



March 18, 2013

Dear Monsignor or Father:

I am writing at the recommendation of the Presbyteral Council, but also from personal conviction.

On July 12, 1999 a letter from Bishop Trautman was sent to the presbyterate announcing the unanimous approval of a motion by the Council at their ordinary meeting on May 10th. The motion read as follows -- "***The Diocese of Erie deplores the violence in our society that arises from the misuse of guns. Correspondingly, the Diocese of Erie will prohibit all sponsoring of gun raffles on Church property or by Church-sponsored institutions, effective July 2, 2001. All parishes should seek to move to alternative sources of funding as soon as possible eliminating all gun raffles by July 1, 2001.***"

There has never been any expressed revocation of this policy since its promulgation. Nor do I intend to revoke it. On May 15, 2001, the Presbyteral Council reaffirmed the July 1, 1999 policy but also allowed for the possibility of parishes holding fund raising events where gift certificates to sports stores and/or cash prizes could be awarded. At these events there should no longer be any display of firearms or any encouragement to purchase them.

With this letter I am affirming and make binding on all parishes the above action of the Council. Violence in our society is born of many forces and multiple sources. I am not so naïve to think that our detachment from promoting guns at church-sponsored events will impact in any significant way the number of horrendous assaults on the lives of the innocent. That day will come, as Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI wrote, only when every person "disarms his own heart and becomes a peacemaker. . . ."

People do not need the Church to promote the sale of guns. Access is easy and everywhere. If we are a Church that promotes a ***culture of life*** then we are sending the wrong message to the faithful about our culture. Nor should we have to rely on their sale to keep the doors of the churches open. If we do, our problems are far greater than we realize. No, admittedly so, we can't end the violence occasioned by guns. But we can try!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*+Lawrence T. Persico*

Most Rev. Lawrence T. Persico, JCL  
Bishop of Erie

---

DIocese of Erie ♦ P.O. Box 10397 ♦ Erie, Pennsylvania 16514-0397

814.824.1120 ♦ FAX 814.824.1124