

Diocese of Wollongong		
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June 24, 2002
 Most Rev Peter W Ingham D D
 Bishop of Wollongong
 PO Box 1239
 Wollongong SCMC NSW 2521

Dear Bishop Ingham,

I refer to your recent letter enquiring about my location and situation. Excuse the small delay in my reply; work was very intense at the time I received your letter. I attempted to phone you to speak personally, but although I left two phone numbers, I have not received a return call. I see from your letter to Bishop Jenky of June 11th, 2002, that you already have the information you requested: After the favorable decision by the Congregation for Clergy in December 2000, I received permission- first from Bishop Wilson then from the Administrator of the Diocese, Father Jones- to be absent in the United States to increase my pastoral skills in University apostolate. Bishop (now Archbishop) Myers, who was aware of the history of my case, gave me faculties for his diocese and asked me to live at the Newman Center at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Illinois.

I have now received a copy of the interim Decree of the Apostolic Signatura, dated April 22nd, 2002, temporarily suspending that part of the Congregations Decree of December 2000, insofar as it directs that I "...be restored immediately to the full exercise of [my] priestly ministry in the Diocese of Wollongong...". This appears to temporarily regularize the refusal to date of the Diocese to comply with the Decree of the Congregation.

I have also received copy of a letter of June 21st, 2001, from Father Jones, Administrator of the Diocese of Wollongong, to Bishop Myers. As already mentioned above, I have received a copy of your letter of June 11th, 2002, to Bishop Jenky, containing your interpretation of the Apostolic Signatura's interim Decree.

My time with the Newman Center seemed to have been very pastorally effective. God blessed the activities of the staff there and recently Msgr Swetland, its Director, estimated that fifty people had returned to the Sacraments as a result of my activities. Bishop Jenky has now terminated my residency there and unfortunately, no priest can be spared to replace me.

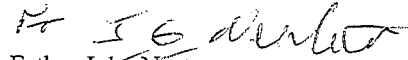
Your recent letter gives no indication of your wishes in my regard. I would suggest that, because of the pejorative publicity there, most of which appears to have been generated by Church sources, it would be unwise for me to return to live in Australia. In addition, the way I have been treated by Church officials has been perceived by many lay people and clergy in Australia to be grossly and scandalously unjust. Hence my presence in Australia would, in spite of my best efforts, be likely to cause dissatisfaction and possibly division among many clergy and lay people there, until this matter is finally resolved. Therefore, in spite of the encouragement I have received from clergy of Wollongong diocese and the laity, to return to Wollongong, I believe it would not be in the interests of the Church and the Wollongong Diocese, that I do so. I am prepared to accept this self-imposed exile for the good of the Church.

My present circumstances are that I have moved out of the Diocese of Peoria but have not yet finalized my future living arrangements. I can be contacted at the address at Wollongong West where your last letter was sent.

I hope that you will see your way clear to resolving my situation before the Apostolic Signatura issues its final Decree. As I stated to Bishop Wilson in late 1997, I am prepared to work as a priest in any part of the world (though as I have suggested, it has subsequently become difficult to see how I could effectively work in Australia).

I wish you God's blessing as you work to lead the people of Wollongong to an ever-closer commitment to their Christian vocation.

Yours Sincerely in Our Lord,


Father John Nestor.