

On Fr. Gruner II

3. But let us take a look at the arguments of Mr. Christopher Ferrara, who is zealous for the truth as far as I can tell. He makes an argument in an article he published on this matter, and his argument rests on the principle that no one may be punished for failing to do that which is impossible, or gravely inconvenient to do. He states that if a bishop suspended a priest for not doing some duty, and the whole time the priest was in bed with double pneumonia, or even if the duty was gravely inconvenient, then the suspension would be null and void. Mr. Ferrara has a point here, but I do not believe it to be complete. That is, how could it be *impossible* to return to his diocese like his bishop asked? I get the feeling that Mr. Ferrara is of the opinion that *only* Fr. Gruner could do this work regarding Our Lady of Fatima. Were that the case, then I can see some impossibility. But we are all dispensable. We can all be replaced. No priest in any apostolate is immune to being transferred by his superior.

4. Which leads us to a separate question: just who is Father's superior? Whom does he obey? I cannot find this out.

5. If I were handed a letter stating that I was suspended for not doing something, I would have done exactly what Fr. Gruner did, contest it with the bishop who gave it, and if that didn't work take the decision of the ordinary to a higher court. But when the highest court of the Church makes a decision, then the decision stands. Let's say I receive orders for a transfer. The parishioners perhaps would complain that the building project in the parish was not finished; the nuns perhaps would complain that the project of the renovation of their chapel needs me, etc. But another priest could be found to do this work. It is not impossible.

6. Next, Mr. Ferrara says that the press release comes from "an anonymous author," and that the release is in a "chain of hearsay

and buck-passing," and that the Vatican did not do the suspension. I don't understand why he would write this, given that Cardinal Hoyos signed this document. True, technically the Vatican did not confirm the suspension, it was rather the Apostolic Signatura. But the Signatura is the highest court there is in the Church to determine the legitimacy of a canonical procedure. And it has the authority of the Vatican.

7. Mr. Ferrara then states "As anyone who takes the least trouble to study the facts of Father Gruner's case will appreciate, he has been subjected to cruelty and injustice..." This may be true. Perhaps he has been subjected to injustice and cruelty. But how is it unjust for a bishop to recall one of his priests to come back to work for his diocese of incardination? The bishop has every right to do, just like my ordinary would have every right to move me, and do so *whenever* he chooses. As to the cruelty, well, I imagine this to be the case. But who has not been treated with cruelty? That is everyone's lot in life. I just don't think this can be used as an argument that the order to return to his diocese is somehow invalid. It may be hard – even terribly hard to do. But that does not invalidate the order. A spouse may treat another spouse with great cruelty, and that would be wrong. But that does not make the marriage invalid. It is a sin against the marriage covenant, not an invalidating factor.

c. To Father's YouTube response I say:

1. This is very strange to say the least. First, any parishioner has the right to know if I have faculties, and am in good standing. So, if I was asked about this in the parish hall, we could simply walk over to the rectory and I could show them my celebret which is in my desk. The celebret, is a document which every priest in good standing possesses, and is issued from his ordinary. I would do so with no hard feelings whatsoever because the faithful have a right to know this, which is why a celebret is issued in the first place. I'll be traveling to Ireland (God willing), next February, and if I request to say Mass in a church, I'll be asked for that document, and rightly so. So, if I showed the celebret, that would solve the problem immediately most likely. But, if (God forbid), the parishioner who asked for proof, was nervous that the celebret was forged, then he could easily go online and find me listed on the Fraternity website. Or, if that was unsatisfactory, he could find me listed with the Archdiocese of Denver. It's that simple. Why doesn't Fr. Gruner just hold up his celebret to the camera, or put it on his website? It would solve the problem in a New-York minute. The last thing I would do, would be to record a video and post it on YouTube, and insist that all parishioners who questioned my faculties, produce some document proving I did not have any.

2. If I was not listed as a priest in this archdiocese, you would know that either it was a mistake, or that I was not in good standing. Go to the website of the Diocese of St. Catherine's in Ontario, Canada where Father Gruner resides. You will not find him listed. Go to the website of the diocese of Hyderabad, India where he claims he is incardinated, and he is not listed. Perhaps there is some explanation of these absences

which I cannot fathom. But again, this is so easily solved with simply showing people the celebret.

3. Fr. Gruner insists that those who say he has no faculties need to prove it, and produce the document stating his suspension. Let's say for a moment that he is a man of honor, and is simply indignant that someone would question his faculties. Is there such a document?

1. The suspension would have come from his bishop (or shall I say his former bishop?) in Avellino, Italy. But suspensions are rarely made public; they are in the internal forum. For example, there have been priests suspended here in the Archdiocese of Denver. But the proceedings are not published in the Denver Catholic Register, or anywhere else. However, if the Archbishop deems it prudent, there will simply be a press release to this effect. And these usually say very little; something about the priest taking some time off for reasons of health or whatnot, so one may sincerely doubt that Fr. Gruner's bishop would publish any document to this effect.

2. It is clear that Fr. Gruner fought the suspension by appeal, as is his right. He took it to a higher court, namely the Apostolic Signatura. This information was released by the Vatican Press Office, with a terse statement. *"The Congregation for the Clergy, upon the mandate from a higher authority, wishes to state that Rev. Nicholas Gruner is under an 'a divinis' suspension, which has been confirmed by a definitive sentence of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signature."* There is some more to it should you care to read it. The statement was released on September 13, 2001. It is still there on the Vatican Information Service website. It was signed by Dario Castrillon Cardinal Hoyos.