

From the desk of...

**Reverend Father Paul A. Wickens**  
*Saint Anthony of Padua Roman Catholic Church*  
1360 Pleasant Valley Way, West Orange, New Jersey 07052  
973-325-2233 Fax 973-325-2865

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Dear Fellow Priests:

As many of you know, by the grace of God, we have a beautiful church in West Orange, New Jersey. After offering Mass at temporary locations for well over ten years, the church was officially opened on June 13, 1996: the Feast of Saint Anthony.

The genesis of the church goes back to 1983 when Archbishop Gerety transferred me, in a unilateral, punitive move, from my parish to Elizabeth, NJ - an assignment that did not exist before or after. Furthermore, no one was assigned to take my place in Orange, thereby causing great spiritual loss to the parish, the hospitals as well as the Police and Fire Departments with which I served as Chaplain. For many months, countless souls were deprived of Extreme Unction.

If ever there was an irresponsible, punitive, cold-hearted episcopal maneuver, this was it!

Nevertheless, while I appealed the transfer to Rome, which was within my rights as an Assistant Pastor, I was willing to accept the transfer to a new assignment ( it only required my services two days a week ) out of the sense of conformity to a diocesan order.

Why was I transferred? Not for the good of souls, to be sure, but only as a revengeful act because I had strenuously objected to the classroom sex-ed promoted by Archbishop Gerety.

While I was willing to accept the bogus assignment, since I found so many of the diocesan policies imprudent, I decided to seek early retirement. At fifty-three (53) years of age and laboring under a chronic back ailment, I received certification from two medical doctors. When I presented my request for retirement, Archbishop Gerety rescinded the assignment to Elizabeth.

To this day, most priests opine that Father Wickens refused the assignment to Elizabeth. Henceforth they erroneously labeled him as "disobedient". Archbishop Gerety never clarified nor corrected the false impression. I asked to speak before the Priests' Senate and was refused a platform. I sent letters into the diocesan newspaper (*The Advocate*). None were printed.

Archbishop Gerety was so determined to discredit my character that when I asked for the disability pension, he announced in a press release that I was "suspensio." As such, if anyone calls the chancery regarding my status, the reply remains to this day, a terse, "Father was disobedient".

Thus I am deprived of all salary, stipends, medical coverage, pension benefits and, eventually, room and board. I made several appeals to Rome, by letter and in person, but was never granted a Canonical Hearing. Cardinal Oddi, Prefect of the Congregation of the Clergy, politely reminded me that I had refused to go to an assignment in Elizabeth. "Who told you that?" I interjected. "Why Archbishop Gerety, of course." So much for fairness and truth!

"Could I make a formal appeal or complaint? Could I write up deposition? What are my rights? Can you read me Miranda?" All to no avail. Cardinal Oddi, an avuncular prelate, simply shrugged his shoulders. Vintage Romanita!

### **GOOD THINGS HAPPEN**

Over the last twenty (20) years lots of good things have happened. I have full canonical faculties to hear confessions and perform marriages. The Vatican removed (*ad cautelam*) any punitive censures.

Our chapel offers the Traditional Mass exclusively with jurisdiction and faculties. *Deo Gratias!*

Parenthetically, when I was persecuted by Archbishop Gerety, there was no thought or intention to return to the Latin Mass. It never entered my mind. In March, 1983, I suddenly had no parish, no public altar on which to offer daily Mass. One day soon after, as I was about to offer Mass on a makeshift altar in the rectory, it occurred to me to use the old Missal. The impact of that Mass, with all its traditions and beauty, compelled me, henceforth, to offer that Mass of our Fathers *semper et pro semper*.

Erroneously, most people now think that the issue of Gerety vs. Wickens concerned the use of the 1962 Missal. That issue did not exist. In 1983, the New Mass vs. the Old Mass was not on the table..

What was on the table was: Should a priest remain silent while his bishop disobeys Papal directions, such as prohibitions of classroom sex-ed and General Absolution? Should a priest say nothing of the heretical aspects contained in "*Christ Among Us*": a bad catechism promoted by Archbishop Gerety which was eventually condemned by Rome?

### **TWENTY YEARS OF OPPROBRIUM**

Ever since 1983, many priests in the Archdiocese have slandered the reputations of the priest and people of Saint Anthony's Chapel.

I've tried to curb these slanders in discussion with Archbishop McCarrick. He was a stone wall.

In the past two years, I've tried to reason with Archbishop Myers. After writing him concerning my desire to work with the diocese, he never responded. I have tried to arrange personal meetings with him. He refuses to meet and dialogue with even a modicum of Christian charity. Archbishop Myers appears to be full of pride and arrogance. This conclusion has been the inevitable result of much prayer and soul searching. Bishop Myers is obviously hiding some dark secrets.

### **A CHANGE OF ATTITUDE**

I am very grateful to the number of priests who have shown courtesy and charity to me throughout this period. I have also heard from many who are secretly on my side, but cannot risk losing the material things that I have lost.

However, since the bishops and most priests have been sending my way so many "slings and arrows", perhaps it is time to fight fire with fire. I have been very patient, absorbed much verbal abuse, been refused hospitality in your churches, retreats, conferences. I no longer receive requiem notices of brother priests. Archbishop Gerety's "charity" went so far as to refuse me to offer the funeral Mass for my own mother.

Henceforth, by God's Grace, we will no longer remain silent. We shall inform the faithful and point fingers at the real enemies of Christ, i.e., the homosexual clique in the archdiocese. I am aware of the cruel and vindictive nature of homosexuals. Thus having received several threats, we have put law enforcement on the alert.

### **EXCUSES, EXCUSES, EXCUSES**

Some of the clergy who read these words will be scrambling to make excuses. They need to justify their toleration of heresy and sacrilege.. Here is a selection of clichés for their timid souls:

- ▶ It's not my responsibility.
- ▶ Let Rome take care of it.
- ▶ It's always dark before the dawn.
- ▶ C'mon! Lighten up!
- ▶ The Church is doing well.
- ▶ Leave it to the Holy Spirit.
- ▶ I am humble and obedient.
- ▶ I follow the Pope.

Good Padres! Where were the majority of you when female altar servers, bad catechisms, sex ed and General Absolution were promoted in **DISOBEDIENCE** to Papal decrees? Where were you when certain Scriptures (Old Testament and New) were discredited? When Genesis was reduced to mythology; when St. John's Gospel was trashed and St. Paul's Epistles were rejected for being "out-dated" and offensive to the Feminists? When the Rosary was belittled? When the Precious Blood was dumped down the sink.

**DIVINE LAW † ECCLESIASTICAL LAW**  
**A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE**

1. Divine Law **ALWAYS** binds.
2. No exceptions. No dispensations.  
Christ was obedient to Divine Law. i.e., the Will of the Father.  
We must be obedient as was Christ.  
**THIS IS THE OBEDIENCE OF THE PRIEST!**
3. Ecclesiastical Law does not bind if a proportionate excusing cause exists.  
Ecclesiastical, i.e., human law does not bind when a proportionate reason is present.  
Thus, Christ cured on the Sabbath, plucked corn on the Sabbath and rescued animals despite the Temple restrictions, i.e., Church Law.

Does one dare call **Jesus** "disobedient", or **the Apostles** "sinners"?

And on the subject of "obedience", parish priests **NEVER** took a **VOW** of obedience to their bishop. A pledge, yes! But not binding under sin! Furthermore, the liberal hierarchy and its legion of priests reject the notion of sin. That's why Confession lines have disappeared. There are often grave reasons to exercise exceptions to a bishop's directives.

For just one moment, suppose one's bishop is a heretic or schismatic. Suppose the faith is threatened or souls are in danger of corruption because of diocesan policy. Suppose the bishop is a practicing, if not flaunting homosexual, such as Weakland of Milwaukee and Ferrario of Hawaii, as well as two consecutive bishops of Palm Beach, Florida ( and Lord knows how many others).

Suppose your bishop is part of the "homosexual, clerical network", whose liturgies are sacrilegious, whose priests do not believe in Transubstantiation, thereby invalidating their Masses since they deliberately exclude the proper intention. The canonical dictum, *Ecclesia Supplet*, does not apply if there is a deliberate wrongful intention.

The link of authority from Pope to bishop is broken by heresy and schism, even if there is no formal declaration by the Pope.

In 16th Century England, most Catholic bishops had severed their authority from Rome by taking the schismatic Oath of Supremacy. It took a number of years before Rome formally excommunicated these bishops. They were de facto out of union with the Papacy.

This is obviously all too true in most dioceses today. While in Rome, a Cardinal confided in me that the American bishops are de facto in schism.

**A "COP-OUT"**

When we hear modern priests talk of obedience, it is usually a convenient way out of doing one's duty to preach the truth "in season and out of season." The Litmus Test of clerical obedience is how obedient, humble and silent would you be if your bishop announced that henceforth there would be a cessation of salaries, stipends, medical insurance, expenses and pensions?

(4)

Would you say, "Yes, bishop, I obey!" Or would you PROTEST, scream and holler, have a fit and storm the chancery?

Well, our liberal bishops took away reverence and faith, undermined Catholic doctrine and morals...and most priests remained mute!

"Where your heart is, there is your treasure." The loss of money meant more to them than the loss of doctrine.

**MONEY, MONEY and SECURITY**

Christ spoke of the Good Shepherd and the hireling. Are we afraid to protect the sheep at the cost of our own lives? Will we stand up for morality and reverence at the loss of money, reputation, financial security? If not, then we are the hirelings of the Gospel.

As for money... we are well aware of a number of pastors who are skimming the collection basket. I doubt that I would shock any of you with the practice of our "sophisticated brethren" in taking vacation money as well as the pretext of siphoning extra cash for "expenses".

Wouldn't the "O'Reilly Factor" love to get that story?

**DOUBLE STANDARD**

I have wondered whatever happened to:

1. Be open and honest!
2. Don't be judgmental!
3. Follow your conscience!

All we have heard from the Newark clergy (with some very admirable exceptions) are **JUDGMENTS** (usually unfavorable) regarding the status of our Traditional **CATHOLIC CHAPEL**.

By God's Grace, we shall henceforth adapt similar tactics that are used against our apostolate - for the glory of God and the salvation of souls!

We intend to be "open and honest" regarding the situations that exist in the Archdiocese of Newark.

**TO OUR ORTHODOX PRIESTS**

I encourage you to think about the importance of leaving Liberalism and Modernism behind you. Please consider coming back to the Mass of All Time...Consider the countless souls that you can help to attain heaven... consider leaving the irreverence, doctrinal ambiguity and the moral corruption that you deal with on a daily basis.

I appreciate your taking time to read this update. Know that I welcome your responses and cordially invite interested priests to visit us at Saint Anthony's.

In Christ,



Reverend Paul A. Wickens