



Office of the Bishop
Diocese of Toledo

+

26 May 2020

Dear Priests, Deacons, Consecrated Religious, and Lay Faithful,

This letter comes to inform you of a most serious matter which has pastoral and spiritual implications. As your shepherd I am charged by the office entrusted to me by Christ and His Church to profess, proclaim, promote, and protect the integrity and unity of the Catholic Faith of all those entrusted to my care. Given the grave nature of what follows, and in conscience before God and in accord with canons 375 §§1-2 and 386 §§1-2, it is essential that I make known to you this matter for your sake and the sake of the Catholic Faith in the Diocese of Toledo.

You may be aware that Ms. Beverly Bingle, a layperson of the Diocese of Toledo, publicly attempted ordination to the diaconate on 13 September 2012. Subsequently, she attempted to receive ordination to the priesthood on 9 February 2013. These actions were in violation of canon 1024 of the 1983 *Code of Canon Law* and the *motu proprio, Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela*, Article 5, 1° and 2°. By these public acts, Ms. Bingle formally separated herself from the Catholic Church.

A preliminary investigation, according to the norms of canon law, regarding Ms. Bingle's attempted ordination to the diaconate was undertaken by then Bishop Leonard Blair, in September 2012, and again in February 2013 when she attempted priestly ordination. Both of these were transmitted to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Dicastery of the Holy See that has competence regarding such matters.

Following both public acts, Bishop Leonard Blair made pastoral efforts to invite Ms. Bingle to meet with him, to renounce her actions and be reconciled with the Catholic Church. His invitations went unheeded. Likewise, I, too, made pastoral efforts, including personally meeting with Ms. Bingle in 2015, to invite her to renounce her attempted ordinations and reconcile herself to the Catholic Church. She, however, remains obstinate and has refused any reconciliation.

More recently, on 20 August 2019, Ms. Bingle formally represented the Association of US Catholic Priests, Toledo Chapter, as the "authorized agent" on an "Application for Permit to Use Lucas County Government Buildings and Grounds" for an event on 20 September 2019 for which the Association of US Catholic Priests Social Justice Subcommittee was the principal organizer and sponsor. This action, along with her continual simulation of the Sacraments at the "Holy Spirit Catholic Community" in Toledo, Ohio, are a cause of great concern, and a source of confusion and scandal to the faithful of the Diocese of Toledo.

The fact that Ms. Bingle has obstinately refused to be reconciled to the Catholic Church by not renouncing her attempted ordinations, and has continued to simulate the Sacraments has led the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which has the authority of Pope Francis, to make a definitive judgment on these matters. In a decree dated 20 December 2019 and received in my office on 20 April 2020, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has declared that Ms. Beverly Bingle incurred the excommunication *latae sententiae* for the grave delict of attempted

Letter to the Faithful Concerning Ms. Beverly Bingle

26 May 2020

Page Two

sacred ordination. Most recently, I made the pastoral effort to reconcile Ms. Bingle with the Catholic Church, inviting her to meet with me and renounce her attempted ordinations. Ms. Bingle declined to meet with me and has refused, once again, any reconciliation.

By definition, *latae sententiae* penalties are incurred at the very time of the offense (i.e. attempting ordination) and they are set forth as such by a declaratory sentence or decree after a judicial or extrajudicial penal process.

A person who is excommunicated is excluded from any share in the Eucharist or other acts of public worship, and from receiving any of the other Sacraments that they could otherwise participate in, or celebrating sacramentals. They are likewise excluded from the exercise of or the ability to acquire any ecclesiastical office, ministry or function. The excommunicated may not be validly received into a public association of the Christian faithful or serve as a baptismal or confirmation sponsor. This severe penalty is deemed necessary in order to protect the nature and dignity of the Sacrament of Holy Orders and repair the scandal that has occurred in the faithful. The penalty of excommunication is meant to help the offender realize the gravity of his or her actions and seek to repent, and to bring the person back into the fold and be restored to full communion with the Church.

In light of the above, it is also my responsibility as your Bishop to warn all of the clergy, consecrated religious and lay faithful in the Diocese of Toledo that, since Ms. Beverly Bingle has served as a representative of the “Holy Spirit Catholic Community” and the Association of US Catholic Priests, any affiliation with these groups may be a source of grave concern due to the confusion and scandal they have caused. This word of caution is provided to all the faithful who are reminded that Catholics, according to the norms of canon 209 §1, “in their own manner of acting are always obliged to maintain communion with the Church.” In 1994, Pope Saint John Paul II declared that the Church has “no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and that this judgment is to be definitively held by all the Church’s faithful” (*Ordinatio sacerdotalis*, no. 4), a teaching reiterated by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI and Pope Francis.

In your charity, please join me in earnestly praying for Ms. Beverly Bingle that she may renounce her attempted ordinations and continued simulation of the Sacraments and be reconciled with the Catholic Church. Please also pray for anyone that has been affected or scandalized by her actions that they may not be led astray, but may embrace anew the perpetual teachings and practice of Christ’s Church. Kindly remember me in your good prayers, even as I remember you; that by God’s grace, we might together remain firm in the communion of our Catholic faith and steadfast in our love for God and for one another.

Sincerely yours in Christ Jesus,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daniel E. Thomas". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Daniel E. Thomas
Bishop of Toledo