

DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

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February 12, 2008

William Cardinal Levada
Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith
00120 Citta del Vaticano
Palazzo del S. Uffizio
Rome, Italy

PROT. N. 460/2003-24019

Your Eminence:

Enclosed is a copy of my November 8, 2006 letter [Appendix 1] to you [Prot N. 460/2003-24019] which conveyed my urgent request for the removal from the clerical state and dispensation from the obligation of celibacy for Reverend Francis G. DeLuca, a priest of this Diocese who has admitted his guilt with regard to past offenses against the Sixth Commandment of the Decalogue with minors. I have also enclosed a reply to the aforementioned letter sent by His Excellency Most Reverend Angelo Amato, dated December 19, 2006 [Appendix 1], and by which Archbishop Amato instructed me to determine whether or not Fr. DeLuca was willing to submit a request for laicization.

Following the receipt of Archbishop Amato's response, our Vicar General/Moderator of the Curia, Msgr. Thomas J. Cini, spoke with Fr. DeLuca concerning his readiness to seek the favor of a dispensation. In the first conversation, Fr. DeLuca indicated that he would be willing to do so. However, in subsequent conversations, and after he had first spoken with a canon lawyer, Fr. DeLuca then showed some reluctance to writing the letter. [see enclosed November 6, 2007 memo from Msgr. Cini to Bishop Saltarelli, Appendix 2]

In light of my inquiries into Fr. DeLuca's state of mind on this matter, and with his refusal to do so before me, I now respectfully ask that your Congregation decree the removal of Fr. DeLuca from the

clerical state along with the grant of a dispensation from the obligation of celibacy. I ask that this be done by decree rather than by a penal process because:

- 1) Fr. DeLuca has admitted his guilt.
- 2) All facts and circumstances demonstrate that Fr. DeLuca acted with full deliberation when committing these grave acts.
- 3) He is a serial child abuser who has done inestimable damage to individuals.
- 4) He has caused great scandal to arise which has harmed the Christian community and members of our civil communities.
- 3) The dismissal of Fr. DeLuca from the clerical state would greatly assist in the restoration of justice and, we may pray, the repentance and reform of Fr. DeLuca himself.
- 4) The enclosed September 10, 2007 article from the Syracuse Post Standard [Appendix 3] shows: "Former Catholic Priest Francis DeLuca will serve 60 days in jail for molesting a teenage boy in Syracuse, where he settled after retiring in Delaware. DeLuca, 77, at first faced only probation, but City Judge Kate Rosenthal backed out of that deal. She said it appeared DeLuca had failed to understand the consequences of his conduct."

In addition, in the enclosed September 11, 2007 *Wilmington News Journal* [Appendix 3] Judge Rosenthal addresses Fr. DeLuca: "Your probation officer asked if you were surprised that the victim had disclosed this [his sexual abuse by Fr. DeLuca] and you said you were surprised. You felt you had done a lot for this young man...With regard to your Delaware victims, you thought of yourself as a parental figure. You were well-liked by those victims. It does not appear to me that you have gained an iota of insight into your actions or the impact of the abuse on this man."

There would still exist the danger upon his release from prison that Fr. DeLuca would abuse again given his pathology. In light of this determination that Fr. DeLuca is not reformed of his wrongs nor able to control his actions, imposition of a life of prayer and penance would

constitute an insufficient response to the grave wrongs perpetrated by Fr. DeLuca.

5) Fr. DeLuca's actions resulted in a civil legal action being brought against myself, former Bishop Robert E. Mulvey, and Monsignor Thomas Cini. Details of this are contained in the enclosed Sept. 21, 2007 article from a local media outlet, the *News Journal* [Appendix 3].

6) Yet more significantly, in July 2007, the Governor of Delaware signed into law the Child Protection Act, approved by the legislature of the State of Delaware, which lifts the civil statute of limitations for two years [Appendix 4]. This is the most severe and unjust law in the country [California had a one year window.] It is directed at the Catholic Church and does not include the public schools. The Diocese is facing millions of dollars of civil suits and extensive media coverage for years to come. Fr. DeLuca's actions caused some to unjustly approve this legislation.

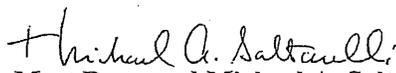
In closing, Your Eminence, may I express how important it is to me as Chief Pastor of this Diocese, and for the common good of the Christian faithful, that as a new Bishop prepares to lead this Diocese he is not weighed down by unresolved canonical matters given the burdensome challenges mentioned above. Thank you for your consideration of this request and your helpful assistance.

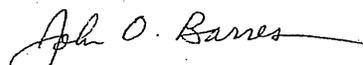
Sincerely yours in Christ,

PATRICIA SLEPESKY-BOSSI
NOTARY PUBLIC
STATE OF DELAWARE
My Commission Expires Sept. 24, 2009



Patricia S. Bossi
Notary for the Curia


Most Reverend Michael A. Saltarelli
Bishop of Wilmington


Rev. Msgr. John O. Barres
Chancellor