



La Communauté des Fils de Marie

10, route de Formerie
Bouricourt
76220 Gancourt-Saint-Étienne

Bouricourt, August 22, 2006

His Exc. Bishop Gordon D. Bennett, S.J.
Bishop of Mandeville - Jamaica
P.O. Box 8
Mandeville
Jamaica, West Indies

Your Excellency:

I received your letter dated last July 15, on August 22, the feast of Mary, Queen of the World. After having read it attentively and for the purpose of giving you an honest and clear answer, may I be permitted, quite humbly, to bring to your knowledge some information and to remind you of the agreement signed on December 8, 1995, with the Diocese of Mandeville at the time it was an Apostolic Vicariate.

Since my return to France in September 2003, although I was a resident of the Diocese of Beauvais, I was not engaged in pastoral ministry, having been sent there solely in the service of our religious Community. Bishop James, the Bishop of Beauvais, had given me the faculties, and occasionally I would help or replace one of my confreres in his ministry.

During my stay in Jamaica, just before my ordination as a deacon, I signed an agreement with Bishop Paul Michael Boyle, the delegate of the Superior General of the Sons of Mary, Father Michel Palud and in the presence of a witness of this agreement, Father Bruno Ruel. Paragraph 2 of that agreement stipulates: "The local Bishop leaves to the Superior General the responsibility of the above-mentioned member of the Community of the Sons of Mary, with the freedom to also assign him outside the Diocese in which Father Stéphane Bouchet has been incardinated."

Still being a Son of Mary, and not having the least thought of changing either my commitment in the future or my vocation, I rely completely on the second paragraph of our agreement, leaving all the decisions regarding my person as a religious and my ministry as a priest to Father Eric Roy, our Superior General. Before God, since I have not committed any serious fault I cannot see any reason for or find any motive justifying the right to strip me of my faculties to celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation. In regard to this latter point, I leave everything, in all conscience, up to the grace of God and the help of Mary Immaculate.

I thank you for the invitation to return to the Diocese of Mandeville; however, if in the past Divine Providence led me to that land, my primary vocation is and remains that of being a Son of Mary. My duty is to remain in the service of my Community in a spirit of humility, charity and fidelity for the glory of God and the triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, without forgetting the welfare and salvation of souls.

I assure you of my humble prayers for your intentions and those of the Diocese of Mandeville.

Sincerely yours in Jesus and Our Lady,
Respectfully,

Father Stéphane Bouchet, O.F.F.M.

cc.: To whom it may concern