



Copy

26 June 1984

Bishop's House

Mr. James Romero
118 Santa Iguene
New Iberia, La 70560

Dear Mr. Romero,

I would like to answer your letter very simply - if that were possible. After considering the many points that were raised, and in the light of our own experience and observations, I think the following points may be safely made without fear of rash judgment, in the interests of honesty and truth, and for the peace of mind of the faithful everywhere.

1. It has come to my knowledge that Msgr. Musey is presenting himself as a "Primate of the United States" to some people, while Mr. Thomas Fouhy has been propagandizing him as some kind of "first and Senior Bishop", implying that Bishop Musey has some kind of special power or authority. This is absolutely false. This would be like saying that because you came after your father, your father is more of a man than you are.

Bishop Musey does not have any seniority of authority. The same is true of Bishop Carmona. Concerning the agreement signed by the bishops: Musey, Zamora, Carmona and myself, this was not meant as an absolute prohibition. The intention was to maintain unity among the bishops. In no case could we give to Archbishop Thuc any power that he did not have as an Archbishop.

In Baton Rouge, Archbishop Thuc said in his sermon that he has done all that he could; now it is up to the other bishops to do the work. Bishop Musey can make any claims he may wish and they have only as much validity as people will believe his stories. What is important is that Archbishop Thuc does not even know Bishop Musey, much less would he give him some kind of special authority. Bishop Musey has met the Archbishop very briefly only twice: in France and in Baton Rouge. The same is true for the Mexican bishops. The Archbishop still laughs about the Mexican bishops when he talks about them. On the other hand, the Archbishop has been living with us for over a year. We have become very close and if anyone knows the thoughts of the Archbishop it would be myself. We converse only in French because his English is not as good as some would pretend.

Archbishop Thuc confided many things to me. His trust was such that he made me his legitimate representative by executing a power of attorney. This document I have in my possession and copies are registered with the proper civil authorities. If Bishop Musey or Bishop Carmona make any claims, it would not be difficult for them to offer some kind of proof.

2. Mr. Thomas Condon Fouhy is a laicized priest. This has come about by a two-fold manner. First, by his own actions of attempting public marriage in a civil court before his petition for laicization was granted. This is called 'degradation' in Church law. Secondly, by the official decree issued by the Vatican at Mr. Fouhy's own request. On two counts, therefore, Mr. Fouhy's deliberate intention of renouncing his priesthood has been officially recognized. (Canon 2338 #1). It is to be noted that when a rescript (an official decree) of reduction to the lay state is granted to a priest at his own request, the obligation of celibacy remains and there is no hope of readmission to the clerical state.

This is the practice of the Roman Catholic Church. You will please note that even when the decree is granted, there continues the obligation not to marry! Mr. Fouhy not only ignored this by applying for a decree of reduction to the lay state, he manifested his defiance to Church law and authority by attempting to get married even before he was reduced to the lay state. Again, please note: there is no hope of readmission to the clerical state.

The Catholic Church will not readmit Mr. Fouhy. But, from what I have observed, Bishop Musey feels competent to re-admit him. Where does that put Msgr. Musey? I am sorry to dwell on this sad history which continues to haunt many people. For the spiritual welfare of the innocent people, this matter must be dealt with.

Conclusion: no Roman Catholic may attend the sacrilegious Masses or receive fruitless Sacraments from Mr. Fouhy. Anyone going against this clear law and practice of the Roman Catholic Church becomes suspect of schism and partakes in the grave sin of this man.

3. Because of the suspicious conduct of Bishop Musey in so many matters: example: Mr. Fouhy's scandalous appointment as a Vicar General and Rector of a seminary; the arranging for consecration of questionable candidates as bishops, and other matters, it appears that the safest course to follow is to avoid attending his Masses or receiving the Sacraments from him until his situation is clarified. As it stands right now, there are serious grounds to believe that Bishop Musey is excommunicated from the Catholic Church.

4. I do not know who would want to involve either me or our community mysteriously in the things going on in your area. I can assure you that we know nothing of what goes on down there. The first news we had of some kind of trouble was your phone call. We have since heard of all kinds of justifications on the part of Bishop Musey for his dealings. I reject totally whatever he says as shameful lies. I have been in total darkness and ignorance of all his doings. And, because of these things we are unable to associate ourselves with him. We are deeply grieved by all these things and are very sensitive to the needs and sufferings of the innocent people.

5. The obvious question then presents itself: what are the people to do? That is a big problem. Since we did not create the problem, it is not really ours to solve. We do not wish to interfere in other people's quarrels. We have become involved insofar as duty requires that the truth be presented to the people.

Assuring you of our prayers and best wishes in this time of terrible trial

Fr. Louis Vezelis
+Fr. Louis Vezelis, OFM