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**From the Archdiocese of Detroit, Regarding Remarks by
Fr. Anton Kcira, the Albanian Community, and the
Relationship Between Catholic Christians and Muslims**

Out of deep concern over the conflict and confusion created in Catholic and Muslim communities over remarks delivered in the Detroit archdiocese by Fr. Anton Kçira of St. Paul Albanian Parish in Rochester Hills, Michigan, Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron has asked the priest for a written statement. The archbishop has agreed to assist in distribution of Fr. Kçira's statement on his behalf.

An Open Letter from Fr. Anton Kçira to the Albanian Community in Metro Detroit and beyond:

In the past few weeks, there has been tremendous controversy over videotaped remarks I delivered at my parish in May of 2007. While the majority of the back-and-forth over this has been transacted on the Internet and in the media, I wanted to take this opportunity to put in writing my sentiments regarding this matter.

When I delivered those remarks three years ago, I was angry, very angry, about the lack of response in the Albanian and Kosovar communities against the criminals who planned to kill American soldiers at Fort Dix, New Jersey. The USA and NATO have done so much for our nation and our peoples over the years, and by not condemning the Albanian criminals we appeared ungrateful.

In expressing my anger, I used what an English teacher would call hyperbole— an exaggeration used for effect— to make my point. In doing so, I used some wrong words, cited some bad examples, and described massacre victims with provocative names. That wasn't right. I am deeply sorry for using those words, and for the hurt my words have caused. That was my anger talking, not my heart.

In Kosovo and here in Detroit, I have been grateful and proud of my participation in the collaborative efforts between and among Albanians of all religions. We share a common love for our homeland, our independence. I respect people of the Muslim faith, and see the

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relationship between Catholic Christians and Muslims as one based on a common pursuit of peace and good will. I pray that what I said will not, in any way, hurt or compromise the valuable relationship between the two religions. And, I trust a regrettable outburst of anger will not diminish all of the projects our faith communities have supported and worked on together over the years, or damage our relationships going forward.

May God Bless Us All,

Rev. Anton Kçira
St. Paul Albanian Roman Catholic Church
Rochester Hills, Michigan

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