

## *English Benedictine Congregation*

From: DPA  
Abbot President

Ealing Abbey  
Charlbury Grove  
London W5 2DY  
Tel: 0181-862 2100  
Fax: 0181-810 4725

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Dear Father Peter,

Thank you for your letter of 13th December which reached me this morning.

I must confess I am not very sure why you felt it necessary to address your concerns to me nor what it is you are asking me to do!. When I left office in 1991 the monk you mention was doing a good job as Headmaster and I had no complaints about him from anyone. It would seem that any difficulties there may have been, such as those to which you refer, must have been dealt with by Abbot Laurence..

In the circumstances the only person who has the jurisdiction and competence to deal with this matter is Abbot Martin. I imagine Father Timothy acted in perfectly good faith. Unless some clear and universal statement is issued to the community whereby everyone knows that certain people can not be asked to do specific duties, how is anyone expected to know? On the other hand it is the duty of any Superior to inform individual members of his community about any work, pastoral or otherwise, from which he is excluded.

The protection of children has always to be a very high priority, and you are right to be both vigilant and concerned about it, and I don't need to tell you, it can have most serious implications both for individuals, schools and communities. I would however like to stress that we are here in an area of justice. A person must be clearly told what he is forbidden to do by the competent authority, (in this case his Abbot) before any action such as you propose is embarked upon. The other point we need to remember, is that someone's good name is at stake, hence one needs substantial evidence. "Remarks passed by third parties," or "occasions when he has been passed over for a number of posts," would to my mind be wholly insufficient information to pass on to officials outside the monastery.

I shall leave this note for you when I come to the Abbey on Friday, otherwise you may not get it until after Christmas. I shall be returning for Christmas Day and will be happy to talk with you further about your concerns, should you so wish.

With my prayers and every blessing for the coming year,

Yours ever,