

12 January 2012

His Eminence  
Cardinal William Joseph Levada  
Prefect  
Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith  
VATICAN CITY

Your Eminence,

I write in response to a letter from Archbishop Angelo Amato SDB (Prot. N. 425/2006-24469) which I received in December 2006.

It is with regret that I have not been able to bring this sad matter to a satisfactory conclusion. However, I should wish very much to do so in view of my imminent retirement from the office of Bishop of Ballarat after a period of almost fifteen years.

My predecessor, Bishop Ronald Mulkearns, attempted on several occasions to request Paul David Ryan to petition a dispensation from the obligations of the clerical state, but he refused to do so.

Upon receipt of the letter from Archbishop Amato, I did attempt to visit Paul David Ryan while he was serving a custodial sentence after his conviction for sexual assault of minors in the Warrnambool Magistrates Court. I enclose a copy of the letter that I sent to Paul David Ryan.

Sister Mary O'Shannassy who was the chaplain to the Victorian Prison System at the time also attempted to arrange for me to visit Paul David Ryan but without success.

When he completed his sentence, Paul David Ryan left the state of Victoria and despite several enquiries, I have not been able to locate him. Privacy regulations that exist throughout Australia do not allow Government departments to provide information re the whereabouts of former prisoners to be given to third parties.

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You are aware that the matter of Paul David Ryan is notorious as illustrated by an article which was published on the internet. A cutting from the Herald Sun dated 21 February 2007 also refers to the activities of Paul David Ryan when he was in the United States.

I note that I did enclose newspaper cuttings with my previous communication with you. However, I now enclose a newspaper cutting from the Herald Sun dated 19 September 2006 which illustrates the scandal caused by the matter of Paul David Ryan.

I have asked Father John Salvano to read through the file of Paul David Ryan. Father John Salvano has a licence in Canon Law and is the Secretary of the Tribunal of the Catholic Church for Victoria and Tasmania. His observations are also attached.

I apologise for this delayed response to the letter of Archbishop Amato but despite every effort, I have not been able to make contact with Paul David Ryan.

I should therefore be grateful for advice as to how I might proceed in obtaining the dismissal of Paul David Ryan from the obligations of the priesthood. Perhaps it might be your recommendation that I should proceed with a request to the Congregation for the Clergy for the use of the special faculty given to the same Congregation.

With sentiments of profound respect,

Yours sincerely in Christ,

**Bishop of Ballarat**