



« Totus Tuus »

La Communauté des Fils de Marie

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

Your Excellency:

I thank you for your letter of July 15 last. In reading it I could not help thinking that perhaps you have had imposed upon you a burden you do not merit, and if that is the case you have all my sympathy. The fact is, Archbishop Prendergast has informed you, Your Excellency, of certain more recent developments concerning the Sons of Mary. Before writing to me it would perhaps have been desirable, pastorally speaking, if I had been able, at least, to inform you or give you my version of the facts. Be that as it may, you have sent me this letter and I do not hold this against you. But perhaps Archbishop Prendergast forgot to inform you of all that led us to these latest happenings? Solely for your information, I am going to draw your attention to certain facts that could enlighten your ulterior judgment on the situation.

It is a good thing to know that the Sons of Mary have been undergoing Apostolic Visits for more than thirteen years. In effect, Visitors and Commissioners have followed one another without interruption and these visits have been of no help to the situation of the Sons of Mary or of the Work to which they belong. On the contrary, more and more pressure has been exerted on the Sons of Mary to detach themselves from their Foundress and the Charism she has passed on to them. There is no need to remind you that all of us in the Church have the duty to protect and safeguard the gift of religious life along with the charisms proper to it that enrich the Church. Indeed:

It serves the best interests of the Church for communities to have their own special character and purpose. Therefore loyal recognition and safekeeping should be accorded to the spirit of founders, as also to all the particular goals and wholesome traditions which constitute the heritage of each community. (Perfectae Caritatis, no. 2)

So we have always tried to cooperate as far as we were able to. But when such cooperation placed in danger the vocation proper to the Sons of Mary, as well as their membership in the Work of which they are the issue, it was impossible, in conscience, to give way to compromise or to consent to pervert the truth. Any compromise would have been to the detriment of the Sons of Mary, the Foundress or the whole of the Work willed by God.

Moreover, apart from all the storming, we must not forget one fundamental aspect of the question, one that has never really been touched upon over the years by our Visitors: the mystical reality of the life of our Foundress. Up until now, everyone has refused to make a clear pronouncement; there has been every attempt to avoid the question, making all sorts of detours around it, even tightening the vise on the Sons of Mary, calling upon them to obey, at times even against their conscience.

If we have reached such a point, Your Excellency, it is because no one in authority in the Church has been willing to open his heart to the mystical life of our Foundress or to God's plan for the Work which He founded through her. If only you knew the anguish with which we see how the Church, in many of its ministers, has shut itself up against our Foundress and the Work as a whole, including the Community of the Sons of Mary.

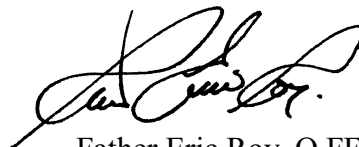
We have been forced to act as we have acted, and not as a pleasure or in a spirit of insubordination and disobedience. That is not our attitude, nor that which our Foundress has taught us. We have acted as we did because, in all conscience, for us that was what was just and right to do, before God and especially with a view to the "*salus animarum*" [salvation of souls] in very clear and precise circumstances.

Thus, to enlighten your pastoral judgment, it would be well to explain that, in keeping with the agreement signed by your predecessor and myself and to which you allude, it is clear that it was for the Community of the Sons of Mary that I was incardinated in the Diocese of Mandeville (at that time an Apostolic Vicariate). It is clearly stipulated in that agreement that all liberty was given the Superior General. You can also refer to Bishop Boyle and to his correspondence with the Sons of Mary, and you will see that he left free scope to the Community in what concerned the incardinated Sons of Mary and even, and this affects me, the office of Superior General which had been entrusted to me in order to serve my Community. In addition, you could also reread, among others, the seventh paragraph of the agreement, which releases you from any responsibility in respect to my pastoral work whatever it might be, since you had nothing to do with my appointment as Superior General.

It is with regret that I cannot, for the time being, accede to your request to return to the Diocese of Mandeville for December 1, 2006. Since you are a pastor of souls, I am sure you will understand that the pastoral charge that has been entrusted to me prevents me from quitting my post and my confreres in order to think of an eventual return to the Diocese. For me, this would be a dereliction of duty, especially in the present turn of events.

Finally, I thank you above all for the prayers for my intentions, and I too pray for you and for the Church to the end that Love may triumph in all things and in everyone. But I also remain equally convinced that another unfortunate act has been perpetrated against the Community of the Sons of Mary.

In Christo et Maria,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Roy", written in a cursive style.

Father Eric Roy, O.F.F.M.
Superior General

cc.: To whom it may concern