

January 30, 2019 Update on Fr. Aaron Brodeski

Dear family and friends,

I am happy to announce that, after a very long and thorough three year "extra-judicial" process (trial) at the Vatican's Congregation for the Clergy, the Church has fully adjudicated my case. If you want to see the "Summary Rescript" of the resolution from Rome provided to me by the Diocese of Rockford, it is available at www.father.brodeski.com/apology. Because there has been so much misinformation about what happened initially, as well as much misinformation regarding the actual resolution from the Vatican, I would like to share the details as clearly as possible.

Though the initial incident that led to all of this was an accident and unintentional, as explained in my apology letter of January 2015 (see my website mentioned above for that letter also), the Bishop of Rockford decided in the fall of 2015 to put me on trial in the Church so as to thoroughly adjudicate my case at the Vatican. His goal was to remove me from the priesthood which I vehemently opposed.

The first stage of the "extra-judicial" process involved three bishops, various canon lawyers, civil lawyers, a lot of documentary evidence (such as the police report and witness affidavits) and expert witness testimony from law enforcement, medical doctors and psychologists. Upon the gathering of all testimony, the "acts" of the case were sent to the Congregation for the Clergy, Rome, for adjudication. The compilation of the acts of the case took about a year, and the review of the acts by the Congregation for the Clergy took about two years.

The specific process focused upon the following statute in Canon Law:

Can. 1399 In addition to the cases established here or in other laws, the external violation of a divine or canonical law can be punished by a just penalty only when the special gravity of the violation demands punishment and there is an urgent need to prevent or repair scandals.

This canon deals with "external violations of a divine or canonical law" where scandal has occurred. The external violation was that I was "in an exposed condition" in a public place. However, the Church also considers subjective factors that may reduce or even eliminate personal culpability (guilt) for an external violation. The canons that deal with diminished guilt are outlined in the Code of Canon Law 1323, 1324, 1325. After their two years of study, they chose to apply Canon 1324 §1 when they said the gravity of the external violation of the Divine Law was lessened because I was in a "diminished state of awareness." Thus, the Vatican accepted the expert testimony of the numerous medical doctors and psychologists involved. The Vatican did not make the judgment that I was completely innocent, rather, they said my guilt was lessened.

As a result of this decision, the Vatican Congregation stated that the bishop's request that I be removed from the priesthood "could not be presented to the Holy Father." Instead, the Congregation recommended to the Holy Father that I be given a penalty, a penance and a precept in

order to “repair scandal, restore justice and reform the offender.” The Holy Father approved that recommendation. The conclusions are as follows:

1. Penalty: “The deprivation of the title of Chaplain to His Holiness with the loss of the designation ‘Monsignor.’ Can. 1336 §1.2”
2. Penance: “The imposition of one year of prayer and penance at a location to be determined by the Ordinary of Rockford. Can. 1340”
3. “A penal precept that any subsequent commission of the same delict will result in further penalties, not excluding the permanent expiatory penalty of dismissal from the clerical state.”

I should also mention that, upon the resolution of my case in Rome, there were some sensationalized and inaccurate news stories about me once again. I encourage you to ignore what has come to be known in this country as “fake news.” I believe that the following quote from Pope Francis, which comes from a 2016 [interview](#), addresses my case accurately:

A thing that can do great damage to the information media is disinformation: that is, faced with any situation, saying only a part of the truth, and not the rest. This is disinformation. Because you, to the listener or the observer, give only half the truth, and therefore it is not possible to make a serious judgement. Disinformation is probably the greatest damage that the media can do, as opinion is guided in one direction, neglecting the other part of the truth.

I now look forward to entering my year of prayer and penance and pray that God's grace will help to repair the hurt and confusion that was caused by this unfortunate incident.

God bless,
Fr. Aaron

For more information and for any future updates please see www.father.brodeski.com