



Memorandum

To: Federation of Vietnamese Catholics in the USA/Fr. Chau Nguyen, President
Fr. Gilbert Medina, Pastor of St. Peter Catholic Church in Deland
Diocesan Entities and Clergy
From: Theresa Simon, Chancellor/COO for the Diocese of Orlando
Date: August 9, 2024
Re: Augustinian Monks of the Primitive Observance

This Memorandum is executed on behalf of the Most Reverend John Noonan, Bishop of Orlando, to provide some clarification concerning the Community of Augustinian Monks of Primitive Observance, situated at 2075 Mercers Fernery Road, Deland, Florida 32870.

The said community, on March 19, 2005, was erected as a canonical Diocesan Public Association of the Faithful by the Most Reverend Thomas Wenski, the Proper Ordinary at the time. The Community was under the leadership of Fr. Seamus of Jesus, who served as its Abbot/Superior. In 2019, Fr. Seamus passed away. Unfortunately, since its establishment, the Community did not attract new members and, with the death of its superior, Br. Nicholas Drouin, O.S.A. becomes the sole remaining member of the original Community. In addition, as of 2019, the Community no longer met the requirements of its bylaws – that at least two members be priests.

Recently, the Diocese of Orlando became aware that several Vietnamese individuals have claimed to be newly professed members of the community. It is necessary to note that

1. According to the Community's Proper Law, only the Abbot, with the consent of his counsel, may admit new members. As Br. Nicholas is a lay brother, he is not qualified by law to receive any new candidates, nor can he provide any formal admission according to the norms of law. Therefore, the said individuals are not considered legitimate members of the Community of Augustinian Monks of Primitive Observance.
2. Having met and consulted with Br. Nicholas, it has also been decided that, without prospects and means of sustainability, the canonical status of a Public Association of the Faithful of this Community should be modified to that of a canonical Private Association unaffiliated with the Diocese of Orlando.
3. Subsequently, the decision was formalized and executed through an Administrative Decree. Thus, as a result,
 - a. The Community of the Augustinian Monks of the Primitive Observance no longer holds the status of a Public Association of the Faithful under the jurisdiction and care of the Diocese of Orlando. In other words, it is not a canonical entity of this Particular Church.

- b. The Community may not engage in any activities, pastoral or spiritual, in the name of the Diocese.

It must also be noted that the Diocesan Bishop has never given permission for this Community as a whole or its individual members to carry out any fundraising activity.

Therefore, the Diocese of Orlando wishes to clarify this matter and caution the different Vietnamese Catholic Communities in its territory or beyond against any attempt to solicit monetary donations.