



CARDINAL'S RESIDENCE
2101 COMMONWEALTH AVENUE
BRIGHTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02135-3192

April 29, 1999

His Eminence, Angelo Cardinal Sodano
Secretariat of State
Apostolic Palace
00120, Vatican City State, EUROPE
Personal and Confidential

Your Eminence,

I am writing to support the request made by His Excellency, Thomas J. Tobin, Bishop of Youngstown, Ohio, in regard to the case of Reverend Robert M. Burns, a priest of that Diocese. With Bishop Tobin, I am grateful and appreciative of your pastoral understanding of the difficult situation facing this local Church. The immoral and illegal activities of Father Burns during his stay in the Archdiocese of Boston are the cause, potential and actual, of grave scandal.

I have asked my Delegate to prepare the enclosed Memorandum. You can see that in dealing with Father Burns, the Archdiocese of Boston mistakenly accepted his word of contrition as a pledge against further acts of sexual molestation of children. Despite treatment for this behavior, Father Burns continued to commit these egregious acts. He is presently incarcerated for the same type of behavior, unrelated to his work in the Archdiocese of Boston.

I would greatly appreciate your consideration of this case and I request that you present it to the Holy Father with your recommendation. The sad conclusion I draw from all the evidence is that the best course for all involved would be dispensation from all the obligations of priesthood for Reverend Robert M. Burns. I believe this action would benefit the Church without causing undue harm to the priest.

Again, Your Eminence, I am grateful for your assistance. I ask your prayers for all who are so deeply touched by this tragedy.

With warm personal regards, I am,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Archbishop of Boston

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