



Catholic Diocese of Sioux Falls

Office of the Bishop

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Statement from the Most Reverend Paul J. Swain, Bishop of Sioux Falls:

His Excellency, George J. Lucas, Archbishop of Omaha, announced yesterday that he has suppressed the Hermit Association of the Intercessors of the Lamb. As a result any association, retreats or other relationship with this group by clergy or laity in the Diocese of Sioux Falls is to be terminated. Archbishop's Lucas' statement explains why and serves as a guide for us:

"Today, for grave reasons, I suppressed the Hermit Association of the Intercessors of the Lamb. The reasons for this suppression are noted in a separate news release, principally, the refusal of the lay civil board of the Intercessors of the Lamb, Inc., a Nebraska corporation, to acknowledge my authority in making much-needed reforms in the community. The way of life of some fifty vowed members was in peril due to actions of a handful of civil directors. The vows of the former members have ceased (c. 1194), and they are to set aside the habit and refrain from using the titles "Mother," "Brother," or "Sister." They are no longer considered to be in consecrated life or assimilated to it in the Church. I am providing for the care of the former members in the short-term, and remain committed to helping them in any way I can in the future.

From this point forward, The Intercessors of the Lamb, Inc., is in no way associated with the Catholic Church. As Archbishop of Omaha, and in view of my authority to govern and guard the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church (c. 835 §1), I hereby decree that no liturgical or sacramental celebrations are to occur on any property owned by the Intercessors of the Lamb, Inc., within the Archdiocese of Omaha.

Priests, deacons, and lay ministers are to observe this prescription. The chapel formerly known as the Our Lady of Light Chapel on the Bellwether campus in Omaha is no longer a Catholic chapel. Catholic faithful worldwide should be aware that any alms given to the Intercessors of the Lamb, Inc., are not being given to a Catholic organization. Those who previously had scheduled retreats or other Catholic ministry opportunities there should look elsewhere.

Those who consider themselves "companions" or "associates" of the Intercessors, some of whom have even taken vows, are hereby informed that such vows were never canonically recognized in the Church. Even if such vows were binding in conscience, they too cease in view of the suppression of the Hermit Association of the Intercessors of the Lamb and c. 1194. Of course, Catholic faithful are always welcome, in virtue of their baptism, to associate together and to pray. I would encourage those companions and associates to continue to pray for the former vowed members of the Intercessor community, for the Church, and for the needs of the world."

Let us pray for those directly affected by this sad but necessary decision by Archbishop Lucas and for unity in the Church.

Statement made on October 16, 2010.