



OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

## ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE

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### PASTORAL ADVISORY

To the Christian faithful of the Archdiocese of Baltimore:

Over the course of several years, information has been made available which suggests that messages and locutions have been given to Gianna Talone-Sullivan by the Virgin Mother of the Lord. These alleged messages and locutions are supposedly to be shared with members of the Christian faithful. Recent messages and activity by those who support Mrs. Talone-Sullivan have created confusion among many and division in our parishes and our Archdiocese.

On more than one occasion, the Archdiocese of Baltimore has conducted investigations into these matters in an effort to protect the faith and good morals of the Christian faithful. Each investigation has concluded that there is nothing of significance to be found in the messages and locutions. Most recently, the results of the investigation were submitted for the consideration of the Holy See's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. After thorough study and careful consideration, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith concluded that the Archbishop of Baltimore was in a position to issue a decree concluding the investigation and declaring that there was nothing supernatural about any of the messages or locutions. The decree further stated that no public activity relating to the alleged apparitions and locutions is to take place on properties of the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

Although my predecessor, Cardinal William H. Keeler, and others in the Archdiocese spoke out clearly, it is now apparent to me that more must be done to protect the faith and good morals of the Christian faithful from possible distortion and harm. In virtue of my office as chief shepherd of the people of the Archdiocese of Baltimore and directed particularly by Canon 823 §1, I seek to protect the faith and good morals of the Christian faithful entrusted to my care so that no harm be done to them. To that end, I have consulted with those entrusted with the pastoral care of all affected by these messages and locutions, and I have listened carefully to those members of the Christian faithful who wished to be heard on the matter and those whose rights could be injured.

The *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy* issued by Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments offers principles and guidelines for pious practices of the Christian people. Of particular pertinence to this matter is its paragraph 90:

#### **Popular Piety and Private Revelation**

90. Popular piety has always been interested in extraordinary happenings and events that are not infrequently connected with private revelations. While not confined to Marian piety alone, this phenomenon is particularly involved with "apparitions" and "messages". In this regard, it is useful to recall what the Catechism of the Catholic Church says about private revelation: "Throughout the ages, there have been so-called private revelations, some of which have been recognized by the authority of the Church. They do not belong, however, to the deposit of faith. It is not their role to improve or complete Christ's definitive Revelation, but to help live more fully by it in a certain period of history. Guided by the Magisterium of the Church, the *sensus*

*fidelium* knows how to discern and welcome in these revelations whatever constitutes an authentic call of Christ or his saints to the Church" (n. 67).

The alleged apparitions to Gianna Sullivan have not been recognized by the authority of the Church. Studied in detail by experts in theology and other pertinent fields, the investigations have come to the conclusion that the alleged apparitions are not supernatural in origin. This has been confirmed by the authority of the Church.

Therefore, I strongly caution all the faithful regarding these purported apparitions to be guided by the Magisterium which cannot affirm them as authentic. The confusion and division that have come as a result of these apparitions have prompted me to take this public and decisive step.

I also strongly caution Mrs. Gianna Talone-Sullivan not to communicate in any manner whatsoever, written or spoken, electronic or printed, personally or through another in any church, public oratory, chapel or any other place or locale, public or private, within the jurisdiction of the Archdiocese of Baltimore any information of any type related to or containing messages or locutions allegedly received from the Virgin Mother of God.

Further, I strongly caution those who participate in any activity surrounding these alleged apparitions or who seek to disseminate information and promote them here in the Archdiocese. To do so is a great disservice to the Church and creates further confusion and division among the faithful.

It is my hope that this warning will result in greater clarity for the faithful and resolve the divisions created by this situation. May Mary, Mother of the Church, intercede for us, now and always.

Given at Baltimore, Maryland on October 8, 2008.



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+ Edwin F. O'Brien,  
Archbishop of Baltimore

Witnessed:



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(Rev. Msgr.) Robert J. Jaskot  
Chancellor