



DIOCESE OF DES MOINES

Statement

For Immediate Release

Date: Aug 26, 2010

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The following statement has been released by the Diocese of Des Moines on Thursday, August 26:

The Diocese of Des Moines was victimized by criminals who illegally obtained its banking information in order to transfer more than \$600,000 of diocesan ACH funds to numerous recipients across the United States on August 13 and 16.

The Diocese of Des Moines was advised of this situation by Bankers Trust of Des Moines the morning of August 17, at which time all relevant bank accounts were shut down. At the instruction of the diocese, the bank immediately initiated the process of recovering funds where possible. To date, approximately \$180,000 have been recovered.

Simultaneously, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and United States Treasury Department were notified. The FBI has begun its investigation, taking possession of several diocesan computers. The diocese remains in communication and full cooperation with the FBI.

The diocesan insurance carrier and legal representative have been notified and consulted.

Law enforcement has advised the Diocese of Des Moines that it seems to have been the victim of a highly sophisticated operation most likely based overseas, which engages participation of individuals who unknowingly act as intermediaries of the funds obtained by theft.

To the best of our knowledge, every indication points to proper procedures being followed both before and after the thefts, and no diocesan or bank staff is suspected. The bank has assured the diocese that no personal donor bank accounts that utilized ACH gifting have been compromised.

“While the Diocese of Des Moines is protected by insurance and anticipates the restoration of the funds, we have been advised that such criminal activity is rampant. Obviously, any entity that experiences such a crime should be significantly concerned. We trust, however, that legal authorities are doing all they can to investigate this matter, and hope for a day when such criminal activity is eradicated,” Bishop Richard Pates, the Bishop of Des Moines said.

The Diocese of Des Moines has had a banking relationship with Bankers Trust for more than 27 years.