

office of the Bishop - P. O. BOX 610 - CROOKSTON, MINNESOTA 56716

Tel: (218) 281-4533

Fax: (218) 281-3328

7 December 2005

His Excellency  
William J. Levada, Prefect  
Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith  
P.za del S. Uffizio  
00193 Rome  
ITALY

Your Excellency:

In accordance with Part II, Article 13 of the motu proprio *Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela*, I am writing to inform you of a case involving the sexual abuse of a minor by a cleric of the Diocese of Ootacamund. This cleric was serving as an extern priest in the Diocese of Crookston at the time the alleged abuse occurred, and the victim is a sixteen-year-old girl who resides in the diocese. At this time the cleric has returned to his diocese of incardination. Nonetheless, the circumstances of the alleged abuse, along with the provisions found in the *Essential Norms for Diocesan Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests and Deacons*, necessitated that I order a preliminary investigation into the allegations. The investigation has now been concluded and, in my opinion, the results of this investigation suggest that it is probable that a canonical *delict* was committed. Thus I am transmitting to your esteemed Congregation the results of this investigation, and requesting that, due to the special circumstances of the case, the Congregation call the case to itself.

**Father Joseph Pavanivel Jeyapaul** was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Ootacamund on 19 May 1982. In September of 2004 he came to the Diocese of Crookston to serve as an extern priest for a period of at least three years. Fr. Jeyapaul was received as an extern based on reports of good conduct received from his Diocesan Administrator, Very Rev. Msgr. A. Antony Samy. A background check was conducted at that time, and no items were uncovered that were a cause for action. Fr. Jeyapaul served as parochial vicar to the parishes of Warroad, Baudette, Williams and Falun from October of 2004 to May of 2005, and then was appointed administrator of Blessed Sacrament Church in Greenbush, Minnesota, of St. Joseph in Middle River, and of St. Edward in Karlstad, Minnesota. In September of 2005 he returned to India to be at the bedside of his dying mother. He left with my permission, and with expectation that he would be returning to the diocese to complete his term.

However, beginning in September of 2005 the Diocese of Crookston began receiving reports of inappropriate behavior on the part of the Fr. Jeyapaul with a sixteen-year-old girl, **Girl 1**. The first reports received by the Diocese suggested that Fr. Jeyapaul was seemingly attempting to 'seduce' **Girl 1** by buying her gifts, cooking her meals at his

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Diocese of Crookston

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In the course of the preliminary investigation it became apparent that Fr. Jeyapaul was indeed counseling the alleged victim about her interest in religious life, and that he was using this circumstance as a means of getting access to the girl away from the supervision of her parents. For instance, according to the evidence collected during the preliminary investigation, on one occasion (22 August 2005) Fr. Jeyapaul visited with the parents of the alleged victim about her discernment process. Following the visit Fr. Jeyapaul asked that Girl 1 show him around the neighboring town, Thief River Falls, where she attended school. However, rather than going to Thief River Falls, Fr. Jeyapaul took Girl 1, then sixteen-years-old, to his rectory in Greenbush, where, according to her report, he proceeded to kiss her repeatedly, pulling her on top of him and at one point touching her beneath her clothing. According to the testimony collected, there were other incidents of similar behavior between Fr. Jeyapaul and Girl 1, always occurring at the rectory in Greenbush.

As has been mentioned, before the investigation into his conduct was begun, Fr. Jeyapaul returned to India to visit his dying mother. Prior to his leaving he misappropriated a substantial amount of money belonging to the parish, and also attempted to give a diocesan vehicle to a third party as payment for an outstanding debt. This matter has been brought to the attention of Fr. Jeyapaul and his local ordinary, as have the allegations of sexual misconduct. To date, Fr. Jeyapaul has chosen not to respond to questions presented to him by the investigator. With a civil process pending and a criminal investigation ongoing, I have requested that Fr. Jeyapaul return to the diocese so that he can be made accountable for his actions. I have had no indication from him that he intends to return.

Following the conclusion of the preliminary investigation, I removed his faculties and asked him to refrain from exercising any public ministry in my territory. I also instructed Fr. Jeyapaul to avoid any further contact with the alleged victim. Since Fr. Jeyapaul is presumed to be residing in his home diocese, the Diocese of Crookston is not currently providing him with any sort of financial support.

Because of the recent date of the alleged misconduct, it is impossible to say that Father Jeyapaul does not at present pose a risk to minors. Furthermore, because of the nature of sexual abuse, it is not possible to predict with any accuracy whether he would pose such a risk in the future. I have alerted the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to my concerns regarding Fr. Jeyapaul, to prevent him from attempting to engage in public ministry in another diocese in this country. At the same time, the Diocese of Crookston will do whatever it can to negotiate with any victims that might be discovered, as well as to assist with their emotional and spiritual healing.

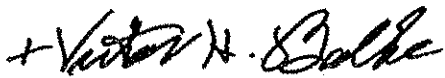
Given the unusual circumstances of this case, namely that the accused priest is an extern to my diocese who has since returned to his home country, I am asking that your esteemed Congregation call the matter to itself, and apply whatever penalty you feel appropriate. To this end I am sending you the complete report from the preliminary investigation. For my part, I cannot in good conscience allow this matter to be passed over because the cleric has left my territory. In my mind that would be a shameful act of betrayal towards the women and girls in India to whom Fr. Jeyapaul could at present pose a serious risk. I would add that I have been in communication with Fr. Jeyapaul's Diocesan Administrator about this matter, but that he has not

been successful in ending Fr. Jeyapaul's attempts to communicate with the victim and her family.

Your Excellency, I am extremely grateful to you and to all the members of your esteemed Congregation for the great assistance you have provided to the bishops of the United States, and for the leadership you have exercised in helping to resolve these issues which have so wounded the Church.

If you need further information in this case, I will be pleased to provide it to the best of my abilities. I send you my own personal regards and the assurance of my prayers.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "+Victor H. Balke". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

+Victor H. Balke  
Bishop of Crookston