

CONGREGATIO  
PRO DOCTRINA FIDEI

00120 Città del Vaticano,  
Palazzo del S. Uffizio

7 July 2006

PROT. N. 446/04-22747  
(In responsione fiat mentio huius numeri)

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Your Excellency,

I write regarding the case of the **Reverend Jerome E. LANSER**, a priest of your Archdiocese who has been accused of sexual abuse of minors and concerning whom Your Excellency has requested dismissal from the clerical state *ex officio*.

After having carefully examined the present case, especially Your Excellency's *votum*, it was noted that the alleged delicts are bound by prescription and that the said priest, while admitting that the acts of sexual misconduct occurred, denies that any of the alleged victim was a minor at the time. For these reasons the Congregation has decided that it would be more appropriate to proceed by way of an administrative penal process in this case. Consequently, this Dicastery grants a derogation from the law of prescription and authorizes Your Excellency to initiate an administrative penal process as outlined in can. 1720 of the *Code of Canon Law*. Your Excellency is therefore kindly requested:

- 1) to inform the accused of the allegations and the proofs, while affording him the opportunity, via his canonical advocate, of a proper defence;
- 2) to evaluate accurately all the proofs and the evidence with the assistance of two assessors who are competent and renowned for their prudence;
- 3) to issue a decree in accordance with cc. 1342-1350 *CIC* if the delict can be proven with certainty. The decree should contain the reasons *in iure et in facto*.

If, as a result of this process, Your Excellency is still of the opinion that the accused should be *dismissed from the clerical state* or have some other *perpetual penalty* imposed upon him, you are requested to refer the matter to this Congregation. Should a decree imposing such a penalty be issued by this Dicastery *in Congressu Particulari*, the accused would have the right to present recourse to the Ordinary Session of the Cardinal and Bishop Members of this Congregation (*Feria IV*).

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His Excellency  
**The Most Reverend Timothy M. DOLAN**  
*Archbishop of Milwaukee*  
3501 South Lake Drive  
Milwaukee, WI 53207-0912, U.S.A.

**ADOM043441**

However, before proceeding with the above-mentioned penal process, Your Excellency should approach the cleric in order to ascertain his position regarding submitting a voluntary petition for a dispensation from the obligations of Sacred Orders including celibacy.

Alternatively, since Rev. Lanser is currently experiencing serious health problems and considering also his advanced age, this Dicastery does not exclude the solution outlined in n. 8 b of the *Essential Norms*. Your Excellency is authorized in this case, if you should judge it appropriate, to apply such *Norms* and direct the cleric to live a life of prayer and penance with the possibility of celebrating Mass privately. That disciplinary measures should be reinforced by penal precept.

I take the opportunity to offer Your Excellency my sincere respects and I remain,

Yours devotedly in the Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Amato', with a small asterisk to the left of the first letter.

✠ Angelo AMATO, SDB  
Titular Archbishop of Sila  
*Secretary*

ADOM043442

November 16, 2006



Dear Jerome,

As you are aware, I was recently advised by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith that I could proceed with an administrative penal process to resolve the allegations against you. Having received a report from your doctor about your fragile physical health and having received a petition from you with supportive documentation from your canonical advisor, I took the matter to my advisors.

Provided you continue to abide by the stringent restrictions that have been placed upon you, namely that you do not exercise any public ministry and do not present yourself in public as a cleric by either attire or title, I would allow you to live out the rest of your life in prayer and penance. You will continue to remain in contact with Deacon David Zimprich to ensure that these restrictions are being observed. Any indication that they are not would then result in initiating a formal process against you.

Despite everything else, I do pray for your health and well being. I hope you are able to incorporate your current physical suffering into the prayer and penance that must be an integral part of your life.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Timothy M. Dolan".

Most Reverend Timothy M. Dolan  
Archbishop of Milwaukee

cc:



ADOM043438

  
ARCHDIOCESE OF MILWAUKEE  
OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

September 27, 2004

His Eminence Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger  
Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith  
Piazza del S. Uffizio 11  
00193 Rome, Italy

Your Eminence:

In accord with the norms of *Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela*, I am submitting for your consideration the case of a priest of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. Reverend Jerome Lanser has been accused of multiple acts of sexual abuse of minors. The summary of these allegations is enclosed. Father Lanser has admitted that a number of acts of sexual misconduct occurred but denies that any of the individuals were minors at the time.

Over the years, efforts were made to provide spiritual and psychological interventions that would rehabilitate Father Lanser. None of these efforts have been successful as he reoffended after each intervention, often while still in therapy. Father Lanser was considered such a risk that he was placed on drug therapy to control his impulses. He failed to observe that treatment plan and reoffended. It was thought that a non-parochial assignment might be possible. Even in that setting, he made sexual advances against an employee of the nursing home who was barely over the age of majority. With our current understanding of the nature of his condition, it is clear that he will never be able to assume any public ministry.

The pattern of his behavior as described is consistent with someone who is unable to control his sexual impulses. He displayed a particular penchant for young African American males. One of the victims who has reported the abuse is [REDACTED] who have reported similar abuse to him. A former associate pastor has reported on the steady stream of young African American males who were observed coming to the rectory late at night and leaving early in the morning. It is unclear if these young men were minors. Father Lanser has been arrested on charges of driving under the influence of alcohol several times but has never been convicted.

The impact on his various victims has been significant. Our new found awareness of the severity of damage caused by sexual abuse at the hands of clergy makes it impossible for us to ignore this situation.

Given the nature and frequency of the alleged and admitted sexual abuse, along with the serious abuse of office, I have pondered long and hard to arrive at an opinion about the most appropriate action to be taken. In order that justice may be made manifest and healing of the victims and the Church may proceed, I am asking that Reverend Jerome E. Lanser be dismissed *ex officio* from the clerical state. He is drawing from his pension fund and that will continue.

His Eminence Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger  
Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

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If the judgement of Your Eminence is that this case should proceed to a dismissal by decree of your Congregation, I would cede to that judgement. Furthermore, if it is your judgement that this case should proceed through a canonical penal process, I humbly request a dispensation from prescription as well as a sanation of any procedural errors that may have occurred during the years this case was under investigation. The severity of the offenses is such that it is my opinion that these requests are justified.

I look forward to your further instructions in this matter.

With sentiments of deepest esteem, I am,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Timothy M. Dolan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T' and a cross at the end.

Most Reverend Timothy M. Dolan  
Archbishop of Milwaukee

ADOM017286

  
ARCHDIOCESE OF MILWAUKEE  
OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

April 7, 2005  
Year of the Eucharist  
*Sede Vacante*

Reverend Jerome E. Lanser  
[REDACTED]  
Milwaukee, WI 53222

Dear Father Lanser,

You raised some important questions in your recent letter to me. I am surprised at some of them since the records of the various Vicars for Clergy indicate that you have been informed of the concerns raised about your actions. However, I will summarize how substantiation of claims is reached.

Both in your letter and in your recent conversations with Father Curt Frederick and Deacon David Zimprich, you seem to focus on two points: first you talk about only one allegation and, second, you refer to the lack of a conviction in the civil court system. As you have been informed, we are not dealing with a single allegation but with multiple incidents. You are also aware that the one case that did find its way into the court system was a civil, not a criminal case. It was not dismissed on the facts of the case but rather on the statute of limitations.

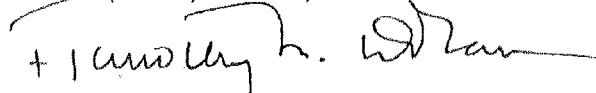
When we examine allegations, substantiation is arrived at when the dates and places reflect a person's assignment history, when there is an internal consistency among multiple reports, and when those reporting are deemed credible. In your own case, surely you have not forgotten earlier interventions about these concerns which even led to institutional and pharmaceutical efforts.

Ultimately any determination in your case will come from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The matter rests in their hands at this time. In the interim, you are to continue observing the provisions of the precept previously issued. I understand from reports received that you have not always been meticulously observant of those provisions. I also expect you to follow the protocols reviewed by Deacon Zimprich.

If you would like to visit personally, please call Father Jerry Herda at (414) 769-3496 to arrange an appointment.

With prayerful good wishes, I am,

Faithfully in Christ,



Most Reverend Timothy M. Dolan  
Archbishop of Milwaukee

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**ADOM017275**