

A dubium was proposed to the Pontifical Council of Legislative Texts regarding the obligation of "perfect and perpetual continence" in accord with canon 277 for a married permanent deacon. An unofficial English translation follows the original response of the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts.

Pontificium Consilium De Legum Textibus
Città del Vaticano, 4 marzo 2011
N. 12959/2011

Gentile Signore,

Abbiamo ricevuto via fax la Sua cortese lettera del 20 febbraio u.s. In essa ha posto un dubbio con questa motivazione: «However an issue has arisen where an aspirant to the Permanent Diaconate who is a married man has declared he will not practice 'perfect and perpetual continence' in accordance with Canon 277. He says that he has been told that men in the diocese have been given a general dispensation from this requirement».

In proposito mi pregio significarLe a titolo di chiarimento quanto segue.

a) L'obbligo del celibato riguarda tutti i chierici, ivi compresi i diaconi permanenti che prima dell'ordinazione non sono sposati (cfr. can. 1037).

b) I diaconi permanenti che prima dell'ordinazione sono sposati, non hanno l'obbligo del celibato (e quindi della continenza) finché dura il matrimonio. Hanno l'obbligo del celibato in caso di vedovanza (cfr. can. 1087).

Per questi motivi il can. 277 non è tra quelli elencati nel. can. 288.

Infine, la dispensa dell'impedimento di cui al can. 1087 non spetta al Vescovo diocesano. Egli può invece, dato il caso, trasmettere la domanda di dispensa alla Santa Sede. La dispensa può essere chiesta solo all Santa Sede, dal diacono permanente sposato che è già diventato vedovo, e verrà eventualmente concessa solo se si darà nel richiedente una delle tre cause ammesse: la grande e provata utilità del ministero del diacono per la diocesi di appartenenza; la presenza di figli in tenera età, bisognosi di cura materna; la presenza di genitori o suoceri

anziani, bisognosi di assistenza (cfr. Congregazione per il Culto Divino e la Disciplina dei Sacramenti, Lettera circolare del 6 giugno 1997).

Profitto volentieri della circostanza per confermarvi con sensi di distinto ossequio

della Signoria Vosta

dev.mo. in Cristo

(Signed)
+Francesco Coccopalmerio
Presidente

(Unofficial Translation)
Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts

Dear Sir,

We have received a fax of your kind letter of February 20th, 2011. In it you proposed a *dubium* with this reasoning: "However an issue has arisen where an aspirant to the Permanent Diaconate who is a married man has declared he will not practice 'perfect and perpetual continence' in accordance with Canon 277. He says he has been told that men in the diocese have been given a general dispensation from this requirement."

In regard to this matter I am happy to offer the following clarifications:

The obligation of celibacy applies to all clerics, including permanent deacons who are not married prior to ordination (cf. c. 1037).

Permanent deacons who are married prior to ordination do not have the obligation of celibacy (and therefore of continence) during the marriage. They have the obligation of celibacy in case of widowhood (cf. c. 1087).

This is why canon 277 is not included in the list in canon 288.

Finally, the dispensation from the impediment of canon 1087 does not apply to the diocesan bishop. He can, instead, given the case in question, transmit the request for a dispensation to the Holy See. The dispensation can be requested only of the Holy See by a permanent married deacon who has been widowed and will be eventually granted only if the petitioner admits one of three reasons: the great and proven usefulness of the deacon's ministry to the diocese to which

he is attached; the presence of children of a tender age requiring maternal care; the presence of elderly parents or in-laws requiring assistance (cf. Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Circular Letter of June 6th, 1997).

(Signed)
Francesco Coccopalmerio
President

CANONS 303, 313 AND 677 §2

CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH ON "OPUS ANGELORUM"

On October 2, 2010 the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued a circular letter signed by Cardinal William Joseph Levada, prefect of the congregation. The letter concerns the current doctrinal and canonical position of the association known as "Opus Angelorum". Below is the English language version of the circular letter.

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

More than thirty years ago, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith began to examine the theories and practices of the association called Opus Angelorum (Engelwerk). At the present time, the dicastery believes that it would be helpful for the bishops of [episcopal conferences] to be informed regarding the developments which have taken place in these years, so that they may exercise effective oversight in this area.

I. The initial examination was brought to a conclusion with the publication of a letter on 24 September 1982, communicating certain decisions approved by the Holy Father (AAS 76 [1984], 175-176); this letter was followed by a Decree entitled 'Litteris diei' of 6 June 1992 (AAS 84 [1992], 805-806).

In essence, these two documents stated that, in promoting devotion to the Holy Angels, the members of the Opus Angelorum were to follow the doctrine of the Church and the teaching of the Church Fathers and Doctors. In particular, the members were not to make use of the "names" of angels derived from the alleged private revelations attributed to Mrs. Gabriele Bitterlich and they were not to teach, spread or make use of the theories originating from these alleged revelations. Furthermore, they were reminded of the duty to follow strictly all liturgical laws, in particular those relating to the Holy Eucharist. The Decree of 1992 entrusted the implementation of these measures to a delegate named by the Holy See and possessing special faculties; he was also given the task of regularising the relationship between the Opus Angelorum and the Order of Canons Regular of the Holy Cross.

In the years that followed, the delegate, Fr. Benoit Duroux O.P., successfully