



Communiqué

Rev. Raymond Gravel and Politics

Clarification by Most Reverend Gilles Lussier, Bishop of Joliette

The Vatican has not given the “green light” to Father Raymond Gravel to enter politics. Most Reverend Gilles Lussier, Bishop of the Diocese of Joliette, did not receive permission from the Roman authorities concerning Father Gravel’s project. Catholic Church legislation is clear: all priests are to refrain from active involvement in political activities. Nevertheless, there can be special and truly exceptional circumstances when this could be possible. In such a case this would involve a derogation from the general norm. It comes under the competent authority of the Bishop of the diocese concerned to study such a request. The Bishop must take into consideration the good of the ecclesial community as well as the common good of society in order to consent to such a derogation. To do this, the Bishop is to consult his Presbyteral Council, that is those representatives from the diocesan clergy who assist the Bishop in governing the diocese. In the present case, it is not the political situation of our country that justifies a derogation from the general norm as defined by the law of the Catholic Church.

In choosing to become actively involved in a political party, Father Gravel retains his clerical state but is relieved from the exercise of his priestly ministry. He cannot undertake any priestly activity during such time as he is involved in politics. This measure is to avoid confusion among the faithful and to preserve the distinction between politics and religion. In any case, renouncing the exercise of the priestly ministry always represents a painful situation for the Church.

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