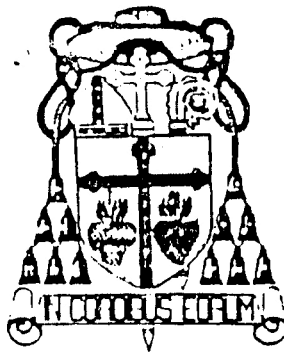


Copy -
Bishop Okoniskis
please give original to
Gerhard Stefan.



July 20th 1984

Most Rev. George J. Musey, D.D.

Dear Sir:

Initially it came as a shock to learn that Michael Degnan (known to serve as "Fr. Dominic Savio") had the incredibly poor judgement, if not downright malice, to make public a private controversy between Bishops. Since he is not one himself, he should never have been told of the matter - but once having learned of it, prudence would have demanded priestly confidence, leaving the matter to be settled between the Bishops.

While complaining to the laymen (not to the Bishops) that the Mexican Bishops and I were usurping Bishop Vezelis' authority, Michael usurped the authority of all the Bishops by daring to pass judgement and take decisive action without the benefit of understanding the matter at hand nor the canon laws or circumstances involved.

Now it has been brought to my attention that Michael has stated that I examined his ordination papers and highly recommended him. The fact is that Mike told me he had been ordained by an Old Catholic Bishop Fesi of that particular religion, and wanted to know if his ordination would be considered valid and if he could become a Catholic Priest. I told him the validity of his orders depend on whether Bishop Fesi could be proven to have valid Orders - (which some groups of the "Old Catholics" have and others do not) - and whether a valid rite of Ordination was used. I instructed him to get background information concerning Bp. Fesi and a copy of the rite of Ordination.

(Mike told me he didn't know anything about the rite but did recall that it was in English) - He later informed me that Bp. Fesi said he didn't know where he had gotten the copy of the rite or what rite it was - had never used it before or since and didn't know what he had done with it. (It may have been Novos Ordo or Episcopalian.)

A few months later Mike contacted me again and I recommended that he contact Bishop Vezelis (whom I had recently consecrated) since he had a seminary where Michael could pursue the Spiritual and Academic training necessary for the Priesthood. I then contacted Bp. Vezelis, explaining to him that Mike had no seminary training but had been ordained an Old Catholic Priest by Bp. Fesi. Bp. Vezelis said he knew Bp. Fesi and was sure that he had valid Orders - there remained the problem of the doubtful Rite which would have to be solved by Ordaining Mike sub-conditione after, of course, training him; the absolving him from Apostacy, Heresy and Schism and receiving him back into the Catholic Church from which he had defected and been excommunicated when he became an Old Catholic.

¶ Over ¶

Sometime later I was contacted by a gentlemen from Akron, Ohio inquiring about a Fr. Dominic Savio (a name Mike adopted when he became an Old Catholic.) I assured him that Mike (or Fr. Savio) was surely a true Catholic Priest if (as was stated), Bp. Vezelis had sent him to offer Mass, since Bp. Vezelis knew Mike's background and would certainly not send a man to celebrate Mass without making certain that the man was a true Priest.

I now know that I had been misinformed. The sad, scandalous facts are:

1. Mike was ordained not by Bp. Fesi but another Bp. of the Old Catholic Church named Swigert. I am informed that Bp. Swigert then shared his home and belongings with Mike, who later calumniated and defamed him and pirated his congregation, much as he did Bishop Altenbach.
2. Michael never renounced, and received absolution from, his Apostasy and Heresy and excommunication nor was received into the Catholic Church.
3. Bishop Vezelis did not Ordain Mike - (not even conditionally.)
4. Michael Degnan remains an excommunicated layman (from the Catholic Church) and at best possibly (but not probably) a clergyman of the heretical sect known as the Old Catholic Church.

Those who place their and their children's immortal souls in his hands should ask themselves if they would put their own (or their children's) mortal lives in the hands of a "surgeon" who never attended medical school but received a "license" from the United Faith-healers Assoc.

I apologize for not having written sooner, but my schedule is crushing - besides, nothing that has been written here is new - it's all been related before to various inquiring individuals many times.

Please keep me in your prayers and be assured of remembrance at Holy Mass.

*In cordibus Eorum
+ Jesu*

PLEASE NOTE: - The foregoing is a true, verbatim typed copy of the original, hand written letter - addressed to Mr. Gerhard Stefan in answer to an inquiring letter to Bishop Musey.