



Statement of  
**BISHOP LIAM CARY**  
regarding the canonical status of  
**JAMES RADLOFF**  
in the Roman Catholic Church

March 10, 2015

On April 18, 2014, Reverend James Radloff informed me of his decision to “canonically resign from the presbyterate of the Roman Catholic Church” and rescind his “personal membership with the Roman jurisdiction.” Shortly thereafter he formally associated himself with a religious body known as the “Evangelical Catholic Church” which is not affiliated with or recognized as being a part of the Roman Catholic Church. In June of 2014 he opened “Holy Communion Church” here in Bend.

As the months have gone by, uncertainty about James Radloff’s status has arisen, prompting some parishioners of St. Francis of Assisi, for example, to receive Communion or Anointing of the Sick from him in the hospital and in nursing homes. Lest such confusion spread, I wish to make it clear that James Radloff is not authorized or permitted to exercise the ministry of a Roman Catholic priest in the Diocese of Baker. He has entered into schism with the Catholic Church.

Canon 751 of *The Code of Canon Law* defines schism as “the refusal of submission” to the Pope and the refusal to remain in “communion with the members of the Church subject to him.” James Radloff’s resignation from the priesthood and his decision to rescind his “personal membership with the Roman jurisdiction” clearly constitutes such an act of schism on his part. According to canon 1364, §1 of *The Code of Canon Law*, persons who have committed such acts of schism automatically incur the penalty of excommunication. Additionally, canon 194, §1, 2°, provides that “a person who has publicly defected from the Catholic faith or from the communion of the Church” is removed by the law itself from any ecclesiastical office he holds. In James Radloff’s case, the law removes him from the exercise of the Catholic priesthood.

By reason of the excommunication that canon law itself imposes, therefore, James Radloff is forbidden to celebrate Mass, to baptize, to perform marriages, to hear confessions, or to anoint the sick. As canon 1331, §1 prescribes, all such actions on his part are illicit. Faithful Catholics should take no part in them.

In the Catholic Church the door to reconciliation is always open. It is my prayer that James Radloff will one day step through it and back into communion with all who regret his departure.