

Priest researcher leaves Jesuits over Vatican fiat to destroy work

Los Angeles (NC) — A Jesuit priest in Los Angeles said he has quit the Society of Jesus rather than comply with an order to destroy his survey of Catholic bishops' views on celibacy and women priests.

Father Terrance A. Sweeney, a Jesuit for nearly 24 years, signed a formal decree of dismissal Aug. 15 at Loyola Marymount University, where he was in residence.

He said orders to "cease and desist all work on the survey" and to destroy all the material he had gathered came last December from the provincial of the California Jesuits, Father John W. Clark of Los Gatos, Calif.

Father Clark issued the orders at the request of the Jesuit superior general in Rome, Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, and of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, head of the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, according to Father Sweeney.

Father Clark told National Catholic News Service Aug. 19 that he was unable to talk about the situation because of the confidential relationship between a priest and his superior.

Father Sweeney said he decided to leave the order rather than destroy his work, which he said was "an attempt to save the priesthood itself by bringing to the surface the crisis it is in."

Father Sweeney said he remains a priest but has been released from vows of poverty and obedience. However, he cannot function as a priest unless a bishop accepts him into his diocese. Archbishop Roger Mahony of Los Angeles has already refused to accept him, he said.

Last November, Father Sweeney sent a four-question survey and drew responses from 145 of the 312 U.S. bishops to whom he sent it and from 10 of 122 cardinals around the world who received it. Respondents were not asked to identify themselves.

According to Father Sweeney, the prelates

were asked if they approved or disapproved of changing the church's rule of mandatory celibacy and its bar on women deacons and priests. He also asked if they approved of allowing married and resigned priests to return to active ministry.

He did not reveal details of the responses, but said fewer than half of the bishops or cardinals who responded said they disagreed with the church's stands on women priests and mandatory celibacy.

"The data won't be earth-shattering from a sociological point of view, but from a theological perspective it will be. If even one bishop differs from Rome, it is significant," Father Sweeney told the Los Angeles Times.

He said he sent a copy of his research Aug. 15 to Pope John Paul II.

Father Robert Caro, head of the Jesuit community at Loyola Marymount University, said Father Sweeney "requested dismissal. It's his choice to leave the (Jesuit) order," said Father Caro, who declined further comment.

Father Sweeney is author of two books and has won several Emmy awards for television writing and production. He said he has worked as writer, producer or technical adviser on nearly 100 film and television productions, including "The Thorn Birds" and "Barnaby Jones."

He said he learned last November that his survey had provoked complaints, when Archbishop Mahony telephoned to tell him that Archbishop Pio Laghi, papal pronuncio to the United States, had expressed concern.

In a follow-up letter Dec. 6, according to Father Sweeney, Archbishop Mahony complained that "the survey is so inadequate as to be useless as a research tool."

A week later, Father Sweeney said, he got orders from his religious superior to halt his survey and destroy all materials related to it.

Bishop calls for study of diocesan finances

Bishop Matthew H. Clark has announced the formation of a five-year financial planning task force to develop and recommend a financial plan for the Diocese of Rochester for the years 1987 to 1992. The task force is chaired by Dr. Rose Marie Beston, president of Nazareth College, and facilitated by Dr. D. Robert Frisina, vice president and secretary of Rochester Institute of Technology.

At the task force's first meeting June 26 and 27 at Notre Dame Retreat House in Canandaigua, the bishop specified four objectives:

- 1) to give its best counsel about the funds our diocese can hope to realize to support a generous but realistic pastoral program;
- 2) to recommend procedures to simplify administration, thus freeing our personnel for ministry;
- 3) to suggest how we might utilize more effectively the personnel, finances, building and properties with which we are blessed; and
- 4) to suggest a way to continue the effort begun by this task force.

The members of the five-year financial planning task force are: Bishop Clark, Betty Alt-

er, Father Gerald Appelby, Jann Armantrout, Father Peter Bayer, Dr. Beston, Teryle Brewley, Thomas Clement, Friederich Grasberger, Victor Hadeed, Father Joseph Jankowiak, Sister Jean Marie Kearse, James Knauf, David Metz, Father James Moynihan, Father John Mulligan, Dr. Paul Pagery, Ann Schnepf, Frank Stotz, Dr. Frisina, David Scholl and Lee Pelkey.

"We have divided into seven work groups to prepare for our next convening," Dr. Beston said. "The task force members will be calling on various established groups in the diocese to help us respond to the bishop's challenges. We are also inviting interested persons to contact the convenors of the individual groups if they would like to participate in this process."

The work groups and convenors are: Thanks Giving Appeal, Father Moynihan; government policies, Schnepf; economic trends, Knauf; community giving, Altier; social trends and public attitudes, Grasberger; diocesan Pastoral Center, Stotz; utilization of ministerial services, Sister Jeanne Marie; special issues, Brewley.

The next two major meetings of the task force will be October 2-3 and December 4-5.

Construction project approved for St. James Mercy Hospital

The State Review and Planning Council and the Public Health Council recently approved the application by St. James Mercy Hospital for a \$23-million construction project.

The project includes a multi-phase modernization and construction program at the St. James Mercy Hospital site, and acquisition of the former Bethesda Hospital for operation as a skilled nursing facility.

Annual Red Mass scheduled for Catholic lawyers' guild

The 41st annual Red Mass, sponsored by the St. Thomas More Lawyers Guild, will take place at 12:15 p.m. on Friday, September 12, at St. Mary's Church, 15 St. Mary's Place, Rochester. The public is invited to join with attorneys, paralegals, court personnel, judges, state police and members of area police, sheriff's and fire departments in marking the opening of the

public Health Council approval permits the hospital to become a licensed provider of long-term care. Sister Mary Rene said the opening of the new 55-bed nursing home and respite care services is projected for October or November.

A formal license will be granted upon completion of several requirements, including naming the facility, completing renovations and meeting staff regulations.

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fall court term. Bishop Dennis W. Hickey will celebrate the Mass, and a homily will be given by Monsignor Donald J. Harrington, C.M., president of Niagara University.

Following the service a reception will be held at St. Mary's rectory.

Call Andrew Weidman at (716)454-1990 for information.



Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Along the Way

At this time of the year when the relative freedom of summer gradually gives way to post-Labor Day demands, we are especially aware of adjustment and transition.

I think of parents whose first child begins kindergarten this year and of parents whose last child has gone off to college. I think of all of our beautiful young people advancing to another level of education, of all who are beginning new jobs, of those who are in the first days of married life after summer weddings.

All of those mentioned above will experience changes in their lives. Some will experience them directly; other will experience them indirectly through changes in the lives of people close to them. But in either case, the persons affected will know both the demands and consolations of these new realities.

Parents will miss and worry about the tiny one now off to her or his first day of school, but they will appreciate the growth the child experiences because the child's world is larger. Those who bid goodbye to their last child will realize a new sense of independence, but will find that they need to find new ways of relating to one another. The student at the higher level and the person in another job will know the excitement of fresh challenge, but may be aware as well of some sense of uncertainty that leaves them wondering whether they'll make it or not. The newly married so absorbed in one another will face, if they have not already, the reality that faithful love must come from deep within a person and is seldom easy.

It's good for us to be aware of such calls

to change and their implications in our lives, because this is in reflection on such experiences that we come to the deeper meaning of the ordinary experience of human life. We are able in such prayer to appreciate that in times of adjustment God might be calling us to the kind of self-surrender and concern for others that joins us deeply to the heart and saving mission of Christ.

We can so easily conceive of daily Christian life as a kind of qualifying round that is meant to be drab and hard and in which we will be graded primarily on discipline. But when we are granted the grace to know the loving presence of God in the ordinary events of life — perhaps especially in the very demanding or painful ones — then we can appreciate our life as a daily participation in God's ongoing creative and redemptive activity.

Here you have in my own language some attempt to comment on the significance of daily human activity, of change and of our participation now in the life of the Risen Christ. I believe what I have said, although I confess that I am not always able to do it or as faithful to it as I should be.

I offer it to you with the hope that it might invite you to a fresh and faith-touched consideration of the changing and unchanging elements in your own life. Sometimes we can reverse the two or become confused in other ways. That's always possible. But the Lord wants us to search daily for the pearl of great price, and He promises to be with us always in the journey on which that search calls us.

Peace to all

Perez-Albuerne to head justice and peace efforts

Lourdes Perez-Albuerne has been appointed associate director for justice and peace of the diocesan Division of Social Ministry.

The appointment was announced August 11 by Father John A. Firpo, director of the division.

Perez-Albuerne has served the diocese in various capacities for 10 years. For the past year, she has been issue specialist for the Division of Social Ministries. Prior to that appointment, she served for eight years as coordinator for the International Justice and Peace Commission. She has also worked as a volunteer staff person in the educational section of the Office of Human Development.

Perez-Albuerne succeeds Mary Heidkamp, who resigned the post in order to relocate outside of Rochester.

Among the new associate director's priorities will be the U.S. bishop's pastorals on peace and the economy, Central America, legislative concerns and life issues.

"I look forward to continuing the programs already under way and the direction the Department of Justice and Peace has taken in the past years," she said. "The Diocese of Rochester has carved a niche for itself nationally as a forerunner in dealing with peace and justice issues."

Perez-Albuerne and her husband, Evelyn, are members of Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Greece. They have three children: Esio, a second-year medical student at Johns Hopkins University; Carlo, a senior at McQuaid Jesuit High School; and Lourdes, a senior at Nazareth College.

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