



EALING ABBEY

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From Abbot Martin Shipperlee O.S.B.

4th June 2007

Dear Peter,

I am sorry to harass you on the matter of Fr RC-F41 but some weeks have passed since we last talked and I am under increasing pressure to bring closure to this situation. Parishioners do not understand why he continues to be under restrictions, and to be honest, I not sure I do either. In addition the Cardinal has copied to me a letter he sent to Fr RC-F41 DPA which indicates that the matter is under my control, which is news to me!

So what am I after? That Fr RC-F41 should be able to function as a retired member of the monastic community at Ealing, concelebrating and when suitable, presiding at the community mass, which normally occurs at 7 a.m. There would be no need for him to hear confessions or have any active ministry outside the monastery. Clearly we need to ensure that there is no or as little risk to children as possible. At the moment it is far from obvious that Fr RC-F41 has ever posed a risk to children. Neither the jury nor the sixty people interviewed as potential character witnesses, all of whom were fully informed, put much store by the events in DPA. There is, of course Mr Tregaskis' risk assessment, but I have expert medical testimony that argues his report has little value. Moreover, there is the very long list of people who are willing to testify to Fr RC-F41 effectiveness in the pastoral care of children over more than thirty years. However, since he would have no unsupervised access to children, indeed very little contact with children at all, I think that would have satisfied the precautionary principle.

There remains the problem of possible scandal, but by far the greater likely cause of scandal is the public perception that an innocent man is being kept under restriction, with the conclusion being drawn that either the Church is behaving unjustly, or that there is some other, undisclosed information which is being kept secret. Either way things do not reflect well on us, which is why I am writing to you. As I see it, a clearly worked out code for Fr RC-F41 retirement will protect children and protect him from malicious comment, a modest degree of sacramental activity will protect all of us from causing scandal.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,

DPA

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