

March 28, 2002

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His Holiness, John Paul II
Vatican City
Europe

 COPY

Your Holiness:

Under the provisions of canon law, I humbly request a dispensation from the obligations connected with the priesthood, including priestly celibacy, and ask that I be returned to the lay state.

My name is John Peter Lenihan. I was born in County Kerry, Ireland on March 5, 1946. I was baptized into the Roman Catholic Church on March 6, 1946 at Ballymacelligott Parish, County Kerry Ireland.

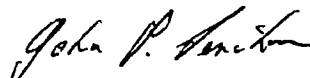
I was committed to priesthood from a very early age and attended Salesian College, Pallaskenry, County Limerick, Ireland for high school at a boy's boarding school from 1958 at the age of twelve until 1963. I immediately entered All Hallows Seminary, Dublin, Ireland. I progressed through philosophy (no degree in those days) and theology and was ordained June 15, 1969 at the age of 23.

I immediately came to Los Angeles Archdiocese and was assigned as associate pastor at All Souls Church in Alhambra, California. I have been in parish work for all of my 33 years as a priest. I was removed as Pastor of St. Edward Parish, Dana Point, California on September 18, 2001 and spend four months in residential treatment at Southdown, Toronto, Canada.

I was totally celibate until 1978 when I became involved with a teenager and that was followed by a sexual relationship with another teen shortly afterward. Both have now come to light and resulted in lawsuits, one in 1991, the other in 2002. Subsequently I had a number of adult relationships. After counseling, spiritual direction and pressure from the diocese, media, and plaintiffs and in the hope of personal salvation and holiness I desire this dispensation.

It is with deep regret that I present this petition to you. When ordained, I had fully intended a life of faithful service to Christ and the Church as a priest. However, I am now convinced it is vital for my spiritual welfare and for the good of the Church to submit this petition. I do so after careful deliberation. I have left the active priestly ministry, but maintain a deep love for Christ and a desire to actively practice my faith. I do not believe the granting of a dispensation would create any new scandal. People are aware of my status and family and friends have been most supportive and understanding of my decision. Therefore, I humbly and prayerfully entrust this petition to you, asking for a favorable decision.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



John Peter Lenihan
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