

**Statement Concerning Angie Phillips' Lawsuit
October 15, 2004**

In July of 2002, after the Diocese of Jackson learned of the alleged misconduct involving Father Thomas Boyce, Bishop William Houck suspended his priestly faculties, and he was not allowed to present himself as a priest, wear clerical attire or the Roman collar, and he was not allowed to celebrate public mass. In addition, the diocese offered pastoral care and to pay for comprehensive therapeutic psychiatric counseling to help Angie Phillips and her other family members recover from the actions that occurred over thirty years ago. She refused this offer of assistance and shortly thereafter filed a lawsuit seeking over \$12 million dollars in damages. Her lawsuit and her request for damages jeopardize the assets of the diocese and its many ministries throughout Mississippi.

Sexual misconduct by church personnel violates human dignity and the mission of the Church. Beginning in 1985, the Diocese of Jackson implemented a written policy and procedure regarding reporting and handling of sexual misconduct claims for lay and church personnel. The diocese is committed to ensuring that children being served by the Church are not at risk of sexual abuse by Church personnel. The spiritual well-being of all victims, their families, and others in the community is of particular concern to the Church. For more information about these policies and the procedures, the diocese encourages the public visit the diocesan website at "www.jacksondiocese.org" and click on "Protecting God's Children." Additional information regarding statements commenting on the pending litigation against the Catholic Diocese of Jackson also can be found there.

The Diocese of Jackson encourages any victim of sexual abuse by a member of the Catholic Clergy to come forward and begin the healing process. When an allegation is found to be credible, counseling will be offered, so that the healing process can begin. The diocese requests that the victims contact Mrs. Linda Raff, Victims Assistance Coordinator at 601-355-8634 Ext 119.