

VERAPOLY
ARCHDIOCESAN GAZETTE


## Vol．XXXXVI／FK－47 2013 February 20 No． 5

## CIRCULAR－11

## வ®ி๙్మß నிறைவั



















 ๑าカ囚ృ．













 ゅாுమாาைை



 2013 ๑กமேூவவி 20－0๐ ๓ியைை．

20．02．2013



##  

















 ஸேே. ாூவோல்.


## CIRCULAR-12

ஜธவக(ロவృOM○



























 ๑าோைறைைஸ゙.






















6. เ


 வையூ.


















 2013 ஜாைనவา 30-0० ตlఱ๗า.

A No. 24/ 2013/ VP


## CASUS February 2013

Jacintha Saldanha was from Mangalore, and had been working as a nurse at King Edward VII's Hospital, London for about 10 years. She was found dead by apparent suicide on December 7, 2012, three days after receiving a hoax call. The prank call was part of the Hot 30 Countdown radio program, broadcast on the Austereo -owned station 2Day FM in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. In it, the hosts impersonated Queen Elizabeth and Prince Charles enquiring about the health of the Duchess of Cambridge, who was, at the time, a patient staying at the hospital. Saldhana fell for the hoax and transferred the call to the nurse looking after the Duchess. A hospital spokesperson said that she was the "victim of a cruel journalistic trick". A Mass was offered at Westminster Cathedral. Then her corpse was taken to Mangalore. The Bishop of Udupi Diocese Rev. Gerald Isaac Lobo offered the funeral mass along with other priests. After the mass, the coffin was carried to the cemetery, where the burial service was held.

Q: What is the current stand of the Church regarding the possibility of funeral Masses for persons who are said to have committed suicide? Is it true that there already are mitigating circumstances, like the possibility of irrationality at the moment of taking one's life (even if there was no note), whereby it would be possible to suppose that the person was not in his rightmind?

A: Can. 1184 §1: Unless they gave some signs of repentance before death, the following must be deprived of ecclesiastical funerals:

1/ notorious apostates, heretics, and schismatics;2/ those who chose the cremation of their bodies for reasons contrary to Christian faith; 3 / other manifest sinners who cannot be granted ecclesiastical funerals without public scandal of the faithful.
§2. If any doubt occurs, the local ordinary is to be consulted, and his judgment must be followed.

Can. 1185: Any funeral Mass must also be denied a person who is excluded from ecclesiastical funerals.

Canon 1184 mentions only three cases: a notorious apostate, heretic or schismatic; those who requested cremation for motives contrary to the Christian faith; and manifest sinners to whom a Church funeral cannot be granted without causing public scandal to the faithful. These restrictions apply only if there has been no sign of repentance before death.

In earlier times a person who committed suicide would often be denied funeral rites and even burial in a Church cemetery. However, some consideration has always been taken into account of the person's mental state at the time. In one famous case, when Rudolph, the heir to the throne of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, committed suicide in 1889, the medical bulletin declared evidence of "mental aberrations" so that Pope Leo XIII would grant a religious funeral and burial in the imperial crypt. Other similar concessions were probably quietly made in less sonorous cases. Canon law no longer specifically mentions suicide as an impediment to funeral rites or religious sepulture. The local bishop weighs any doubtful cases and in practice a prudent priest should always consult with the bishop before denying a funeral Mass.

A particular case of suicide might enter into the third case - that of a manifest and unrepentant sinner - especially if the suicide follows another grave crime such as murder. In most cases, however, the progress made in the study of the underlying causes of self-destruction shows that the vast majority are consequences of an accumulation of psychological factors that impede making a free and deliberative act of the will. Thus the general tendency is to see this extreme gesture as
almost always resulting from the effects of an imbalanced mental state and, as a consequence, it is no longer forbidden to hold a funeral rite for a person who has committed this gesture although each case must still be studied on its merits.

Some faithful asked for clarifications about Canon 1184, that "those who requested cremation for motives contrary to the Christian faith" were not to be given a Church funeral. A person would only incur such a prohibition if, before death, he or she requested cremation explicitly and publicly motivated by a denial of some aspect of Christian faith regarding life after death. Among possible such motivations would be a lack of faith in the survival of the immortal soul and thus requesting cremation to emphasize the definitiveness of death. Another could be the denial of belief in the resurrection of the dead. More recently, some nominal Catholics who believe in doctrines such as reincarnation or migration of souls might request cremation in order to follow these esoteric doctrines or the customs of some Eastern religions. In all such cases the motivation for seeking cremation is contrary to Catholic doctrine and, if this fact is publicly known, performing a Church funeral could cause scandal or imply that holding to Church doctrine is really not that important. With regard to notorious apostates, heretics and schismatics who show no sign of repentance before death, a few years ago in Italy the Church denied an ecclesiastical funeral for a nationallyknown campaigner for euthanasia who requested and obtained the removal of his life-support system. In this case the request for a funeral for someone who was only nominally Catholic was in itself a publicity stunt for the organization behind the campaign. Likewise, someone subject to excommunication or interdict (for example, a Catholic abortionist) would be denied a funeral.

