

Letter to Archbishop Di Noia
Re: Rev. Arthur J. Smith

December 15, 2015

His Excellency J. Augustine Di Noia, O.P.
Congregazione Per La Dottrina
Della Fede
Palazzo del S. Uffizio
00120 Citta del Vaticano

Your Excellency:

I wish to acknowledge receipt of your letter, as well as the enclosure, relative to your desire for information about Rev. Arthur J. Smith, a priest of the Diocese of Buffalo, New York, who wrote to our Holy Father describing what appears to be his displeasure as to how he has been treated by local authority in regard to several unfortunate incidents in which he was involved. I am pleased to respond to your request for "a brief summary of the case, including its current status," as indicated in your letter to me (Prot. N. 08/2015-52876).

In his letter, Father Smith seems to treat lightly his relationship with a minor, an 8th grader in the parish school where Father Art served as pastor, and his regular contacts with that minor through social media and personal encounters.

I would note that in careful investigation, after several reports received by the school principal, as well as complaints from the child's mother and a review of the case by the Diocesan Review Board, Father Smith was removed from the parish as pastor due to his "grooming" of the minor for a period of weeks. In addition, complaints were presented to the Diocese about Father Smith's heavy alcoholic drinking and depression.

As a result, Father Smith accepted the request of the Ordinary to submit to an assessment at Southdown, a residential treatment facility for clergy and religious in Aurora, Canada. After only a day, Father Smith "checked himself out" of the facility refusing to complete the four day assessment addressing his obvious issues of "grooming," "boundaries," heavy drinking, and depression. He resigned the parish as pastor.

At the request of Bishop Kmiec, Father Art finally was admitted to the St. John Vianney Center in Downingtown, PA for an evaluation, which noted some difficulties as far as Father Art has a poor level of processing information which could lead him to behave in ways that offend others and get him into trouble without realizing how such occurred. He was recommended for residential treatment.

Under my watch as diocesan Bishop, on November 20, 2012 I assigned Father Art as Chaplain at an area healthcare facility operated by the Brothers of Mercy. Contrary to what Father Smith stated in his letter, he once again faced "boundary issues," this time