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CONGREGAZIONE
PER GLI ISTITUTI DI VITA CONSACRATA
E LE SOCIETÀ DI VITA APOSTOLICA

Prot. n. **DPA**

MOST HOLY FATHER

The Abbot President of the English Benedictine Congregation
asks of Your Holiness
the confirmation of the Decree of dismissal from the Order
of Father **Laurence Soper**,
solemnly professed Monk and Priest of Saint Benedict Abbey at Ealing, Great Britain,
issued by the Abbot President on December 14, 2011,
for the reasons expressed.

The Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, after
having carefully examined the case, confirms the above indicated decree of dismissal of
Father **Laurence Soper**, according to canons 696-700 of the Code of Canon Law, for the
reasons expressed in the same decree, without prejudice to those things which by law are
to be respected, according to canons 701 and 702 of the Code.

Any thing to the contrary notwithstanding.

Vatican City, January 9, 2012.

DPA

DPA Joseph W. Tobin C.Ss.R.
Archbishop Secretary

DPA

P. Sebastiano Paciolla, O. Cist.
Undersecretary



CONGREGATIO PRO DOCTRINA FIDEI

Prot. N. **DPA**

Congregatio Angliae O.S.B.

D.nus **David PEARCE**, presbyter humiliter petit dispensationem ab omnibus oneribus sacrae Ordinationi conexas

Summus Pontifex Benedictus, Papa XVI

Die 8 m. Iulii a. 2011

habita relatione de casu a Congregatione pro Doctrina Fidei,
precibus praedicti sacerdotis annuit iuxta sequentes rationes:

1. Dispensationis Rescriptum a competenti Ordinario oratori quamprimum notificandum est:

- a) Eius effectum sortitur a momento notificationis;
- b) Rescriptum amplectitur inseparabiliter dispensationem a sacro coelibatu et simul amissionem status clericalis. Nunquam oratori fas est duo illa elementa seiungere, seu prius accipere et alterum recusare;
- c) Si vero orator est religiosus, Rescriptum concedit etiam dispensationem a votis;
- d) Idemque insuper secumfert, quatenus opus sit, absolutionem a censuris.

2. Notificatio dispensationis fieri potest vel personaliter ab ipso Ordinario eiusve delegato aut per ecclesiasticum actuarium vel per "epistulas praescriptas" (*registered*). Ordinarius unum exemplar restituere debet rite ab oratore subsignatum ad fidem receptionis Rescripti dispensationis ac simul acceptationis eiusdem praeceptorum.

3. Notitia concessae dispensationis adnotetur in Libris baptizatorum paroeciae oratoris.

4. Quod attinet, si casus ferat, ad celebrationem canonici matrimonii, applicandae sunt normae quae in Codice Iuris Canonici statuuntur. Ordinarius vero curet ut res caute peragantur sine exteriore apparatu.

5. Auctoritas ecclesiastica, cui spectat Rescriptum oratori rite notificare, hunc enixe hortetur, ut vitam Populi Dei, ratione congruendi cum nova eius vivendi condicione, participet, aedificationem praestet et ita probum Ecclesiae filium se exhibeat. Simul autem eidem notum faciat ea quae sequuntur:

- a) Sacerdos dispensatus eo ipso amittit iura statui clericali propria, dignitates et officia ecclesiastica; ceteris obligationibus cum statu clericali conexas non amplius adstringitur;
- b) exclusus manet ab exercitio sacri ministerii, iis exceptis de quibus in can. 976 et 986 § 2 CJC ac propterea nequit homiliam habere, nec potest officium gerere directivum in ambitu pastorali neve munere administratoris paroecialis fungi;
- c) item nullum munus absolvere potest in Seminariis et in Institutis aequiparatis. In aliis Institutis studiorum gradus superioris, quae quocumque modo dependent ab Auctoritate ecclesiastica, munere directivo fungi nequit;
- d) in aliis vero Institutis studiorum gradus superioris ab Auctoritate ecclesiastica non dependentibus nullam theologiam disciplinam tradere potest;
- e) in Institutis autem studiorum gradus inferioris dependentibus ab Auctoritate ecclesiastica, munere directivo vel officio docendi fungi nequit. Eadem lege tenetur presbyter dispensatus in tradendo Religione in Institutis eiusdem generis non dependentibus ab Auctoritate ecclesiastica.

6. Ordinarius curet, quantum fieri potest, ne nova condicio presbyteri dispensati fidelibus scandalum praebeat. Attamen, si adest periculum minoribus abutendi, Ordinarius potest factum dispensationis necnon causam canonicam divulgare.

7. Tempore autem opportuno, Ordinarius competens breviter ad Congregationem de peracta notificatione referat, et si qua tandem fidelium admiratio adsit, prudenti explicatione provideat.

Contrariis quibuscumque minime obstantibus.

Ex Aedibus Congregationis, die 8 m. Iulii a. 2011

DPA

Gulielmus Cardinalis LEVADA
Praefectus

DPA

✠ Aloisius Franciscus LADARIA, S.J.
Archiep. titularis Thibicen.
a Secretis

Dies notificationis 09 Feb 2012

DPA

Subsignatio Presbyteri in signum
acceptationis

DPA

Subsignatio Ordinarii

DECREE OF DISMISSAL

Father Laurence Soper, a solemnly professed monk and priest of Saint Benedict's Abbey at Ealing, of the English Benedictine Congregation, who was assigned to work in the Abbey of Saint Anselm at Rome as General Treasurer of the Benedictine Confederation, was summoned to go to London for an interview with police on 8 March 2011, and left the Abbey of Saint Anselm on 3 March 2011 and has not been seen since. An examination of his cell suggests that he left voluntarily with the intention of avoiding arrest.

On 4 May 2011 the Abbot of Ealing formally ordered him to report to him and to live in a place in accordance with the Abbot's instructions, and warned him that failure to do so might lead to dismissal, on grounds of unlawful absence from the monastery prolonged for six months.

The Abbot of Ealing, after consulting his Council on 7 November 2011, decided that dismissal proceedings should be initiated and on 7 November 2011 and 23 November 2011 sent warnings to Father Laurence, in accordance with the provisions of canon 697 § 2, ordering him to report to him.

Father Laurence has not obeyed the order to report to the Abbot of Ealing, so the Abbot of Ealing, together with his Council, on 8 December 2011 determined that Father Laurence was incorrigible and ought to be dismissed because of his unlawful absence from the monastery prolonged beyond six months, and the Abbot of Ealing has sent the acts of the case to the Abbot President of the English Benedictine Congregation fifteen days after the last warning had expired without effect.

The Abbot President and his Council, comprising at least four members as well as the Abbot President in accordance with canon 699 § 1 and n. 136 (6) of the Statutes for the Government of the Congregation, considered the matter on 14 December 2011, and determined, in a secret collegial vote, that Father Laurence should be dismissed.

The Abbot President, together with his Council, therefore dismisses Father Laurence Soper from Saint Benedict's Abbey at Ealing and from the English Benedictine Congregation, on account of his unlawful absence from the monastery prolonged for more than six months, contrary to the provisions of canon 696 § 1. Father Laurence is dispensed from his religious vows, and all rights and obligations deriving from profession hereby cease. He may not exercise Holy Orders until he finds a bishop who is prepared to receive him into his diocese, after suitable probation, or at least permit him to exercise Holy Orders. The provisions of canon 702 are to be observed. This decree will come into effect when it is confirmed by the Holy See. Father Laurence has the right to have recourse within ten days of notification of this decree to the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

Given at the Abbey of St Benedict at Ealing.

14 December 2011.

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