

  
ARCHDIOCESE OF MILWAUKEE  
DEPARTMENT FOR CLERGY

February 5, 2003

Rev Jerome Wagner

Malone WI 53049-1239

Dear Jerry,

During the past month I had the opportunity to meet with you and each of my brother priests who stepped aside from active ministry at Bishop Sklba's request in 2002, and who continue to hope and pray for a just resolution to this painful transition period. I promised to remain in communication with you as helpful and necessary.

Archbishop Dolan sent you a letter January 16, 2002, asking you to voluntarily submit your resignation for the pastoral welfare of the parishioners or to respond by February 5, 2002, with reasons for choosing not to do so. I believe a follow-up letter from the Archbishop will be sent to you this week.

A couple different proposals were suggested by way of attempting to resolve the "situation." After careful study of these proposals and computation of their potential cost to the Archdiocese, after further reviewing the history of what was offered in similar cases in the past, what your canonical rights are, and what the archbishop's canonical obligations are, the following plan was approved by Archbishop Dolan:

- 1) If a priest elects voluntary laicization, we would offer what has been our practice, if not policy, for more than a decade, namely \$10,000 when the petition is submitted and \$10,000 when a definitive response is received, regardless of the contents of the response. We would offer, in addition, and new to our practice, minimum support during the time the case is in process. That minimum support would be the monthly amount a pensioned priest receives. During the processing of the case we would also provide some outplacement assistance. This assistance could consist of payment for services from a career counseling office, such as the one at Marquette or Stritch. These services provide the individual with information about how to "translate" their skills from one career to another. We could then offer three sessions of outplacement assistance which provides help with resume writing, interviewing skills, etc.
- 2) If the priest does not want to seek voluntary laicization but would rather have the penal process imposed, we would have an obligation of minimal support from the time he loses office until the case is complete. During the time of the trial, which could be up to a year, we would provide a monthly subsidy at the level of a pensioned priest. At the conclusion of the trial, if there is a penalty imposed of dismissal from the clerical state, your canonical obligation of support ceases but some small amount (obviously less than the \$20,000 above) could be given in charity.

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Rev Jerome Wagner  
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- 3) In all instances we would maintain the priest on our health insurance for one year at our expense. He would then be free to ask for an additional six months of coverage but at his own expense. This coverage would cease as soon as he had employment providing this benefit.

While this plan may not be exactly what you hoped for, it is a genuine effort to respond justly and equitably.

Sincerely yours in the Lord,



V. Rev. Joseph F. Hornacek  
Vicar for Clergy

JFH/ks

ADOM022341



February 8, 2005

Jerome A. Wagner

Malone, WI 53049-1239

Dear Jerry,

Thank you for your letter of February 2, 2005. I'm sorry about the hurt that contact brings. Please, if you do not wish contact because it is too hurtful, just let me know. My intention is not to cause you stress.

I am happy to offer answers to the questions you pose in your letter. If Rome denies the petition for a dispensation from prescription and instructions for a penal trial, the Archbishop could do nothing or petition for an administrative act of laicization. If the petition is granted we will receive instructions for conducting a trial here in Milwaukee. That would be implemented through Paul Hartmann's office.

Regarding a request to return to the lay state, this can be initiated at any time prior to a final disposition. Once the outcome of a trial is had, it is too late, I believe. Once Rome has executed an administrative act of laicization it is too late. Before those dates, one can voluntarily request a return to the lay state.

When a priest requests voluntary laicization, the archdiocese of Milwaukee has a custom of helping the priest through the period of transition financially. At the filing of the petition, the priest is given \$10,000. Through the period of the transition he is supported at a sustenance level, which is what you are currently on. When the laicization is granted and is accepted by the priest another \$10,000 is offered. Ecclesiastically, you are not allowed to present yourself as a priest nor function in any way as a priest, the exception being in death the possibility of anointing and/or confession.

Regarding publicity, the Archbishop has limited any announcements to the priests of the Archdiocese, utilizing his first Thursday of the month circular.

I hope this is helpful to you, Jerry. Please be assured of my continuing prayers for you. I wish you only good things, Jerry. God bless.

If I can be of help to you in another way, please do not hesitate to contact me.

In the Lord Jesus,

Very Reverend Curt J. Frederick

ARCHDIOCESE OF MILWAUKEE  
DEPARTMENT FOR CLERGY

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March 29, 2005

Jerôme Wagner

Malone, WI 53049-1239

Dear Jerry,

Thank you for alerting me to my error in the last letter. I apologize for that.

The severance package is as was stated in the letter of February 8, 2005. The archdiocese offers a payment of \$10,000 when one submits to the process. The archdiocese continues sustenance throughout the process and at the conclusion of the process and the priest's acceptance of the rescript another payment of \$10,000 is offered.

I believe that was the only issue that you raised in the phone message. If I am missing something or I can be of help in another way, please let me know, Jerry

God bless you.

In the Lord Jesus,

*Curt*

Very Reverend Curt J. Frederick  
Vicar for Clergy