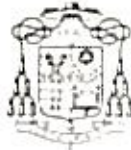


PAGELLA OF FACULTIES

FACULTIES: SACRAMENTAL MINISTRY

11. IN ADMINISTERING THE SACRAMENTS, PASTORS OF THE DIOCESE ARE TO USE THE rites of the Catholic Church AS REVISED BY THE SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL. THE OFFICIAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THESE SACRAMENTAL RITES IS TO BE USED.



Office of the Bishop · P.O. BOX 610 · CROOKSTON, MINNESOTA 56716

Tel: (218) 281-4533

Fax: (218) 281-3328

March 16, 1994

Dear Pastors, Parochial Vicars, and Pastoral Administrators,

As you know, AIDS is a tragic disease for which there is still no cure. Much ignorance surrounds this illness, and because of this, persons with AIDS may well suffer injustice.

In this letter, I want to address certain issues relating to this. First of all, persons with AIDS in your parishes have a Christian right to your pastoral presence and care. I know that you will honor this right, and that you will do so with Christ-like love and compassion. I also strongly encourage your people in pastoral care, especially Befrienders or Stephens ministers, to visit persons with AIDS and to try to respond to their needs.

Secondly, persons with AIDS have a right to the Sacraments and to Christian burial in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Canon Law. I urge you to see to it that those who cannot attend the Sunday Eucharist have the opportunity to receive the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Penance with reasonable frequency, and also to receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick with the frequency permitted by the Church's norms.

Thirdly, persons with AIDS have a right to confidentiality concerning this illness, and every precaution should be taken by the pastoral minister to maintain that confidentiality. Knowledge that a person has AIDS should be confined to those persons with a direct need to know. (For example, in a school which has a student with AIDS, only the principal, the school nurse, the pastor, and teachers in direct contact with the student need to know.)

Fourthly, the disease of AIDS should not, of and by itself, prevent a person from being hired by Church institutions unless, of course, the disease has so advanced that the person cannot do the work expected. Nor should the disease of AIDS be cause for termination of employment unless, again, the person cannot do the work expected. In other words, the requirements of justice must be respected in these matters.

Fifthly, students with AIDS should ordinarily be permitted to enroll in our schools and religious education programs in an unrestricted setting. Children in our schools and religious education programs who may be at risk to themselves or others should be evaluated on a case by case basis, with parents (or legal guardian), the family doctor, and Church officials involved. In those rare cases when a student may not be permitted to attend school or religious education programs, the student should be

provided with another means of catechetical instruction.

Sixthly, Church institutions, especially our parishes, should do what they can to educate people about the physical and psychological impact of AIDS, including AIDS related complex and infection with the human immune deficiency virus. Only in this way will that ignorance, which leads to prejudice, be overcome.

In all our relationships with people who have AIDS, let us look upon them not so much as victims of a terrible illness, but as human persons, our brothers and sisters in Christ, whose human dignity and rights must be upheld and defended, and whose need for our love and care, especially as the disease progresses, must be met. If persons with AIDS are considered to be among "the least," then all the more do they have a claim on our compassion. "Whatever you do for the least of mine, you do for me."

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+Victor H. Balke

+Victor H. Balke
Bishop of Crookston