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15 November 2006

His Excellency  
Cardinal 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 matter 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.

This is not the first occasion on which I am reporting to you allegations against this priest. In December of 2005 I transmitted to your esteemed Congregation the results of a previous investigation, also involving a sixteen-year-old girl. You responded that you had advised the cleric's ordinary to see that his priestly life was monitored. However, given the most recent allegations, which are much more serious, I am afraid that a new investigation, and possibly a more severe penalty, is necessitated.

In most cases, 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*, would necessitate that I order a preliminary investigation into the allegations. However, given that the Diocese of Crookston is prohibited from investigating the matter because of an impending civil suit, and because the cleric is no longer under my jurisdiction, beginning such an investigation at this time would appear pointless. Thus I am transmitting to your esteemed Congregation the information that I have been able to assemble, and I am requesting that, due to the special circumstances of the case, your Congregation investigate the matter 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

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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 rectory, and kissing her while telling her that such behavior was acceptable because he was a priest and she was discerning a vocation to religious life.

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.

Following the conclusion of this 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.

Now, in 2006, the Diocese of Crookston has received reports of similar behavior having taken place between Fr. Jeyapaul and a second girl, **Girl 2**, also considering religious life. According to the reports made by the girl's father to the local priests and then to the Diocese (enclosed), Fr. Jeyapaul had 'rubbed up against her' in the rectory at Middle River, in the confessional at Middle River, and then had fondled her breasts, exposed himself to her, and forced his penis into her mouth. Fr. Jeyapaul was made aware of these most recent allegations, and responded to them. His response, along with that of his ordinary, is enclosed.

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 the victims, as well as to assist with their emotional and spiritual healing.

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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,

*+Victor H. Balke*

+Victor H. Balke  
Bishop of Crookston

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