

ABOVE URL CONTAINS PDF IMAGE OF LETTER, THE TEXT OF WHICH FOLLOWS:

[Handwritten at top of letter: "servet in exemplum"
(interpreted below as "let it serve as an example. ... A policy document.")]

SACRA CONGREGAZIONE PER IL CLERO

Roma, January 31 1984

PROT. 172621/1

(Citare questo numero nella riposta)

Most Rev. Manuel D. Moreno, D.D.
Bishop of Tucson
192 South Stone Avenue
P.O. Box 31 Tucson,
Arizona 85702-0031

Your Excellency:

This Sacred Congregation wishes to respond to your questions relating to the case of the Reverend [redacted] a priest of your Diocese.

To the first question ("was the proper procedure followed, i.e. due process, in the case") we would reply in the negative. On the basis of the documentation sent to us, it would seem clear that Father should have removed from his pastorate immediately upon completion of the process outlined in n.20 of the Motu Proprio 'Ecclesiae Sanctae', of 1966. The signed testimonies about his drunkenness[s], outrageo[us] language, liberties with wome[n], etc, are too numerous and convincingly articulate to leave any dou[b]t that Father's ministry is both harmful and inefficacious and should, therefor[e] have been terminated long ago.

Nor was there any need for engaging in the so called "due process" procedures. Indeed, an Ordinary is not free to leave to the decision of any group of arbitrators such matters as the continuation or removal of pastors. The "due process" procedures have to do with challenges made against the decree of an Ordinary or the rules of a diocesan administrator, and never are they to supplant procedures established by and for the Church universal.

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To the second question ("Should we allow or disallow civil lawyers from obtaining Father's personnel records from our Chancery files") we reply that under no condition whatever ought the afore-mentioned files be surrendered to any lawyer or judge whatsoever. In addition, we suggest that both the office of the Apostolic Delegate and the legal department of the United States Catholic Conference be informed of the request for Father [redacted]'s files so that all may begin preparing whatever resistance to this request may be necessary.

The files of a Bishop concerning his priests are altogether private; their forced acquisition by civil authority would be an intolerable attack upon the free exercise of religion in the United States; and we have no doubt that both Federal courts and public opinion would sustain us in this position.

[Margin note in handwriting: Who knows? I will not be so sure!]

Your Excellency should therefore make known immediately and with clarity that no priest's files will be sent to any lawyer or judge whatever. Clarity in this matter may be enough to move the good Catholic people whom Father [redacted] is suing from further pressing their demand.

We should be clear and resolute, for failure in this regard might initiate a movement toward a most unfavorable precedent in law and -no less importantly -'frighten and upset not a few priests whose files are perhaps less than flattering.

With sentiments of cordial esteem and every best wish, I remain

Faithfully in Christ

[Handwritten, said to be
Silvio Angelo Pio Cardinal Oddi Prefect of the Vatican's Congregation for the Clergy]

A report on the letter follows:

<http://www.ibtimes.com/articles/103256/20110120/vatican-letter-to-tucson-reveals-cover-up-mentality.htm>

Vatican letter to Tucson reveals cover-up mentality

By Joseph Picard | January 20, 2011 2:59 PM EST

Another Vatican letter instructing non-cooperation with civil authorities has come to light, this one from 1984 and addressed to the Bishop of Tucson, [Arizona](#).

Earlier this week, an Irish bishop gave a 1997 letter from the Roman Curia to a reporter, which apparently instructed Irish bishops not to cooperate with civil authorities who were probing reported incidents of sexual abuse by priests.

The letter has re-fueled the sexual abuse and cover-up scandal that has plagued the Church for decades and calls into question the Vatican's many denials of non-cooperation with civil authorities. The Irish letter has also led some Catholics to call for a halt to the canonization process underway for Pope John Paul II, who was pontiff at the time the letter was written

The 1997 letter is somewhat vague in its wording, although most who have read it agree that the message is clear enough. But the 1984 Vatican letter, released today by [BishopAccountability.org](#), leaves no doubt

John Paul II was also pope in 1984.

The Tucson letter was written by Silvio Angelo Pio Cardinal Oddi, who was from 1979 to 1986 Prefect of the Vatican's Congregation for the Clergy - that is, the Curia, which is, together with the Pope, the governing body of the Catholic Church -- and is addressed to Bishop Manuel D. Moreno of Tucson. It was written in response to Moreno's request for guidance in how proceed regarding a badly behaving priest.

After telling Moreno that there was not "any need for engaging in the so called 'due process' procedures," Cardinal Oddi answers Moreno's question: "Should we allow or disallow civil lawyers from obtaining Father's personnel records from our Chancery files?"

"...under no condition whatever ought the afore-mentioned files be surrendered to any lawyer or judge whatsoever." Oddi said "The files of a Bishop concerning his priests are altogether private; their forced acquisition by civil authority would be an intolerable attack upon the free exercise of religion in the United States."

The Curial cardinal goes to say that Moreno should "make known immediately and with clarity that no priest's files will be sent to any lawyer or judge whatever."

"We should be clear and resolute, for failure in this regard might initiate a movement toward a most unfavorable precedent in law and - no less importantly - frighten and upset not a few priests whose files are perhaps less than flattering," Cardinal Oddi concluded.

The priest's name was expunged from the letter by Terence McKiernan of [BishopAccountability.org](#) because the priest was not accused of sexual abuse in the letter.

[BishopAccountability.org](#) is an online archive of sexual abuse by clergy and cover-up cases throughout the United States.

"Although this priest is not accused of sexual abuse, and his name does not turn up in our database, Cardinal Oddi's letter certainly indicates the Vatican's mentality and its position regarding cooperation with civil authorities," McKiernan said. "The Vatican sees itself as an entity separate from civil authority. It's prohibition against cooperation transcends the sexual abuse issue."

There are two hand-written comments on the letter. McKiernan said they were written by Pio Cardinal Laghi, who was the Vatican's Apostolic Delegate/Pro-Nuncio to the U.S. from 1980 to 1990.

The note on the first page reads, "servet in exemplum." McKiernan explained that the words mean "let it serve as an example" and indicate that the letter was meant to be taken as a policy document.