

# Anthony Locricchio Says 'Stuck Neck Out Too Far On Poverty Program' Seminarian Tells Why He Was Ousted

Ousted Seminarian Anthony P. Locricchio today said he was fired because "I stuck my neck out too far" in the Detroit poverty program.

He charged that the church had declined to use its strength on behalf of the poor.

Locricchio spoke out for the first time since he was ousted from his class Aug. 6 at St. Johns Seminary, Plymouth.

He returned last weekend from Bogotá, Colombia, where he was helping a cleric friend with a housing project for poverty-stricken natives.

LOCRICCHIO this week started teaching a class on "The Church and the City" at the University of Detroit, a course which he was twice before prevented from completing.

He said he may join a religious order conducting an anti-poverty program on a national scale.

More than 75 laymen who signed a white paper demanding reasons for Locricchio's ouster said they had not re-

ceived an answer from the Rt. Rev. John P. Dearden, archbishop of Detroit.

From the first, Locricchio told his side of the story.

"Basically, I think I was denied ordination because here was a guy who stuck up and said what he saw in the poverty program. There was this great concern about ordaining someone who would speak out.

"The saddest thing is this great concern about me. The real problem is that the church is not serving the poor. That's what this is all about. In all the turmoil, this is the main focus."

He said he wished the group of laymen supporting his position and demanding answers from the archdiocese would switch its campaign to forcing changes within the church.

Locricchio said a group of community leaders in the inner-city of Detroit have asked that the archdiocese step out of the poverty program.

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of such poor quality that the people to be helped no longer want the church to take part in the program," he said.

LOCRICCHIO said he was "extremely pleased" by the campaign of the laymen on his behalf but that the major concern should be whether the church is going to serve the poor.

"If it is not, it should be," he said.

"I feel that change has to develop in the church and that it must come from within. Too many priests have become instruments of the institution rather than standing up for their beliefs."

"I think the job for the priest and for the cleric now is to stick his neck out, knowing that it might very well be chopped off."

"But if enough do it now—and it must be now—they will get support. Perhaps in five or 10 years, these changes will come if enough people act now."

"The silence of the church in this major question indicates that it has placed itself in the position of abandoning responsibility."

The failure of the archdiocese to spell out the reasons for his ouster, Locricchio said, has given rise to innuendoes.

"In Detroit, I could not be an effective priest," he said.

"But I want my reputation to be cleared."

Locricchio, who has been ordained since the subdiaconate, said he is not a rebel to the point of blaspheming the church or his position.

"I feel I should try one more time," he said.

## Court Decision May End DSR Suburban Service

Withdrawal of DSR bus service from the suburbs may be the end result of a court case currently pending before Wayne County Circuit Judge Neal Fitzgerald.

Judge Fitzgerald must decide at the hearing if the DSR is legally a private or governmental organization. If determined to be a private group, the DSR would then be subject to the jurisdiction of the Michigan Public Service Commission and must abide by its ruling.

If defined as a governmental agency, the DSR would be free from the commission's interference and would be free to extend bus routes throughout the suburban area.

At present, DSR must abide by the commission's limit of providing bus service within Detroit and five miles beyond city limits.

A RULING by Fitzgerald in favor of DSR, however, would only be the beginning of a long legal fracas which eventually will return to the State Supreme Court which then would have to reverse its 1967 decision before the DSR's contention could be won.

The main contention centers on DSR wishes to extend its services on Seven Mile Road all the way to the Livonia Mall, an extension also desired by Robert Poris, general manager of the Mall. The extension has been blocked by the Michigan Public Service Commission with prodding from the Northville Coach Lines and the Michigan Motor Bus Association.

The commission has ruled that DSR can run buses up to Grand River on Seven Mile from Northville Coach Lines responsible for transportation from Grand River to the Livonia Mall at Middle Belt - Seven Mile.

Poris and DSR contend that Northville Coach Lines, with its 21 buses and seven drivers, is unable to adequately service the Mall. Northville argues many people ride from Detroit to the Mall and it would add more buses if demand requires.

THE CONTROVERSY dates to August, 1954 when DSR extended its Grand River line west from the city limits to the Livonia Mall.

Manuel Zechman, general counsel for DSR, explains it is his company's policy not to operate in a suburb unless requested or unless permission is granted by the community.

A temporary permit for service to the Mall was applied for only after the City of Livonia passed a resolution stating DSR service was needed, Zechman said.

When the extension was first made in 1954, Northville Coach Lines started action to restrain DSR from operating in Livonia without first obtaining authority from the Michigan Public Service Commission.

Up to this point, during 42 years of operation the DSR had never requested MPSC approval because the Motor Carrier Act exempted municipal-owned bus lines from the commission's jurisdiction.

In 1947, the Michigan Motor Bus Association convinced the Legislature to amend the law to include municipal-owned transit lines under the commission's jurisdiction, to be effective 90 days after passage.

But during the 90 days, a petition was submitted which forced the question on the ballot. In November, 1947, voters in a statewide election voted by a 2-1 margin that the DSR was not to come under the provisions of the Motor Carrier Act and MPSC.

However, in 1957 the State Supreme Court ruled the DSR was not a governmental agency since it did not serve a public service and therefore has to comply with the Motor Carrier Act.



PROGRESS ERASES another old familiar landmark in downtown Plymouth. Workers are shown razing the old Ford Agency building located directly behind the Mayflower Hotel on S. Main. Once the building is removed, the area will be converted into another downtown parking lot.

BARRED FROM the diocese for the time being, Locricchio said completion of the processes to attain the priesthood through other routes could take two years.

Locricchio became a controversial figure when he spoke out against the progress of the poverty program in Detroit. He got support from other seminarians at St. Johns.

At the request of the seminarians, Bishop Dearden and Auxiliary Bishop Walter J. Schoenherer came to a meeting at St. Johns at which they were challenged to explain Locricchio's position.

"(The Dearden) refused to discuss it," Locricchio said. "I had been told the day before I would not be called to the diocese. When they insisted he discuss it, he walked out."

"So," he said, "All right, I quit. Now that the personalities are out of the way, let's discuss it. He refused."

LOCRICCHIO said he was uncertain of the future in teaching at the University of Detroit. His first attempt to teach the course, he said, was "squashed when pressure developed from the archdiocese. The second attempt was also challenging."

"The students rose up in arms and some even threatened a lawsuit, so the course was resumed," he said.

The white paper filed at the archdiocese by the group of laymen said:

"Presently, in this world of revolution, Our Church suffers a severe crisis in determining if her role will be to accept with courage the challenge of Christianity or simply exist as an institution."

"Attempting to be what Our Church asks of us ultimately causes rebellion against the structure as it exists today because it is, in fact, living a double standard."

"While it teaches concepts of love, truth, justice and reverence, in reality it finds itself primarily concerned about its public image."

"This image must be preserved at all costs, even of honesty. Its name has become more important than truth; its face more important than its soul."

It said the Locricchio case has become of "prime importance" as a symbol of the role of the church.

"We feel that hiding behind confidential reasons for his dismissal is a further smoke screen to cover reasons that are not embarrassing to the dismissed, only to the dissembler."

"We could not exonerate ourselves from contributing to the dishonesty of this position if we did not at this time step forward."

## Fee For Insured Drivers Gets Hard Look By State

Wide sweeping changes to the state's Motor Vehicle Accident Claims Fund are being weighed by Secretary of State James M. Hare, originator of the fund law, according to his staff.

The new proposals were "thrown open for discussion" by William N. Hettiger, deputy secretary of state, speaking for Hare at a Governor's Regional Traffic Safety Conference in Cadillac.

Among them is making the dollar insured-fee optional. Only vehicle owners who paid the fee would be eligible to make claims against the fund. Uninsured drivers would also be eligible by paying the additional dollar over and above the \$35 fee.

The \$1 fee charged insured drivers has been one of the most unpopular features of the law.

"It would be interesting to see how many persons would gamble on this kind of situation," Hettiger said.

ANOTHER SUGGESTION being studied is doing away with the dollar fees and "trying to make it with the unappropriated money in the fund plus the uninsured fees," said Hettiger.

He noted there was a \$20 million balance in the fund but that \$9 million of this was represented in filed claims.

He said Hare was also looking into combining removal of the dollar along with hiking the insured fee to "perhaps \$50 or \$75," adding, however, that the present \$35 represented a "realistic figure."

He said raising the uninsured fee was an open invitation for the "chiselers."

Yet another proposal embodied dropping property-damage limits from the present

\$200 minimum to \$100. He said that this "might be begging an administrative problem of monumental proportions because the volume of claims might balloon to twice what we now have."

"Because each claim, large or small, must be checked out, investigated, and adjusted, the cost for handling a smaller claim is often as much as for some large personal injury claims."

HETTIGER SAID his department was also mulling over possibly trying to increase limits of the fund from the current \$10,000 for one person and \$20,000 for a single accident.

"In the face of rising costs, perhaps this merits consideration. There are cases where people are seriously injured or a wage earner is killed."

He said this could be coupled with limiting fund claims to actual expenses for bodily injury or death, including medical costs and loss of income, but not paying for pain and suffering. Such a program would speed claim settlements, he claimed.

Finally, Hettiger said Hare was also studying a suggestion to set up a review board or arbitration panel to evaluate and hand down awards in cases where the Fund and claimant cannot reach an equitable settlement.

MEANWHILE, Poris is hoping to get enough citizens around to take a petition to the MPSC demanding action on the DSR request for a permanent permit to service the Livonia Mall.

Poris says he has a problem hiring workers from the City of Detroit because without cars they face an hour's delay transferring from DSR to Northville lines to get to the Mall.

Poris wanted to hire 20 graduates from the City of Detroit man skills center in Detroit but could only employ one who had a car.

"The center has trained the unemployed and we have the jobs waiting for them," says Poris, "and it's a shame that we can't match the men with the jobs just because transportation isn't available."

"The labor pool is in the city and the jobs are in the suburbs," Poris explained, "if the hard-core unemployed are to be helped transportation must be provided to get them from the inner city to suburban jobs."

"You can improve the world if you can get people working," says Poris, "and I am ready to start a crusade to get one man one job. You can talk about helping the thousands but you can't count to one thousand without first saying one."

But if Poris or the DSR win their fight, it will be by either a reversal from the Supreme Court or Michigan Public Service Commission. If neither agency acquiesces, a challenge of heart, Judge Fitzgerald's ruling this week will have little effect.

OBSERVER

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## Receives Bronze Star In Vietnam

Army S/S J. Michael Porter, son of Mr. and Mrs. C.L. Porter, 250 Auburn St., Plymouth, received the Bronze Star Medal during ceremonies near Phu Bai, Vietnam.

Presenting the award was Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Clayton Day, Provisional Corps chaplain in Vietnam.

Spec. Porter received the award for outstanding meritorious service in combat operations against hostile forces in Vietnam.

SPEC. PORTER, senior chaplain assistant with the corps,

entered the Army in September 1964, completed basic training at Ft. Hood, Tex., and arrived in Vietnam in July 1967. He holds the Army Commendation Medal.

The specialist, whose wife, Lesley, lives at 163 Madelon St., Belleville, graduated in 1960 from Plymouth High School. He received a B.S. degree in landscape architecture in 1965 from Michigan State University, East Lansing. He is a Mason.

Before entering the Army, he was assistant commissioner of parks for the City of Toledo Parks Division, Toledo, O.

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