



DIOCESE OF FALL RIVER
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DECREE IMPOSING A PENAL REMEDY

In the Name of God

Rev. Ryszard Biernat,

On September 3, 2019, I, Bishop Richard J. Malone, received an email from a local television reporter that advised me that he was in possession of hours of audio recordings made secretly by you during senior staff meetings at the Catholic Center, as well as recordings of conversation between us at the residence. He also mentioned that he had taped an interview with you which he intended to broadcast. That broadcast has occurred, as well as several other interviews where you have been very critical of me and members of the senior staff with whom you had previously worked very closely.

As you are aware, the meetings of the senior staff of the Diocesan Curia are confidential and often sensitive in nature, especially when we must deal with the health and behavioral difficulties of some members of the diocesan clergy. When you breach that confidentiality, you betray the responsibility of your curial office of Vice Chancellor as stated in canons 274 §2 and 471 #2. It is also, on a more personal note, an action that betrays canon 275 §1 which states that "Since all clerics are working for the same purpose, namely the building up of the body of Christ, they are to be united with one another in the bond of brotherhood and prayer." I have always hoped that the sentiments of that canon would be a unifying bond among those of us who serve in the Diocesan Curia. Your actions are a grave disappointment in that regard.

On August 14, 2019, I issued to you a pastoral precept of warning to allow you some time of discernment regarding a compromising letter you had written that had the potential for causing scandal among the faithful. It appears that the time of discernment does not seem to be producing the outcome for which I had hoped. On the contrary, your recent actions have caused further scandal, and I find it necessary to take stronger measures. Therefore, in light of your conduct, your moral culpability for that behavior, and the scandal caused to others, I find it necessary to issue this precept. Although your actions do not constitute a grave delict according to canon law, they are, nonetheless, a serious infraction of several canons. For your own good and the good of the Church, in accord with the provisions of canons 49, 1339 §2, and 1340 §1, I, the Most Reverend Richard J. Malone, do hereby impose on you, Rev. Ryszard Biernat, the following:

Penal Remedy:

1. You are hereby permanently deprived of your position as Vice Chancellor and Priest Secretary to the Bishop.

2. You may no longer serve as chaplain to the Carmelite Monastery in Buffalo.
3. You are prohibited from residing at the Bishop's residence at 127 Wilson Street, Buffalo, NY 14212

The following restrictions are imposed on you:

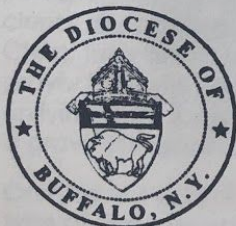
1. Until further notice you may not celebrate the Eucharist publicly.
2. Until further notice your faculties to preach and to celebrate the sacraments are revoked.

As a penance, you are encouraged to continue your time of discernment and to make the five day retreat asked of you on August 14, 2019. I would appreciate knowing when you have completed that retreat. I also hope that, after a time of discernment, you will advise the Bishop's office of your intentions regarding resuming priestly ministry in the Diocese of Buffalo.

The provisions of this precept are necessary and prudent precautions as a pastoral measure to protect the rights and reputations of all involved and to safeguard the salvation of souls. Non-compliance could possibly bring further restrictions.

This precept is effective immediately upon its notification to you.

Given at the Chancery of the Diocese of Buffalo on December 3, 2019.



A. Regina Murphy, SSMN
Sr. Regina Murphy, SSMN
Canonical Notary

+ Richard J. Malone
Most Reverend Richard J. Malone
Bishop of Buffalo

I acknowledge receipt of this precept.

Rev. Ryszard Biernat

Date