

IN THE ECCLESIASTICAL TRIAL COURT  
FOR THE DIOCESE OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA  
OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE  
DIOCESE OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA,

COMPLAINANT,

v.

THE REVEREND WALTER THOMAS  
LECKRONE

RESPONDENT.

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**FINAL ORDER REGARDING FINDINGS, JUDGMENT  
AND ADJUDGMENT OF SENTENCE**

This Court, having tried the Respondent upon the five counts alleged against him through the Presentment from the Standing Committee, and having considered all testimony and evidence duly admitted in that trial, and more than two-thirds of the Court having determined that the Respondent had committed all three Offenses charged in the Presentment; it is, thereby and therefore,

ORDERED and ADJUDGED that the said Walter Thomas Leckrone, Respondent in these proceedings, be, and he is hereby, adjudged to have committed all three of the Offenses alleged in the Presentment.

In connection with this determination, the Court further finds as follows:

1. The Presentment, pursuant to the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church, Title IV, Canon 1.1(b), (h) and (j) charged the Respondent with the Offenses of actions which involved a violation of his Ordination vows, actions which constituted immorality, and

actions which constituted conduct unbecoming a member of the clergy. In support of the allegation of the commitment of these Offenses, five separate counts were pled in the Presentment.

2. In response to the allegations of each of the Counts of the Presentment, the Court considered, with a separate vote on each of the five Counts, whether the facts alleged in the Presentment had been established in accordance with the standards set by the Canons, and whether the evidence warranted a determination of the commission of an offense by the Respondent with respect to each of the five Counts. A separate vote was taken by the Court upon the findings of the commission of an offense. In connection with the Court's determination that there were findings to show the commission of these three offenses by the Respondent, and in connection with the Court's judgment that the Respondent had committed these offenses, the affirmative vote of the entire membership of the Court serving for this trial was entered in favor of a determination that there had been the commission of these offenses by the Respondent.

3. Pursuant to Title IV, Canon 4.22, the Court previously informed the Respondent, the Church Attorney, the Complainant and the Victim of the Judgment of this Court, and afforded those parties a reasonable opportunity to offer matters in excuse or mitigation, or otherwise to comment of the Sentence. The Court has considered all such matters brought to its attention in this regard.

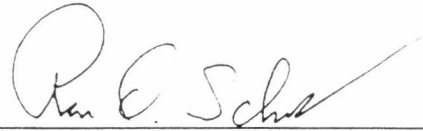
The Court subsequently met at a date which was more than thirty (30) days after the parties identified above had been informed of the Judgment and provided a reasonable opportunity to offer matters relative to the Sentence to be imposed on the Respondent. At this meeting of the Court, pursuant to the requirements of Title IV, Canon 4.24, the Members of the Ecclesiastical Trial Court then serving for this trial voted and concurred in the Sentence to be

imposed on the Respondent. All but one member of the Court were present for this vote, and that one member subsequently concurred in the determination.

Therefore, pursuant to the requirements of Title IV, Canon 4.25, the Court hereby orders and hereby adjudges that the Sentence to be imposed upon the Respondent shall be that of Deposition. This Sentence was imposed by this Trial Court after the Court's final judgment of the commission of offenses by the Respondent.

Pursuant to the requirements of Title IV, Canon 4.26, this decision of the Court with respect to the Charges and with respect to the Sentence have been reduced to writing and upon signature of the Presiding Judge, shall be deemed to be the Judgment of the Court with respect to this matter. Furthermore, pursuant to the requirements of Canon 4.26, counterpart copies of this Order shall be circulated to each of the members of the Court, so that each member of the Court can sign to acknowledge and attest their individual concurrence with this being the judgment of the Court and in confirmation of their assent to the matters contained herein. Once the Presiding Judge shall have received back all such executed counterparts, he shall provide them to the Clerk for this Court, for retention within the records of this proceedings. During the interim, it is the determination of this Court, for purposes of allowing the Presiding Judge to communicate promptly in accordance with the requirements of Canon 4.27, the Judgment and Sentence which has been adjudged, that the original of this Order signed by the Presiding Judge shall constitute the Order and Decision of this Court with respect to the Charges and with respect to the Sentence which has been imposed.

DONE AND ORDERED in Tampa, Hillsborough County, Florida, this 8<sup>th</sup> day of April,  
1999.



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ROGER D. SCHWENKE  
PRESIDING JUDGE, ECCLESIASTICAL TRIAL  
COURT, DIOCESE OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that a true and correct copy of the foregoing Order was mailed this date to the Rt. Rev. John B. Lipscomb, Bishop, Diocese of Southwest Florida, P. O. Box 763, Ellenton, Florida 34222-0763; the Rev. Walter Thomas Leckrone, 1631 Valley Forge Drive, Lancaster, Ohio 43130; Thomas C. MacDonald, Jr., Esq., Church Attorney, Cook Bell & MacDonald Mediation Group, 100 North Tampa Street, Suite 2100, Tampa, Florida 33602; and to Joseph W. Fleece, III, Chancellor, Diocese of Southwest Florida, Holland & Knight LLP, One Progress Plaza, 200 Central Avenue, Suite 1600, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701; on this 8<sup>th</sup> day of April, 1999. The Church Attorney is requested to submit a copy of this Order to the members of the Standing Committee, the Complainant, and the Victims, and is further requested to submit to the Court a written certification that he has provided such copies to these parties.



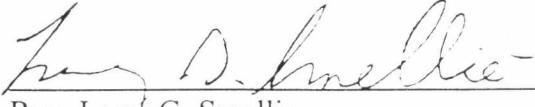
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ROGER D. SCHWENKE  
PRESIDING JUDGE, ECCLESIASTICAL TRIAL  
DIOCESE OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

cc: Members of the Ecclesiastical Trial Court  
Leenetta Blanton, Esq., Lay Assessor  
Rev. Barbara Carmine, Court Clerk

**CERTIFICATION, RATIFICATION AND CONCURRENCE**

The undersigned members of the Ecclesiastical Trial Court for the Diocese of Southwest Florida sign their names where indicated below to acknowledge, certify, ratify and concur in the foregoing Order in all respects.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Rev. Larry G. Smellie

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Rev. Arthur R. Lee, III

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Rev. Nancy Stone Farley

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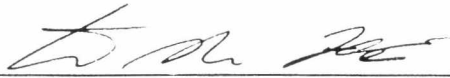


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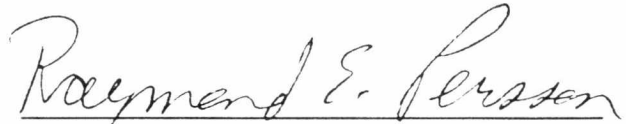
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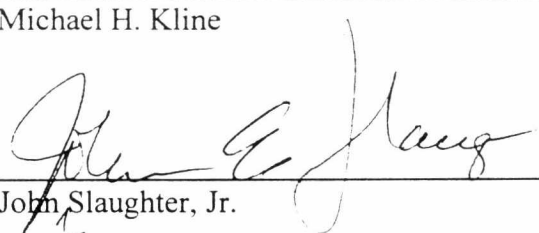
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John Slaughter, Jr.  
E.

# *The Diocese of Southwest Florida*

(Episcopal)

*The Right Reverend John B. Lipscomb, D.Min., Bishop*



April 15, 1999

The Reverend W. Thomas Leckrone  
328 East Fifth Avenue  
Lancaster, Ohio 43130

Dear Father Leckrone:

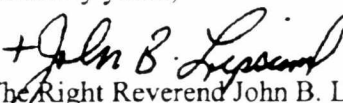
I am writing to you under the authority of Title IV Canon 12 of the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church and in my capacity as Bishop of the Diocese of Southwest Florida.

The President of the Ecclesiastical Trial Court for the Diocese of Southwest Florida communicated to me by letter dated 9 April 1999 that the Ecclesiastical Trial Court of the Diocese of Southwest Florida, "having tried the Respondent upon five counts alleged against him through the Presentment of the Standing Committee, and having considered all testimony and evidence duly admitted in that trial, and more than two-thirds of the Court having determined that the Respondent had committed all three Offenses charged in the Presentment; it thereby and therefore ordered and adjudged that the said Walter Thomas Leckrone, Respondent in these proceedings, be, and he is hereby, adjudged to have committed all three Offenses alleged in the Presentment."

The Court communicated this finding to you, the Church Attorney and through the Church Attorney to the complainants and victims and afforded each party a reasonable opportunity to offer matters in excuse or mitigation or otherwise to comment on the Sentence. The Court considered all such matters brought to the Court's attention regarding this issue and concurred in a sentence to be imposed upon you. It recommended to the Bishop of Southwest Florida that you be deposed from the Sacred Order of Priests. Concurring with the sentence of the Court it is my intention to pronounce the sentence upon you on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of May 1999 at 1:00 p.m. at the Office of the Bishop at the DaySpring Episcopal Center.

It is your right in accordance with Title IV, Canon 4B to appeal the decision of the Ecclesiastical Trial Court in the case of the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Southwest Florida v. The Reverend Walter Thomas Leckrone to the Court of Review of the Fourth Province of the Episcopal Church, within 30 days of the receipt of this notice.

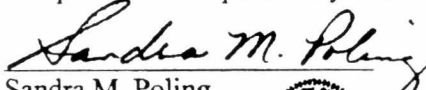
Sincerely yours,

  
The Right Reverend John B. Lipscomb  
Fourth Bishop of Southwest Florida

JBL/smp

cc: Roger D. Schwenke, Esq.  
Thomas C. MacDonald, Esq.  
The Rev. Larry Hooper/Standing Committee  
The Rt. Rev. Dorsey F. Henderson  
Joseph W. Fleece III, Esq.  
Mrs. [REDACTED]  
Mrs. [REDACTED]

State of Florida, County of Manatee  
Sworn and subscribed before me this 15<sup>th</sup> day  
of April 1999 and personally known to me.

  
Sandra M. Poling



Sandra M. Poling  
MY COMMISSION # CC507842 EXPIRES  
November 5, 1999  
BONDED THRU TROY FAIR INSURANCE, INC.

  
The Rev. Victoria Kempf, witness

# *The Diocese of Southwest Florida*

(Episcopal)

*The Right Reverend John B. Lipscomb, D.Min., Bishop*



April 29, 1999

The Reverend W. Thomas Leckrone  
1631 Valley Forge Road  
Lancaster, Ohio 43130

Dear Father Leckrone:

On advice of counsel we are re-issuing to you our letter of April 15, 1999. The address on file with our office at the time was apparently not your correct address. By this letter we are issuing that correction. In addition, on advice of counsel we are extending the date of sentencing by sixty days as set forth below.

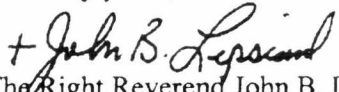
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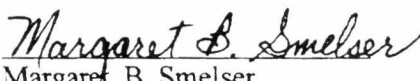
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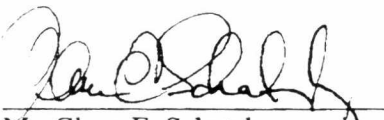
  
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JBL/bcp

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The Rt. Rev. Dorsey F. Henderson  
Joseph W. Fleece III, Esq.  
Mrs. [REDACTED]  
Mrs. [REDACTED]

State of Florida, County of Manatee  
Sworn and subscribed before me this 29<sup>th</sup> day  
of April 1999 and personally known to me.

  
Margaret B. Smelser

  
Mr. Glenn E. Schatzberg, witness

