



Alaska Radio Mission

P.O. Box 988, Nome Alaska 99762

Tom Busch, General Manager
Fr. Mark Hoelsken, S.J., Spiritual Director

March 16, 2004

Dear Friend of KNOM,

This is the most difficult letter I have ever written.

I write to you today in great sorrow.

Yesterday, a woman known only as "Jane Doe" filed suit against our diocese, the Oregon Jesuit Province and Father Jim Poole, SJ, charging that Father Poole committed over one hundred inappropriate acts with her, most of them when she was a child. The suit alleges that Father Poole's behavior began on a village on the Yukon River and continued when he was assigned to Nome to found KNOM.

You can imagine my shock when I learned of this. I felt as though I had been hit by a truck.

According to the lawsuit, some of these actions occurred right here at KNOM between 1978 and 1984. The suit also claims that "Jane Doe" believes that other underage girls were molested, prior to Father Poole's moving to Nome.

Florence and I were living here throughout those years, and I was managing KNOM. We had absolutely no knowledge of any of this until recently. We were floored.

I want to assure you of two things. First, I am writing personal letters to all former KNOM volunteers, some 300 of them, telling them what I've just told you, and asking anyone who may have been hurt to come forward and seek help.

Second, the Diocese of Fairbanks, which owns KNOM, established strict policies against sexual misconduct in 1993, long before they or we had even a tiny suspicion that any impropriety had taken place.

Since 1993, every KNOM staff member and every volunteer is carefully trained to avoid any misconduct, to recognize if it occurs to them or to others, and to report it to the diocese and to civilian authorities.

We remain committed to providing a spiritual and safe environment for everyone associated with KNOM.

For Florence and me, this is a personal blow, as Father Poole was like a second father to both of us. He married us. To

us, it feels like the death of a parent. Our initial response includes outrage and anger, and I guess that's normal. Yet, each of us is called by Jesus to respond with love and forgiveness even when we and people we care about are hurt.

My heart goes out to Jane Doe. I honor her for calling these terrible past acts to our attention. And I am heartsick for anyone else who has been hurt. They remain in my prayers. I grieve for them, and everyone at KNOM joins me in that sorrow.

It also pains me that our mission, which I truly believe is inspired by the Holy Spirit, is stained by the actions which a single person might have committed.

I apologize to you for sending this impersonal form letter, but there are so many thousands of people whom I want to reach so quickly. It is you who are the strength of this important mission, as we work diligently every day to bring God's Love into this part of the world. We value and respect you, and I wanted you to hear this information directly from me.

I know very little more about this. However, if you have any questions about it, or if you have questions about any aspect of our operation, please contact me.

I thank you for your continued support and especially for your prayers as we, too, need healing following this revelation. You are important to the continued success of the KNOM mission.

I am out of space, though I am not out of tears. May Our Lord bless you abundantly for your kindness to the families whom KNOM serves.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Busch". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Tom Busch
General Manager