter from Bishop Metzger to San Angelo, Texas, Bishop Stephen A. Laven, whom Father Holley had

**June 14, 1982  
WORCESTER**

Letter from Bishop Flanagan to Bishop Florence.

"... since he expresses no desire to return here but rather, for good reasons, to remain in the south, I am willing to excommunicate [formally release] him."

**Dec. 22, 1982  
SAN ANGELO**

Letter from Bishop Florence to Bishop Flanagan.

"... some of his past problems surfaced again, which made it advisable for me not to incardinate him. ...

"For the past several months Father Holley has been studying Spanish in San Antonio and Mexico in order to more efficiently minister to the people of this diocese. I have made it clear to him that I will give him a fair chance to exercise his priesthood here, but if there is one more lapse I will ask him to leave."

**May 25, 1984  
SAN ANGELO**

Letter from Bishop Florence to Bishop Harrington in Worcester.

"It is with great regret that I write now to say that Father Holley has made it impossible for us to keep him in this diocese.

"... I will continue to pray for him and hope that he will successfully deal with his problems so that he can continue a useful priestly ministry. ..."

**July 23, 1984  
SAN ANGELO**

Letter from Bishop Florence to Bishop Harrington.

"Bishop [Leroy] Mathiesen has informed ... [Father Holley] that he could not accept him in the Diocese of Amarillo. However, he is presently staying at one of the parishes there."

**Aug. 13, 1984  
AMARILLO**

Letter from Father Holley to Bishop Harrington.

"After leaving the Diocese of San Angelo, I immediately came to Amarillo where I am now working at St. Joseph Church. My plans are to remain in this diocese and, God willing, to be incardinated."

**Aug. 11, 1986  
ALBUQUERQUE**

Letter from Father Holley to Bishop Harrington.

"I have recently completed a Clinical Pastoral Education course at St. Joseph Hospital here in Albuquerque. ...

"Shortly after arriving in Amarillo from San Angelo, I saw that the diocese was having serious financial and personnel problems. After sound advice, I applied for the CPE course in Amarillo but was told there were no immediate openings. The director suggested, however, that I apply in Albuquerque and I was accepted the following week. ...

"As an adjunct to the program, all the interns had to consult weekly with a psychotherapist. ... The most difficult time for me was getting in touch with my painful childhood when I was frequently beaten, burnt and cut by my stepfather and lived in isolation and rejection. I can see now, however, that God never abandoned me.

"Presently, I am working as a chaplain just a few hours each week at St. Joseph Hospital and at Vista Sandia Hospital. ..."

**Oct. 5, 1987  
DENVER**

Letter from the Monsignor Lawrence St. Peter, vicar for priests and seminarians in the Archdiocese of Denver, to Father Holley.

Bishop Harrington "assures me that you are a priest in good standing and that he has given you permission to be a chaplain at St. Anthony Hospital Central, Denver."

July 27, 1970  
WORCESTER

Letter from Worcester Auxiliary Bishop Timothy J. Harrington to Dr. Louis Cleary, clinical director of Seton Psychiatric Institute in Baltimore.

"Bishop Flanagan and I have had such serious doubts about Father continuing in the priesthood that, at one time, it was suggested that he seek a dispensation and return to the lay state.

"His last three parochial assignments were among those that priests would consider ideal. In each place Father's difficulty came to the fore and caused us to give him leaves of absence. He was referred for therapy after the first incident, and he continued in therapy with Father Jerome Hayden until his hospitalization at Seton. During this time, he was transferred to two other parishes where his problem became even more public and a wake of trouble ensued.

"People have been so greatly disturbed by his behavior that we would wonder whether he can avoid his reputation going before him in any area of this compact diocese. We also question whether we can chance the possibility of his having another relapse."

Nov. 25, 1970  
WORCESTER

Letter from Bishop Flanagan to Dr. Chung-wuk Kang, Father Holley's therapist at Seton Institute.

"I presume that Father David Holley has informed you that we met in Washington last week and that I confirmed the decision . . . that he not return to active ministry in this diocese."

"We would be willing, of course, to help Father find a benevolent bishop who could use his services. . . . To this end, it would be important to have a report from you or an authorized person at Seton Institute which could be used with the greatest confidentiality."

Dec. 24, 1970  
BALTIMORE

Letter from Dr. Kang and Dr. Cleary to Bishop Flanagan, summarizing the results of more than a year's inpatient treatment.

"For quite some time during his hospitalization Father Holley was resistive. . . . He had great difficulty in recognizing his problems, and consequently in being motivated toward trying to do something about them. . . . While . . . [subsequent improvement] certainly gives some reason for optimism, it is important to note that this is only the beginning, and continued outside therapy is strongly indicated. . . ."

[Earlier in the year, according to Dr. Kang's treatment notes, "There was a report that Father Holley in an informal way was counseling a young teenage patient [at Seton] and he brought up the subject of sex. He admitted himself that he has been counseling a few young patients in the hospital, and has brought up the topic of sex. He realized how seductive it can be for him, because of his past history which was quite similar, namely he starts out with counseling in any subject and then very smoothly gets around to sexual subjects to arouse young men and goes on to masturbating. When we brought this subject up in the sessions, he associated this with his current anger toward authorities. . . ."]

Feb. 11, 1971  
WORCESTER

Letter from Bishop Flanagan to Wilmington, Del., Bishop Thomas J.

"I am sure that there were at least two incidents which, though they did not evoke wide public scandal, did become known to several priests and lay people. In this very compact diocese, it is practically impossible to transfer a priest to a place where his previous history is not known — at least by the priests of the diocese."

March 2, 1971  
WILMINGTON, Del.

Letter from Bishop Madaga to Bishop Flanagan, rejecting the transfer.

"Despite the unfavorable decision in this particular case, I trust that you will realize that we are still sympathetic to requests regarding the placement of priests who have experienced difficulties in their own communities. This has been our policy and we are determined to continue it. Regrettably, Father Holley's case presented a greater problem than we could handle, at least with the present prognosis."

March 18, 1971  
WORCESTER

Letter from Bishop Flanagan to Father Holley, telling him that he'd been rejected by the Wilmington diocese and probably by Boston, too.

"In discussing the problem with Bishop Harrington, we agreed to suggest that you accept the idea of going to one of the houses of the Paraclete Fathers (an order of priests) — either Via Coeli in New Mexico or one of their other hospices. They now have some professionally directed programs of therapy, so that you could continue whatever treatment is indicated. Also, by reason of their many contacts with bishops who are in need of priests, they are able to find openings for their guests after a reasonable period of time.

"If you are willing to do this, we will make the arrangements for you and provide for your care. I do hope that you will accept the suggestion since it would appear to me as the best possible solution to helping you return to an active ministry."

Sept. 30, 1971  
WORCESTER

Letter from Bishop Flanagan to the Rev. Joseph McNamara, supervisor at Via Coeli, accompanying Father Holley's records.

"His past history would seem to give us little hope of his being able to resume an effective ministry for a long time, if ever."

Nov. 1, 1971  
ALBUQUERQUE

Letter from Father Holley to Bishop Flanagan.

"Since my arrival in Albuquerque, I have been at Pius XII Villa, a few miles from the city limits. Via Coeli is about 70 miles northwest in Jamez Springs. I visited there three weeks ago and found that . . . the buildings are antiquated to say the least. The second floor of the main building has not been used for several years and is scheduled to be torn down soon. . . ."

"Here at Pius XII Villa are four Paracletes. One is 72 years old, another is a foreigner who speaks poor English, one is an alcoholic patient and the other is a belated vocation (53 yrs.) recently ordained. I was disappointed to learn that none are professionally trained. Seven guest priests, in their 30s and 40s, are living here on a renovated chicken farm but the spirit is very good, thank God. All the priests go out to neighboring parishes on weekends. . . ."

Feb. 10, 1972  
ALBUQUERQUE

Letter from Father Holley to Bishop

Harrington and I am grateful for the therapy from Dr. [D.H.] Cummings. I have worked in three local parishes on weekends and occasionally during the week.

March 28, 1972  
ALBUQUERQUE

Letter from Father Holley to Bishop Flanagan.

"Since my last letter to you, I have heard from the Veterans Administration in Washington. There are no vacancies at present but they are retaining my application for a chaplaincy for future consideration.

"Dr. Cummings at the Lovelace Clinic and the new superior at Pius XII Villa both approve my desire to work in this [military] apostolate. There was only one question about medical history on the application which I showed to Dr. Cummings. He said that the question did not affect me and there was no need to volunteer information about my past problem.

"In regard to my present status, I wrote that I am on a special assignment outside the diocese working as an assistant. I was advised to do this by the chaplain at the local V.A. hospital. . . ."

"I am most eager to return to full active duty as soon as possible and can finally say that I have conquered the tragedy that has plagued me in the past. . . . Thank you for your charity and understanding of a priest in need."

July 3, 1975  
ALAMOGORDO, N.M.

Letter from Father Holley to Dr. Cummings, requesting release of records to the Diocese of El Paso, with which the priest was seeking an assignment.

"Perhaps you remember that I have been assisting the pastor at St. Jude Mission in Alamogordo. At first, I came only on weekends from Pius XII Villa in Albuquerque. Father [Willard] Diamond then asked me to stay for longer periods of time. . . . For the past three and a half years, I have been at St. Jude almost continuously. (Nearly 20 years later, after Father Holley and church leaders had been sued by 18 young men over alleged molestation in Alamogordo, Father Diamond testified in a deposition that:

■ Two hundred to 300 priests under Paraclete care — for problems ranging from alcoholism to pedophilia — helped him over the years. "There were no [other] priests available."

■ He got permission from top church officials in El Paso to use the priests under treatment. "They said, 'Sure, what the hell. Go ahead.'"

■ After Father Holley had been in Alamogordo for at least a year, a family complained that he had molested their son. Father Holley admitted what he'd done, promised it would never happen again and was allowed to continue work; the family moved away "a couple of months later."

■ He thought Father Holley would return but soon learned that "he was still playing around." The victims included three boys in one family Father Diamond named. "And the others, I don't remember who they might have been."

Oct. 3, 1975  
ALBUQUERQUE

Letter from Dr. Cummings to the Diocese of El Paso.

"In my opinion the unhealthy and grossly immature pattern of thoughts and feelings that led to the abnormal impulses and behavior of the past has been totally eliminated. . . ."

Dec. 26, 1975  
EL PASO

El Paso Bishop Sidney M. Metzger's

Harrington in the city of El Paso, and having confidence in your knowledge, piety, prudence, experience and general character, we . . . [are] granting you the necessary rights and powers."

April 27, 1976  
EL PASO

Letter from the Rev. A. Dixon Hartford, pastor of St. Raphael's, to Bishop Metzger.

"I informed Father that his assignment at St. Raphael's is immediately terminated and that I would have his things packed and shipped to wherever he wished. Of course, Father was deeply humiliated and mortified and very apologetic. . . ."

"I know that Father [Carlos] Frias could use help at the Immaculate Conception [in El Paso]. I propose that you send Father to the Immaculate with the understanding that Father Frias knows what the problem is and that Father Holley and myself will have a regular schedule of appointments. I feel that my training in Reality Therapy could be of some use to Father.

"Bishop, I know what I propose is very risky and if you think it is worth merit, I would suggest that one or two others from the Priests Personnel Board be consulted."

Dec. 30, 1976  
EL PASO

Letter from Bishop Metzger, addressed to Father Holley at Immaculate Conception.

"It gives me great pleasure to give you the appointment as associate pastor of the Church of Our Lady of the Valley, El Paso. . . . With the grace of God you will succeed."

May 23, 1977  
EL PASO

Letter from Bishop Metzger to Father Holley.

"I have come to the painful decision that you will no longer be permitted to function as a priest in the Diocese of El Paso. . . ."

"We do not intend to pass judgment on you or your actions, realizing that many past events have had an impact on your life.

"It is my suggestion that you remain with your family and seek employment as a layman. . . ."

"I hope that you will not think harshly of us. . . ."

Sept. 20, 1977  
EL PASO

Letter from Bishop Metzger to San Angelo, Texas, Bishop Stephen A. Leven, whom Father Holley had asked for an appointment.

"We tried to help him but the situation became simply untenable. I personally have no objection if you wish to give Father Holley an appointment. . . . all the more since you have sent him to Canada for treatment. . . . You and I also know from our experience with such unfortunate matters that such cases are always a calculated risk. . . ."

June 2, 1982  
SAN ANGELO

Letter from Bishop Leven's successor, Bishop Joseph A. Fioranza, to Bishop Flanagan in Worcester.

"Father Holley has been working in the Diocese of San Angelo for four years and, as far as I know, there has been no serious problem with his ministry here. I am aware of his past difficulties yet I do not know the extent of his problems.

"With our shortage of priests, I am willing to risk incardinating him [formally accepting him in the diocese] unless you would advise me against it. . . ."

with his problems so that he can continue a useful priestly ministry."

July 23, 1984  
SAN ANGELO

Letter from Bishop Fioranza to Bishop Harrington.

"Bishop [Leroy] Mathiesen has informed . . . [Father Holley] that he could not accept him in the Diocese of Amarillo. However, he is presently staying at one of the parishes there."

Aug. 13, 1984  
AMARILLO

Letter from Father Holley to Bishop Harrington.

"After leaving the Diocese of San Angelo, I immediately came to Amarillo where I am now working at St. Joseph Church. My plans are to remain in this diocese and, God willing, to be incardinated."

Aug. 11, 1986  
ALBUQUERQUE

Letter from Father Holley to Bishop Harrington.

"I have recently completed a Clinical Pastoral Education course at St. Joseph Hospital here in Albuquerque. . . ."

"Shortly after arriving in Amarillo from San Angelo, I saw that the diocese was having serious financial and personnel problems. After sound advice, I applied for the CPE course in Amarillo but was told there were no immediate openings. The director suggested, however, that I apply in Albuquerque and I was accepted the following week. . . ."

"As an adjunct to the program, all the interns had to consult weekly with a psychotherapist. . . . The most difficult time for me was getting in touch with my painful childhood when I was frequently beaten, burnt and cut by my stepfather and lived in isolation and rejection. I can see now, however, that God never abandoned me.

"Presently, I am working as a chaplain just a few hours each week at St. Joseph Hospital and at Vista Sandia Hospital. . . ."

Oct. 5, 1987  
DENVER

Letter from the Monsignor Lawrence St. Peter, vicar for priests and seminarians in the Archdiocese of Denver, to Father Holley.

"Bishop Harrington assures me that you are a priest in good standing and that he has given you permission to be a chaplain at St. Anthony Hospital Central, Denver."

Sept. 19, 1988  
DENVER

Letter from Monsignor St. Peter's successor, the Rev. R. Walker Nickless, to Father Holley.

"Your faculties for the Archdiocese of Denver are hereby revoked, effective immediately."

Oct. 5, 1988  
WORCESTER

Letter from Auxiliary Bishop George E. Rueger to Monsignor Nickless.

"I know how sincerely you tried to give Father Holley permission to serve."

(There is no indication that Father Holley ever worked as a priest again. In 1982, church officials sent him to inpatient therapy in Maryland as old molestation allegations resurfaced. Criminal charges came in 1993, and Father Holley pleaded guilty to molesting eight boys during his early 1970s Alamogordo stint. He was sentenced to a maximum of 275 years in prison and is now confined at the Western New Mexico Correctional Facility in Grants, N.M.)