

41. FR. JOSE J. MENDEZ

Parents:

Professed: August 19, 1979
St. Augustine's Monastery
Kansas City, Kansas

Ordained: August 12, 1983
Bishop Alphonse Gallegos, O.A.R.
Our Lady of the Pillar Parish

Residences: St. Augustine's Monastery, Kansas City, August, 1977 -
August, 1978
Monteagudo, Spain, August, 1978 - August, 1979
Tagaste Monastery, Suffern, NY, August, 1979 -
August, 1983
Casa Moreno, Santa Ana, CA, August, 1983 - June, 1985
San Miguel Parish, Casa Padre Ezequiel Moreno, Los
Angeles, CA, June, 1985-October, 1987
Cristo Rey Parish, Los Angeles, CA, October, 1987 -
June, 1990
St. Augustine Priory, June, 1990 -

Degrees: B.A. in Social Welfare, California State University,
Long Beach, CA, 1977
M.Div. in Pastoral Ministry, Immaculate Conception
Seminary, Mahwah, NJ, 1982

Offices: Vocation Director, 1983 -
Secretariat of Vocations, Formation, 1984 -
Assistant Director of Pre-postulants, Casa Moreno,
Santa Ana, CA, 1983-1985
Sub-prior, St. Augustine Priory, June, 1990 -

Works: Religious Vocation Board, Archdiocese of Los Angeles, CA,
1987-1988

REDACTED

OUR LADY OF THE PILLAR PARISH

AUGUSTINIAN RECOLLECT FATHERS

1622 WEST 6TH STREET

P.O. BOX 3007

SANTA ANA, CALIFORNIA 92703

PHONE (714) 543-1700

Fra. Jose J. Mendez, O.A.R.

Birth: [REDACTED]

Schools:

REDACTED

Employment: St. Mary's Medical CTR - Long Beach
Department of Public Social Services - Los Angeles
Jewish Community Ctr - San Francisco

Entered the Augustinian Recollects in 1977 -age 29

Postulancy - St. Augustine's Monastery Kansas City, KS 1977-78

Novitiate - Convento de la Virgen de Camino Monteagudo, Navarra, Spain 1978-79

Theology - Tagaste Monastery, Suffern, N.Y. 1979-1983

(Immac. Conc. Seminary)

Deacon Internship - Our Lady of the Pillar, Santa Ana, CA Feb.-Aug. 1983

Summer Pastoral Programs :

1st yr. Most Holy Crucifix, New York City (Little Italy)

2nd Yr. Prelature of Madera, Chihuahua, Mexico O.A.R. Missions

3rd Yr. Monasterio de San Millan de la Cogolla, La Rioja, Spain

✓ Ordination August 12, 1983 Friday 7:00p.m. Our Lady of the Pillar, Santa Ana
by Bishop Alfonso Gallegos, O.A.R. D.D attending Archbishop Tomas Clavel, D.D.
August 13, First Mass (English) St. Anthony Long Beach Sat. 5:30pm
August 14, First Mass (Spanish) Our Lady of the Pillar, Santa Ana 1:30pm



PRELATURA DE MADERA
APDO. 4 - TEL. 28
CD. MADERA, CHIH.- MEX.

RVDO. P. TOMAS O'LEARY
MAHWAH, NEW JERSEY.-

Julio 26 de 1981.-

Muy distinguido Rvdo. P. Tomás O'Leary:

Con mucho placer le presento mis saludos y el presente informe sobre el estudiante agustin recoleto Fr. José J. Méndez.

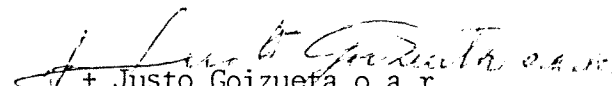
Fr. José J. Méndez ha estado entre nosotros los meses de junio y julio. Lo he observado muy de cerca y en todo cuanto se le ha ordenado lo ha realizado con responsabilidad y objetividad.

Sus trabajos han sido de pastoral y su labor ha resultado muy positiva para las parroquias de la Prelatura que lo han solicitado: Madera - Yécora y La Mesa del Huracán.

No puedo menos que extender mi testimonio con palabras de alabanza por todo cuanto ha realizado Fr. José J. Méndez en la Prelatura. Es para mí una gran satisfacción poder constatarlo así.

Quedo de usted humilde servidor y hermano en Cristo.

Suyo afectísimo en el Señor.


+ Justo Goizueta o.a.r.
obispo-prelado.



PARROQUIA DEL SGDO. CORAZON — CATEDRAL

Apdo. 17

Tel. (158) 2-03-49

CD. MADERA, CHIH., MEX.

Julio 26 de 1981

Rev. Thomas O'Leary
Immaculate Conception Seminary
Mahwah, New Jersey

Muy estimado Padre:

Mi saludo afectuoso pidiendo al Señor los llene de bendiciones y satisfacciones sacerdotales.

Por medio de estas líneas me comunico con Ud. para darle mis impresiones de la convivencia con nuestro Corista Fr. José Méndez. No ha sido mucho el tiempo, pero suficiente para conocer algo de tantas cosas positivas que tendrá.

Hicimos juntos un viaje a la alejada Parroquia de Yécora, enclavada en la Sierra Madre Occidental. Es lugar difícil en sus comunicaciones y José fue una gran ayuda en los apuros que pasamos en el camino; luego trabajó muy bien allí como lo ha seguido haciendo los días que ha permanecido en esta Parroquia. Concreto los siguientes puntos:

- 1.- Desde el primer día se puso a disposición para cualquier tipo de trabajo, tanto manual (arreglo de muchas cosas de la casa) como el apostolado (asistencia a grupos de instrucción, orientación a jóvenes en Yécora, dirección del rezo del Rosario, administración del bautismo, etc...)
- 2.- Se ha adaptado completamente a la forma de vivir de la gente acomodándose a sus costumbres, alimentación y convivencia.
- 3.- Ha manifestado un carácter muy abierto, alegre y de gran compañero. Siempre con mucho ánimo en todo.
- 4.- Hago también notar su participación en los actos de comunidad de este ministerio, sobre todo rezo de las Horas y meditación.

Nada más por el momento. Me despido ofreciéndole mis pobres oraciones y encomendándome a las suyas.

P. Germán Sanz J. O.A.R.

PARROQUIA SAN JOSE ARTESANO
PP. AGUSTINOS RECOLETOS
MESA DEL HURACAN, CHIH.

Mesa del Huracán a 31 de Julio de 1981

Rvdo. Tomás O' Leary:

Tenemos el placer de comunicarle que Fray José J. Méndez ha compartido con nosotros durante una temporada la vida religiosa y las tareas pastorales, ayudándonos en:

- La catequesis infantil de La Mesa del Huracán.
- Celebraciones de la Palabra y Predicación en las Rancherías durante los domingos y ferias.
- Asistencia al grupo bíblico de El Laro-Maderal.
- Celebración de la Penitencia comunitaria.
- Horas Santas Eucarísticas. (Mesa y Largo).
- Celebración del Sacramento del Bautismo, con licencia del Sr. Obispo.

Ambos sacerdotes, Párroco y Vicario, estamos satisfechos de Fray José, de su trabajo y forma de trabajar y de su comportamiento como religioso.

Ha sido una gran ayuda para nosotros y nos gustaría que en sus vacaciones volviese de nuevo para acompañarnos en nuestro caminar sacerdotal y recoleto, compartiendo con nuestra pequeña comunidad la oración, el trabajo, nuestra esperanza y el amor.

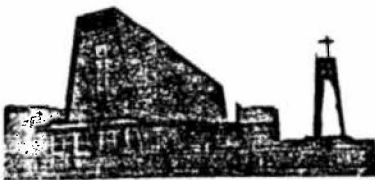
Deseándole la bendición del Señor Jesús, se despiden

P. TOMAS PEREZ CATALAN

P. Tomás Pérez O.A.R.

P. JOSE R. BELLOSO

Fr. José Ramón Belloso O.A.R.





Order of the Augustinian Recollects

PROVINCE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

29 RIDGEWAY AVENUE

WEST ORANGE, NJ 07052

(201) 731-0616 FAX (201) 731-1033

Most Reverend Father General
Order of Augustinian Recollects

Dear Father General:

Report of Prior Provincial on Fr. Jose Mendez, O.A.R.

I first became acquainted with Father Mendez when I was his prefect of postulants at our monastery in Kansas City, KS, in 1978. My recollections include that of a very personable young man who seemed to be unaware of his intellectual deficiencies even though he had a college degree. I remember trying to help him with his English and Spanish, which were both less than could be expected from a college graduate.

As Prior Provincial I became aware of an accusation against Fr. Mendez when he was a deacon in 1982. After investigation of the alleged threat of a paternity suit, the accusation was dismissed as coming from a very immature young lady. At the time, I recall telling Fr. Mendez that it seemed he was innocent of any gross indiscretions; however, my feeling was that he had been imprudent in his visits and conversation with the family of the individual.

During my first two terms as provincial (1981-87), I attempted to be both fatherly and direct. I visited his widowed mother who seemed to be overprotective of her only son. She continually warned his superiors that women (including religious sisters) "were after him". This was just brushed off as the worry of an overprotective mother.

During the seven year provincialate of my successor (1987-94), it was widely known in the province that Fr. Mendez was coddled and favored by the provincial, and that Fr. Mendez had free reign with funds dedicated to the vocation ministry. His effectiveness as vocation director decreased with each passing year. He was saddened when he was not named superior of our new seminary in Oxnard in 1990, even though his performance left much to be desired as a vocation director. His homilies and conferences were childish, and after the initial novelty these seemed to lack any real substance.

Upon my reelection as prior provincial in 1994, I learned of further indiscretions and accusations made during the previous administration. It seems there were serious accusations against Fr. Mendez regarding a young lady while he was at San Miguel Parish in Los Angeles, and also while assigned to Cristo Rey Parish in Los

Angeles. Msgr. Thomas Curry, at that time Vicar for Religious in Los Angeles, was involved in helping to clear up the case, and certain criminal charges concerning sexual indiscretions were dropped.

Father Mendez introduced a certain young lady as "his cousin" to me during one of my visits to Oxnard in 1991. His mother died during the celebration of our Provincial Chapter in June of 1994 when I was once again elected provincial. After attempting to be compassionate and understanding after his mother's death he was assigned to our parish in Mexico City.

The transfer to Mexico was made after consultation with the Provincial Council. It was the opinion that his prolonged stay in California was not beneficial to Fr. Mendez. Besides minor physical ailments there was no notable change in behavior.

Upon making the provincial visitation to Mexico City in November of 1995, Fr. Mendez related to me that indeed he had fathered a child of the person he was passing off as "his cousin" in Los Angeles, and that the child was now six years old. I attempted to encourage him to remember the forgiveness promised by the Lord, and get himself into a counseling program for priests. He replied that it was too late, and informed me that the mother of the child did not need any financial support since she was able to care for the child along with two other children.

He insisted that his vocation really was that of his mother who continually pushed him into the seminary. I offered to help him in any way possible; perhaps a change of assignment with therapy. He repeatedly answered, "I'd rather be a good christian than a bad priest". He then informed me that he had made plans to leave in early January of 1996, that he had a job offer in Florida and wanted to start over again. Telephone conversations with him up until the time of his leaving Mexico without permission produced no results but the repetition of the same ideas.

It is my opinion that Father Mendez probably should never have been professed a religious or ordained a priest, and that his vocation was at least partially the result of his acquiescence to the appeals of his mother. Since he insisted on leaving without permission, makes no effort to reply to letters and the counsel to seek a regularizing of his situation by applying for a return to the lay state through approved channels, the only recourse is to seek his dismissal from the Order.

May the Lord keep you in his peace.

West Orange, New Jersey
August 16, 1996



Fr. Francis E. Peluso, O.A.R.
Prior Provincial



Order of the Augustinian Recollects

PROVINCE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

29 RIDGEWAY AVENUE

WEST ORANGE, NJ 07052

(201) 731-0616 FAX (201) 731-1033

July 24, 1996

Fr. Jose Mendez, O.A.R.

c/o [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear Fr. Jose:

I first wrote to you on January 30, 1996, regarding your departure from a religious house on January 8, 1996, without permission, reminding you of your religious and priestly obligations. At the same time, you were encouraged to seriously consider your decision and return to the Province and Order.

In my letter to you of February 21, 1996, I once again stated that we would be ready to assist you. In the same letter, you were asked to return to the Province and report to the Provincial Residence in West Orange, NJ, before March 23, 1996. A second letter was sent to you, dated March 25, 1996, asking for your return to the Province.

Since your departure, there has been no communication from you. I do want to inform you that this letter will serve as your second canonical warning to return to the Province. In the event that you do not return to the Province and report to the Provincial Residence by August 2, 1996, the Provincial Council will be forced to take the necessary steps to begin the process of dismissal from the Order (Canon 697).

Permit me to remind you that Canon Law and our own Constitutions do provide you with the opportunity to have recourse to the Prior General if you consider our action to be incorrect.

I wish to remind you of our desire to be of service to you and we have you in our thoughts and prayers, asking that the Lord enlighten you during these days of discernment.

Fraternally yours in St. Augustine,

Fr. Francis E. Peluso, O.A.R.
Prior Provincial

11-29-95

Parroquia de
Ntra. Señora de Lourdes

PP. AGUSTINOS RECOLETOS

Dear Frank,

Just wondering, will there be a possibility
of leaving in January? Drop me a note
to let me know on the updates. Thanks
for listening.

Joné Mendez

TEL. 596-09-99 APARTADO POSTAL 10-664 AV. CASTILLO DE CHAPULTEPEC No. 70 COL. LOMAS REFORMA 11000 MEXICO, D. F.



Order of the Augustinian Recollects

PROVINCE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

29 RIDGEWAY AVENUE

WEST ORANGE, NJ 07052

(201) 731-0616 FAX (201) 731-1033

December 1, 1995

Fr. Jose Mendez, O.A.R.
Our Lady of Lourdes Church
Av. Castillo de Chapultepec, No. 70
Apartado 10.664
11.000 Mexico, D.F. MEXICO

Dear Father Mendez:

I would like to thank you for your prompt response to my request for your letter requesting permission to return to the lay state. I did want to inform you that your letter and the accompanying petition to the Holy See has been forwarded to Fr. General.

I am hoping that we will be able to comply with your request to absent yourself from one of our houses as of January 1, however, I cannot guarantee that until I have received further communication from Fr. General regarding the process as requested. I promise to keep you posted.

Know that you are thought of and prayed for during these days.

Faternally in St. Augustine,

Fr. Francis E. Peluso, O.A.R.
Prior Provincial

Order of the Augustinian Recollects

PROVINCE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

29 RIDGEWAY AVENUE

WEST ORANGE, NJ 07052

(201) 731-0616 FAX (201) 731-1033



Most Reverend Father General
Order of Augustinian Recollects

Dear Father General:

I am enclosing the following documentation in order to begin the process for dismissal from the Order, according to cc. 696 and 697, for Fr. Jose Mendez, O.A.R., a religious of our Province:

- (1) Copy of transfer to Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Mexico City, Mexico, Protocol No. 79/94, July, 1994;
- (2) Letter received from Fr. Mendez, dated October 4, 1995, requesting a one-year leave of absence with no mention of situation as stated in his later letter of November 18, 1995;
- (3) Letter from Fr. Mendez, dated November 18, 1995, requesting a return to the lay state for reasons mentioned therein;
- (4) Copy of letter to Fr. Mendez, dated November 28, 1995, expressing desire of the Provincial Council to assist in any way;
- (5) Letter to Fr. General, dated December 1, 1995 from Fr. Provincial, informing him of agreement by the Provincial Council that Fr. Mendez be allowed to begin the process for return to the lay state;
- (6) Copy of information received informing us that Fr. Mendez left without any permission on January 8, 1996;
- (7) Letter to Fr. Mendez, dated January 30, 1996, asking that he give serious consideration to what he has done and return to the Province. There was no response received;
- (8) Letter from the Prior Provincial to Fr. Mendez on February 21, 1995, asking that he return to the Province. There was no response from him;
- (9) Communication of the first canonical warning to Fr. Mendez, dated July 8, 1996, and signed copy of Return Receipt for Certified Mail. There was no response from him;
- (10) Communication of the second and last canonical warning, dated July 24, 1996, and signed copy of Return Receipt for Certified Mail. There was no response from him.

(continued)

- (11) Certificate stating that the Provincial Council, in its session of August 16, 1996, after reviewing all the pertinent documentation, recommends that we proceed with the process of dismissal;
- (12) Report of the Prior Provincial regarding Fr. Mendez and the entire case.

I put into your hands, and those of the General Council, these documents, and request that you proceed with the dismissal of Fr. Jose Mendez, O.A.R. from the Order, in conformity with c. 699, 1, according to your judgement and decision.

May the Lord keep you in his peace.

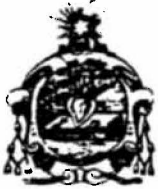
West Orange, New Jersey
August 17, 1996



Fr. Francis E. Peluso, O.A.R.
Prior Provincial

Br. Michael Stechmann, O.A.R.
Br. Michael Stechmann, O.A.R.
Secretary of the Province
Notary





Order of the Augustinian Recollects

PROVINCE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

29 RIDGEWAY AVENUE

WEST ORANGE, NJ 07052

(201) 731-0616 FAX (201) 731-1033

FR. FRANCIS E. PELUSO

Prior Provincial of the Province of St. Augustine

In virtue of the faculties proper to my office, according to No. 406, 1, of our Constitutions, I hereby give official notice of the transfer of residence of

FR. JOSE MENDEZ, O.A.R.

from Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, Santa Ana, CA, to Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Mexico City, Mexico. This transfer is effective August 10, 1994.

Please enter a reference to this notice in the official book of communications at Our Lady of Guadalupe and Our Lady of Lourdes.

May the Lord keep you in his peace.

West Orange, New Jersey
July 15, 1994

Fr. Francis E. Peluso, O.A.R.
Prior Provincial

Br. Michael Stechmann, O.A.R.
Secretary of the Province



cc: Fr. Paul Goni, O.A.R.
Fr. Jose A. Arias, O.A.R.

Parroquia de
Ntra. Señora de Lourdes

PP. AGUSTINOS RECOLETOS

Oct. 4, 1995

Dear Father Provincial and Provincial Council:

I'm writing this letter to notify you of my decision to ask for a one year leave of absence. At the present time I need to reorganize my thoughts and my priorities. I would appreciate that the province respect my decision and not place any obstacles in my path, since I have made this decision with much reflexion and prayer. In fact I have been seriously contemplating this decision for the past three years. I have been under spiritual guidance and shared my decision with my spiritual directors and they have supported me. I request a year to reevaluate my priorities and my lifestyle.

During my year of absence I plan to work as a lay person and will also seek the guidance of a spiritual director. I'm sure that the province will accept this petition and respond to it in a Christian manner.

If you need further information, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Fr. J. J. Mendez, OAR

Fr. Jose J. Mendez, OAR

Augustinian Recollects
Fr. Provincial and Provincial Council
West Orange, New Jersey

Document No. 3
(Prot. N. 75/96, A2739)

November 18, 1995

I'm writing this letter as a petition to ask for a one year leave of absence to live and work as layman. At the present I need time to reflect upon my obligations, and make the necessary decision of my future.

Some years back I met a woman of my age. This encounter was for a number of years we started as friends then it flourished as love. This relationship led to a deep relationship of love. She was kind, nice, wonderful and reaffirming. At that time someone to listen to me. Her home was my home away from home, I felt welcomed. Something I couldn't find in the religious house at the time. The friar that could help me was too far away and too busy.

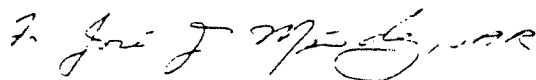
I cannot live like this anymore, I feel like I'm living a double life. I feel that I cannot live as a priest any longer. I feel I can not be faithful to my vows of obedience and celibacy. Before I notified Fr. Provincial of my decision in October. I called this woman to share with her my decision. She revealed to me something that I always suspected and she had always denied me. I have a child, this immediately even made my decision sooner and necessary. She never wanted to admit that the child was mind because she saw how I loved the priesthood at the time. I can not hold up any longer in this situation. I do not want to bring any scandal to the church nor the province, as I have brought to you.

I can not sleep nights anymore, the guilt is building in me. I ask for forgiveness from Fr. Provincial and the Province. As I said before, I do not want to cause scandal for the church and for the Recollects. This is eating me alive, the guilt is too demanding. At the present time I'm seriously considering to request being relieved of my priestly duties. If upon further reflection I decide to leave the priesthood, I shall inform the provincial council.

I have been seriously contemplating this decision for the past three years. I have been under spiritual guidance and shared my decision with my spiritual directors and they have supported me. To ask for a leave of absence or leave the priesthood. I'm sure that the Province will accept this petition and respond to it in a Christian manner. I would appreciate that Province respect my decision and not place any obstacles in my path, since I have made this decision with much reflexion and prayer.

Please, consider my petition being sincere. I'm at a point now, of despair. I would rather be a good Catholic than a lousy priest. Please keep me in your prayers so I can find a job soon and get on my feet. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Fr. Joel Mendez OAR

Augustinian (Mendez) 0015



Order of the Augustinian Recollects

PROVINCE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

29 RIDGEWAY AVENUE

WEST ORANGE, NJ 07052

(201) 731-0616 FAX (201) 731-1033

November 28, 1995

Fr. Jose Mendez, O.A.R.
Our Lady of Lourdes Church
Av. Castillo de Chapultepec, No. 70
Apartado 10.664
11.000 Mexico, D.F.
Mexico

Dear Fr. Jose,

The Provincial Council upon meeting yesterday reviewed your petition of November 18, 1995. The Council wishes to express their desire to help you in any way possible.

Upon discussion of your letter, the Council is of the opinion that a direct petition to the Holy Father requesting a return to the lay state would be the most prudent manner of fulfilling your desires.

Considering the details which you provided in your letter to the Council, the Council is in favor of you requesting at the present time a return to the lay state. This would provide you a greater peace of mind and at the same time expedite the process which you seem to desire in your letter.

Accordingly, please write a petition addressed to the Holy Father requesting a return to the lay state and seal it in an envelope addressed to him. At the same time write a letter to the Provincial Council requesting the same return to the lay state with all the details of your letter of November 18, 1995, and enclose the sealed letter to the Holy Father.

Rest assured that you are always in our prayers and Masses and that we are trying our best to help you.

Fraternally yours in Christ,

Fr. Francis E. Peluso, O.A.R.
Prior Provincial

Order of the Augustinian Recollects

PROVINCE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

29 RIDGEWAY AVENUE

WEST ORANGE, NJ 07052

(201) 731-0616 FAX (201) 731-1033



Most Reverend Father General
Order of Augustinian Recollects

Dear Father General:

It is my duty to forward to you the enclosed documentation which we received from Fr. Jose Mendez, O.A.R., a solemn professed priest of our Province, who is requesting a return to the lay state.

His request was presented to the Provincial Council, in its session of November 27, 1995, and his letter was discussed at length. After discussion of the situation and informing the Provincial Council that you have been made aware of the request and specifics, the Council unanimously agreed that his request be forwarded to you.

There were allegations of inappropriate behavior as far back as thirteen years ago. It also has been confirmed that Fr. Mendez was placed under arrest some years later for "alienation of affections", however, the case was dropped. There have been rumors which have circulated throughout the Province that he has fathered a son. These rumors have been verified by Fr. Mendez himself.

Along with the recommendation of the Provincial Council, we are enclosing a petition to the Holy Father requesting return to the lay state by Fr. Mendez.

After meeting with him personally during the Provincial Visit of Renewal, I wish to state that I, along with the Provincial Council, am convinced that his request for a return to the lay state be acted upon as petitioned to the Holy Father. Fr. Mendez is hoping to leave his present assignment at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Mexico City, Mexico, on January 1. He does plan to seek employment as a layman at that time. The Provincial Council is in unanimous agreement that all efforts be made to expedite his request.

May the Lord keep you in his peace.

West Orange, New Jersey
December 1, 1995



Fr. Francis E. Peluso, O.A.R.
Fr. Francis E. Peluso, O.A.R.
Prior Provincial

Parroquia de
Ntra. Señora de Lourdes

PP. AGUSTINOS RECOLETOS

MEXICO, D.F., JANUARY 10, 1996

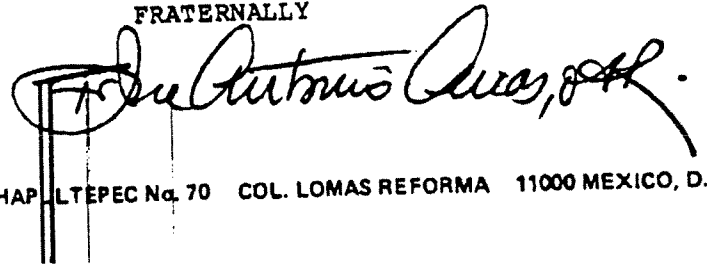
DEAR FR. PELUSO/BRO. MICHAEL:

REDACTED

I HOPE YOU ARE AWARE THAT FR. MENDEZ LEFT ON JAN 8TH. HE HAD SO MANY VERSIONS ABOUT WHAT HE WAS GOING TO DO THAT I JUST DID NOT BELIEVED ANYTHING HE SAID. I HOPE HE WAS IN TOUCH WITH YOU BEFORE LEAVING. HE TOLD THE R.J.M. SISTERS THAT HE HAD A 3 MONTH PERMISSION FROM YOU TO BE AWAY FROM THE ORDER (1111). IN CASE YOU DO NOT HAVE HIS ADDRESS, THIS IS THE ONE HE LEFT HERE:

BEST WISHES FOR THE NEW YEAR!

FRATERNALLY



TEL. 596-09-99 APARTADO POSTAL 10-664 AV. CASTILLO DE CHAPULTEPEC No. 70 COL. LOMAS REFORMA 11000 MEXICO, D. F.



Order of the Augustinian Recollects

PROVINCE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

29 RIDGEWAY AVENUE

WEST ORANGE, NJ 07052

(201) 731-0616 FAX (201) 731-1033

January 30, 1996

Fr. Jose Mendez, O.A.R.

REDACTED

Dear Fr. Jose:

Fr. Jose A. Arias informed me that you left Mexico City for Florida on January 8th. I can appreciate what must have been great sadness in leaving Our Lady of Lourdes.

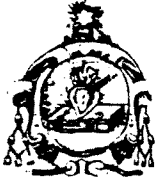
When I saw you last November, and you shared with me the struggle which you undoubtedly were battling with during this last year and the events of your past life which lead to this conflict, I could appreciate your state of mind. It is only daily sincere and profound prayer with a true conversion of heart that can help us in such circumstances. You did share with me the support which you felt from your local community and the particular kindness of your prior.

In our telephone conversations and during the Visit last November, I thought that we had clarified the possibilities and alternatives which you could consider before making any decisions which you might regret. Leaving Mexico City without any permission was certainly not the most prudent of decisions. Indeed you said that there were job offerings waiting for you in Florida, but your religious and priestly obligations should have taken precedence over such possibilities. You know the very grave needs of the Province to serve the people of God entrusted to us and your responsibilities to the younger members of the community, some of whom you yourself directed to our Order. You were popular during your ministry in California, and you were very much appreciated by the people whose lives you touched. All of these considerations should help you in rethinking your decisions and return to the Province and Order. Any help at all that we might offer, please let us know, and we shall be more than happy to try to assist you.

Rest assured that you are daily in our Masses and prayers.

Fraternally in St. Augustine,

Fr. Francis E. Peluso, O.A.R.
Prior Provincial



Order of the Augustinian Recollects

PROVINCE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

29 RIDGEWAY AVENUE

WEST ORANGE, NJ 07052

(201) 731-0616 FAX (201) 731-1033

February 21, 1996

Fr. Jose Mendez, O.A.R.

REDACTED

Dear Father Jose:

On January 30 I wrote to you concerning your leave from the Parish of Our Lady of Lourdes in Mexico City. To date I have not received any reply to my letter.

I realize you must be busy in your new surroundings and have had to concern yourself with many things.

As I told you in my last letter, I am ready to help you in any way possible. There is no difficulty in this world that the Lord cannot help us to look at in the light of His love and compassion, and not attempt to resolve.

I can well imagine the turmoil you must have been going through the last year while in Mexico. My heart goes out to you. If there is any way at all that I can help you, please do not hesitate to let me know.

At this time, I ask you to return to the province by March 23, 1996. Please come to the provincial residence in West Orange. It's a place that you can come to with complete confidence in knowing that there are very few people here, and that you can rest and reflect in an atmosphere of companionship. If you need money for the ticket, etc., please feel free to count on me.

You are always in my prayers and Masses.

Fraternally in St. Augustine,

Fr. Francis E. Peluso, O.A.R.
Prior Provincial



Order of the Augustinian Recollects

PROVINCE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

29 RIDGEWAY AVENUE

WEST ORANGE, NJ 07052

(201) 731-0616 FAX (201) 731-1033

March 25, 1996

Fr. Jose Mendez, O.A.R.

REDACTED

Dear Fr. Jose:

I first wrote to you on January 30, 1996, regarding your absence from a religious house without permission, reminding you of your religious and priestly obligations. At the same time, you were encouraged to seriously consider your decision and return to the Province and Order.

In my letter to you of February 21, 1996, I once again stated that we would be ready to assist you. In the same letter, you were asked to return to the Province and report to the Provincial Residence in West Orange, NJ, by March 23, 1996. This letter was your first canonical warning.

Since your departure, there has been no communication from you. This letter is the second canonical warning for you to return to the Province, following the previous communication. In the event that you do not return to the Province and report to the Provincial Residence by April 23, 1996, the Provincial Council will be forced to take the necessary steps to begin the process of dismissal from the Order (Canon 697).

Permit me to remind you that Canon Law and our own Constitutions do provide you with the opportunity to have recourse to the Prior General if you consider that our action is incorrect.

I wish to reiterate our desire to be of service to you and we have you in our thoughts and prayers, asking the Lord to enlighten you in these days of discernment.

Fraternally in St. Augustine,

Fr. Francis E. Peluso, O.A.R.
Prior Provincial



Order of the Augustinian Recollects

PROVINCE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

29 RIDGEWAY AVENUE

WEST ORANGE, NJ 07052

(201) 731-0616 FAX (201) 731-1033

July 8, 1996

Fr. Jose Mendez, O.A.R.

REDACTED

Dear Fr. Jose:

I first wrote to you on January 30, 1996, regarding your departure from a religious house of January 8, 1996, without permission, reminding you of your religious and priestly obligations. At the same time, you were encouraged to seriously consider your decision and return to the Province and Order.

In my letter to you of February 21, 1996, I once again stated that we would be ready to assist you. In the same letter, you were asked to return to the Province and report to the Provincial Residence in West Orange, NJ, before March 23, 1996. A second letter was sent to you, dated March 25, 1996, asking for your return to the Province.

Since your departure, there has been no communication from you. I do want to inform you that this letter will serve as your first canonical warning to return to the Province. In the event that you do not return to the Province and report to the Provincial Residence by July 23, 1996, the Provincial Council will be forced to take the necessary steps to begin the process of dismissal from the Order (Canon 697).

Permit me to remind you that Canon Law and our own Constitutions do provide you with the opportunity to have recourse to the Prior General if you consider our action to be incorrect.

I wish to remind you of our desire to be of service to you and we have you in our thoughts and prayers, asking that the Lord enlighten you during these days of discernment.

Faternally in St. Augustine,

Fr. Francis E. Peluso, O.A.R.
Prior Provincial



Order of the Augustinian Recollects

PROVINCE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

29 RIDGEWAY AVENUE

WEST ORANGE, NJ 07052

(201) 731-0616 FAX (201) 731-1033

July 24, 1996

Fr. Jose Mendez, O.A.R.

REDACTED

Dear Fr. Jose:

I first wrote to you on January 30, 1996, regarding your departure from a religious house on January 8, 1996, without permission, reminding you of your religious and priestly obligations. At the same time, you were encouraged to seriously consider your decision and return to the Province and Order.

In my letter to you of February 21, 1996, I once again stated that we would be ready to assist you. In the same letter, you were asked to return to the Province and report to the Provincial Residence in West Orange, NJ, before March 23, 1996. A second letter was sent to you, dated March 25, 1996, asking for your return to the Province.

Since your departure, there has been no communication from you. I do want to inform you that this letter will serve as your second canonical warning to return to the Province. In the event that you do not return to the Province and report to the Provincial Residence by August 2, 1996, the Provincial Council will be forced to take the necessary steps to begin the process of dismissal from the Order (Canon 697).

Permit me to remind you that Canon Law and our own Constitutions do provide you with the opportunity to have recourse to the Prior General if you consider our action to be incorrect.

I wish to remind you of our desire to be of service to you and we have you in our thoughts and prayers, asking that the Lord enlighten you during these days of discernment.

Fraternally yours in St. Augustine,

Fr. Francis E. Peluso, O.A.R.
Prior Provincial



Order of the Augustinian Recollects

PROVINCE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

29 RIDGEWAY AVENUE

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(201) 731-0616 FAX (201) 731-1033

The undersigned, Fr. Francis E. Peluso, O.A.R., Prior Provincial of the Province of St. Augustine, to which Fr. Jose Mendez, O.A.R., belongs,

CERTIFIES

- (1) That we have used all the means according to our laws to correct Fr. Mendez who has been illegitimately absent since January 8, 1996 from a religious house;
- (2) That the Provincial Council, in its session of August 16, 1996, after examining the conduct of Father Mendez, has unanimously agreed to initiate the process of expulsion for this religious;
- (3) Having heard the opinion of the Provincial Council, the process of expulsion has begun.

West Orange, New Jersey
August 16, 1996

Fr. Francis E. Peluso, O.A.R.
Prior Provincial

Br. Michael Stechmann, O.A.R.
Notary



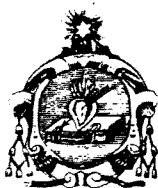
Order of the Augustinian Recollects

PROVINCE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

29 RIDGEWAY AVENUE

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(201) 731-0616 FAX (201) 731-1033



Most Reverend Father General
Order of Augustinian Recollects

Dear Father General:

Report of Prior Provincial on Fr. Jose Mendez, O.A.R.

I first became acquainted with Father Mendez when I was his prefect of postulants at our monastery in Kansas City, KS, in 1978. My recollections include that of a very personable young man who seemed to be unaware of his intellectual deficiencies even though he had a college degree. I remember trying to help him with his English and Spanish, which were both less than could be expected from a college graduate.

As Prior Provincial I became aware of an accusation against Fr. Mendez when he was a deacon in 1982. After investigation of the alleged threat of a paternity suit, the accusation was dismissed as coming from a very immature young lady. At the time, I recall telling Fr. Mendez that it seemed he was innocent of any gross indiscretions; however, my feeling was that he had been imprudent in his visits and conversation with the family of the individual.

During my first two terms as provincial (1981-87), I attempted to be both fatherly and direct. I visited his widowed mother who seemed to be overprotective of her only son. She continually warned his superiors that women (including religious sisters) "were after him". This was just brushed off as the worry of an overprotective mother.

During the seven year provincialate of my successor (1987-94), it was widely known in the province that Fr. Mendez was coddled and favored by the provincial, and that Fr. Mendez had free reign with funds dedicated to the vocation ministry. His effectiveness as vocation director decreased with each passing year. He was saddened when he was not named superior of our new seminary in Oxnard in 1990, even though his performance left much to be desired as a vocation director. His homilies and conferences were childish, and after the initial novelty these seemed to lack any real substance.

Upon my reelection as prior provincial in 1994, I learned of further indiscretions and accusations made during the previous administration. It seems there were serious accusations against Fr. Mendez regarding a young lady while he was at San Miguel Parish in Los Angeles, and also while assigned to Cristo Rey Parish in Los

Angeles. Msgr. Thomas Curry, at that time Vicar for Religious in Los Angeles, was involved in helping to clear up the case, and certain criminal charges concerning sexual indiscretions were dropped.

Father Mendez introduced a certain young lady as "his cousin" to me during one of my visits to Oxnard in 1991. His mother died during the celebration of our Provincial Chapter in June of 1994 when I was once again elected provincial. After attempting to be compassionate and understanding after his mother's death he was assigned to our parish in Mexico City.

The transfer to Mexico was made after consultation with the Provincial Council. It was the opinion that his prolonged stay in California was not beneficial to Fr. Mendez. Besides minor physical ailments there was no notable change in behavior.

Upon making the provincial visitation to Mexico City in November of 1995, Fr. Mendez related to me that indeed he had fathered a child of the person he was passing off as "his cousin" in Los Angeles, and that the child was now six years old. I attempted to encourage him to remember the forgiveness promised by the Lord, and get himself into a counseling program for priests. He replied that it was too late, and informed me that the mother of the child did not need any financial support since she was able to care for the child along with two other children.

He insisted that his vocation really was that of his mother who continually pushed him into the seminary. I offered to help him in any way possible; perhaps a change of assignment with therapy. He repeatedly answered, "I'd rather be a good christian than a bad priest". He then informed me that he had made plans to leave in early January of 1996, that he had a job offer in Florida and wanted to start over again. Telephone conversations with him up until the time of his leaving Mexico without permission produced no results but the repetition of the same ideas.

It is my opinion that Father Mendez probably should never have been professed a religious or ordained a priest, and that his vocation was at least partially the result of his acquiescence to the appeals of his mother. Since he insisted on leaving without permission, makes no effort to reply to letters and the counsel to seek a regularizing of his situation by applying for a return to the lay state through approved channels, the only recourse is to seek his dismissal from the Order.

May the Lord keep you in his peace.

West Orange, New Jersey
August 16, 1996



Fr. Francis E. Peluso, O.A.R.
Prior Provincial



Order of the Augustinian Recollects

PROVINCE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

29 RIDGEWAY AVENUE

WEST ORANGE, NJ 07052

(201) 731-0616 FAX (201) 731-1033

CURRICULUM VITAE

RE: Fr. Jose Mendez (Rivera). O.A.R.

BORN:

PARENTS:

REDACTED

EDUCATION:

REDACTED

1979-1983 Immaculate Conception Seminary, Mahwah, New Jersey

DEGREES:

B.A., California State University, Long Beach, CA, 1977
M.Div., Immaculate Conception Seminary, Mahwah, NJ, 1982

NOVITIATE:

Entered novitiate in Monteagudo, Spain, August 8, 1978

SIMPLE PROFESSION:

August 19, 1979, Monastery of St. Augustine, Kansas City, KS

SOLEMN PROFESSION:

September 4, 1982, Tagaste Monastery, Suffern, NY

SACRED ORDERS:

Diaconate: December 5, 1982, Immaculate Conception Seminary,
Mahwah, NJ, by Most Rev. John C. Reiss, Bishop
of Trenton (New Jersey)

Priesthood: August 12, 1983, Our Lady of the Pillar Parish,
Santa Ana, CA, by Most Rev. Alphonse Gallegos,
O.A.R., Auxiliary Bishop of Sacramento (California)

STUDIES:

Undergraduate studies at Long Beach City College, California
State University, St. Mary College and Donnelly College. He
completed his B.A. in Social Welfare from California State
University in 1977 and M.Div. in Pastoral Ministry from
Immaculate Conception Seminary in 1982.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Following ordination, he served as Vocation Director and
served as a member of the Vocation Team until 1993. He was
Director of Pre-postulants at Casa Moreno in Santa Ana, CA,
from 1983-85. In addition to vocation ministry, he served in
parochial ministries in California. He served as Sub-prior
of St. Augustine Priory in Oxnard, CA, from 1990-92. He was
assigned to our parish in Mexico City in 1994.



AGOSTINIANI RECOLLETTI
Procuratore presso la Santa Sede

domingo, 27 octubre 1996

R. P.
Francis Peluso
Provincia San Agustín

Estimado Francis:

Recibe mi saludo y mis mejores deseos porque te encuentres disfrutando de salud y bienestar completo, no obstante las pequeñas dificultades que en el ejercicio del trabajo se van presentando.

El motivo principal para escribirte estas líneas no es otro que el de comentarte algo sobre el proceso de expulsión de Fr. José Mendez. En el consejo se ha estudiado detenidamente y vemos que hay causa suficiente para la expulsión.

Me han encargado de sugerirte lo siguiente:

1- Repetir las amonestaciones, por cuanto el tiempo de ausencia de la casa, sería demasiado estrecho, es decir que jurídicamente faltaría un día y por ese motivo nos pondrían problema en la Congregación.

2- En las moniciones decir que son en vistas a la expulsión y no para comenzar el proceso de expulsión. Serían los números 9 y 10 del elenco que han enviado. Lo demás está bien.

Perdona las molestias que esto te puede causar.

De por acá no te comento nada puesto que has tenido en estos últimos días noticias frescas con el viaje de los Hermanos y también con la visita de Charles.

El P. General salió el 27 para realizar la visita en Guatemala, Costa Rica y México.

Luis Garayoa, sale definitivamente para Monteagudo el día 28.

Bueno, mi estimado Francis, que el Señor y su Santísima Madre nos guíen y nos den fuerzas para realizar la misión que se nos ha encomendado.

Con todo mi aprecio


P. Climaco López M.

Order of the Augustinian Recollects

PROVINCE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

29 RIDGEWAY AVENUE

WEST ORANGE, NJ 07052

(201) 731-0616 FAX (201) 731-1033



FR. FRANCIS E. PELUSO

Prior Provincial of the Province of St. Augustine

The Provincial Council, in its session of November 5, 1996, reviewed all the pertinent documentation regarding the case of Father Jose Mendez, O.A.R.

No communication has been received from him to date, and we have proof that he received all of our communications which were sent to him from January, 1996, until the present.

In the absence of any further communication, the Provincial Council voted to proceed with the dismissal of Fr. Mendez and send the documentation to the General Curia for due process.

West Orange, New Jersey
November 6, 1996



Fr. Francis E. Peluso, O.A.R.
Prior Provincial

Br. Michael Stechmann, O.A.R.
Secretary of the Province



Order of the Augustinian Recollects

PROVINCE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

29 RIDGEWAY AVENUE

WEST ORANGE, NJ 07052

(201) 731-0616 FAX (201) 731-1033

November 9, 1996

Fr. Jose Mendez, O.A.R.

REDACTED

Dear Fr. Jose:

I first wrote to you on January 30, 1996, regarding your departure from a religious house without permission on January 8, encouraging you to seriously consider your decision and return to the Province and Order. In my letter to you of February 21, 1996, I once again stated that we would be willing to assist you and asked that you return to the Province by March 23, 1996. Another letter was sent to you, dated March 25, 1996, again asking for your return and the date in which you were asked to present yourself at the Provincial Residence.

Since your departure, there has been no communication from you. The time has now come for a clear decision on your part. We repeat our willingness to help you in any way possible to regularize your present situation.

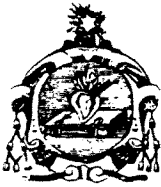
Once again, I am asking for your return to the Province and that you do so by presenting yourself to the Provincial Residence by November 26, 1996. This letter will serve as your first canonical warning to inform you that you will be expelled from the Order if you fail to comply with this. This is a decision that has been unanimously approved by the Provincial Council.

I do want to remind you that Canon Law and our own Constitutions do provide you with the opportunity to have recourse to the Prior General if you consider our action to be incorrect.

You are very much in our thoughts and prayers.

Fraternally in St. Augustine,

Fr. Francis E. Peluso, O.A.R.
Prior Provincial



Order of the Augustinian Recollects

PROVINCE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

29 RIDGEWAY AVENUE

WEST ORANGE, NJ 07052

(201) 731-0616 FAX (201) 731-1033

November 27, 1996

Fr. Jose Mendez, O.A.R.

REDACTED

Dear Fr. Jose:

I first wrote to you on January 30, 1996, regarding your departure from a religious house without permission on January 8, encouraging you to seriously consider your decision and return to the Province and Order. In my letter to you of February 21, 1996, I once again stated that we would be willing to assist you and asked that you return to the Province by March 23, 1996. Another letter was sent to you, dated March 25, 1996, again asking for your return and the date in which you were asked to present yourself at the Provincial Residence.

Since your departure, there has been no communication from you. The time has now come for a clear decision on your part. We repeat our willingness to help you in any way possible to regularize your present situation.

I had written to you on November 9, 1996, asking again that you return to the Province by presenting yourself to the Provincial Residence by November 26, 1996. You failed to do so. This letter will serve as your second and the last canonical warning to inform you that you will be expelled from the Order if you fail to comply with our continued warnings. I am therefore asking that you present yourself at the Provincial Residence by December 12, 1996. Again, I do wish to remind you that you will be expelled from the Order if you fail to comply with this. The Provincial Council is aware of the admonitions that have been forwarded to you.

I do want to remind you that Canon Law and our own Constitutions do provide you with the opportunity to have recourse to the Prior General if you consider our action to be incorrect.

You are very much in our thoughts and prayers.

Fraternally in St. Augustine,

Fr. Francis E. Peluso, O.A.R.
Prior Provincial

Order of the Augustinian Recollects

PROVINCE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

29 RIDGEWAY AVENUE

WEST ORANGE, NJ 07052

(201) 731-0616 FAX (201) 731-1033



Most Reverend Father General
Order of Augustinian Recollects

Dear Father General:

The documentation for the process of dismissal from the Order, according to cc. 696 and 697, for Fr. Jose Mendez, O.A.R., a religious of our Province, was forwarded to you on August 17, 1996, Protocol No. 75/96.

In a letter from Fr. Climaco Lopez, dated October 27, 1996, he instructed us to repeat the warnings to Fr. Mendez, informing him that he will be expelled from the Order if he fails to comply with the admonitions.

These warnings have been repeated and I am enclosing copies of the letters sent to Fr. Mendez, along with the signatures verifying receipt of the same.

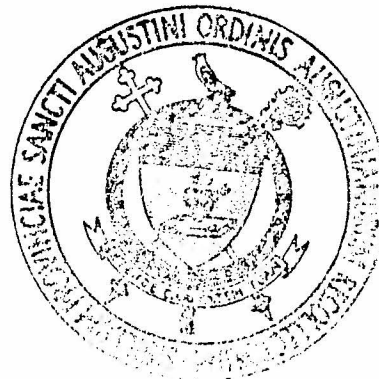
I put into your hands, and those of the General Council, these documents, and request that you proceed with the dismissal of Fr. Jose Mendez, O.A.R. from the Order, according to your judgement and decision.

May the Lord keep you in his peace.

West Orange, New Jersey
December 14, 1996

Fr. Francis E. Peluso, O.A.R.
Prior Provincial

Br. Michael Stechmann, O.A.R.
Secretary of the Province





Prot. N. 5 - 2/95.1
(in responsione hic numerus referatur)

ORDO AUGUSTINIANORUM RECOLLECTORUM

GENERALATUS

FR. DAVID HERNÁNDEZ CUADRADO, VICAR GENERAL
OF THE ORDER OF AUGUSTINIAN RECOLLECTS

In virtue of the authority granted by Canon Law 699§1,
DECREES: that Fr. JESÚS JOSÉ MÉNDEZ RIVERA is hereby expelled from the
Order of Augustinian Recollects.

Dear Father Méndez:

It is a difficult and unpleasant duty for me to write to you on this occasion to notify you of your dismissal from the Order. The basic motive prompting this dismissal is your illegitimate absence from a religious house since January 8, 1996, in violation of c. 665§1 of Canon Law and of no. 106 of our Constitutions, which states that religious must have the permission of the superior to leave the house and that they must return to their residence when this permission has expired.

You have repeatedly disregarded the paternal counsels of your legitimate superior in a serious matter. You have not obeyed what he commanded in his canonical admonitions, in which he warned you that you would be dismissed from the Order if you did not return to a religious house and resume community life.

The General Council, after examining collegially the various circumstances of the process, which had been initiated and documented at the proper time by the prior provincial of the Province of St. Augustine, determined that your conduct is sufficient reason for expulsion, in accord with c. 696§1 of the Code of Canon Law, and decided by secret vote in its session of January 29, 1997, to dismiss you from the Order.

As stated in c. 700, this decree of dismissal does not take effect unless it is confirmed by the Holy See, to whom it has been transmitted together with all the acts of the process.

We remind you that, in conformity with the same canon, the law grants you the right to have recourse to the Holy See to appeal your dismissal, provided that you do so within ten days from receiving this notification. You may address your appeal to: Cardinal Eduardo Martínez Somalo, Prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, Piazza Pio XII, 00193 Roma, Italia.

Rome, January 29, 1997.



Fr. José Antonio Martínez Merino

Fr. José Antonio Martínez Merino

Secretary general

Fr. David Hernández
Fr. David Hernández
Vicar general

Augustinian (Mendez) 0033



Prot. N. 5 - 2/95.2
(in responsione hic numerus referatur)

ORDO AUGUSTINIANORUM RECOLLECTORUM

GENERALATUS

Reverend Father:

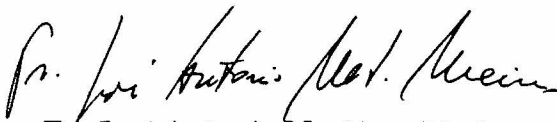
Enclosed please find the decree of expulsion of Fr. Jesús José Méndez Rivera. Fr. Procurator before the Holy See has presented the document, together with the pertinent documentation, to the Holy See for the confirmation required by law.


I request that you please forward this document to Fr. Méndez in a manner that will assure that he receives it personally.

May the Lord keep you in his peace.

Rome, January 29, 1997.




Fr. José Antonio Martínez Merino
Secretary


Fr. David Hernández
Vicar general

Rev. Fr. Prior Provincial
PROVINCE OF ST. AUGUSTINE
WEST ORANGE, NJ 07052

Augustinian (Mendez) 0034



Prot. N. 5 - 2/95.3
(in responsione hic numerus referatur)

ORDO AUGUSTINIANORUM RECOLLECTORUM

GENERALATUS

Reverend Father:

Please find enclosed the rescript bearing protocol n. 32040/97, dated April 15, 1997, by which the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life confirms the decree of expulsion from the Order of Fr. José Jesús Méndez Rivera, issued by the vicar general on January 29, 1997, under protocol no. 5-2/95.1.

I request that you please forward this document to Fr. Méndez in a manner that will assure that he receives it personally.

May the Lord keep you in his peace.

Rome, June 12, 1997.



Fr. José Antonio Martínez Merino

Fr. José Antonio Martínez Merino

Secretary General

Fr. Gabriel Robles

Fr. Gabriel Robles

Provicar General

Rev. Fr. Prior Provincial
PROVINCE OF ST. AUGUSTINE
WEST ORANGE, NJ 07052

Augustinian (Mendez) 0035