

These electronic messages are part of the correspondence between the ICHRusa Headquarters, members, and individuals believed to be supporting and/or selling relics thereby violating the Canon Law of the Roman Catholic Church and in some cases Civil Law. This annual report is intended for viewing only by enrolled members of the International Crusade for Holy Relics.

This must not be reproduced!

The ICHR does not and will not condone the selling of relics, and will do Everything within its powers to see that all Catholic individuals comply to the Code of Canon Law.

- Canon 1171 - Sacred things which are destined for divine worship through dedication or a blessing are to be treated with reverence and not to be employed for improper or profane use even if they are under the control of private individuals.
- Canon 1190 - It is strictly forbidden to sell sacred relics.
- Canon 1376 - One who profanes a movable or immovable sacred thing is to be punished with a just penalty.

Simony (SAI-muh-nee): The selling or purchasing of spiritual things, which is forbidden both by natural law and ecclesiastical law.

Natural Law: *Man's reasoned participation in God's eternal law.*

Natural law is promulgated by God and is the "objective order" established by Him; furthermore, man uses his reason to promulgate the dictates of natural law, which is autonomous. The development of society means an increase in the specific dictates of natural law, so that what was once implicit gradually becomes explicit. The Catholic Church possesses the power to interpret and to help others understand the natural law, which is knowable by all human beings.

"It is not simony to offer money in order to free oneself from the loss of the Sacraments, or from annoyance in the free performance of one's religious duties, or to rescue sacred things from profanation." (Henry Davies, S.J., 'Moral and Pastoral Theology', Fifth edition, London, Sheed and Ward – 1946. Vol II page 39 [article on simony].

Intention of this report:

- It is *not the intention* of this report to harass or slander any corporation, website, group or individual. The *intent is* the documentation of the callous marketeering of the remains of our Christian saints. These are the bodily remains of the very temples of the Holy Spirit that GOD Himself created to “know, love, and serve” Him.
- This report was created out of necessity and designed for practical function, the designers first lesson, form follows function. I would like all members to consider this a “living” report with supplements.
- You will not find chapters or page numbers in this report. The idea is to add to this report with additional information gathered on your own or supplemented by the ICHR/usa on a yearly basis. Simple headings that can be applied to index tabs will be listed.

E-MAIL CORRESPONDENCE

LETTERS OF CONCERN

WEBSITES (SELLING)

DISINFORMATION

SELLER TRACK

(various aliases, e-mail addresses, and user names)

RELIC THEFTS

AUTHENTIC?

AUCTIONS

SUPPORT

IDEAS

International Crusade for Holy Relics – Internal Report - Members Only

E-Mail Correspondence

*These e-mails have been left unedited regarding grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
The names and addresses have been omitted in the spirit of charity.*

1998

- Date: Tue, 26 May 1998 22:00:39 +0000
- From:
- To: saintsalive@earthlink.net
- Subject: Immediate response requested

Tom,

Could you please email us your phone number..and your Spiritual directors name and phone number ..you need to speak to our spiritual director _____.
Also did you or did you not fax our new Arch bishop? Did you do that BEFORE you communicated that to us?..... that you had a problem with us.? That you found us unwilling to communicate with you? Did you try and work it out with us as scripture recommends and then if we did not come to resolution then did you request our parish Priests phone number so that you could speak to him and ask for resolution?

I don't really understand what you are up to...or what it is that you are trying to accomplish.....and for what purpose in Gods Kingdom?. What good purpose in Christ's Body does this kind of approach bring....Christ does not act like this....he is kind and big on talking things out.....

We are easy to reach and easy to communicate with. Originally we came to you to link with your page...we gave you an online test site that know one else had or has the address too and you were very unhappy with it...(It was NEVER put into any search engines....Is that what you think?) At that time..we were on our way down to show _____ the site before loading it..... who would have corrected anything in proper anyway I remember that you seemed to correct us with alot of malice and unkind ness as if we were criminals out to strip catholics of their money and give relics to the profane. I remember writing you one last time...you can do so much more with kindness.....We were happy to make tremendous changes on our site with out any problems or personnel grudges. Although we feel the site is currently right...we are STILL open to feed back and corrections.... It has just been listed.

Why in the world would you either go to the arch bishop or even think of it??? Why would you not act in the spirit of Christian charity? Why would you not simply communicate with us directly.... We are like I said easy and open to change and better options. I would like to onfirm something with you....concerning the relics we have been able to provide.

1. We are not making any money.....none....we are still falling short of shipping each month...and our time is given freely.....

WE ARE NOT SELLING RELICS.....THEIR IS NO PROFIT HERE...none!

This is a God Known Fact....you will know for sure sooner or later....even if I have to send you all my books....or you find out in the kingdom....we are obedient catholics not interested in cheating the lord for some earthly cash. We serve freely in this matter before God and the Angels and Saints...There are no sales and profits.....you are profoundly wrong here..... you couldn't be any more wrong.....if you think differently....

2. WE are giving them only to those who fulfill canon norms and who will be exposing them...who are primarily priests, nuns, and confraternities or orders. Seminarians as well.

3. WE are donating them as well ...we just obtained a relic for Mother _____ Sisters

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freely...we have done that for several priests as well.

4. We have alot of priests behind us.and our work we distribute sacramentals to priests in India and Africa freely..we distribute sacramentals..Rosarys and scapulars as our main work here at _____ we are Fatima oriented.....and we will have to obtain numerous letters and make an appointment with the Arch bishop if you did in fact fax him. I am sorry but if this is true we may be contacting the Bishop in your diocese in order to stop this persecution since this would again show a lack of respect for reconciliation protocol and decency. To cast a slur on an apostolate in its own diocese is a serious offense.

5. We have just received a new arch-bishop.....this is tremendously damaging to fax him instead of COMMUNICATE through the proper channels and order. This is incredibly damaging. WE are just this same week approaching him with a committee proposal to put on a second _____ here in the Diocese. WE did one last February under the old ArchBishop. We have been donated the money again and had a large very orthodox and faithful group behind it. You may have hurt them and their good cause as well. It will certainly upset the committee who are all really good folks trying to do Jesus will. Have you thought about any of this or the fruits of your actions...What if you just blocked something Jesus wanted done.

We are in Perpetual adoration, Nocturnal Adoration, In First Friday Preparation Society, Leaders in our Third Order, and daily communicants....why do you keep approaching us like we are criminals? I just am not getting it.....

Meanwhile...our spiritual director _____ needs to know your phone number....and your spiritual directors phone number and if you did in deed fax the archdiocese yesterday or this week?

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Are you upset with _____ ? What is it? Why do you act so un-christianly towards your own brothers and sisters in the faith? Even those who love the saints as much as you.....

How does this contribute to war in the world? How does this make Jesus feel?

Disagreements among Christians are not suppose to me wars with sides.....name calling....and attacks.....

For goodness sakes.....

- Date: Wed, 27 May 1998 07:41:29 +0000
- From:
- To: Tom Serafin <saintsalive@earthlink.net
- Subject: Re: Immediate response requested

Tom Serafin wrote:

WHY ARE YOU SO BEWILDERED?

Dear Tom,

I am not bewildered about relics but about your lack of Christian decency in communication....

READ THE CANON LAW, IT IS EXACTLY THIS ABUSE THAT ROME HAS ADDRESSED. I HAVE GOTTEN NUMEROUS E-MAILS FROM LAY PEOPLE WHO WERE CONCERNED ABOUT THE SALE OF RELICS ON YOUR SITE.

I would like to have those forwarded to us please...would you like to have the thank you letters from all our priests and nuns sent to you.....

THEY WERE THINKING OF GETTING THEM, THEY ARE NOT RELIGIOUS OR SEMINARIANS.

How do you know that I would give them to them...I say no often to people.....how do you know anything thats going on over here?

HOW DID YOU ASSUME THE RIGHT OF DISPENSATION?

_____ and our directors feel that we are qualified to help place them.....your really do have a problem with _____ being able to receive them don't you?

_____ SAID HE HAD A LENGTHY DISCUSSION WITH YOU AND HE SAID HE WAS REASSURED THAT THE RELIC SALE PAGE WOULD NOT CONTINUE, LO AND BEHOLD IT'S STILL THERE.

We were not told to end it...but to be careful with it...we think we have done a good job....if not was it not your duty to communicate to us.....

ASK YOUR SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR IF HE WOULD ALLOW ME TO HAVE HIS DIRECT NUMBER AND I'LL HAVE ONE OF OUR PRIESTS IN YOUR AREA CALL AND EXPLAIN OUR CONCERNS.

We want you spiritual directors number and we are going to be calling the bishop in your area today to explain our problem with you....if you do not come up with it upon request..which is once again proper protocol.....

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IF YOU WOULD FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE I COULD PROVIDE YOU WITH A FAX WITH THE THEOLOGICAL OPINIONS OF 3 PRIESTS.

Yes we would that is also proper protocol and respect instead of coming up from behind us...How do you think Jesus would be dealing with this? With alot more kindness....

THIS IS NOT A PERSONAL ATTACK, I BELIVE THAT YOU ARE UNKNOWINGLY GOING SOMETHING THAT IS VERY QUESTIONABLE. IF YOU HAVE A BURNING DESIRE TO HELP PEOPLE ACQUIRE RELICS THAN DIRECT THEM TO _____.

We are helping _____. We are packing them in box's with seals, including zerox of canon norms, shipping them certified, and keeping a file on each order that includes the research on the parish, priest they are under if they are not a priest, and their organization and how they will be exposed. That also includes two phone calls or several fax's and emails.

All that comes to \$15 - 18.00 worth of materials and expenses...we are still spending tremendous time in keeping records so that we are still coming up short each month financially on whatever we are able to help distribute for and with _____.....GET ITno money, no profit, no mistakes, alot of time and energy donated to the service of the Saints.....

OR BETTER YET ENCOURAGE THEM LIKE WE DO OUR MEMBERS TO RECOVER THEM FROM PAWN SHOP, SWAP MEETS, AND PLACES OF DESECRATION. IF I AM WRONG, I WILL APOLOGIZE TO YOU AND YOUR BISHOP.

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International Crusade for Holy Relics – Internal Report - Members Only

Your so incredibly wrong.....and you have not even touched anything I said to you about Christian decency..... Or about our devoted life style and how much damage you have just done by going to Our new Bishop.....The other people that you have hurt.....

You are an unkind man.....You dont even slightly resemble Jesus's love. The more I look at it the more I am begining to realize your issue is with _____.....

Why are you bothering us? WE are sincere devotees of Jesus and Mary and the Saints.....We get nothing out of this but the incredible joy of the letters of those who properly deserve and receive them....

No we are not making tons of money, and giving them to devil worshipers....

You have treated us cruelly and now it will have to be worked out responsibly..

We need your spritual directors phone number...your priest....you have certainly spoken enough to _____ everyone over here wants to speak to your priest now...including each one of us and our director.....

So in obedience of recounciliation protocol.....please email this over this morning ...because by noon....I am going to call your diocese and start searching and that makes a difference in the meeting I have to have with the NEW arch bishop.....thanks alot....I really appreciate how you handled that....did it ever occurr to you that you just slandered one of Jesus and Marys servants?

I am awaiting a swift and obedient response.....

In Christ and Mary...._____

- Date: Wed, 27 May 1998 07:44:49 +0000
- From:
- To: Tom Serafin <saintsalive@earthlink.net
- Subject: Re: Immediate response requested

Tom, please email me a copy of that letter back to my box....I forgot to make a copy and it will be needed for all the priests, and the bishop.....

"A proud man is seldom a kind man. It is humility that makes us kind and kindness that makes us humble." I am astounded by you lack of kindness and love....specially when you work with the saints the greatest lover of men....

----Original Message-----

- From: saintsalive@earthlink.net
[SMTP:saintsalive@earthlink.net]
- Sent: Monday, October 05, 1998 9:23 PM
- To:

Your Excellency,

I am the co-founder of the International Crusade for Holy Relics; a pious organization comprising of 1000 members(religious and laity) worldwide, dedicated to the preservation of the dignity of the sacred remains of our saints.

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International Crusade for Holy Relics – Internal Report - Members Only

For the past 8 months we have been trying to stop a Catholic group in your Diocese from actively selling relics. The ICHR has had 3 priests from the National Committee speak to them, yet only recently have I again been informed by two more individuals that they are still selling relics. To my embarrassment one person is a Archimandrite in the Eastern Orthodox rite.

Could you please assign an individual from your office that can investigate this group and help us stop this horrible practice.

In Christ Crucified,
Thomas Serafin
ICHR/usa

Dear Mr. Serafin,

We are aware of these people and have made some effort to approach them. However, we do not have enough information about their activities. What more can you tell us?

Chancellor

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International Crusade for Holy Relics – Internal Report - Members Only

- Date: Tue, 06 Oct 1998 10:41:30 -0400
- From:
- To: Tom Serafin <saintsalive@earthlink.net
- Subject: Re: _____

Yes, the _____ does have relics for sale. According to _____, they get them from _____, tack on a bit extra for their postage costs, and then send them out to their customers. I don't have their price list, but _____ did say that they offer the True Cross for \$125. _____ offers the same thing for \$100.

- Date: Tue, 06 Oct 1998 15:06:45 -0400

Tom --

I can confirm that I have been able to shut down two _____ sales today: one St. Peter for \$1,000 and on St. John Neumann for \$103.00. Both bidders have been informed about _____ and are refusing to pay. And he is thoroughly steamed.

I did a web search using his email address _____@webtv.net -- and found him leaving messages on guestbooks at two sites: one _____, and the other for large gay men. Amazing.

1999

- To: <saintsalive@earthlink.net
- Subject: On false relics
- Date: Sat, 9 Jan 1999 12:04:31 -0600

Dear Mr. Serafin,

I enjoy visiting regularly your beautiful page on relics. In our chapel at _____, I have put together a good collection of relics, venerated by the students and the faithful. It is for me a great consolation to see their devotion to the Saints.

Anyway, the reason for my mail is to ask if you would consider placing an article in your page concerning false relics. I am horrified at the incredible amount of false relics proceeding from _____, fraudulently distributed with false documentation claiming to be issued from the late Father Ferrante, postulator general of the Redemptorists. They are everywhere in the US, and if you check regularly the big internet auction site, eBay, you will see how these fake relics are being sold at exorbitant prices every week. One gentleman bought a "True Cross" relic for five thousand dollars! The very one which _____ sells for about \$175. Just at this very moment you could check some of these auctions of "Ferrante" relics at:

It pains me to see good people being deceived. Maybe an article in your excellent website could help. I am sure that you are visited by many of those who are interested in relics.

If I can be of any help, please let me know.

Sincerely in JMJ, _____

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International Crusade for Holy Relics – Internal Report - Members Only

- Date: Fri, 15 Jan 1999 15:08:14 -0800
 - From:
 - To: saintsalive@earthlink.net
- Subject: Phone call please.

Tom,

_____ has asked that you please arrange a phone call with him. He has received the information that you have blacklisted us on your cyber space board. We have spoken to your spiritual director once, and he was more than supportive of our complaints. I realize your having a rough life, but how long does this Catholic bashing go on before you realize who your real brothers and sisters are?

Your director has said he does not agree with your methods, and next I am going to write your Bishop if this does not cease and desist.

Please call _____ by Monday, and I will wait to hear your explanation before I start calling, faxing and writing everyone concerned.

In Christ...._____

- To:
- From: saintsalive@earthlink.net (Tom Serafin)
- Subject: Re: Phone call please.

It has been agreed upon by all members of the council as well as Carlos Evaristo that you are no longer enrolled as members of the ICHR. This is final.

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International Crusade for Holy Relics – Internal Report - Members Only

- Date: Sat, 16 Jan 1999 18:53:50 -0800
 - From:
 - To: saintsalive@earthlink.net
- Subject: We are guardians of two relics

January 16, 1999

Dear Thomas,

We are active and devoted lay Catholic's (affiliated with the Secular Order of the Servants of Mary, Portland, Oregon) living in Vancouver, Washington. We have the privilege of being guardians for two documented 1st Class Relic's of Saint(s): St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, obtained for a nominal donation in 1991, at the shrine in Emmitsburg, MD., St. Francis of Assisi, obtained for a nominal donation in 1998, to _____

_____.

After reading the information on your www we would like clarification if the Catholic apostate mentioned under "Current Events" is it _____ ?

If so, should we be dubious about the authenticity of the St. Francis relic? We waited several months for the _____ to notify us they had located a relic of St. Francis for us. At the time, we believed the _____ were presenting themselves ethically with respect and devotion to the preservation of sacred relics and we were blessed to be entrusted with a relic's care.

Also, it say's "you are currently making the Bishop of the diocese aware of the situation," if it is _____, what is his position? Our understanding is there is a great responsibility for guardians of relics to learn all they can about the life of the saint whose relic they venerate, protect, and share with others for the blessing of all, which is our desire.

The I.C.H.R. www is a great resource to bring informed and accurate Church doctrine on holy relic's. We look forward to your response to us regarding this important matter. God bless you for your tremendous effort to make this knowledge available.

Peace of Christ, Always

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International Crusade for Holy Relics – Internal Report - Members Only

- Date: Sun, 17 Jan 1999 11:06:19 -0800
 - From:
 - To: Tom Serafin <saintsalive@earthlink.net
- Subject: Sacred Relics

Dear Tom,

Hello and Blessings be on your day! We are really impressed you took time to write us right away, because to us accurate knowledge is very important. Your prompt e-mail response is appreciated.

We are sorry we didn't explain our concern accurately in our letter to you, but yesterday was the first time we had visited I.C.H.R. We are indeed grateful to have received the grace to be lead to I.C.H.R. at this time.

Prior to reading this article, we weren't aware of the potential for the exploitation of relics (unscrupulous selling for profit or by "collector" who have no love for the saints). We have no reason to suspect that the St. Francis relic we received from _____ isn't authentic, so that is not our concern.

If the North-Western Catholic group selling relic's is _____ then we feel concerned about the motive in which they are being distributed (being sold for profit). After studying the article we are concerned _____ may be the organization you are referring to because they are here in the North-West. Since the ICHR has been lead to question the ethical motivation of the organization and has contacted the Bishop of their diocese to be aware of the situation--- it is an **IMPORTANT MATTER**.

What is your recommendation to lay individuals who have donated to receive relics through similar situations when this acquisition was made with love for a saint and to nobly venerate their pious life?

We were blessed to receive the relic of Mother Seton from the Mother House when we were visiting there. (Mother Seton's relic has tremendous significance to us because of a documented healing that occurred through Mother Seton's intercession after receiving it. This healing was the catalyst for conversion and renewal of our sacramental life.)

We found your www. presentation and knowledge on Relic's to be exemplary this www provides wisdom and guidance regarding the proper respect and veneration for sacred relics AND is a Canonical resource in this aspect of our faith and compliance with "Sacred things which are destined for divine worship through dedication or a blessing are to be treated with reverence and not to be employed for improper or profane use, even if they are under the control of private individuals", Canon 1376.

Thank you very much for your insight.

Peace of Christ, Always

- Date: Tue, 19 Jan 1999 23:17:12 -0800
- Subject: THE PLOT THICKENS...

If you are really interested in a fraud concerning the sale of relics on ebay, start doing research on the percentage of them that are coming from a Post General Nicolas Ferenate. So far I have figured it close to 70%. It has come to my attention that these relics are fakes, that the diocese of _____ is doing an investigation of these relics. Notice how new and poorly constructed they are, and that the authenticity is a copied piece of paper. This is the true scam going on ebay, if you want to really take action, look into this.

In a message dated 99-01-21 06:03:55 EST, you write:

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International Crusade for Holy Relics – Internal Report - Members Only

What leads you to believe that these Niolas Ferante relics are frauds?

I notice that the 2 St. Monica's/St. Andrew being offered by _____ are signed by him.

I don't doubt you....I just wonder how you know?

Nicolas Ferrante is the Post General, and a real one at that. But these relics that have been largely distributed on ebay are fakes. The fakes are being reproduced supposedly by someone in the diocese of _____, I dont believe this has anything to do with Nicolas Ferrante, it just so happens that they are using his name to forge the documents, which if you ask, happen to be copied pieces of paper, an obvious fake, also the size of the documents are much smaller than standard relic authentication. As well, there have been relics that have shown up on ebay from this provider, with the same authenticity, of relics that dont even exist, ie. bone of St. Edith Stein, who was cremated in the holocaust, or St. Josephs cloths, which we have no idea where he died, and as recently there were two of the true cross, both authenticated in the mid 80's, and the Church hasnt released relics of the true cross for over 30 years.

There are lots of other signs, I have been watching for over 6 months. The sale of these precious objects as collectable pieces for this kind of money is discusting to me. There are several, which I own of St. John Neumann and St. Elizabeth Anne Seton, which you can obtain directly from there motherhouses here in the States for 5.00-15.00, being resold on ebay for hundreds of dollars.

I give you this information, because you truly seem interested and want to see things done right, I hope you do.

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International Crusade for Holy Relics – Internal Report - Members Only

- Date: Fri, 22 Jan 1999 01:14:35 -0800

Thomas,

I send you a series of letters that may or may not shed some light on the current activity of Relics being traded on eBay. I myself bid a considerable amount. ...it came to over \$900.00 for a relic of St. Benedict.

I sent the fellow e-mail, and left my phone number. He returned my call...on a calling card that "ran-out" mid conversation. He refused to give his telephone number, any references, and chose to use the initials D.P. He demanded payment by money order sent to a rented mail box. His reluctance to divulge anything about himself led me to suspicion. I posted the article about Relic Fraud, as a result of our drawn out conversations...on e-mail, behind an AOL screen name with no profile, and another on a calling card from an unknown location, which again "ran out" and we were disconnected mid sentence.

I have received a number of queries, ranging from questions on Canon Law, to how to determine fraudulent relics, as they have been being on eBay since its inception BEFORE its IPO on the New York Stock Exchange. A number of people have requested the Address for the _____, of which I am one of the benefactors. The _____ is mine, but I am not a non profit organization, and they are. I have forwarded several internet addresses to the Sisters at _____ including: _____ and _____. I have withheld from them the controversy this has stirred. While this thread may seem long, I picked out letters that sort of explained the personal development between myself, and the original auctioneer....who found himself matched by a rogue cut from the same cloth.

-
- Date: Sat, 23 Jan 1999 23:05:05 -0500
Regarding _____ sources:

He has personally stated to me that he receives relics from several religious orders including the Discalced Carmelites, Augustinians, Dominicans and others. As you may know, Bishop van Lierde himself was assisted by two Augustinian Friars, and did not himself prepare the relics in their cases. Many of _____ relics used to bear his seal.

Please consider this: if _____ were to reveal his actual sources, in many cases the laity could apply directly to them for relics. Now, he currently asks a donation of \$100.00 for a relic of the Column of Flagellation of Our Lord. I offered \$15.00 for mine years ago. What do we have here, a mark-up of \$85.00? His currently- suggested offering for most relics is \$10.00-\$20.00 higher than the offerings usually sent per relic to religious orders by most of the faithful. He has also given relics for free to persons who could not afford to send the recommended offerings. The lady who obtained ten relics of St. Philomena V.M. and proceeded to send them to Bishop van Lierde for verification of their authenticity told me that she never sent the offering (then \$25.00 per relic), nor had _____ ever asked for it so it would not appear that _____ is in it solely for money. Some of the additions to his inventory of relics came about as a result of requests by people for relics not listed. In these cases, he sent the relics as so as he got them (I suppose) but never mentioned any money due. It would therefore appear that his motives are pure. In some cases he tells people that a relic is not available. Anyone counterfeiting them would hardly do that. _____ is, as you know, not authorized by anyone with the authority so to do to distributed relics upon the receipt of offerings. This privilege is now given mostly to Postulators General, even though it may be exercised by other agents, such as the Sisters who prepare relics for them. If his sources become known, there are any number of hostile prelates who could shut-down his apostolate by forbidding anyone to supply him with relics.

The Sisters who prepare the relics also benefit from the offerings, as they pay only four or five American dollars per "teca", and probably gain 15 dollars at least per relic produced. Cloistered religious orders are not exactly over-supplied with either vocations or money these days.

_____ has very likely agreed to keep the names of his contacts confidential, especially if they are issuing ecclesiastical documents on behalf of a dead Postulator General!

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International Crusade for Holy Relics – Internal Report - Members Only

Bishop P.C van Lierde
Vatican City, December 1,1988
Vicar General to the Holy Father for Vatican City

Dear _____,

Amidst of assiduous and various manifold activities in direct service to the Holy Father, I come a moment to you thanking you for your letter of November 18th, 1988, by which you sent me the most recent list of _____ advertising his relics.

It is good to read how the intelligent devotion to St.Philomena brings progress of faith and spiritual life and also help and support in many daily circumstances of life.

Regarding the letter and recent list of _____ I repeat what I have written before: *It is not allowed to distribute Holy Relics on such a high price;** *shortly said, it is a sorrowful abuse and do not collaborate with this!*

I wish you a very fruitful Advent time and a beautiful Solemnity of Christmas with renewed light and vigour for your spiritual life and apotolate.

With my kind greetings and good wishes,

In Jesus Christ and Blessed Virgin,

Signed:

Peter Canisius J. Van Lierde
Vicar General

*** neither can a priest unless he is a Postulator General promoting the “causes” of Beatification and Canonization distribute Holy Relics.**

+J.+M.+J.+

Dear Tom-

As I mentioned in our telephone conversation today, it is not uncommon for Postulators General etc. to delegate the authority for the authentication of holy relics, both via the wax seal which is applied to the red cord and the issuance of the document (normally provided) to those who must actually prepare these sacred objects, and rightly so, for those who prepare them have the grave obligation of seeing that the correct relics are placed in the cases. How can the Postulator General honestly say that he knows what is in the reliquaries bearing his seal if he does not have a hand in the process of preparation? It makes common sense to trust those who prepare relics to properly prepare their documents of authenticity as well.

To this end, many Postulators have their certificates of authenticity printed bearing a facsimile of their signatures, provide a rubber signature stamp, or otherwise establish an agency relationship with those preparing relics for them. Such a relationship would necessarily grant the power to sign the appropriate documents in the absence of the Postulator General. Whether this privilege would apply post-mortem is beyond my capacity to answer. At any rate, those chosen by Fr. Ferrante for this work may feel obligated to continue his work, for the greater good of souls, to the glory of Almighty God, and for the veneration of His Saints. Certainly given the horrible happenings in the Church and the world in the last several decades, who can say that they are wrong?

One Saint observed that it would be wrong to leave the Saints (in the person of their relics, of course) trapped in their tombs, while demons have the ability to roam the entire world to the ruin of souls! Perhaps this is the thinking of the good Sisters who prepared relics for Fr. Ferrante for all those years. At any rate, those who know _____ personally would never accuse him of avarice, or even of being concerned with money at all beyond the amount required to keep his _____ solvent.

Basically, it is useless from what I have seen to question him concerning the source or authenticity of his relics. Frankly, neither his apostolate nor the Sisters who supply him would benefit from the loss of income or the opportunity to help save souls should Rome take action to stop the distribution of these sacred objects.

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What else makes me think that the relics received from _____ are legitimate? In the cases with which I am familiar: The "mounts" or pieces of paper to which the relics are glued are exactly the same size and shape (e.g. six-pointed star, flower or bow-shaped) as those used by the Vicariate of Rome/ Augustinians of St. Lucy and the Vicariate of the Vatican/ Bishop van Lierde. The labels in the reliquaries match the labels of relics of the same Saints provided by the above-mentioned agencies, right down to the mis-spellings, uneven type-setting, smears, color, discolorations etc.

The seals on the bulk of the relics from _____ which I examined during the late 1980's/ early 1990's proved under intense magnification to be those of Bishop van Lierde himself, with a sharpness indicating the use of the original seal, rather than a dummy seal made by taking an impression of an original wax seal. As soon as Bishop van Lierde retired, the Augustinians lost control of the Sacred Reliquaries of the Vatican, and the new Vicar General for the Holy Father for Vatican City, Cardinal Noe, stopped the distribution of Holy Relics save to the Ordinaries of Dioceses. All new relics that I saw that had been acquired by _____ after Bishop van Lierde's retirement bore the round (rather than the oval) version of the seal of the Postulator General of the C.Ss.R. rather than the seal of Bishop van Lierde. By the way, the oval seal of the Redemptorist Postulator General is kept in his office at the headquarters on the Via Merulana, where it is used to authenticate only the relics of Saints and Blessed of his Order. Where is the other seal? How about in the possession of the Sisters who prepared relics for the late Fr. Ferrante? If counterfeiting were going on, why the switch in the seals from mostly van Lierde to all (round) Postulator General C.Ss.R.? I guarantee you that no one else has researched this aspect as closely as I, and if you would like to do the same, you need only examine the bulk of your (non-O.C.D.) relics acquired from _____ before about 1995, checking the tassel-flanked shield on the coat of arms for Bishop van Lierde's personal arms, the top of which is the coat of arms of the Order of Saint Augustine, to the lower right, the rampant lion of Flanders (I believe), and to the lower left the star-and- water motif of the late Bishop's family armorial bearings. The presence of any wax-seal related device at the _____ is totally without significance. All ecclesiastical documents (baptismal and marriage certificates for example) must have the appropriate seal(s). I have seen parish seals on the desks of priests, often next to boxes of pre-embossed gold foil seals bearing the arms of the Diocese, ready to be applied to documents that require them. Ecclesiastical seals may, as you know, be stamped in ink, embossed, or pressed into red wax.

If _____ has been able to acquire multiple relics of a single Saint from the Vicariate of Rome (and he has) complete with documents issued by that authority, and can get relics of Discalced Carmelite Saints and Beati by the dozens (and he does), face it: the man has clout. With such powerful contacts, why would he bother to forge relics? I was informed some ten years ago by a spokesman at the Chancery there in _____ that the problem they had with _____ was his lack of the appropriate faculties to fulfill his duties as a priest. When I broached the subject of his relics and their authenticity, I was told that he knew people in Rome who got them for him. A conversation with head of the Province (is that the term?) of the Redemptorist Order into which the _____ area falls in about 1989 indicated that he knew that _____ was distributing relics authenticated by Fr. Ferrante. He said that _____ had a source for relics in Rome, and that he would not worry about their genuineness. Mistakes in the wording in the hand-written part of the documents accompanying some of the relics received from _____ were no worse in most cases than similar errors found in documents whose sources are above reproach

J.M.J.

Dear Tom-

Before I continue, let me apologize for the spelling errors in my previous e-mail messages ("authentification", "as so[on] as", etc.).

Back to our subject- some people have wondered about the authenticity of relics provided by _____ because of mis-spellings and other mistakes on the documents accompanying them, such as "Veli B.M.V.", rather than "ex Velo B.M.V.", "Corona Spinae" instead of "Corona

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Spinea", the use of the nominative, rather than the genitive case after the words "ex ossibus", etc. but consider this: I have seen a document from the Vatican authenticating a relic of St. George describing it as being "ex ossibus S. Gregorii, M.", the letters being transposed; "ex induemntis/indunemtis" and worse on documents for second-class relics of garments, and these mistakes were involving relics from sources above reproach. The Dominican Sisters on the Via Trionfale, God bless them, have made their own errors on authentications as well. And what about those relics of St. Erasmus, Confessor, (he was, of course, a martyr) from the

Augustinians of St. Lucy?

It must have been more than a coincidence years ago when relics from _____ which bore the seal of Bishop van Lierde, matched not only in seals, wax, cord, labels and mounts (pieces of paper to which the relics are glued) but also in the type of bone tissue (look this up in a good anatomy book) of which there is more than one kind, relics of the same Saints received directly from Bishop Peter Canisius van Lierde at the Vatican. Especially in cases of fragments taken from cancellous tissue (the kind that has a sponge-like appearance), the appearance was absolutely identical. The strange thing was that those received from Bishop van Lierde always had intact particles, while those from _____ usually had loose chips floating around in the locket. Why? Whoever prepared them was clearly more used to dealing with the deeper "teche" used for relics from Bishop van Lierde, and when he was forced to use a shallower, filigree-trimmed "teca" provided by _____ contact, the generous-sized particle of bone usually provided from the Vatican Reliquaries (called the "Lipsanoteca del Vaticano", I believe) would be crushed when the cardboard disk was tied with the cord and sealed. Not only that, the holy relic of St. Charbel Makhlof that I have from Bishop van Lierde has a label which says "S. Charbel Makhlorof", as does the one I have from _____. To his credit, the authentic from Bishop van Lierde does have the correct spelling of the Saint's surname on it, but as usual, whoever filled out the Ferrante document provided by _____ just copied the label in the "teca". But in both instances, the bone tissue is exactly the same! Interesting? ABSOLUTELY!!! Why? Because, as you may know, the holy body of St. Charbel is no longer incorrupt, and it no longer yields the mysterious blood-fluid. After the flesh had fallen into dust, the bones were found to be an eerie reddish-brown color! The bone fragments in both of my small reliquaries are identical in size, coloration and texture. How could a forger have known to do this? How much research would he have to do? Even if he photocopied authentic labels from "teche" containing real relics, this would not yield the slightly-yellowed hue which many of them have. How would he cut out the oddly-shaped pieces of paper to which the relics are glued and why, when even sources for genuine relics occasionally use squares and diamond-shapes which are easily cut from a plain strip of paper, or disks of paper produced by a hole-punching device? I repeat what I have said before: there are absolutely NO irregularities which occur in cases of relics obtained from _____ that do not occur (with alarming regularity, I might add!) with relics acquired directly from sources whose legitimacy cannot be questioned. I could give you more examples, but I do not wish to belabor a point which I have already made several times.

One of the more interesting questions concerning the relics offered by _____ concerns the relics of the North American Martyrs. _____ says that he has obtained from _____ a first-class relic of St. Isaac Jogues, whose remains, according to _____, have never been found. I told him that just because a document says "ex ossibus" does not mean that the relic in question matches that description. I have an "ex ossibus" relic of St. Peter the Apostle obtained for me by friends in Rome. Although the document describes the particle as being of bone, it clearly is wood, probably from the Chair or Cathedra of the Saint, or from his wooden table (altar), both of which are preserved there in the Holy City. Even if _____ relic is bone, there is no proof of deliberate fraud. It may well be a mis-labelled bone of St. Isaac, Patriarch (not likely), or of St. Isaac of Spoleto/Syria (very likely). I myself have a relic of Blessed Rupert Mayer, whose tomb I have visited in Munich, which came with a document describing it as being "ex indumentis". The labels in the case say "ex capillis" and "P. Ruperti Mayer S.J.". The relic is obviously a small lock of hair. The hilarious thing is that both the relic and the authentic came with a nice letter from the Bavarian Jesuit from whom I had requested a first-class relic of Blessed Rupert. This very kind letter explained sadly that absolutely NO first-class relics of this Beatus were available, and that he was sending a second-class relic instead. He obviously neglected to tell this to his assistant who actually prepared the package.) _____ has no monopoly on mistakes made in regards to relics.

You mentioned yesterday your concern about bone-relics of St. Joseph, Spouse of Our Blessed Lady, which come from _____. If these are false, then the same is probably true for the bone-relics of the same Saint issued by the Augustinians of St. Lucy, Bishop van Lierde, and the Dominican Nuns of the

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Monastery of the Most Holy Rosary, all of whom do send out or have distributed in the past first-class relics of St. Joseph. What is truly rare now, or so I have heard, is the second-class "ex pallio" relic of the Saint.

Concerning the remark made by _____, regarding the authenticity of the relics distributed by _____, I can only shake my head. As to the ridiculous suggestion that Fr. Ferrante "had no access to a photocopier"- how ludicrous! Where are such machines not found? In Rome, the very capital of a very modern Italy? And who says that Fr. Ferrante made the copies himself? Maybe, just maybe, _____ prepares his own relics of the small number of Redemptorist Saints and Beati, but for decades it was common knowledge that the relics of almost all of the well-known Saints, as well as of the Holy Family and of the instruments of the Passion of Our Lord were available from Fr. Ferrante, the Postulator General of the Redemptorist Order. I do not believe that anyone involved thought that Fr. Ferrante had all of these relics in his living quarters, or that he single-handedly prepared relics for the prodigious number of requests which he received. No, I distinctly remember hearing that these nuns who helped Fr. Ferrante had access to almost any relic imaginable. Everyone in Rome knew that cloistered Sisters prepared his relics, and received part of the donations given as compensation for their labors. Do these same nuns now distribute these same relics under "license" from a now-deceased Potulator General, and are they still supported at least in part by this work? Well, why not? Does _____ want to cause trouble for them, himself and others by naming names, giving out details and addresses, etc., if this were indeed to be the case? Why should he? Absolutely no one is constrained or even encouraged to request relics from _____. As he is truly independent (not necessarily a good thing), any rebuke from the local Ordinary would be meaningless. Which is worse, a priest who distributes holy relics without the proper authorization, or a Cardinal Vicar General who prohibits the distribution of Holy Relics for private veneration to ANYONE, and only grants them to Bishops who must also be the Ordinary of a Diocese and who intend to have them exhibited only in a church, chapel, or oratory? You have a section on altar stones on your web-site. Such things are no longer used. If (and goodluck on even that) holy relics are used in the consecration of a fixed stone altar they must be so large that they are clearly an identifiable part of a human body. No longer are small relics or particles allowed, except in the case of Eastern-Rite Antimensia, which by necessity contain tiny particles in a wax-mastic compound. The Antimensium/ Antimention is considered to be a complete Altar, as well as a permit to offer the Holy Sacrifice, as I am sure you know. These regulations are clearly hostile to the traditional cultus of relics found in the Church from its very beginnings. How long would the supply of relics last if each Latin-Rite Church had a least an arm or a leg of a Saint buried in it? Of course relics are no longer required for the Roman Rite consecration of ANY altar whatsoever.

While it is very important to be sure that a relic offered for veneration is what it is supposed to be, as far as it is humanly possible to tell, I can honestly say that after more than a decade of doubt and suspicion, research and questioning, I have not been able to uncover the slightest bit of evidence that the relics distributed through _____ are in any way any more suspect than those which have been distributed by various religious orders and high-ranking ecclesiastics. This is not to say that mistakes could not have been made, or that every certificate was signed by Fr. Ferrante himself (and remember that all of Fr. Ferrantes documents used to come with a pre-printed signature on them in the same color as the rest of the text of the authentic, and many relics sent out by _____ have certificates issued by other authorities), nor do I say that it is right to distribute holy relics, especially where there may be the appearances of a commercial transaction, without the authority so to do being granted by the Holy See. I merely offer my opinion, based on the facts as I see them, that relics aquired from _____ have as much claim to authenticity as any I have ever seen.

Although I had a very busy day, it was a fruitful one. As Fate (or Divine Providence) would have it, I happened to call upon a dear soul this evening who had stashed away in a file, a copy of a letter from the late Bishop van Lierde to the director of the _____ which dealt with the question of _____ and his relics, and I am forwarding a copy to you. This letter, which was sent to numerous members of this apostolate criticized only the (relatively) high offerings requested by _____, and mentioned in a post-script that a priest would need to be a postulator general in order to be allowed to distribute relics. Nowhere does the Bishop indicate any doubts about the authenticity of the relics, in fact he says that he is only repeating what he had said in previous correspondence. It was this very letter which triggered curiosity on the part of a number of people concerning the source and genuineness of relics of St. Philomena which they had received from _____. This brings me to another point: I believe that the Canons (at least formerly) pertaining to the distibution of relics restricted actually only the

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authentication of holy relics to Ordinaries, Abbots Nullius, heads of religious orders, Postulators of Causes, Vicars General and ecclesiastics privileged via Apostolic Indult for such work, and not the simple distribution of such things. I understand that several Shrines around the country distribute first-class relics with certificates of authenticity, as does the publishing arm of one of the Maronite eparchies, and that the Byzantine-Rite (Ruthenian and Ukrainian/Russian) "antimensia" (already consecrated with Holy Chrism and relics of martyrs) were available (read "For Sale") until recently at the Russicum and several Easternrite sources in Rome, so apparently I am not the only one with such a perception.

I also understand that it is perfectly lawful to give an offering to a priest or religious going to Rome as a donation for relics to be acquired by them for the donor, and that anyone whosoever having contacts or friends in the Eternal City who are able to secure relics might legitimately receive money from another to provide for an offering for relics to be obtained for this third-party without fear of committing simony or giving scandal. These are obviously legitimate acts. What may not be permitted, as I have heard, would be the possession of a supply of relics with the intent of giving them out in exchange for donations which are kept by the distributor, rather than being forwarded to legitimate suppliers of holy relics in Rome or elsewhere. Of course, this is exactly what a number of the previously-mentioned shrines and agencies which are totally lawful and subject to the local Ordinary are in fact doing.

About ten years ago, a group known as _____ was advertising _____ relics in its publication. They asked for a \$40.00 donation, \$25.00 going to _____ as their offering to him. Quite a scandal arose, with the Bishop of the place forbidding them to do this as it was in fact the sale of relics for profit, but no one to my knowledge thought that the relics were not real. Here again, we see accusations of simony. Yet the shrines in the paragraph above also have a mark-up on their relics, making it costlier to obtain them from the shrines than from religious orders.

Dear Sir,

I must congratulate you on your information concerning the "Ferrante" relics. I got in touch years ago with the Postulator General of the Redemptorists, Father Marrazzo, and he assured me and then wrote to me that the relics I sent for his inspection could not come from Father Ferrante. Among other reasons, Father Ferrante never used the photocopy-based document, and the signature in it does not even look similar to Father Ferrante's. All these relics -Holy Cross included! - seem to be distributed from _____, by a priest whom I have contacted about the issue and confronted with my documentation with no response other than "I will check with my contacts in Rome". . . One of my secretaries called a few days ago and she was told that she could ask for ANY relic she wanted.

My congratulations, then. You are doing a work of justice and truth.
Sincerely in Christ,

- Date: Sun, 31 Jan 1999 01:36:04 -0800
- To: Tom Serafin <saintsalive@earthlink.net

Subject: [Fwd: Re. relics]

A particular person, claiming to be Father Francis Mary? (I don't remember his name) contacted the _____, via the Monks _____, discouraging them from participating in relic bashing, as it was creating a crisis of faith. Today, _____ the founder of _____, noticed YOUR name, on my list of e-mail's.....and said:

"THAT'S THE GUY THAT PRIEST ASKED ME ABOUT"he had asked her if YOU were the source for our negative information. As the forwarded e-mail shows, NO YOU ARE NOT.

- Date: Sun, 31 Jan 1999 09:34:10 -0500
- To: saintsalive@earthlink.net

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J.M.J.
Tom-

In case you ever wonder how I got involved in the _____ controversy in the first place, it was by accident. I had heard that some Traditionalist Catholics used him as a source for relics, usually because it was faster and easier than writing to Rome and waiting for two to six months (or worse), only to find out that a relic was not available. A few people groused about the offerings being high, but most folks thought of it as a \$15.00 donation for the relic, and a \$10.00 stipend of sorts for the good priest (which he is) who got these things for them. After all, \$25.00 for something that is priceless is quite a bargain. By the way, as soon as Bishop van Liede retired a few years ago and the Augustinian Order had lost control (which they had been given centuries ago) of the Vatican Reliquaries (which, if I am not mistaken, are a division of the Apostolic Sacristy), the _____ sent out a new relic inventory list with a notation that the donations for most relics had been increased to \$35.00, and those for relics of the Holy Family and the Passion of Our Blessed Lord had increased by \$25.00. We all knew that it must be harder to get Holy Relics, and sure enough people found that the new Vicar General of the Vatican, who is also Prefect of the Apostolic Sacristy, would no longer distribute relics for private veneration. This is more evidence regarding at least one of _____ sources of relics.

But I digress. Again. Ten years ago members of the _____ (which now has its own website) told their national directors _____ that they were getting relics of St. Philomena, Virgin and Martyr, from _____. Mrs. _____ requested ten of them, which she received and promptly sent to Bishop van Liede for verification of their authenticity. How could he establish this, and when? The poor man was always extremely busy, and his time very valuable. At any rate, Mrs. _____ stated in her newsletter that the relics "probably are not authentic", a direct quote attributed to Bishop van Liede, who also told her, she said, not to patronize _____. I cannot imagine Bishop van Liede's taking more time with this issue, given the crushing load of work he was under constantly.

As a result of the newsletter, a minor tempest erupted. People wondered what to do with these relics they had received, although Mrs. _____ had only addressed the issue of the relics of St. Philomena distributed by _____, and a friend sent me _____ relic list.

There was a number of mistakes on it, but only one jumped out at me. There next to the name of St. Charbel stood his mis-spelled surname, given as "Makhlorof". I have seen numerous relics of St. Charbel, and have seen his name given as "Sharbel", "Charbel", "Sarbelius" (the Latin form), but only in one place had I seen his family name given as "Makhlorof" - on the labels of relics of the Saint which were obtained from Bishop Peter Canisius J. van Lierde. Relics obtained since his beatification from the Postulator General of the Lebanese Maronite Order, the "Ufficio delle Reliquie", which was at least once located at the Vicariate of Rome there at Piazza San Giovanni in Laterano, and other sources never had this mistake. There are many Lebanese families around this part of the country, and most of the Christian ones are Maronites, with some Melkites as well, and regardless of Rite the majority have had at least a picture of St. Charbel in their homes and often places of business too, so I have been familiar with the Saint for quite a while, and have seen a number of his relics, both bone and even the blood-fluid given out before his beatification, although not as an "official" relic. As I mentioned several times, the relic of St. Charbel from _____ matched the one from Bishop van Lierde in every detail except for the case. Having found the seal of Bishop van Lierde on this particular relic, I proceeded to look at the seals on other relics from _____, and have already informed you of what I found.

I do not claim expertise in the field of lipsanography, as I believe the study of relics is called, and I possess absolutely no competency or authority in matters of church law or doctrine. I can only share with you the "detective work" I have done on behalf concerned friends and family who had been alarmed by the newsletter mentioned earlier in this e-mail.

I saw this item for sale at eBay, the world's largest personal trading community, and thought that you might be interested.

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Title of item: First Class Relic of St. Anselm
Seller:
Starts: 04/28/99 13:48:57 PDT
Ends: 05/05/99 13:48:57 PDT
Price: Currently \$227.50
To bid on the item, go to: <http://cgi.ebay.com/aw-cgi/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&item=97249065>

Item Description:

First-class relic of St. Anselm. Seal and strings intact. Comes with authentication papers. Bidding is for the reliquary, not the relic. The relic comes with the reliquary. St. Anselm was born in 1033 in Aosta in Piedmont in Italy. He stands out in Church history as a link b/n St. Augustine of Hippo and St. Thomas Aquinas. He died in 1109 and was declared a Doctor of the Church in 1720. He was a great philosopher and in art is often depicted with Our Lady appearing to him.
Buyer pays shipping: \$5 includes insurance. Money order/cashier's check: item shipped immediately. Personal check: item shipped when cleared.

I saw this item for sale at eBay, the world's largest personal trading community, and thought that you might be interested.

Title of item: RELIC 1st CLASS of PIOUS s. PII X SPECTACULAR
Seller:
Starts: 04/28/99, 07:55:35 PDT
Ends: 05/05/99, 07:55:35 PDT
Price: Currently \$177.50
To bid on the item, go to: <http://cgi.ebay.com/aw-cgi/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&item=97137872>

Item Description:

1st CLASS RELIC OF POPE PIOUS X Spectacular case and relic from the Vatican in the 50s. Relic is removable. All in 1st class condition. Winner contacts me within three days of close of the auction and pays actual shipping charges. Money orders Please, allow seven days for personal checks to clear. Vist my other sights email me wuth questins or requests. Thanks,

I saw this item for sale at eBay, the world's largest personal trading community, and thought that you might be interested.

Title of item: CRUCIFIX holds 1st class RELICS "PASSIONIST"
Seller:
Starts: 04/28/99, 12:41:34 PDT
Ends: 05/05/99, 12:41:34 PDT
Price: Currently \$207.50
To bid on the item, go to: <http://cgi.ebay.com/aw-cgi/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&item=97229095>

Item Description:

1st Class Relics of the PASSIONIST SAINTS CRUCIFIX OPENS TO REVEAL 1st CLASS RELICS OF St GABRIEL POSSENTI of the sowerfull virgin, St VINCENT STRAMBI @ St PAUL of the

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CROSS.excellent condition, reserve to protect my investment. Winner contacts me within three days of close of the auction and pays actual shipping charges. Money orders Please, allow seven days for personal checks to clear. Vist my other sights email me wuth questins or requests. Thanks, _____

In the past, I would receive a nice response to the effect "I was not aware, I'll look into it" or "I canceled the auction and notified eBay that I was not aware of their prohibition". Lately (probably the last 10), They haven't bothered to respond or remove the auction. It appears that people have watched the new policy and realize there is no penalty for violating it. People like _____ continue to auction 1st Class relics despite the ban. How disappointing after all of our work and diligence.

Dear Tom,

I couldn't agree with you more on the 1st Class nature of the True Cross Relics. I feel, however, that we should first be appreciative of _____ gestures. Let us get a strong position on "human remains" and then we can work on others. I think this is a great step in the right direction. I don't, however, understand, why we are having these converstaions with him in the first place. I thought 6.2 was clear on these matters. In the 3 months since it has gone into effect, the enforcement has been lax. Perhaps now we will get some serious attention.

My concentration now is on Amazon.com. Unfortunately, they have stopped responding o my emails. I have been very polite and concise and I believe they are now huddling trying to figure this one out. Every time they came up with a "sly" response, I had some retort. Perhaps they are working on this with their superiors and / or legal department. What a blemish on a wholesome company like Amazon. They do not allow pornography, which, unfortunately, is legal, yet they do allow the auctioning of Relics with human remains.

How undignified it sounds to me - having to push the "human remains" aspect of the Relics of Our Faith. But, in order to get the results, we have to do what we must.

Thanks for your continued support - a "good job" here and there goes a long way. In my business, I am the "top dog" and as such, never hear from anyone how I'm doing. I have to figure that out for myself (my CPA helps). It is nice to hear some positive response from time to time - else one cannot know if they are moving forward, backward, or laterally.

I just sent a strong email to ebay. _____ just continues to flaunt 6.2. I have sent about 12 emails to ebay on violations since my return from vacation, but they don't even bother to cancel auctions any more, never mind penalize the sellers. Is there anything you can do?

Title of item: [+] Incredible Relic Cross, Antique, Beautiful

Seller:

Starts: 04/30/99 17:36:12 PDT

Ends: 05/07/99 17:36:12 PDT

Price: Currently \$485.00

To bid on the item, go to:

Item Description:

An absolutely gorgeous relic cross, antique, with 11 great relics inside, consisting of the following: St. Agnes, St. Vincent, St. Francis, St. Crescenti, St. Achatius, St. Aloysius, St. Valentine, S. Victoria, St. Anthony, St. Cronelius, St. Pontianus, and the Agnus Dei in the center. Cross hinges at the top,

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opens like a ladder, not the slide type. Incredible detail work inside surrounding the relics. Cross total length is about 5". +\$6.50 ship/ins, visa/master ok

Here's the latest response. At least it sounds like they are listening.

Return-Path: <Support@eBay.com

- Date: Thu, 06 May 1999 08:44:23 -0700

- To:

Subject: Re: Interesting item on eBay web site item#97229095: CRUCIFIX holds
1st class RELICS "PASSIONIST"

From: eBay Customer Support <Support@eBay.com

Reply-To: eBay Customer Support <Support@eBay.com

Hello,

Thank you for contacting us about your concern in this situation.

The auctions reported are still being reviewed. Although we may not be able to keep you abreast of our actions, we pledge to thoroughly investigate the information you have provided. We appreciate your concern in helping to keep eBay a safe and reputable forum in which to conduct business.

Please let us know if we can be of further assistance.

Regards,

eBay Customer Support

- **Original message follows:**

This violation of section 6.2 was reported many days ago yet the auction is still active. Please do something.

Title of item: CRUCIFIX holds 1st class RELICS "PASSIONIST"

Seller:

Starts: 04/28/99, 12:41:34 PDT

Ends: 05/05/99, 12:41:34 PDT

Price: Currently \$212.50

To bid on the item, go to:

<http://cgi.ebay.com/aw-cgi/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&item=97229095>

Item Description:

1st Class Relics of the PASSIONIST SAINTS CRUCIFIX OPENS TO REVEAL 1st CLASS RELICS OF St GABRIEL POSSENTI of the sowerfull virgin, St VINCENT STRAMBI & St PAUL of the CROSS.excellent condition, reserve to protect my investment. Winner contacts me within three days of close of the auction and pays actual shipping charges. Money orders Please, allow seven days for personal checks to clear.Vist my other sights email me wuth questins or requests. Thanks, _____ On 04/28/99 at 16:30:50 PDT

Tom,

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Here's a response to my email to Amazon. I can't believe they responded in 1 day. I have a feeling they will be flexible and will come over to our side on this issue.

Thank you so much for your prompt reply to my email. Although I do not know if the selling of Human Body Parts is illegal, I would think that all of you at Amazon.com would have a problem with allowing people to sell Human Remains. 1st Class Relics are the remains of human bodies. The listing I referenced even clarifies what type of 1st Class Relic he is selling Ex Ossibus, which he translates "of the bone". So, what he is offering is a piece of the bone of St. Thomas.

Canon Law 1190 (I believe that is the section) strictly prohibits the selling of such Relics. It is quoted as a sinful act of Simony. Though I am not an expert in the field, I have enjoyed learning more about Relics and have found that selling Relics is a serious offense in the Christian Community (Billions strong). There is a web page you should read about the subject that discusses what is happening today:

http://home.earthlink.net/~saintsalive/relics_for_sale.html

There is a group of people about 1,000 strong who are members of the ICHR (International Crusade for Holy Relics). These are the people who are working around the globe to educate people on what Relics are and how to preserve and protect them. One of the problems Christians have with the selling of Relics, especially through anonymous auctions, is that Holy Relics have been found to be purchased for all sorts of desecration including Satanic Rituals.

eBay fully researched the issue of Relics and did create a prohibition for all of the above reasons. The problem was not limited to Christian Relics. There were people selling bones of american indians, bones of ancient Africans in Reliquaries, etc. I can't so much blame the buyers as what Christian wouldn't like to have a memorial of their favorite saint. For them, there are proper channels to acquire a Relic (through their Priest Bishop). Another concern is that Relics have historically been distributed for a nominal charge of say \$15 from the Shrine of a Saint. The charge is to cover the cost of the Reliquary / Theca that the Relic is sealed in, the cost of paper work, and shipping. These exact Relics are then listed at sites like yours and sell for \$200 or more. Again, I can't say it is illegal to allow such action, but it is immoral. The bottom line became that eBay did not want to offend Billions of Christians, nor be involved in the selling of Human Body Remains. Below you will find eBay's text:

From ebay user's agreement, downloaded 2/17/99

6.2 Your Information and the sale of your item(s) on eBay: (a) shall not be fraudulent or involve the sale of counterfeit or stolen items; (b) shall not infringe any third party's copyright, patent, trademark, trade secret or other proprietary rights or rights of publicity or privacy; (c) shall not violate any law, statute, ordinance or regulation (including without limitation those governing export control, consumer protection, unfair competition, antidiscrimination or false advertising); (d) shall not be defamatory, trade libelous, unlawfully threatening or unlawfully harassing; (e) shall not be obscene or contain child pornography or, if otherwise harmful to minors, shall be posted only in the Erotica, Adults Only section and shall be distributed only to people legally permitted to receive such content; (f) shall not contain any viruses, Trojan horses, worms, time bombs, cancelbots or other computer programming routines that are intended to damage, detrimentally interfere with, surreptitiously intercept or expropriate any system, data or personal information; and (g) shall not link directly to or include descriptions of goods or services that: (i) are identical to other items you have up for auction but are priced lower than your auction item's reserve or minimum bid amount; (ii) are concurrently listed for auction on a web site other than eBay's; or (iii) you do not have a right to link to or include. Furthermore, you may not post on our site or sell through our site any: (x) item that, by paying to us the listing fee or the final value fee, could cause us to violate any applicable law, statute, ordinance or regulation, or (y) live animals, human beings or body parts (relics, skulls, human remains or other parts), soiled garments, bulk email lists, switchblades and automatic weapons such as AK-47s.

- **Your original email:**

Dear _____,

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International Crusade for Holy Relics – Internal Report - Members Only

Thanks for writing to Amazon.com and bringing this item to our attention. I have referenced your email to our Sentinel division but we were unable to find anything specifically illegal in the Auction.

We have great respect for your concerns. One of our goals as an auction forum, however, is to offer our customers the ability to sell a wide variety of items on our site. It is unfortunate but inevitable that a few items may offend some of our customers.

We hope you will understand that we want to be an open forum for almost everything people wish to buy and sell; this does include items which some people dislike.

Currently the following items may NOT be listed for auction on our website:

- * Pornography (including MPA rated X, home porn, and hard core material)
- * Offensive material (including hate literature)
- * Firearms and ammunition (including weapons with gunpowder)
- * Living creatures
- * Homemade alcoholic beverages
- * Copyright-protected items
- * Stolen goods
- * Any item whose sale is prohibited by any applicable law

If you can direct us to a specific secular law regarding the illegality of this item, or furnish some manner of evidence that the relic may be stolen, please submit that to Sentinel@amazon.com. If you have any further feedback, please feel free to write us with your suggestions. Thank you for your interest in Amazon.com Auctions.

Best regards,

Title of item: Relic or Reliquary *LOOK!!!*

Seller:

Starts: 05/07/99, 08:17:08 PDT

Ends: 05/17/99, 08:17:08 PDT

Price: Starts at \$1.00

To bid on the item, go to: <http://cgi.ebay.com/aw-cgi/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&item=101065061>

I am a Catholic Seminarian, and I have seen many relics for sale here on ebay.com. I have seen and possess many relics and there is no doubt in my mind that many of the relics posted on ebay are NOT authentic. Often the seals are not authentic and the Latin in the reliquary itself is incorrect! Furthermore, for all of you who are bidding on or are selling these items and are Catholic, it is strictly against Canon Law to buy or sell relics. Canon # 1220 reads: "It is strictly forbidden to buy or sell sacred relics" In doing so weather you are Catholic or not you are USING the Church and it's faithful to make money for yourself! If you are buying these relics because you have a special devotion to the saints, What do you think the saints would say about your spending hundreds or in some cases thousands of dollars on their relics??? I think that they would say that you missed the point altogether!

Just some information and some thoughts....do with it what you will...

Thank You and may God richly bless you!

_____ Seminary

- From:
 - To:
 - Subject: Re: amazon.com
- Date: Sat, 8 May 1999 20:06:35 -0700

Hi _____:

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International Crusade for Holy Relics – Internal Report - Members Only

Thanks, but I could care less about the US Attorney on this matter. I'm sure he has other more important things to do than that. Guess he would have to arrest a couple of priests that I know very well that sold me some too. I would love to know the "other laws" that apply. I know a lot of nuns, priests, brothers etc. that are going to jail.

Is that the only auction "that the word is on the street about me" they found out. They better get busy and look at some more auctions, I guess the "ICFHR" or whatever the symbol is aren't writing enough letters, _____ and the rest of them. They are probably the same organization that's after _____ . A self-made righteous group (in their own minds) that has no guidelines from Rome.

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International Crusade for Holy Relics – Internal Report - Members Only

-----Original Message-----

- From:
 - To:
 - Date: Saturday, May 08, 1999 10:19 AM
- Subject: amazon.com

Hi _____,

Just thought I would let you know that the word is on the street that you are now selling 1st Class Relics at amazon.com since eBay now prohibits the act. I also heard there is an action brewing involving the US Attorney General and I think it has something to do with the "sale of human body parts / remains" - not sure. As we both know, Canon Law is non-binding on the US Constitution, but there are other laws that may apply. Just thought you would like to know so you can plan accordingly.

Good luck,

_____+

- Date: Sun, 9 May 1999 07:23:05 EDT
 - Subject: Fwd: amazon.com
- To: saintsalive@earthlink.net

Tom,

I tracked down _____ through amazon.com and he is the person auctioning 1st Class Relics there. I sent a neutral email saying that basically "the word on the street was that he was selling 1st Class Relics through amazon.com now". I also suggested that there was a new push to do something about the matter of Relic selling on the internet. You can see he is not very concerned. The interesting part of his email has to do with his hint at "many" other internet auction sites where Relics are sold. I'll try to track them down.

In my last email to amazon.com, I tried a new tactic in explaining why it was "wrong" to allow the auctions. Other than violating Canon Law, there must be something in US law prohibiting the sale of "Human Remains". I believe that may be how eBay created their prohibition. With tens of millions of Catholics in the country, can we find a few attorneys who would research this for us without charging? Perhaps we can create a legal argument. The problem I see there is that one would argue that they are using the "Human Remains" for legitimate Christian reverence.

Hi,

I've been working with _____ in your legal department on the matter of Relics. You should note that it is not just the description of "1st Class" that has been agreed upon. Any 1st Class Relic (containing human remains such as bone, flesh, etc.) should be prohibited. This particular auction is a "bone Relic" and is described as such in the body of the description. It does not state 1st Class or "bone" in the title. You will need to dig a little deeper and you will see.

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International Crusade for Holy Relics – Internal Report - Members Only

- From: auction-support@amazon.com
 - Date: Fri, 14 May 1999 10:09:23 -0700 (PDT)
 - To:
- Subject: Your Amazon.com Auction Inquiry

Hello Sir,

And thank you for taking the time to send us your thoughts.

It is policy not to allow anyone to sell items that are found to be offensive. This can include, but is definitely not limited to, human remains. I've searched our site for relics of St. Thomas Aquinas and St. John Vianney. The items I did find were actually documents--one was a page from a book printed in 1497 and the other was some sort of certificate printed in 1981.

I've forwarded your message on to the appropriate department so that they may view your comments. Thank you once again for taking the time to write in with your thoughts.

Regards,

Amazon.com
Earth's Biggest Selection
<http://www.amazon.com/>

- Subject: Sale of Relics on Amazon
 - From:
 - To: auction-support@amazon.com
- Date: Fri, 14 May 1999 16:31:12 +0100

Dear Support Team,

I have noticed that some people have recently been posting relics of saints for auction on Amazon.com, for example relics of St. Thomas Aquinas and St. John Vianney. I hope you will not mind me making some comments about this.

As you have probably become aware, relics are objects which are held in great veneration and respect by Christians. Part of that respect consists of the unvarying principle that, like all spiritual gifts, relics should never be sold. In fact, when relics do appear outside their proper context of religious veneration - for example in an auction - this is something which causes offence and distress to many Christian people.

For comparison, I may draw a parallel with other issues. Relics are human remains - actual parts of human bodies - and Christians are not the only people to be concerned about what happens to them. Native American, Jewish and Aborigine communities (for example) have very strong views on the respect that should be accorded to human remains and would certainly be outraged if any parts of the bodies of their own illustrious dead were to appear for auction on the internet.

I realise of course that not everyone will share these beliefs and that you as a company are naturally committed to serving a full range of customers of all sorts of beliefs and backgrounds. I may say without hesitation that I fully support a tolerant, diverse, inclusive society where anyone may express their beliefs without prejudice. However, it is an essential part of being a tolerant society that allowance is made

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International Crusade for Holy Relics – Internal Report - Members Only

for not offending the beliefs of different communities. It is such allowance and mutual forbearance that allows us to build up a strong and cohesive society.

I do hope you will consider these points and implement a policy at Amazon to prohibit the sale of human remains. A policy phrased in general terms in this way will have the advantage of assuring the other communities referred to above, as well as Christians concerned about relics. Ebay have recently implemented such a policy after listening to arguments from concerned groups, and now prohibit the sale of human remains.

Please do contact me if you would like to discuss this matter further or ask me any questions.

With many thanks for your attention,

Yours sincerely,

Romford, England

- From: auction-support@amazon.com
 - Date: Mon, 17 May 1999 03:41:44 -0700 (PDT)
- To:
Subject: Your Amazon.com Auction Inquiry

Dear _____,

Thank you for writing to Amazon.com Auctions to bring this to our attention. We will report this item to our Sentinel group for immediate investigation. We appreciate your vigilance in this matter. Please let us know if you have any further questions or concerns.

Best regards,

Amazon.com
<http://www.amazon.com/>
Earth's Biggest Selection

- Subject: Re: Your Amazon.com Auction Inquiry
 - From:
 - To: auction-support@amazon.com
- Date: Mon, 17 May 1999 11:10:14 +0100

Dear Support team,

Further to my comments about the sale of relics on Amazon.com, there has now appeared an item listed as:

[+] Altar Stone, Marble, Antique, Contains Relics of Martyrs from the 3rd Century

May I please point out that the "relics" referred to are actual human remains (pieces of bone), and moreover, an Altar stone is a sacred object, consecrated by a bishop for the sole purpose of religious worship. According to Christian belief the consecrated Altar represents Christ Himself. Such a thing should never be sold. I wish to protest very strongly at the appearance of this sacred object for sale in your auction forum.

May I also please point out that the St. John Vianney relic auction I mentioned earlier is still listed, and that this has been joined by another listed as "First Class Relic, St. Dominic, Ex Ossibus". This also is a piece of human bone.

May I please urge you to take action as soon as possible to remove these items and prevent any other relic (human remains) sales on Amazon.com.

Yours sincerely,

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International Crusade for Holy Relics – Internal Report - Members Only

Romford, England

- From: auction-support@amazon.com
- Date: Tue, 18 May 1999 20:00:32 -0700 (PDT)
- To:

Subject: Your Amazon.com Auction Inquiry

Dear _____,

Thank you again for writing to us.

I have conferred with our Sentinel Group and, while we cannot discuss the details of this particular investigation, I did want to let you know that, in general, the sale of relics is not prohibited on our site at this time. As you may know, the following items may NOT be listed for auction on our website:

- * *Pornography (including MPA rated X, home porn, and hard core material)*
- * *Offensive material (including hate literature)*
- * *Firearms and ammunition (including weapons with gunpowder)*
- * *Living creatures*
- * *Homemade alcoholic beverages*
- * *Stolen goods*
- * *Items that infringe on another party's copyright, patent, trademark or other proprietary right, including rights of publicity and privacy*
- * *Any item whose sale is prohibited by any applicable law*

Please know that we respect your thoughts on these items, _____, and I can appreciate your concern. I have therefore passed your comments to the appropriate people. Do let us know if we can be of further assistance, and thank you for your interest in our site.

Best regards,

<http://www.amazon.com/>
Earth's Biggest Selection

- From: auction-support@amazon.com
- Date: Tue, 18 May 1999 11:45:36 -0700 (PDT)

To:

Subject: Your Amazon.com Auction Inquiry

Dear _____,

Thanks for writing to us at Amazon.com Auctions.

We appreciate your bringing this matter to our attention, and for sending this additional information. I can assure you that we are currently investigating your concern and we will take appropriate action if necessary.

Please note that we are not able to provide the results of our investigation.

Please don't hesitate to contact us should you have any further questions, and thanks for participating in Amazon.com Auctions!

Best regards,

-
- Subject: Re: Your Amazon.com Auction Inquiry
 - From:
To: auction-support@amazon.com
Date: Tue, 18 May 1999 11:19:18 +0100

At 03:41 17/05/99 -0700, you wrote:

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International Crusade for Holy Relics – Internal Report - Members Only

Dear _____,

Thank you for writing to Amazon.com Auctions to bring this to our attention. We will report this item to our Sentinel group for immediate investigation.

We appreciate your vigilance in this matter. Please let us know if you have any further questions or concerns.

Dear _____,

Thank you for your prompt reply yesterday. Unfortunately the items I mentioned are still listed and have now been joined by a reliquary crucifix containing six first class relics (I must point out again these are human remains). This is on offer for a minimum bid of 1200 dollars. I have one of these myself that I obtained from the Passionist sisters in Rome for a donation of 7 dollars (yes, seven) a few years ago. I presume that this seller obtained this one in the same way and now is trying to make a massive profit out of selling a sacred item, the sale of which is forbidden by the Religious order that distributes them at cost price (this order is vowed to poverty and charitable works, they would be horrified by this).

The certificate that accompanies the relics states clearly the "conditions of use" (albeit in Latin). Please could you let me know what action you propose to take about these sales which are still continuing in spite of your investigation.

Regards,

Romford, England

- From: auction-support@amazon.com
 - Date: Thu, 20 May 1999 03:26:17 -0700 (PDT)
- To:
Subject: Your Amazon.com Auction Inquiry
from-address: auction-support@amazon.com

Dear _____,

Thank you again for writing to us.

I'm sorry to hear of your disappointment in our response.

You are correct in that we have made certain limitations on the items that we will allow to be sold on our Auction site.

Many of the items we do prohibit involve complex legal and business issues. For example, while it is not illegal to sell guns in the U.S., it is illegal for any person other than a federally-licensed dealer or collector to transport into or receive in the state where he resides any firearm purchased or otherwise obtained by such person outside that state, unless it was obtained in person, from a licensed dealer, and the

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purchase and possession of the firearm do not violate the laws of either state (Section 922 of title 18, United States Code).

While we recognize that there are some exemptions and limitations in the law, it would impose a substantial burden on Amazon.com to ensure that neither it nor its subscribers assisted in an illegal gun sale.

As you may appreciate, we did want to create a safe and fun environment for our community members. In order to do this, we established guidelines appropriate to this goal. Please know that there were many factors involved in deciding what items we would or would not allow on our Auction site.

That said, however, I do hope you know that your concerns are important to us, and we do respect your feelings on this matter. I am very sorry if our decision is in any way offensive to you. I have passed this message as well to the appropriate people.

We hope you will continue to be a member of our Auction community, but we will certainly respect your decision should you decide that this site is not in your best interest.

Thank you again for participating in Amazon.com Auctions!

Best regards,

Amazon.com
<http://www.amazon.com/>
Earth's Biggest Selection

- Subject: Re: Your Amazon.com Auction Inquiry
 - From:
 - To: auction-support@amazon.com
- Date: Thu, 20 May 1999 10:21:25 +0100

Dear _____,

Thank you for your reply.

I have to say that I am very disappointed by Amazon's response to this issue. I find it difficult to reconcile your stated list of prohibitions with the fact that you refuse to prohibit the sale of human remains. For example, it is not illegal (as I understand it) to sell pornography, hate literature or firearms in the United States - and yet you prohibit the sale of such items on Amazon. Quite rightly, I hasten to add. But why do you do this? Presumably, I suppose, because the sale of these items is controversial or offensive to a significant section of the community. So why does the same consideration not apply to the sale of human remains?

I wish I could help you to understand just how offensive the sale of the remains of saints is to the Christian community. You have only to consider the tireless and passionate campaigns of the Native American community to have the remains of their dead returned to them in order to comply with their traditions and religious beliefs. It's a very similar case with relics of saints. This is something about which people feel very strongly indeed.

Ebay have understood this and now prohibit the sale of human remains. I must urge you to follow their example, and I have to inform you that I and many like me will not feel able to use Amazon.com until you change your position on this issue. Ebay, as I see it, are acting more responsibly than Amazon so if I require any auction services I will go to them.

I will however continue to monitor sales on Amazon and complain when it is appropriate until you change your policy.

I am sorry to have to write to you yet again criticising Amazon's position, but I hope this will help you to understand the gravity of this issue.

Yours sincerely,

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International Crusade for Holy Relics – Internal Report - Members Only

Romford, England.

At 20:00 18/05/99 -0700, you wrote:

Dear _____,

Thank you again for writing to us.

I have conferred with our Sentinel Group and, while we cannot discuss the details of this particular investigation, I did want to let you know that, in general, the sale of relics is not prohibited on our site at this time. As you may know, the following items may NOT be listed for auction on our website:

- * Pornography (including MPA rated X, home porn, and hard core material)
- * Offensive material (including hate literature)
- * Firearms and ammunition (including weapons with gunpowder)
- * Living creatures
- * Homemade alcoholic beverages
- * Stolen goods
- * Items that infringe on another party's copyright, patent, trademark or other proprietary right, including rights of publicity and privacy
- * Any item whose sale is prohibited by any applicable law

Please know that we respect your thoughts on these items, Matthew, and I can appreciate your concern. I have therefore passed your comments to the appropriate people.

Do let us know if we can be of further assistance, and thank you for your interest in our site.

Best regards,

Amazon.com
<http://www.amazon.com/>
Earth's Biggest Selection

• **Subject: Re: Your Amazon.com Auction Inquiry**

From:

To: auction-support@amazon.com

Date: Fri, 21 May 1999 14:20:38 +0100

Dear _____,

Thank you for your reply. Since Amazon's motivation in considering which items to prohibit on Amazon Auctions is "complex legal and business issues", and since other considerations do not seem to be sufficient for you, you may wish to consider the following points which I feel have a legal bearing on the matter of selling human remains in general and Christian relics in particular.

Firstly, the sale of a relic contravenes the "conditions of use" imposed on the person who accepted it. A relic of St. John Vianney was recently sold on Amazon with the accompanying certificate which was

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International Crusade for Holy Relics – Internal Report - Members Only

clearly photographed and shown with the relic. The certificate was in Latin, the following is an exact translation:

"The Vicar General of Our Most Holy Lord the Pope, Ordinary of the Roman Curia and District, etc. To all and each one reading the present letter, we make known and witness, to the glory of God and the veneration of His Saints, that we have recognised these particles from the flesh of Saint John Vianney, Confessor, and have put them very reverently in a metallic container of round form, well-closed, outfitted with a red ribbon and signed with our signature (seal), and have handed them over with the permission to keep them with the owner and to expose them for public veneration, according to the norm of canon law."

The conditions stated in this document are of course accepted by the person who takes possession of it, in particular "permission to keep them with the owner and to expose them for public veneration, according to the norm of canon law". This makes the person accepting the relic party to a contract to use the relic in accordance with the stated permission. Canon law, which is made a condition of this contract, of course forbids the sale of relics. Violation of this contract could well be actionable though the Civil Courts. Would Amazon care to be cited in such a case?

Secondly, I am sure there must be a history of case law in the US about the ownership of human remains. In my newspaper yesterday there was a report of the remains of 2000 Native Americans being handed over to their tribe for proper burial in New Mexico. These bones were formerly kept at Harvard University. I presume that there is a legal history behind this case and that there are on record judgements and interpretations of the law on claims of ownership of human remains. I suggest it would be in Amazon's best interests to investigate these cases to see whether your permission to sell relics on your site puts you in violation of any state or federal laws regarding ownership or sale of human remains.

Thirdly, when relics appear for sale on Amazon the minimum bids are usually extortionate and the prices eventually reached are astronomical, sometimes in excess of 1000 dollars. The vendors have obtained these relics from the Vicariate in Rome or from religious orders for donations of around 15 dollars, a fact they choose not to mention in their listings. I don't know about US law but UK law is very clear about this. In the UK it is illegal to sell an item at a price that is held to be unfairly higher than the price for which it can be obtained elsewhere. Selling a relic for 1000 dollars that can be obtained elsewhere for 15 dollars would be a clear case of this. Trading Standards Officers frequently prosecute traders for violations of this law. Two points arise out of this. Again, it would be in Amazon's best interests to find out whether a similar law exists in the US. Also, if in monitoring Amazon.com and Amazon.co.uk I discover a relic being auctioned geographically in the UK for an unfair price, I have to tell you that I will immediately report the matter to the appropriate UK authorities.

I hope you will draw these points to the attention of your legal department as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Romford, England.

- **At 03:26 20/05/99 -0700, you wrote:**

Dear _____,

Thank you again for writing to us.

I'm sorry to hear of your disappointment in our response.

You are correct in that we have made certain limitations on the items that we will allow to be sold on our Auction site.

Many of the items we do prohibit involve complex legal and business issues. For example, while it is not illegal to sell guns in the U.S., it is illegal for any person other than a federally-licensed dealer or collector to transport into or receive in the state where he resides any firearm purchased or otherwise obtained by such person outside that state, unless it was obtained in person, from a licensed dealer, and the

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purchase and possession of the firearm do not violate the laws of either state (Section 922 of title 18, United States Code).

While we recognize that there are some exemptions and limitations in the law, it would impose a substantial burden on Amazon.com to ensure that neither it nor its subscribers assisted in an illegal gun sale.

As you may appreciate, we did want to create a safe and fun environment for our community members. In order to do this, we established guidelines appropriate to this goal. Please know that there were many factors involved in deciding what items we would or would not allow on our Auction site.

That said, however, I do hope you know that your concerns are important to us, and we do respect your feelings on this matter. I am very sorry if our decision is in any way offensive to you. I have passed this message as well to the appropriate people.

We hope you will continue to be a member of our Auction community, but we will certainly respect your decision should you decide that this site is not in your best interest.

Thank you again for participating in Amazon.com Auctions!

Best regards, _____

---Original Message-----

- From:
- Sent: Saturday, May 22, 1999 6:42 AM

To:
Subject: Re: Prohibited Items at eBay

Dear _____,

Thank you so much for responding. I was getting the feeling that nobody over there cared. I've been a good customer of eBay and have enjoyed my purchases and contacts.

I honestly do not understand the message in your email. It sounds like you are reconsidering the prohibition you put into place some 3 months ago regarding "human remains" Relics. If so, this is decidedly a major step backwards. You state that the "bone necklace" may be a problem if it is human, yet you do not afford the same concern about Relics. My position would be that any human remains, be they bones, skin, flesh, blood, ash, or even hair, should be afforded the same protection. I've been trying to help people understand why it is "wrong" to sell such Relics by drawing a comparison to something they may be familiar with. Consider what eBay or the general public's reaction would be to a listing that stated "Grandma's ashes in a decorative brass urn for Sale!". After the chuckling subsides, a few thoughts come to mind. The ash remains of a loved one is usually placed in some form of vessel and then reverently displayed (or hidden). One would never think about selling such an item at eBay. Yet, here we have a similar form of human remains, of our beloved sisters and brothers, auctioned off at eBay like some common goods. These are historically important people who have typically died for their beliefs. And unscrupulous speculators are abusing the innocent masses by charging high prices for something they have no right to sell. I cannot blame the consumers - consider the typical Christian finding a listing and reading with hunger about their favorite Saint. They have no idea about what they are getting into.

Here's another comment I've made several times to eBay over the months. I think it is very wrong for the Relic speculators to take such advantage of the consumers. _____, who has also been helping eBay see the light on this issue, outlined that such practices are illegal in England and may be illegal here in the U.S. The issue revolves around the fact that the Shrines that distribute such Relics are passing them on for a minimal donation that covers the cost of the small Reliquary or Theca. I know that the Shrine of St. John Vianney distributes his Relics for a donation of \$15 (not even enough to cover the overhead). The reason they do this is to "spread the faith" and not for people to turn them over for upwards of \$1,300 (which I saw happen at Amazon.com). Pursuant to _____ translation of the Authentication Documents for such Relics, which I will forward to you shortly, the terms and conditions of receipt of a Relic are clear. It is a violation of the terms to sell a Relic. Some sellers have tried to get around this by stating "you are bidding on the Theca / Reliquary, the Relic is a gift". That argument simply

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does not hold water. Who would pay \$1,000 for a base-metal 1" round container with a market value of about \$5?

Another tactic I've seen used by the Relic sellers is to state "I'm not sure of the material in the Relic", yet state that they believe it is bone in an email. There was one auction just a few days ago that clearly showed a 1st Class (bone) Relic of St. Pope Pius X [105533117 Reliquary) POPE PIUS X RELIC]. Take a look at the photograph. That is clearly (for those in the know) a 1st Class Relic. The keys are: Highly decorated Theca, red silk sealed with red wax, registration number, and date. Only 1st Class Relics are prepared that way.

I could go on for hours about this subject, but believe you have enough here to justify a continuation of the prohibition on at least "human remains" Relics. Unfortunately, eBay's enforcement of section 6.2 has been lacking.

Also, the idea of the "filter" should not cause you any difficulties. I'm not looking for the program to automatically prohibit such listings, but rather to have a pop-up explain that certain types of Relics are prohibited. So, somebody listing an old arrow head could continue with the listing, where the Relic seller should hopefully pause and back-out of the listing.

Tom,

What good news. I answered him immediately (copy coming) so that not a moment would go by without a reply. Please check my facts and follow up with _____. I pray that I did the right thing by answering before checking with you.

-----Original Message-----

- From:
- Sent: Saturday, May 22, 1999 4:00 PM

To:
Subject: Re: Prohibited Items at eBay

_____,

Thanks for your attention in this matter. It is so refreshing to be able to "connect" with a person and not just any "support" person. I very much appreciate the time and effort you are putting into our issue. As Tom may have mentioned, the 1,200 world-wide members of the ICHR, as well as the Billion or so Catholics (not to mention a few Billion more Christians and Jews, who also revere the dead), may find some comfort in the efforts of eBay.

Here are a few comments:

I can understand the difficulty with creating a pop-up (I used to be a DP consultant in a previous career). More lines of code that every user would have to go through - slows the process down by milliseconds. I suppose the true problem lies in that nobody is asked or required to read the terms and conditions of using eBay before they do. So, unless somebody is out there watching, every single user goes about their business, listing whatever they want. This can apply to the "human remains Relics", "human" bone necklaces, firearms, high-capacity clips for automatic weapons, fireworks, bomb making material, etc.

I can see your problem and I'm sure eBay has the finest systems people, as well as capable programmers. I'm sure you would love to do away with the need to have violations of your user's agreement reported. Fortunately, there are watchdogs out there, helping to keep the rules enforced. One of the problems is that Support has not been doing anything to enforce the restrictions. I know that every "human remains" Relic that is listed, is reported several times to Support, yet nothing is done. Perhaps eBay should have an "enforcement@ebay.com" arm that deals only with prohibited items so they may be acted on quickly. How unfortunate it would be if somebody listed a prohibited firearm and the item was "up" for

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several days. In that time, the seller acquired several email addresses. The auction ends, but the seller still finds a few interested parties. The firearm gets sold, then is used to harm or kill somebody.

I am very happy to hear that you do not intend to back out of eBay's earlier commitment to have "human remains Relics" prohibited within 6.2. I am also very eager to be part of the solution, and not just a complainer. Please do continue to make contact with me and I am at your disposal in this matter.

Thank you,

----Original Message-----

- From:
- Sent: Saturday, May 22, 1999 4:03 PM
- To: _____@eBay.COM
- Subject: Current Auctions

_____,

I have to ask what is to be done with the current auctions that clearly list "bone Relic" in the description? There are several, and the sellers are getting bolder by the day. After being advised that such items are a violation of 6.2 and being given a copy of your restriction, they (sellers) have been waiting to see if anything is done. If nothing is, then I would anticipate they will be back with double the listings.

Thanks,

- From:
 - To:
 - Subject: RE: Prohibited Items at eBay
- Date: Sat, 22 May 1999 08:49:59 -0700

_____,

Thanks for the note. eBay at this point has no specific policy on "relics." We do prohibit the sale "human body parts" and Native American grave related items (these are covered by a separate federal law). The intent behind these policies was to prevent grave robbing, or the sale of organs on the site, all of which violate the law.

I'm looking at the relics issue now, which is slightly different. I was a federal prosecutor for 12 years, and can tell you that the sale of these items does not violate US law. You suggest that some relics are sold or given with certain terms, like a limited license. I've checked around, though, and am pretty confident that most relics are sold or given away without any restrictions and they are being resold in venues like antique stores all across the world. eBay, cannot be in the position of figuring out what items have limited licenses that are enforceable, and eBay cannot enforce the terms of contracts between other parties we simply don't know and can't keep track of all the licenses in the world. Rather, the party who feels that the license has been violated must take action to enforce the contract a number of companies watch sales on our site and do that now. And I don't feel as though the masses are being abused individuals are capable of making intelligent decisions about how much they want to pay for a particular item, and eBay can't step in and stop people from paying what a particular item is worth to them.

That said, I'm uncomfortable about the sale of human body parts on eBay (even a small bit of hair or bone), and will be putting together some information about this issue shortly I expect that we will probably ban the sale (or gift in connection with the sale) of these items, and will probably put some information on the site about it. I'm not sold on the pop up screen idea, since most items with the term "relic" have nothing to do with religious items. If we used pop up screens with terms that might involve some problem area, we'd have pop up screens all over the site, making it difficult for anyone to get around

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the site. Try typing in "gun," for example, and see how many items come up...none of them firearms. Anyway, thanks for your concern in this area -- I will be looking at this area and dealing with at least the human remains relics soon.

- To: sentinel@amazon.com
- Subject: Relics

Date: Sun, 23 May 1999 21:14:59 EDT
From:

Below is a description of a new Relic being offered at Amazon. Within it you will find several clues that the seller is aware he is violating both Canon Law as well as "Secular Law". The terms and conditions listed on the Authentication documents always state that the bearer must abide by Canon Law and may not "sell" the Relic. This is a point that has been making with you folks. Here's the description, with the clues high lighted:

Relic, 1st Cl. St. M.Depores, Papers

Seller: reliquary: (2)

Item Description

Details :

Theca (reliquary) containing a 1st class relic "ossibus" part of the bone, of St. Martin De Porres, 1579-1639, gifted with supernatural gifts, among them bilocation and aerial flights. He is the patron Saint of Interracial justice. Papers are SS.mi Domini Nostri Papae Vicarius Generalis, Oct., 1984, constitutes private as well as public veneration with papers. You are bidding on the theca, the relic and papers are a gift.

First, the seller is suggesting that if you buy this item, you may receive "supernatural gifts". Secondly, the seller states that the papers... constitute private as well as public veneration... This suggests that the documentation is the typical, where veneration is discussed. What is not disclosed is that elsewhere in the document, the bearer is agreeing to abide by Canon Law and the restrictions regarding Relics. Thirdly, the seller is attempting to have us all believe that "you are bidding on the \$5 container, and not the Relic and the documentation. Honestly, the Relic is a piece of human bone - that has no value. The paper and ink probably cost about 5 cents and is of no real value. So, why is it that the last auction by this seller went for about \$1,350?

I have been working with the legal department at eBay and just today received more email from them on how they are stepping up enforcement. They recognize that it is absolutely wrong to condone the sale of "human body parts" at eBay. By their admission, that includes bone, skin, hair, flesh, ashes, etc.

May I ask how large the bone would need to be before Amazon would find it unacceptable? Perhaps if an entire corpse was offered? Human remains are human remains, regardless of the size. The Federal Government recognized this and that is why there are laws against selling human bodies, organs, and remains.

Amazon is a good and moral company, evidenced by your prohibition of the sale of pornography. Why then, will you not prohibit the sale of "human bodies and / or their parts"?
Sincerely,

- From:
- To:

Subject: RE: Prohibited Items at eBay
Date: Sun, 23 May 1999 17:00:16 -0700

Thanks for your nice note. I think the reason support doesn't end these auctions when they get your messages is that they don't have written guidance from legal -- that's my fault. I've already started writing some policy in this area that will tell the support folks what a first class relic is, and giving them

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specific instructions on how to handle such auctions. I have a question for you -- is it possible for a 1st class relic to be something other than human remains -- I've gotten some info that 1st class relics include a piece of the cross, and a few other non-human body part items. Also, can a lock of hair be a first class relic? I'm reluctant to ban items that have a lock of hair -- I view that differently than bone, skin, or blood.

- From: _____@ebay.com
- To:

Subject: RE: Prohibited Items at eBay
Date: Sun, 23 May 1999 18:03:10 -0700

Thanks for your help. As a courtesy, I'm going to contact a couple of users who are selling this stuff just to get their input. I'm inclined to ban any relic (or any other item) that contains any body part except hair. This policy would permit a first class relic that had a piece of the True Cross or hair, but it would ban most of the 1st class relics, including those with bits of bone or flesh. I'll listen to the sellers, then get a specific policy to customer service and put some information on the site. Thanks again for your help.

Tom,

As mentioned, I've been trying to keep some contact with _____ the biggest seller of Relics on the net. I've held my patience and have continually tried to discourage him. I've given him all of the information I've found on the subject, including Canon Law, laws about selling body parts, laws about selling bones / human remains (Native American), etc. Nothing works. He sounds desperate in this latest email. I suppose the best course is for me to stop conversing with him. In my last email, in response to his note that I/we should put up or shut up, I asked him what Relics he had and what he would accept for them. I reviewed that pursuant to Canon Law, it is not prohibited to "buy" or "rescue" Relics. I was trying to get him to quantify what he had and see if we could do a "mass rescue" and get him out of the market. No luck.

The wheels keep churning at Amazon. I don't think they will be able to hold up much longer...

- From: sentinel@amazon.com
- Date: Mon, 24 May 1999 15:02:01 -0700 (PDT)

To:
Subject: Your Amazon.com Inquiry
from-address: sentinel@amazon.com

Greetings from Amazon.com Auctions!

We are currently investigating the distribution of these items through our website. We appreciate your concern and vigilance, and will take appropriate action based on that research. Please don't hesitate to contact us should you have any further questions, and thank you for using Amazon.com Auctions.

Best regards,

Sentinel
Amazon.com
<http://www.amazon.com/>

*In a message dated 5/25/99 12:07:44 AM Eastern Daylight Time,
Support@eBay.com writes:*

<< Subj: Re: Interesting item on eBay web site item#_____:
(Reliquary) POPE PIUS X... (KMM1582189C0KM)
Date: 5/25/99 12:07:44 AM Eastern Daylight Time

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From: Support@eBay.com (eBay Customer Support)
Reply-to: Support@eBay.com (eBay Customer Support)
To:
Hello _____,

We forwarded this item for management review, so we apologize for the late response on this one. This is what they came up with:

eBay will end 1st class relics as these items contain human remains (icky). However, 2nd or 3 class relics are OK and will not be ended. If the auction simply states the item is a relic, then eBay will not end the auction item.

This particular item was NOT ended.

Regards,

eBay Customer Support

- From:
- To: Subject: Re: Fw: Interesting Idea

Date: Wed, 26 May 1999 07:58:09 -0700

Dear _____

Just wanted you to know that I have been collecting emails from many individuals from the harrasing tactics of the ICHR, (unfortunately your name has come up many times). I have written to the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, and in the process of getting to the bottom of this organization, which I don't believe has the approval of any Diocese or Rome.

The Diocese, of course, know nothing about this group, and they forwarded my letter to Mr. James Celoni who is head of the information services. From what I can see, once I get all the pertinent information, this organization is going to have a lot of explaining to do, especially if you certainly do not have the "Favor of the Pope", or even the local Diocese.

I'm sure each individual Bishop's office that I contact with my findings, there will be some big explaing to do to each members Diocese. Also, I'll make sure that every listing I post will have a notation upon my findings.

Then again, if you do in fact have the Dicoese and theVaticans authority and decree, you have no worries. Unfortunately, I don't believe you do.

I can't wait to send all my documents, emails and especially the apology letter that Tom Serafin wrote me after I was going to sue the ICHR for their actions. Its a shame that it has to come down to this.

Telling me that the U.S. Attorney General is going to make an example of me! That they are investigating me! That its ok for a church, priest or your group to buy/sell relics but against the law for me to do so, and I will be the example! We shall see who will be investigated soon.

I would have never taken it this far, wasting my time, and all the aggravation that you will currently go through. However, your organization never stops harrasing people, the auction companies the bidders and buyers. Your organization may humble some people with the tactics you use, but you surely won't me.

Return-Path:

- From:
- To:

Subject: Re: Fw: Interesting Idea
Date: Wed, 26 May 1999 19:20:11 -0700

Hi _____,

Yes, we have been fair to each other, I have no problems with that. I remember we started off on a warpath, but have since been fair to each other.

Whatever they write in their description is fine, I, however, don't believe what I read or hear. I'm only going to check this out to see for sure if they do have the approval and decree to do this from their

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Diocese, which I'm sure you know would be first on the list. If they do, good for them and that satisfies my inquiry. If they don't, then I shall investigate further. So far, we have not had any further correspondence. They have indicated they know nothing about the group, forwarding my letter to others, but its only been two days.

If they are part of the Diocese with their guidance, I still would think that the Diocese would not let them interfere with people who are non-catholic. How could the Catholic community govern those not of that faith? They may talk among themselves, ask politely to a non catholic, but never let them harass or send awful emails. And boy of boy, do I got a lot of awful emails on file from the members of that group. I'm sure the Diocese would not stand for any of that, probably ex-communicate some of those members for sending such emails. I have been collecting them for quite some time from other sellers just for this day, which I knew would eventually come. I, am now, very prepared to take on that whole group.

For you being Catholic, I understand 100% your intentions of trying to do good. However, you can't infringe on others rights not being of that faith. No matter how or what you feel. Those laws are only for you, not for me and others like me. Also, you know that I have tried very hard not to ever disrespect your faith and have sold only the reliquary itself, which has been going on in the Catholic community for hundreds of years. I have Catholic Priests letters on file also that will vouch for that.

You have, I'm sure watched my relics on both sites. You know what they are bringing, first class and great 2d class ones. A fair value from the auction results I would say, with papers would be \$450 each, which is a very conservative value considering what they are bringing. If the members of that group would like to pay that amount for each 1st class relic, with papers, I will send you the first 100 as soon as I receive the monies.. There would of course be no Seatons or Neumans, since I believe they are still available. There would also be no "fake Nicolus Ferrente" in their either. I know if I put up a turn of the century true cross in its original cross reliquary set with enamels, stones and the best you've see, it would do \$5000 plus. I have an offer right now \$2500 just for the reliquary. Heck, the veil just did 3200 in a inexpensive reliquary. The relic cross did 1800, the last two relics did over 1000. None that I remember did less than 350.

When I see they are sincere, we will go to the second 100 etc.. Now, I have "put up" as you asked which is only fair. Now, the ball is in your/their court. Lets see if they are rescued or they will finally "shut up". _____

- From:
- To:

Subject: Re: Fw: Interesting Idea
Date: Fri, 28 May 1999 07:09:05 -0700

Hi _____,

The ICHR doesn't look so good. The Diocese isn't recognizing them, his famous "Papal Seal is nothing more than a souvenier, anyone can get them, (and they use that for one of their important appointments) and I know for sure they have absolutley no authority from Rome. The members do harrass people on their own, and also use theis self-made group to try and make a larger impact.

As I said, I'm getting to the bottom of this now. When they try to intimidate me, and keep harrasing others, its time for someone to step in.

When I do get my final findings, many people are going to get the lowdown on the famous ICHR, including many members own Diocese for what they have been doing. Its time for the tables to turn now.

I'm thinking about putting a notation on every one of my listings pointing to a webpage where all my findings about this group will be, for everyone to read. Do you realize how many people look at my items, how many customers I have. A lot more than this group does.

I think you can tell _____ and the rest of them they got a big surprise coming. Let them keep harrasing people, their day is coming.

Oh, didn't my certificate look the same as the famous "ICHR"'s, bet its the same one. I keep it in the junk drawer, its not important, anyone can get them for a couple dollars, a souvenier. However, this is the ICHR's big important certificate. What a joke. You didn't say on the last email how you liked it compared to the ICHR's, same one isn't it.

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Your last response is sure different than the emails I have on file from the members of the ICHR. They are definitely involved with the organization, and say so in the emails. Maybe the policy has changed, but not on the ones that I have. Of course, I have many that say nothing about the groups involvement, but its the same old people, couple new ones that they have recruited.

All I can say, their is going to be a lot of explaining to do. If I were you, I'd think twice about this group. I know that they can't afford my relics, they don't want to buy them anyway, they want them for free. This is their whole concept, to get them for nothing for their self- indulgence, not to rescue anything.

-
- Date: Sat, 29 May 1999 10:23:42 -0700
 - To: "Subject: Re: Interesting item on eBay web site item# _____ (Reliquary) POPE PIUS X
From: Safe Harbor <SafeHarbor@eBay.com
Reply-To: Safe Harbor <SafeHarbor@eBay.com

Hello _____,

I have reviewed this auction again, and have found no reference to "bone" or "1st Class" in the description of the item. I understand your concern regarding the listing of Relics, but unfortunately this item does not include any wording that would give us reason to end it at this time.

Regards,
eBay Customer Support

- From:
- Date: Tue, 1 Jun 1999 08:11:48 EDT
Subject: Fwd: Interesting item on eBay web site item# _____(Reliquary) POPE PIUS X
To: saintsalive@earthlink.net

Tom,

Here is a new challenge with eBay. It appears that only if there is reference to 1st Class or bone will they end an auction. There are so many Relics that appear to be 1st Class, but the seller simply does not list it as such - the buyers still frenzie. Perhaps this is a new way around the rules - sellers simply list "generic" descriptions and let the buyers figure out what it is (or imagine it). I remember reading one description recently where the seller said "not sure what it is", but the item clearly appeared to be 1st Class (registration number and date on the back where the seal and threads are).

*In a message dated 6/2/99 5:04:17 PM Eastern Daylight Time,
sentinel@amazon.com writes:*

Greetings from Seattle.

The sale of human remains is illegal in several states. You will note that there are not currently any relics offered on our auction site. Please don't hesitate to contact us should you have any further questions, and thanks for participating in Amazon.com Auctions!

All the best,

Amazon.com

- From:

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International Crusade for Holy Relics – Internal Report - Members Only

• Date: Thu, 3 Jun 1999 09:53:26 EDT
Subject: Fwd: Your Amazon.com Inquiry
To: saintsalive@earthlink.net

Making headway?

Thanks for the email. I interpret your message to mean that Amazon is not going to allow the sale of Relics with human remains in them.

I did a quick search at Amazon and did find one Relic that has human remains in it. The listing is for a 1st Class Relic of St. Theresa - ex ossibus (human bone). Again, I have provided you already with the categories of Relics. 1st Class Relics contain Human Remains, such as Bone, Flesh, etc.

Here again is the data on 1st Class Relics:

cravio or corporis (body)
ex capillis (from the hair)
ex carne (from the flesh)
ex cineribus (from the ashes)
ex corpore (from the body)
ex ligneo pulvere, mixto pulveri corporis, quem residuum continebat prima
capsa funeralis (from the remains of the wood, mixed with the dust of the
body, the residue of which was contained in the first box (or sarcophagus)
ex ossibus (from the bones)
ex pelle (from the skin)
ex praecordis (from the stomach or intestines)

The following is the information from your site:

Text Only ~ 06:47:36 PST

[+] Relic 1st Class, St. Theresea, Document

Seller: reliquary: (3)
Closes Within: 4 days, 07:30:27

Item Description

Details

Relic, 1st Class, St. Theresa of Lisieux (the little flower), 1873-1897, one of the favorite Saints of many. The document is dated 1960, Highest order, 15 tassels, Cardinals office. Ornate theca contains the first class relic with all proper seals and threads. Of course you are only bidding on the reliquary (theca), the relic and papers are a gift. +\$6.50 ship/ins, visa/master ok

• From:
• Date: Thu, 3 Jun 1999 17:56:43 EDT
Subject: Fwd:
To: saintsalive@earthlink.net

I received your response, outlined below. You suggest in it that the seller of the 1st Class Relic, which does include human remains, is offered as a gift to the person who "buys" the Reliquary. That, quite frankly, is an insult to everyone's intelligence. It sounds like Amazon and the Relic Sellers got together and decided that if anything "illegal" is going to be offered, it should be gifted and the payment will be for the box. Another example is something like "M16 automatic rifle at Amazon", then down in the description it would say "you are bidding on the M16 box, the rifle is a gift". That's a shallow way to talk around the

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subject. Another point is that the Reliquary is identical to what you or anyone can buy at any church supply company for about \$5.

You have been advised by several experts that 1st Class Relics are human remains. Everyone I know of recognizes that, including the folks at eBay (who have banned all 1st Class Relics and anything that contains human remains). You yourself, in your last email, state that it is illegal in states to sell any human remains.

I have asked several times in the past for the name, address, email, and phone number for your legal department and / or supervisor. Why is Amazon so set on offending Billions of Catholics and Christians by allowing the sale of very Sacred Christian Relics, that contain the "human remains" of our Saints?

• ***In a message dated 6/3/99 3:33:22 PM Eastern Daylight Time, sentinel@amazon.com writes:***

• Subj: Your Amazon.com Inquiry
• Date: 6/3/99 3:33:22 PM Eastern Daylight Time
From: sentinel@amazon.com
To:
Greetings from Seattle!

Thanks for taking the time to send the list along -- we do appreciate it. Please note that the auction to which you refer does not specify that the relic is for sale -- the seller is auctioning off a reliquary and the relic will be included as a gift.

Further, the seller does not specify what the relic is -- there are some relics that will be allowed for sale on our auction site. Remember, the law does not prohibit the sale of relics.

Thanks for your interest in Amazon.com Auctions.

All the best,

Amazon.com

-----Original Message-----

• From:
• To:
Date: Sunday, June 06, 1999 1:42 PM
Subject: relic of st. theresa

I am not sure if you got my first message - i would like your guarantee that this is indeed the first class relic of st. therese. what part of her body is it and how did you receive it - I will cherish this relic if it is truly her relic if not please cancel my bid with no questions asked thanks please respond before bidding ends

-----Original Message-----

• From:
• Sent: Sunday, June 06, 1999 9:37 PM
To:
Subject: Re: relic of st. theresa

Hi_____ : Got this email. Don't worry, it is 100% legit. Take it to any priest or your local Diocese if you wish for a thorough inspection. 15 tassel, highest order, Cardinals office. The relic is pulverised corpus with part of the ashes from the coffin. Have collected for many many years, can't say for sure where I obtained this particular relic.

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---Original Message-----

• From:
• Sent: Monday, June 07, 1999 11:22 PM
To:
Subject: Re: relic of st. theresa
Hi _____: If I find her, which I'm sure I will as soon as I start looking,
I'll take \$390.00 _____

-----Original Message-----

• From:.
• To:
Date: Monday, June 07, 1999 5:47 PM
Subject: RE: relic of st. theresa
thanks so much I would greatly appreciate it - I may have an extra of St. Elizabeth Seton, if i still have it (if my cousin returned it) would you be interested in a trade? If not let me know what we can do to work out something - I would be most appreciative - thanks

----Original Message-----

• From:
• To:
Date: Monday, June 07, 1999 5:53 PM
Subject: RE: relic of st. theresa
you are correct - did you find another St. Theresa? what would you want for it?

-----Original Message-----

• From:
• To:
Date: Monday, June 07, 1999 6:21 PM
Subject: RE: relic of st. theresa
i am still interested - let me know when it is found
thanks

-----Original Message-----

• From:
• Sent: Monday, June 07, 1999 10:50 PM
To:
Subject: Re: relic of st. theresa
After 30 years of collecting, and I do have multiples of items, I only need one. I can look through my items to see if I can find you another, which I know I have.

-----Original Message-----

• From:
• Sent: Monday, June 07, 1999 10:11 PM
To:
Subject: Re: relic of st. theresa
Hi _____: Yes, I do have others of St. Theresea. None of Benedict that I am aware of.

-----Original Message-----

• From:
• Sent: Tuesday, June 08, 1999 10:56 PM
To:
Subject: Re: relic of st. theresa
Hi _____: Here it is. Let me know, first class.

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----Original Message-----

• From:
• Sent: Monday, June 07, 1999 10:58 PM
To:
Subject: Re: relic of st. theresa
I have about 100 of Seaton. You can still get her today from the shrine, same with Neuman. They are readily available.

----Original Message-----

• From:
• Sent: Monday, June 07, 1999 11:22 PM
To:
Subject: Re: relic of st. theresa
Hi _____ If I find her, which I'm sure I will as soon as I start looking, I'll take \$390.00

---Original Message-----

• From:
• To:
Date: Wednesday, June 09, 1999 5:10 AM
Subject: RE: relic of st. theresa

How can this be arranged? I would really like it - what is included? - eg. The paper work hat documents it ? My highest bid was \$310 so this is a stretch - but - let me know how to proceed, thanks

-----Original Message-----

• From:
• Sent: Wednesday, June 09, 1999 9:50 PM
To:
Subject: Re: relic of st. theresa

Hi _____: Yes, the paper work (document and the relic) You can send me a check for \$390 to:

I'll then ship the relic to you insured, ups. If for any reason you are unsatisfied, full refund, no questions asked.

-----Original Message-----

• From:
• Sent: Thursday, June 10, 1999 5:24 PM
To:
Subject: Re: i have a concern about your price

_____, i understand your concern.i know a quite bit about relics.any relics that have a redemptorist wax seal and papers you have to be very dubious of.especially, if the papers with them are signed by nicholas ferrante.now, as to my relic of saint theresa,who i have a great devotion i have a three relics one i never would part with a piece of her bone.i have one i got at the augustinian monastery in rome(which no more are available) it is in a gold theca with wax and seals intact,i dont have papers with it but it is without a doubt genuine.i got right from the mother superior.this monastery handles all relics from rome.the second one i have is from lisieux and does have papers,it is in plastic,flat ,and is part of st.theresa's remains from her coffin.it is in a small reliquary that stands up,under glass.the first one from rome, more traditional is

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\$500.00, the second one from lisiuex is \$400.00. the st. pius the 10th does not have papers but the wax and threads are intact. that is something you must always look for. lastly, just to let you know, i am a third order member, a member of the adoration society at my church and received a letter of introduction to go to Rome for the relics i got. i know the prices of st. therese are high, but my mission is to save that relic of st. mary magdalen. a relic of st therese was on amazon last week and went for \$531.00. st. therese is very hard to find. i hope i answered your questions. god bless!

- From:
- To: "saintsalive@earthlink.net" <saintsalive@earthlink.net

Subject: FW: relic of st. theresa
Date: Fri, 11 Jun 1999 08:49:19 -0500

Can you tell me if this is legitimate and should I participate in this or not - do you know this man - it is initially from the internet, thanks

- From:
- To: "saintsalive@earthlink.net" <saintsalive@earthlink.net

Subject: FW: i have a concern about your price
Date: Fri, 11 Jun 1999 08:50:31 -0500

Can you also give me your opinion on this one - I have a great devotion to St. Theresa but after reading your web page I am very confused as to what I should do - any advice is appreciated thanks

-----Original Message-----

- From: saintsalive@earthlink.net [SMTP:saintsalive@earthlink.net]
- Sent: Friday, June 11, 1999 8:10 PM

To:
Subject: Re: FW: i have a concern about your price

Dear _____,

I would not have anything to do with either of those people!!!!!! If you can provide me with proof of your intention, a religious contact that will vouch for you, and a written promise that you will keep the relic for private adoration and not participate in those awful auctions, I can help.

For FREE, like a Christian...

In Christ,

Chev. Thomas Serafin

=====
Chevalier Thomas J. Serafin, V.V.
Saints Alive Relics / I.C.H.R. usa
PO Box 0471
Temple City CA 91780
<http://home.earthlink.net/~saintsalive/>
e-mail: saintsalive@earthlink.net
=====

- From:
- To: "saintsalive@earthlink.net" <saintsalive@earthlink.net

Subject: RE: FW: i have a concern about your price
Date: Sat, 12 Jun 1999 11:03:13 -0500

Thanks so much!

I greatly appreciate your help - interestingly the woman _____ claims she belongs to your group however, I ask her if she belonged and she said yes but nothing more - i brought it up and she gave no details -- I have had for many years a relic of Mother Seton - from the time she was a blessed - it was with my mother when

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she died and now is with my uncle in Texas who is dying from cancer - - I believe firmly that I know how to properly care for the relic and have for many years - generally beyond my own private prayer I make it available to the sick - my mother with cancer, my cousin with ms, and now my uncle - I am growing especially close to St. Theresa as I strive myself for a more contemplative life within my own attention and responsibility in life as a layperson - her little way has helped and continues to guide me - as well as the writing of Teresa of Avila, Thomas Merton, and of course the rule of St. Benedict that I try to live by - I told the women _____ that I needed the weekend to pray about this - obviously the price is a lot and given what I read on your web site I realized that far more could be done with the money for the poor and sick than my selfishly spending the money for my own private devotion - anyway I asked _____ for some proof that she was what and who she claims and that has not been forthcoming - this am I turned on EWTN and there was a benedictine priest who talked about the life of Theresa and the Story of a soul - to some extent I took this as a sign so to speak that she is close to me and perhaps she wants me to have the relic - when I got into my e-mail right after that program and saw your message I now realize that both of those sellers I should not deal with and that perhaps receiving the relic from you is God's will. Further, I will make this promise that if you do send it to me I will let it be known through the ministry to the sick shut-ins of our parish that I will personally bring the relic to anyone who asks and wants to pray to St. Theresa with me - anyway at this point I leave it with you and In God's hands - let me know what more I can do and also what I should say to these people if _____ really is getting the true cross is that a relic she should be responsible for and what can be done to prevent further abuses - I have printed off the application to join your group and I will again in Our Lord and Saint Theresa.

thank you

- From:
- To: "saintsalive@earthlink.net" <saintsalive@earthlink.net

Subject: RE: Forgot something.
Date: Sat, 12 Jun 1999 19:23:44 -0500

also the man seller - the guy from Pennsylvania claims he has over 100 Elizabeth Seton! that is sick there is no reason for anyone except the shrine to have that many

- From:
- To: "saintsalive@earthlink.net" <saintsalive@earthlink.net

Subject: RE: it has gotten worse! ASAP PLEASE READ AND CHECK THESE OUT!
Date: Sat, 12 Jun 1999 19:37:58 -0500
Importance: high

I went into the Amazon web site to see if I could get more info - interestingly _____ name no longer appears the following is listed and this is the e-mail address for the current seller: _____@bellsouth.net is selling 5 relics - the bidding is up to \$695 the following is the site that describes the relics: and there is only one day left on the bidding http://auctions.amazon.com/exec/_____/ts/auction-glance/Y03X44186062541/002-0147-3817246#description

And believe it or not now the "true cross" relic has appeared although not sold by _____ and what is the chance that in 24 hours she would tell me that she will sell me Theresa and Pius to "save" the true cross and it then appears in Amazon! this is terrible this should be stopped! the following the claim is the true cross bidding starting at \$300
http://auctions.amazon.com/exec/_____/ts/auction-glance/Y0446776014618/002-487-3817246#description
please advise me on what to do this is a very scary situation!
in Christ

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- From:
 - To: "saintsalive@earthlink.net" <saintsalive@earthlink.net
- Subject: please help - this is very bad!!!!
Date: Sat, 12 Jun 1999 19:50:27 -0500
Importance: high

I went through the entire religious page and there are far more "relics" than when you simply search with the word "relic" ritta is still there - I was mistaken the name must not be ___ but _____ (amazing how our mind reads what we want it to) she had many for sale including DOn Bosco. St. Francis of Assisi

see descriptions below and her e-mail address

http://auctions.amazon.com/exec/_____/ts/auction-glance/YX5896X1624385/002-0148277-3817246#description

http://auctions.amazon.com/exec/_____/ts/auction-glance/YX1656X0088576/002-014827-3817246#description

_____.@aol.com

the following are the sites of the man from pa who claims he has over 100 elizabeth seton

http://auctions.amazon.com/exec/_____/ts/auction-glance/YX1426X7487709/002-0148277-3817246#description

_____@usaor.net the following is an elizabeth seton and the e-mail of the seller http://auctions.amazon.com/exec/_____/ts/auction-glance/YX68407976436/002-01277-3817246#description

_____@gte.net is it legal to sell these - I am shocked

-----Original Message-----

- From: To: "saintsalive@earthlink.net" <saintsalive@earthlink.net
 - Subject: FW: relic of st. theresa
- Date: Sat, 12 Jun 1999 21:54:51 -0500

this is a recent e-mail sent to me what I asked who signed the papers on the relic of st. theresa from the guy in _____.

-
- From:
 - To: "Tom Serafin" <saintsalive@earthlink.net
- Subject: RE: HOUSEKEEPING
Date: Sun, 13 Jun 1999 22:42:39 -0400

Dear Mr. Tom Serafin,

Talking about online auctions, I've just bought a little broch containing a Saint Pius X relic. It cost me US\$316.00 plus a very high (for me) shipping, handling and insurance costs, but finally I succeeded in rescuing it. Their excuse is that they are selling the container and that the relic if just a gift.

Now I'm close to receive another one containing a True Cross relics, suposely from a dead bishop; I already paid about US\$950.00 for the same above concepts for this one. Venezuelan currency is about 600.00 Bolívares by 1 US single dollar (right now venezuelan minimum wage is 120.000 Bs./month).

I'll do whatever is in my small economy capacity in order to take all the relics I can out of that "black market" of sacred relics.

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Please, tell me: Is it correct to do what I believe I'm doing right? What am I suppose to do with the rescued relics? May I keep them and venerate them properly o I'm suppose to give them back to the Church? Am I suppose to ask my bishop for an authentication and a permission in order to do so? Thank you and may God bless the all of us.

In Christ, _____

-----Original Message-----

• From:
• Sent: Monday, June 14, 1999 9:01 PM
To:
Subject: st theresa relic

_____, I RECEIVED AN EMAIL FROM SAINTS ALIVE, THOMAS SERAFIN, I BELIEVE YOU MUST HAVE CONTACTED HIM. I KNOW RELICS ARE NOT TO BE SOLD, AND I SHOULD HAVE SAID THAT THE RELICS ARE GIFTS AND THAT THE RELIC HOLDERS ARE WHAT YOU ARE BIDDING ON. BUT AGAIN, MY GOAL WAS NEVER TO MAKE A PROFIT FROM THESE RELICS BUT TO USE THE GAINS TO GET THE ST. MARY MAGDALEN AND THE RELIC OF THE TRUE CROSS. THE PERSON IM DEALING WITH GAVE ME ONLY 2 WEEKS! HE WANTS \$1800 FOR THE CROSS AND \$900 FOR THE ST MARY MAGDALEN RELIC. THATS ALOT MONEY FOR ME. WELL, I HOPE YOU UNDERSTAND, IF YOU ARE STILL INTERESTED IN THE ST. THERESA RELIC AND ST. PIUS YOU CAN HAVE THEM BOTH FOR \$400. LAT ME KNOW IF YOURE STILL INTERESTED. _____

----Original Message-----

• From: Tom Serafin [mailto:saintsalive@earthlink.net]
• Sent: Tuesday, June 15, 1999 5:33 PM
To:
Subject: Relic sales

Dear Mr. _____,

I can't tell you how disappointed I am that you are still allowing individuals to sell relics on your sight! With the changing moods in the legal aspect as far as lawsuits (see June 1999-Computer Currents) someone will eventually sue, successfully. If they spend their life savings on what they believe to be a true relic, and realize that it's not, it will become a legal and publicity nightmare. There must be a solution to this horrible situation.

In Christ,
Thomas Serafin, V.V. ICHR/MGK

• From:
• To: "Tom Serafin" <saintsalive@earthlink.net
Subject: RE: Relic sales
Date: Tue, 15 Jun 1999 19:14:57 -0700

Tom -- we do not permit the sale of human remains or body parts on our site. If the item contains such a part, even a small part (like a piece of bone), the item will be removed once we are notified -- I thought that you would be pleased with such a policy. The sale of relics itself is not illegal, and we will permit those relics that do not include human remains to remain on the site. As for authenticity, that is between the buyer and seller....we do not ever see the item, and cannot judge its authenticity.

I appreciate your concern. _____

• From: "Tom Serafin" <saintsalive@earthlink.net
• To:
Subject: RE: HOUSEKEEPING
Date: 6/16/99 07:01 AM

Dear _____,

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This appears to be one of our greatest problems. To rescue or not? If we with the purist of intention rescue a relic for a high amount are we not throwing more fuel on the fire? It's difficult. I have also witnessed that other concerned Catholics have bid against each other, thereby driving the price up. I've also seen the starting bids starting higher. In my opinion that this practice must stop!!!! How I don't know?

Like you, I myself have rescued relics, I believe it is your privilege as their guardian to give them a place of honor in your life and your home. Did the relics have authentic?

In Christ,
Tom

- From: "Tom Serafin" <saintsalive@earthlink.net
- To:

Subject: RE: Relic sales
Date: 07:11 AM 6/16/99

Dear Mr. _____,

I can't tell you how disappointed I am that you are still allowing individuals to sell relics on your sight! With the changing moods in the legal aspect as far as lawsuits (see June 1999-Computer Currents) someone will eventually sue, successfully. If they spend their life savings on what they believe to be a true relic, and realize that it's not, it will become a legal and publicity nightmare. There must be a solution to this horrible situation.

In Christ,
Thomas Serafin, V.V.
ICHR/MGK

- To: sentinel@amazon.com
- Subject: Sale of Human Bones at Amazon

Date: Wed, 16 Jun 1999 20:13:14 EDT
From: _____

Hello again,

I have been patiently waiting for many weeks for you to do something about the sale of human bones at Amazon. You have admitted that this is illegal in many states. You have also recognized that as such, you would not allow such auctions. Yet today, I see there are 6 different auctions under "Relic" that include human bones. The descriptions are "1st Class Relic..." and in the detail, they say "of the bone" or "bone relic", or the like. 1st Class Relics are human bone relics.

Your stated policy says that you will not allow auctions of illegal items, nor auctions that are offensive. The Federal Government finds it "offensive" and illegal to sell human remains, as evidenced by their laws governing "human remains", and more specifically, the "human remains of native Americans". I have asked no less than five times for the name, address, phone and fax for the legal department at Amazon, so I can converse with them directly.

By allowing these auctions to continue, you are creating a market for the trade in human remains. The first few auctions have now encouraged many more. The prices are going up. Soon, I fear, there will be more and more auctions at Amazon that include all sorts of human remains and / or body parts. Then we will see human scalps, necklaces made of human bones (I've seen both at on-line auction companies), etc.

Please do something soon. For about two months now I've been told "we at Amazon are concerned ... we are researching the issue". Yet since my first letter, I would estimate that 30 Relics with human remains have traded hands with your help.

Sincerely,

- Date: Thu, 17 Jun 1999 04:14:21 -0700

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• From:
To:
Subject: NOTICE "PRIVATE AUCTION" / 2 SALE HISTORY

This is an amazing find! This 1st Class double relic of the Veil of the Blessed Mother and the Cloak of St. Joseph was recued from and antique dealer who had it displayed along with 6 other relics and jewelry! He thought they were jewelry and didn't seem to care that they were sacred objects. They came from the estate of an Italian immigrant woman who came to this country in 1920. The locket is in good condition with seal intact. There are no papers but it is clear this locket has never been opened over the years. High bidder is paying for the locket and the relics are a gift. Please include \$10.00 s/h/ins. This double relic should get into the hands of someone who has devotion the saints. Thank you for bidding.

Current bid \$255.50 Minimum bid \$260.50

To finalize your bid, you will need to submit your User ID and Password in the next step. You will not be asked to enter your User ID and Password anywhere on this page.

Current minimum bid is \$260.50

Please type only numerals and the decimal symbol (.) if required.

Placing a bid is a binding contract in many states. Do not bid unless you intend to buy this item at the amount of your bid. Proxy bidding for all bids;Please bid the <strong maximum amount you are willing to pay for this item. Your maximum amount will be kept <b secret; eBay will bid on your behalf as necessary by increasing your bid by the current bid increment up until your maximum is reached. This saves you the trouble of having to keep track of the auction as it proceeds and prevents you from being outbid at the last minute unless your spending limit is exceeded.This is a private auction -- your address will not be revealed. Only the seller will know the high-bidder's address at the end of the auction.

• From:
• Date: Thu, 17 Jun 1999 09:21:38 EDT
Subject: Fwd: Amazon.com, Re: Sale of Human Bones at Amazon
To: saintsalive@earthlink.net

Dear _____,

Thanks for getting back with us at Amazon.com Auctions.

As we have stated, we do not allow the sale of human remains and will continue to investigate this matter. In the mean time, if you know of any specific auctions that contain human remains, please bring these to our attention by sending us the Auction IDs. You can usually find the Auction ID within the URL on an auction's detail page.

It usually looks like this: Y03X4433398714

Please don't hesitate to contact us should you have any further questions, and thanks for participating in Amazon.com Auctions!

Kind regards,

• From:
• Date: Thu, 17 Jun 1999 09:22:20 EDT
Subject: Fwd: Amazon.com, Re: Sale of Human Bones at Amazon
To: saintsalive@earthlink.net

• Return-path:

• From:

Date: Thu, 17 Jun 1999 09:07:41 EDT

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Subject: Re: Amazon.com, Re: Sale of Human Bones at Amazon
To: sentinel@amazon.com

_____,

Thank you for your email (summarized below). I had not heard that you have a process with which to handle the listing of human remains auctions. Is this written anywhere in your policies? If so, that would make things simpler in dealing with people who continue to sell human remains at Amazon.

"As we have stated, we do not allow the sale of human remains and will continue to investigate this matter. In the mean time, if you know of any specific auctions that contain human remains, please bring these to our attention by sending us the Auction IDs."

Several auctions ended last night that had human remains (bone) in them. The following two are still listed. Both are "Human Bone" Relics. Ex Ossibus is latin for "of the bone", and that is the most common Relic I've seen at Amazon. Also note that 1st Class Relics are "human remains", which could be bone, flesh, skin, etc.

Here is the information for the two you have listed. Please cancel them and let me know you have done so. That way I can report to the other concerned "Amazonians" who have expressed concern over the auctioning of human remains.

Thanks, _____

This beautiful 1st Class Relic of St. Benedict is a rare find. Encased in a pretty golden colored locket with burgandy interior, this Relic is ex ossibus, (from the bone) of St. Benedict and has a red bugandy seal of authenticity in tacked on the back.

Auction ID: Y03X21664440123

1st Class relic of St. Theresa Couderc, 1805-1885, Foundress of Sisters of Retreat in the Cenacle. She was canonized by Pope Paul VI in 1970. Document signed by Emygdus Federici, Protonotarius Apostolicus, May, 1970. Seals, threads and documentation are all correct.

Auction ID: Y02X1553X5626745

Note that this auction has a picture of the documentation, which states it is "ex ossibus".

- From:
 - Date: Thu, 17 Jun 1999 09:22:00 EDT
- Subject: Fwd: Amazon.com, Re: Sale of Human Bones at Amazon
To: saintsalive@earthlink.net

Subject: Re: Amazon.com, Re: Sale of Human Bones at Amazon
To: sentinel@amazon.com

_____,

Here is a brief list of other Bone relics that have been auctioned and sold very recently. Please notice that all of these relics are prepresented by only a few sellers (_____, _____, _____, etc.). It may be productive if you email them and advise them that Amazon does not allow the auctioning of Relics with Human Remains (bone, flesh, skin, etc.). That could minimize the "policing" of this issue.

Thanks,

Auction ID: Y01X570440X802407
Auction ID: Y02X637576X998495
Auction ID: Y04X180242X791762
Auction ID: Y03X127016X338169
Auction ID: Y01X519478X886171

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Auction ID: Y03X471923X621511
Auction ID: Y02X666160X019908
Auction ID: Y03X114186X706251
Auction ID: Y02X042896X162435
Auction ID: Y03X093426X748779
Auction ID: Y03X684479X007646
Auction ID: Y02X165111X008856
Auction ID: Y03X099366X611175
Auction ID: Y02X589074X356176
Auction ID: Y03X658564X518696

- Date: Thu, 17 Jun 1999 19:26:47 -0700
- From:

To: _____,
Tom Serafin <saintsalive@earthlink.net ,

Subject: More _____/_____ Relic Fraud

_____ just sent me the following letter. It is interesting, and revealing. I am quite certain that even IF there ARE relic's of the incorrupt St. Bernadette available, _____ would not have one: certainly NOT with Ferrante Authentics! Read on:

Just today I got a letter from a customer I'd set a St. Jude Relic for on a silver medal, and in it (in the letter) was a piece of cloth he'd touched to the theca of an alleged first class relic of St. Bernadette Soubirous he'd just gotten from Rome through the assistance of a _____ at an _____. The relic came complete with authentics signed by a Fr. Nicholas Ferrante. The name of _____. And, oh yes, my customer lives in _____, which is near _____, home of the _____.

Bernadette? Ex ossibus, no less, not even hair. The story he was told was that, well, here it is in his words: "Most people are not aware that any 1st Class Relics [of St. Bernadette] are available, as her incorrupt body is on display in France. But as you know, I have had a long devotion to her and in researching the medical reports surrounding her post humorous condition, I was able to confirm that during the inquiry for her canonization that two ribs on the right side were removed from the body and sent to the Vatican. With some assistance from a _____, I was able to obtain a relic directly from Rome. I was moved to tears upon receiving an ex ossibus relic from the incorrupt body of Saint Bernadette!"

-----Original Message-----

- From: saintsalive@earthlink.net [SMTP:saintsalive@earthlink.net]
- Sent: Thursday, June 17, 1999 11:53 PM

To:
Subject: RE:St.Therese

Dear _____,

If you would like I will send you a gift, two special St. Therese relics. These relics are more than like assembled by the sisters of her community, probably close to her Canonization or even for the event in 1925.

The red seal is of the Postulator of the Carmelites. Often times early relics were not always inserted in teca's (loquets), often if a relic was confected prior to beatification they were mounted on holy cards with a representation of the holy personage or in a small carrying case for private devotion.

I really appreciate the extent you went to to educate yourself on this subject. Fr. _____ believes that you are a good, holy, honest man with pure intentions. Therefore I will send to you; a relic of

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"ex prima capsula funerali", the first coffin of St. Therese (died 1897), "ex vestimentis", from the vestment of St. Therese.

In Christ Crucified,
Chev. Thomas Serafin, V.V.

- Date: Thu, 17 Jun 1999 21:17:16 -0700
- From:
- To:
- Subject: Catch him in the act...

This guy IS the same guy, who sold _____ her bogus Ferrante Relic. HE KNOWS THIS ONE IS FAKE.

He has been selling falsified relics of all descriptions, (and I do imagine some real ones too), on eBay for quite a while. I imagine enough evidence could be gathered to PROVE that this clown KNOWS that he is selling a fake relic.

http://auctions.amazon.com/exec/_____/ts/auction-glance/YX16644X4013/002-002545-4813638

Amazon.com Auctions: Exceptional 1st Class Relic of St. Benedict!!!</title

This beautiful 1st Class Relic of St. Benedict is a rare find. Encased in a pretty golden colored locket with burgandy interior, this Relic is ex ossibus, (from the bone) of St. Benedict and has a red burgandy seal of authenticity tacked on the back. This relic was rescued from an antique dealer who had no devotion to the saints. The highest bidder pays for locket and takes this relic into his/her home for devotion. Only those with devotion to the Saints need bid. High bidder to pay \$10.00 s/h/ins.

Buyer pays.

Will ship internationally.

Cashier's Check / Money Order.

Minimum Bid: \$232.50

- Date: Fri, 18 Jun 1999 23:33:24 -0700
- From:
- To: Tom Serafin <saintsalive@earthlink.net
- Subject: Correction...

My friend recently wrote me:

Here is a tidbit I thought you'd find amusing. Perhaps you'd like to forward it to Tom Serafin: The question of fake relics is indeed a hot topic. I am familiar with seller on e-bay who claimed that his older certified relics were more reliable than the newer ones being distributed today, and based his position on an alleged report from the "_____ on Counterfeit Relics." The ICHR later researched that report, only to find that the organization had never authored or distributed it. The ICHR is, of course, Thomas Serafin's outfit. Actually, Tom, I am the _____, and I did pen the original article. Any denial's came from lower the chain of command.

- Date: Sat, 19 Jun 1999 09:22:55 -0700
- From:
- To:

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Subject: AMAZING RELIC FROM "estate seller"..

I'll bet _____ is adopting a new identity. The guy must be senile to use his old name: _____ as a screen name on Amazon with the new AOL screen name: _____. Notice the same story of "saving the relic?"...the other one, an IMPOSSIBLE to find relic of St. Benedict. Notice how the PRIVATE AUCTION makes it impossible to warn the buyer of the spurious nature of this clown.

As these are ofcourse, not "body parts" they qualify on eBay for auction. This is an amazing find! This 1st Class double relic of the Veil of the Blessed Mother and the Cloak of St. Joseph was rescued from an antique dealer who had it displayed along with 6 other relics and jewelry! He thought they were jewelry and didn't seem to care that they were sacred objects. They came from the estate of an Italian immigrant woman who came to this country in 1920. The locket is in good condition with seal intact. There are no papers but it is clear this locket has never been opened over the years. High bidder is paying for the locket and the relics are a gift. Please include \$10.00 s/h/ins. This double relic should get into the hands of someone who has devotion to the saints. Thank you for bidding.

Proxy bidding for all bids; Please bid the <strong maximum amount you are willing to pay for this item. Your maximum amount will be kept secret; eBay will bid on your behalf as necessary by increasing your bid by the current bid increment up until your maximum is reached. This saves you the trouble of having to keep track of the auction as it proceeds and prevents you from being outbid at the last minute unless your spending limit is exceeded.

- Date:
- From:

I can only respond to my actions in this chain of events. I've attempted to retain an open dialog with you and I believe we have shared some mutually beneficial information. I always try to keep the peace, which is one of the reasons I've been trying to see both sides of this issue. That is also why I've suggested that you follow up on your statement that the ICHR should "put up (and pay for your Relics) or shut up". Well, if you are going to make a statement like that, then you should say what you have and what you want.

Various members, including myself, have rescued single Relics or entire collections. I say rescued because they were in the possession of somebody who no longer wanted them and I / we stepped in and "put up".

Pursuant to Canon Law, Catholics may not sell Relics, but they may surely "buy" them. I believe the intent is so that Catholics will not be breaking any Church law by paying an antique dealer or demolition company to rescue a Relic. That member of the Church is then, however, bound by Canon Law to never sell the Relic. I continue to be interested in being part of the solution to this expanding issue. Let me know how I can help you in this matter (if at all).

- Date: Mon, 21 Jun 1999 12:56:27 -0700
- From:

Subject: Blessed Virgin Veil and Cloak
To:

This was just sent to me. Remember, _____ uses the screen name: _____ on Amazon. _____ the screen name of _____ on eBay has trafficked in countless relics over the months. I don't know what to make of the confusion. (And _____...how many relics of the Blessed Virgin's Veil have we seen now? common.)

I couldn't help but wonder what was going on with your relic auction? Item #116424391
You apparently are offering an item which clearly lacks authenticity by the Roman Catholic Church. Also, I believe that you have TWO ebay accounts _____ and _____. If you are artificially inflating feedback or auction prices, this violates ebay rules.

I find it surprising that your grammar and syntax for both accounts match exactly. It appears that you are giving yourself positive feedback between both accounts.

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Remember, fraud committed over electronic wire services is in violation of the Federal RICO statue. Is it really worth the trouble? Or the years?

I would end the auction if I were you...

Shill bidding, deliberate:

The deliberate use of secondary registrations or associates to artificially raise the level of bidding and/or price on an item.

Many multiple bids from one bidder to one seller. Bidder rarely wins, or the high bidder suddenly does not buy and the second highest bidder is offered the item at that bidder's last bid. Bidder usually has low feedback compared to bidding level. Bidder and seller usually (not always) live fairly close to each other. Bidder usually raises the level of bidding an unusual amount. If it is an alias, the bidder's information will be falsified.

*ACTION: First offense: 30 day suspension
of primary account and indefinite
suspension of all alias registrations.
Second offense: Indefinite suspension of
primary account.*

- From:
- To: "saintsalive@earthlink.net" <saintsalive@earthlink.net

Subject: RE: St.Therese
Date: Tue, 22 Jun 1999 15:48:23 -0500

Oh dear Tom,

Thanks you so very much - I just received the relics today! What a wonderful day to receive the Little Flower. I promise I will cherish these relics, safeguard them, and venerate them for all my days.

Again, thank you for everything.
In Christ and His Little Flower,

-----Original Message-----

- From: Tom Serafin [mailto:saintsalive@earthlink.net]
- Sent: Wednesday, June 23, 1999 7:43 AM

To: Subject: RE: Relic sales/repeat offenders!!!!
Dear _____,
Could you please forward your telephone number.
Thanks,
Tom

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- Reply-To:
 - From:
- To: "Tom Serafin" <saintsalive@earthlink.net
Subject: RE: Relic sales/repeat offenders!!!!
Date: Thu, 24 Jun 1999 09:37:54 -0700

I'd rather not give out my direct phone number -- other folks here have had their number posted on bulletin boards, then we flooded with calls that disrupt our ability to get our work done. Is there some further issue we need to address? eBay will not generally ban the sale of relics, but will end any auction (including relics) that (according to the title or description of the auction) involves the sale (or gift) of human remains, if that auction is brought to our attention. Anyone can bring such an auction to our attention by e-mailing us at ctywatch@ebay.com. The policy in on our site now at <http://pages.ebay.com/aw/help/topics-png-remains.html>. Individuals who continue to sell such items after we have warned them a couple times will be suspended. If there is something that we need to discuss further, I'll be happy to call you.

-----Original Message-----

- From: Tom Serafin [<mailto:saintsalive@earthlink.net>]
 - Sent: Thursday, June 24, 1999 5:50 PM
- To:
Cc:
Subject: RE: Relic sales/repeat offenders!!!!

I am compiling the ICHR Annual Report, this year it will be on the sale of relics on the internet. I will address the sale of relics on the internet, thefts, and bogus relic. This 50 page report will go the 2000+ membership worldwide.

Would you like me to include your "official policy" on the subject of selling relics (human remains) on the auction block? You have been very helpful in our crusade but other members have not been privileged to all communications.

In Christ,
Chevalier Thomas J. Serafin, V.V.
U.S. Territorial Master Guardian Knight
International Crusade for Holy Relics

- Reply-To:
 - From:
- To: "Tom Serafin" <saintsalive@earthlink.net
Subject: RE: Relic sales/repeat offenders!!!!
Date: Thu, 24 Jun 1999 21:04:55 -0700
Sure, we have no objection to your reprinting our policy in your report.

-----Original Message-----

- From: Tom Serafin [<mailto:saintsalive@earthlink.net>]
 - Sent: Friday, June 25, 1999 6:49 AM
- To:
Subject: RE: Relic sales/repeat offenders!!!!

Dear _____,

Could you please forward your official policy. Also an explanation of why you are legally limited as far as censorship in regards to keeping your status as you explained over the phone to me.

Thanks,
Tom

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- Reply-To:
- From:

To: "Tom Serafin" <saintsalive@earthlink.net
Subject: RE: Relic sales/repeat offenders!!!!
Date: Fri, 25 Jun 1999 15:40:18 -0700
Tom -- Here's the policy:

Human Parts and Remains:

Humans, the human body or any human body parts may not be listed on eBay. Examples of prohibited items include, but are not limited to: organs, bone, blood, waste, sperm, and eggs. You may not include such items as a gift, prize or giveaway in connection with an item listed on eBay. However, items that contain human hair (e.g., lockets) may be listed on eBay.

As for your second question, I can't write a legal opinion for you. You may state that we are a venue, and as an Internet Service Provider generally cannot review or edit content that users put on our site.

Dear Friends,

I have been an admirer of your web site for some time now & fully support the cause which you stand for. I have recently become aware of a new website which has been set up to sell phony relics. The address of the site is : . The guy who is running this site has been selling relics (which always seem fake) on the Ebay auction website for some time. He is very clever & hides behind several different user names to hide his identity, & changes them often. He is currently going under the Ebay user name of & currently has an auction for a phony looking relic of the true cross (auction #141770211). I have been following this guy for some time & have recently reported him to Ebay authorities for his questionable activities. I was quite disturbed to see that this guy has recently set up a web site for the exclusive purpose of selling relics (which are most likely fake) & decided to contact you folks to report the situation, and see if there is anything that can be done to stop (or even slow down) this person. As I mentioned previously, this guy is very clever & even claims on his website to be somewhat of a supporter of organizations like yours, but feels it is OK to sell relics anyway. I believe that this is only a ruse to try and deflect negative criticism and possible harrasment from those who oppose the sale of relics.

If you want, I can also provide you with a short list of other phony Ebay user names that this guy hides behind. In any event, I just wanted to update you folks on this situation & to let you know what a great site you have. I fully support your cause & will always help out, if you need me. I respectfully ask that you keep my identity confidential, in relation to the information that I have provided you with.

Thanks.

- -----Original Message-----

Dear Sir,

As an organization we have been pressuring e-bay and amazon.com but to NO avail. I have contacted numerous State and Federal authorities, unfortunately the internet much resembles the wild west of a 150 years ago!

Currently I am assembling a report on the abuses and sales of the remains of our great saints as it relates to the internet. I would appreciate any information you might have and your written permission to include it in the printed report.

In Christ Crucified,

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Chev. Thomas J. Serafin, V.V.

Hello,

You have my permission to use any of the information that I have provided you, for your report. I would be most interested in reading it when it is complete, please keep me posted. The best information that I can currently provide you with, is the info contained in my previous email. I really believe that this person is one of the most blatant and offensive sellers of fake relics that I have seen anywhere on the internet. I feel it is truly sad that well intentioned (although naive) purchasers of these bogus relics will be spending countless hours venerating a meaningless forgery, devoid of any real religious value. I feel that this person's new website is especially harmful, as it is set up for the sole purpose of profiting from the sale of relics and fake relics & will undoubtedly flood the market with them. This person's second Ebay auction for a phony looking relic of the true cross that I described in my previous email, closed today for over \$1,000 (their first true cross auction closed for over \$1,500!!). They currently have a new auction running for a theca which supposedly contains relics of all 12 apostles!!! (Ebay item #144508694) This clearly appears to be a blatant forgery & the current bid is almost \$800--with 7 days to go, the bidding price is likely to go through the roof. The seller shamelessly claims that the theca was previously worn by a "bishop who carried it on a chain around his neck for many years" and that a "Vatican authority has testified to its authenticity". This person's new tactic on Ebay seems to be the sale of spectacular sounding (i.e. true cross, 12 apostles) phony relics, to get top dollar. They will probably try to sell as many "big-ticket" relics as quickly as possible, and switch to a new user name once they receive enough negative and harrasing complaints. I suspect this seller, of using the following additional fake user ID names on Ebay: ofminor, inipso, mundacor, , , reliquarium, and hold-em. I have reported the situation to Ebay authorities & I expect to hear back from them later this week--I will give you the details when I receive them. Although I could be wrong about this, I suspect that this person might possibly be a disgruntled ex-clergyman or somehow previously connected to the Church--his extensive knowledge of Church doctrine and other details evidenced on his website seems to exceed that of an average person. In any event, I reccomend that you follow this person's current & future auctions on Ebay (as well as their website), for more of the same garbage. I wish there was a quick, effeicient way to put a stop these abusive practices. I will send you more information as I receive it, & let me know if I can help you out in anyway. Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,

• -----Original Message-----

From:
Sent: Thursday, August 05, 1999 2:13 PM
To: 'ebay'
Subject: Lynn - A Solution to the Relic Problem !!!

Lynn,

Thanks for responding to my numerous emails. I challenge each first class relic separately in order to respond to any particular decision made at eBay in an unconfused way. I also do this so that if a different eBay representative happens to get a follow-up email, they also will not be confused. I don't know the Customer Service structure at eBay, so this is how I handle it. Also, there are different response rates on each item and the auctions end at different times. However, as per your suggestion, my last challenge included three new items. I forgot a fourth that I will have to challenge separately.

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I am sure that you are tired of receiving these challenges. I am also tired of challenging these auctions. However, I am duty bound, and will continue, to dispute these auctions until a satisfactory resolution to the problem is obtained.

I have an idea on how to ultimately resolve these problems. IT WILL REQUIRE A POLICY CHANGE AT THE MANAGERIAL LEVEL AT eBAY. However, it will be satisfactory to all concerned.

The Seller of an item at eBay is the one who is bound by the Prohibited Items Clause of Section 6.2 of the User Agreement - not the buyer or a third party such as myself who discovers violations of 6.2. Therefore, the BURDEN OF PROOF for the licit nature of an item in this contractual agreement falls on the Seller. I suggest the following amendment to Section 6.2 to deal specifically with the relic question.

- **AMENDMENT TO PROHIBITED ITEMS CLAUSE OF SECTION 6.2**

"eBay prohibits the sale of first class relics on saints because they contain human remains. The sale of any relic that is contained within a theca and/or reliquary, whether or not it contains an intact wax seal and threads, requires written documentation that this item is not a first class relic. Papers (authentic) must indicate that this item is a second or third class relic."

This is a fair solution. A statement by the seller that the lack of documents, or the ignorance of the seller, automatically means that the item is not in violation of Section 6.2 is insufficient to prevent the sale of human remains at eBay. Making a statement that there is no proof or information does not allow a positive conclusion of certainty to be made regarding rule violation. A perfect example of this is Item #142105733, [+] Antique Reliquaries Collection, 25 relic currently at auction at eBay. The Seller states: "Also, without proper documentation, we cannot state what the reliquaries contain. Therefore, as per eBay regulations, the reliquaries contain no human body parts, (1st class), without proper documentation to the best of our knowledge." This is blatantly false. One item is listed as "Ex ossibus Ant. Gianelli. 3 of the four red threads intact (1 relic inside)." "Ex ossibus" is Latin for "from the bones". This is clearly a first class relic.

THE STATEMENT BY THE SELLER THAT THIS AUCTION DOES NOT CONTAIN ANY HUMAN BODY PARTS AS PER eBay REGULATIONS IS NOT ONLY MEANINGLESS, BUT UTTERLY FALSE. This auction contains human remains. This is an example of why a proactive, firm policy is needed by eBay, rather than depending upon what the seller states in the listing.

In conclusion, if the Amendment to Section 6.2 that I propose above is implemented, it will absolutely prevent the sale of human remains, as relics, on eBay, whether by deceitful or purely innocent means. This solution will also stop the numerous emails that you receive from me challenging the sale of these first class relics.

I eagerly await your reply.

Have a nice day,

- **-----Original Message-----**

From:

To:

Date: Wednesday, August 11, 1999 2:36 PM

Subject: Latest response

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Dear Tom,

I received the response below about the 25 relic auction from Lynn at eBay. Something got her attention - perhaps a combination of our missives. Thanks for helping.

Tom - I never received a reply from _____ at MSNBC regarding the possibility of a story about this situation at eBay. I suggest that you hold off going to the press for a little while longer to see if eBay decides to accept the suggested amendment that appears below. I doubt it, as it seems that others at ICHR have made similar suggestions in the past.

Anyway, I would like to give them a chance to reject first. Do you feel that it would be useful to give them a warning before going with the media blitz as their "last chance to rectify the situation in house"?

Finally, I contacted Fr. _____ founder/director of _____ (a group to which I belong) about "S____la". S____la has auctioned first class relics and numerous other religious items (vestments, chalices) at eBay. I obtained S____la's name, address, and phone number from eBay. He lives in Southern Maine, and Fr. _____ is incardinated in the diocese of Portland, Maine (the whole state), and has received an imprimatur on his

book from Bishop _____. I suggested that Fr. _____ could alert the bishop and diocese about this, especially if S____la is getting relics from priests or a bishop in the area. I will keep you informed on any progress. Has there been any attempt to alert bishops in the diocese where repeat sellers (e.g., ____ (PA), _____ (Australia), or (Windsor, CA) are located? Perhaps contact by the bishop or his representative would cause these sellers to cease, especially if they are "Catholic".

God bless,

Most recent response to 25 relics auction

Hello _____,

Thanks for keeping with me on this one and for staying on top of this.

I have contacted the seller and asked for clarification for the items listed. I have also informed the seller of our policy about how we do not allow the listing of human remains here on eBay. I also anxiously await and will then take the appropriate action upon the seller's response.

Have a great day here on eBay!

Regards,

eBay Customer Support

• -----Original Message-----

From:

To:

Date: Friday, August 13, 1999 7:22 PM

Subject: My conversation with _____

Dear Tom ,

I just spent about 15 minutes speaking with Rob Chesnut, the Associate General Counsel at eBay. It was a

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civilized, informative conversation. Here are the relevant facts that I obtained. Most of this is probably not news to you.

_____ said:

- 1) he doesn't consider relics to be a major issue at eBay, given the size of the operation
- 2) he will only deal with items that are illegal or stolen. The best way to get relics banned for sale at eBay is to make their sale illegal.
- 3) there are many items offered at eBay that are offensive to many different people. eBay is not willing to be a moral police force for all items that are offensive to various groups of people. It is not good business.
- 4) the Customer Representatives at Community Watch at eBay get \$6 an hour. He does not expect them to be fluent in Latin and other foreign languages. (re: "ex ossibus" issue).
- 5) even if it says "first class" relic, it does not insure that the item will be removed. For example, he stated that relics of the True Cross and hair relics are first class and would not violate the human remains clause.
- 6) he has no fear of possible media involvement because it is not illegal to sell relics.
- 7) the contractual agreement (re: Section 6.2) is between eBay and the seller, not between eBay and the whole world (i.e., the buyers). eBay does not guarantee authenticity. Caveat emptor is the rule.
- 8) sellers break the rules and get around restrictions "all the time" eBay. eBay acknowledges that this happens and can only proceed when the evidence is clear that this is occurring in a specific instance.
- 9) that eBay is not willing to institute a policy change to ban the sale of relics. This would lead down a "slippery slope" of banning a plethora of items that people find objectionable.

My take on all this is that _____: considers this issue to be a nuisance; does not personally feel strongly one way or the other about the practice of selling relics; is thinking primarily in a business sense, and; is being legalistic and "objective" in his decisions. I don't think that there is much hope that there will be a policy change at eBay. The choices appear to be to continue to fight this on an item by item basis, try to get a law passed banning this practice (not likely, to say the least!), or to exert public (e.g., a Catholic boycott of eBay) and/or media pressure on eBay.

It's your call Tom. If you want documentation on my fights with eBay, I have saved most everything on my computer. Let's pray that this issue will somehow be resolved in God's will. Perhaps a ICHR-wide prayer initiative for the conversion and enlightenment of all those who sell and buy relics is in order. It seems obvious that we will not be successful by solely human means.

In the joy of the Cross,

-----Original Message-----

- From:
 - To:
- Date: Saturday, August 14, 1999 7:03 PM
Subject: Good News!!

Good news! Per my emails to you earlier this week, Ebay has reviewed my complaint against & has suspended his account! (and more importantly, his ability to sell bogus relics on Ebay!). They

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have also suspended several of his bogus user names as well!! (including the user names: _____, _____, _____ &). They also immediately cancelled his current auction (item # 144508694) for the phony reliquary containing all 12 Apostles. This auction was up to \$1,000, with 4 days to go, when it was cancelled. I'm sure it would have gone much higher, if it was not stopped. Best of all, since this person is suspended from selling on Ebay, he can no longer use his auction descriptions to promote his new website, which is set up exclusively to sell relics and phony relics. **I was able to convince Ebay to suspend this guy's account & other user names, by showing them that he was using "shill feedback" to artificially inflate his positive feedback results.** I carefully examined his previous auctions & feedback comments & was able to produce enough evidence against him & brought it to Ebay's attention. "Shill feedback" is the process of creating fake positive feedback for yourself, by using your own multiple user ID's. Ebay's investigation of this guy confirmed this & they immediately suspending all his activity. Although Ebay will not suspend a user for selling relics, they WILL suspend a user who uses fraud to promote their auctions by creating fake feedback. Reporting those who use "shill feedback" is a great way to get these people off Ebay. Unfortunately, a lot of relic sellers do not use shill feedback, but those who are stupid enough to do so, can be removed. I'm not sure how long an Ebay suspension lasts, but I imagine it's for at least a month. This is not a permanent solution to getting rid of this guy and his new website, but it will definitely slow him down & send a clear message that his actions are not appreciated by others. On a different note, I am interested in joining your organization. Let me know how I can do so. Thanks.

Unsolicited E-Mail message sent to a ICHR member

If you wish us to serve as "broker" for you, we can do so. We do so for a great many people, and have a mailing list of people who are looking for particular relics and relics in general for their chapels and/or shrines.

Generally, we can secure an offering for your relics for you. We ask (though we never demand) an offering of 10% (tithe) be made to us for the work we do in matching those who have relics to offer with those who seek them.

Generally, you can expect the following offerings for the relics you have described.

- a) One (1) reliquarium with the 12 Apostles in the same reliquarium \$1,500 to \$2,000
- b) The True Cross of Our Lord \$1,000.00
- c) The Crown of Thorns of Our Lord \$1,000.00
- d) The Cross of St. Dismis (Good Thief) \$500.00
- e) St. James the Less (ex ossibus) \$500.00
- f) St. Francis of Assisi (ex ossibus) \$200.00
- g) St. John Neumann (ex ossibus) \$100.00
- h) St. Elizabeth Ann Seton (ex ossibus) \$50.00
- i) St. Peter (ex ossibus-bone) \$500.00

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Please note, however, that we require that the relics be presented to us for authentication before we offer them to those who seek them. Generally, this process can be accomplished by means of a detailed scan of the relic (front and back) as well as the documentation being sent to us before we offer the relic. After an offer is made by us and accepted by someone, you will be required to send the relic to us and we will forward it to the person who is making the offering after we have authenticated it. We then send their offering to you.

We have recently received a request for a reliquary with the twelve apostles. If you wish to offer it, we can make the arrangements. We recently received an offering of \$1,500 for one.

• -----Original Message-----

From

To: 'saints'

Date: Tuesday, August 17, 1999 9:27 PM

Subject: Rob at eBay

Tom,

Below is my latest missive to Rob Chesnut at eBay. I have challenged most of the auctions. I have decided to send Rob a weekly update on how his rule is being ignored. Maybe he can be shamed into doing something (but I doubt it).

In Jesus through Mary,

Just to update you on the relic situation at eBay.

By my count, about 16 relics in thecas or reliquaries were being auctioned at eBay over the last week. The vast majority were clearly first class relics, as evidenced by simple visual inspection. Two auctions were closed; one because of fraud and one because an apparently naive seller stated that the item was a first class relic. Activity is increasing.

Sellers are realizing that eBay is not aggressively enforcing its prohibitions against the sale of human remains. They are making fools of eBay by thumbing their noses at, and making a mockery of, Section 6.2.

Have a nice day,

• -----Original Message-----

From:

To:

Date: Tuesday, August 17, 1999 5:27 PM

Subject: Re: E-bay: Christianity - Relic of True Cross

Mr. Serafin,

Not to belabor the point, but maybe this will help. It's all that's left of his auctions on Ebay because they

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delete them after 30 days.

(The email that I received from him was regarding his first auction.)

Auction for seller called A_____H:

A_____H email address:

A_____H has also requested that Ebay hide his feedback. That's usually only done if there are bad comments, but he's only got good comments and one neutral. So why the secrecy?

Hope this helps. I absolutely don't want to falsely accuse someone of something like this, but I NEVER would have emailed _____ to begin with if I wasn't 100% sure.

Take care, and God bless!

- **----Original Message Follows----**

From:

To: " Subject: Re: E-bay: Christianity - Relic of True Cross

Date: Tue, 17 Aug 1999 07:41:04 -0000

Dear _____,

I would like to thank you for the information. I just called this man and he said that Bishop _____ is his cousin? He reassured me of the fact that he is NOT selling relics. I'll check further.

In Christ,

Chev. Thomas J. Serafin, V.V.

ICHR/usa

P.O.Box 21301

Los Angeles, Ca. 21301

- **-----Original Message-----**

From:

To:

Date: Tuesday, August 17, 1999 12:00 AM

Subject: Fwd: E-bay: Christianity - Relic of True Cross

Dear _____,

You were kind enough few months back to send me an email telling me that I could get a 1st class of St. Therese at her National Shrine in Darien. (I tried; they said they had never heard of the Shrine distributing relics in all the years they had worked there. But that's okay.) I very much appreciated your kindness. :)

I want to return the favor, if you don't already know about the following.

You are probably going to cringe at this even though you already know his part. All I can do is say I'm sorry. But back in March, when I was doing a search in AltaVista, it came up with the ICHR's bulletin board.

And I've been reading it ever since. I'm very grateful for all that I've learned about the care of and reverence for relics, fake relics, and about more obscure relics like St. Philomena, etc. But lately I've seen something that makes me sick.

There is a _____ who is posting things lately on the bulletin board, specifically asking a couple of times how to get relics. Today's posts were the last straw, and I had to write you. Attached is an email that

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Mr. _____ to me back in May when he was auctioning off a Relic of the True Cross on Ebay. (I kept it because I know there's a Bishop _____ in _____, and thought it was too much of a coincidence that the last names were the same.) Using the name A_____H he has sold a number of relics. If you do a search on his completed auctions, you can see he had an auction of a theca with 12 apostles in it that he closed early. (Please see his bulletin board post of _____ 11/99: Re: is off eBay!) He sold more before that, but those auctions are older than 30 days and have unfortunately been deleted from Ebay.

PLEASE don't let this man obtain any relics through the ICHR (Carlos). He's a fake. It scares me to death that he's asking about getting relics when he's actually a relic seller. Lord only knows what he's going to do with them once he gets them. _____ had a post which stated concerns similar to mine. He's right. (And if you read the addressees in the attachment, one of them is _____ referred to a Bishop _____ in _____.

To prove beyond a doubt that he's the same man as the seller on Ebay, do the search on his email address on Ebay -- the email address that he's using on the bulletin board -- instead of A_____H. Also, the attached email has the email address he's using on the bulletin board, so I'm sure he's the same man.

I realize you all will ASAP probably find some way to prevent non-members like me from accessing the bulletin board, but if this helps you prevent any fraud or sacrilege on the part of that man and protects God's Saint's relics, it will be worth it.

Sorry this email has been so long. And please don't take offense at anything I've said. I'm just trying to return the favor. I'm sorry if I did it poorly.

Take care, and God bless!

• -----Original Message Follows-----

From:

To:

CC:

Subject: E-bay: Christianity - Relic of True Cross

Date: Wed, 12 May 1999 09:55:02 EDT

Just thought you might want to check out this auction. If not....please excuse my interrupting your day.

<A

HREF="http://cgi.ebay.com/aw-cgi/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&item=1221400" eBay item 1021400 (Ends 05/18/99, 09:51:52 PDT) - RELIC OF TRUE CROSS - RARE

Tom,

I followed up on the question that has been raised about _____ by _____.

Here are the facts;

The email addresses of _____ (_____) and _____ on the Board and _____ (a previous seller at eBay) are IDENTICAL: .

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Here is the text of the info on the 12 Apostles auction that was shut down early by ____.

"Relics of All 12 Apostles in a single reliquary. Small frame contains relics of all 12 Apostles with name tags identifying them around a small crucifix. On back of frame are threads with an unbroken red wax seal. I cannot make out impression clearly in wax. There is no accompanying documentation....so I cannot say for sure what these relics are so this reliquary does not, to the best of my knowledge, contain anything banned from being sold on e-bay. This item came from an old priests estate. This is being sold as a "private" auction to avoid harrasing e-mails. Any harrasing e-mails sent to me will be reported to AOL. Shipping is \$10 extra. Since this is a private auction... feel free to send your e-mail address at end of auction with you highest bid amount in case the high bidder backs out."

**Note the statements about items banned at eBay and harrasing emails.
These are quite inflammatory.**

There is no doubt in my mind that the _____ who posts on the ICHR Bulletin Board is identical to _____ who has been a seller on eBay. I guess it is possible that he has repented, had a change of heart, and no longer sells relics on eBay. He did close his own auction of the relics of the 12 Apostles early.

However, I think that _____ is right _____ is potentially very high risk, and I would advise against Carlos or anyone else transferring any relics to him unless he provides a satisfactory explanation for his action, past and present.

Hope this helps.

In the Joy of the Cross,

Dear Mr. William Timlin,

It was brought to my attention, most unfortunately, by an individual who is not connected to the ICHR in any matter, that you have sold relics on the e-bay internet auction house. That has been a very serious problem over the last year, we have tried very hard to get the internet auction houses to stop this enterprise. In light of the agreement you signed and the obvious violation of Canon Law we must rescind your membership in the ICHR, this of course extends to all membership privileges (bulletin board). After my initial inquiry via the telephone conversation with you, I contacted your religious sponsor who appears not to know you and received conformation that you are the seller on e-bay.

Chev. Thomas J. Serafin, V.V.
ICHR/usa
P.O.Box 21301
Los Angeles, Ca. 21301

• -----Original Message-----
From:

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International Crusade for Holy Relics – Internal Report - Members Only

To:

Date: Thursday, August 19, 1999 3:29 PM

Subject: Dear Chev. Thomas J. Serafin, V.V.

Sir,

Your information is incorrect and incomplete. I wish you had contacted me before you took such an action to get the entire story. You asked me in your initial contact if I were my cousin "bishop" _____ which I am not. As far as selling relics on e-bay in the past - you are correct - I did at one time do so....however I realized that it was wrong and stopped doing so. I have gone to confession, done my penance and amended my life. I have over 30 1st Class Relics and have just rescued 2 more.....certainly this shows some change in my life?

My sponsor, I assumed, was the Pastor of my Parish Church....was there some other requirement beyond that Sir? I have not yet read the book your group produces on Relics and am, therefore, not completely familiar with all the requirements.

All I can tell you is that I do not sell relics any longer and wish only to rescue them. I ask you to reconsider your decision in this matter.

Thank you for your attention.

-

- **Original Message**

Mr. Timlin,

It was not pleasant task for me to discover all the information nor an easy decision. I took into the consideration the fact that you have an additional e-mail address under the name of Bp_____@aol.com and the fact that you were selling the reliquary of the 12 apostles.

Here is the text of the info on the 12 Apostles auction that was shut down early by _____. (YOU)

"Relics of All 12 Apostles in a single reliquary. Small frame contains relics of all 12 Apostles with name tags identifying them around a small crucifix. On back of frame are threads with an unbroken red wax seal. I cannot make out impression clearly in wax. There is no accompanying documentation....so I cannot say for sure what these relics are so this reliquary does not, to the best of my knowledge, contain anything banned from being sold on e-bay. This item came from an old priests estate. This is being sold as a "private" auction to avoid harrassing e-mails. Any harrassing e-mails sent to me will be reported to AOL. Shipping is \$10 extra. Since this is a private auction... feel free to send your e-mail address at end of auction with you highest bid amount in case the high bidder backs out."

Note the statements about items banned at eBay and harrassing emails.

These are quite inflammatory.

Chev. Thomas J. Serafin, V.V.

ICHR/usa

P.O.Box 21301

Los Angeles, Ca. 21301

- **Original Message**

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You should be aware that it is unlawful for you to accept "titles" (Chev. Thomas J. Serafin, V.V.) under the constitution. What I cannot understand in accepting such "titles" is what does that have to do with the humility to be a guardian of relics?

May I suggest that you avail yourself of the Sacrament of Confession and drop the "titles?" Because.....in the end we are nothing without love and your "titles" no matter how real or fake with do you no good before the Throne of God on Judgment Day.

Oh...I just rescued 3 more First Class Relics. Do you still honestly believe that I do not belong with your group? (which I personally am beginning to believe is a cult)

May I quote from your text:

Members of ICHR do not and will not condone the buying or selling of relics, and will do everything within its powers to see that all Catholic individuals comply to the Code of Canon Law (Canon 1190, "It is strictly forbidden to sell sacred relics." Canon 1171, " Sacred things which are destined for divine worship through dedication or a blessing are to be treated with reverence and not to be employed for improper or profane use, even if they are under the control of private individuals", Canon 1376, "One who profanes a movable or immovable or immovable sacred thing is to be punished with a just penalty.")

While it is true at one time I did sell relics (on an extremely limited basis for for what I believed to be a just cause) I submitted to Church authority through the Sacrament of Confession and did my penance and have amended my life.

While you may run your "private" organization any way you wish....you cannot replace your judgment for that of the Church's and punish me further. You have violated Canon Law in this action and are, yourself, cut off from the faith even as I am not cut off.

I strongly urge you to reconcile with the faith and amend your life.

Note to John:

I ask you to please post this to the ICHR Board so the members can see and respond to Mr. Serafin's actions.

Thank you for your consideration.

In a message dated 8/19/99 10:09:38 PM Central Daylight Time,
writes:

Mr. Timlin,

It was not pleasant task for me to discover all the information nor an easy decision. I took into the consideration the fact that you have an additional e-mail address under the name of _____.

You are quite mistaken.....I am not BP _____ (that is my cousin)....however, you appear to have your mind set on banning me. It would appear that the Catholic Church is more forgiving than your organization.

Therefore - I hereby resign as a member of the ICHR/USA.

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Dear Tom,

Well caught! I received the following e-mail from Mr/Bishop Timlin while I was on holiday. I had an uneasy feeling and didn't reply...

Regards,

>Return-Path: Bp_____@aol.com
>Delivery-Date: Sat, 14 Aug 1999 19:34:56 +0100
>Received: from imo24.mx.aol.com by mail-b.bcc.ac.uk with SMTP (PP) with ESMTP;
> Sat, 14 Aug 1999 19:34:46 +0100
>Received: from by imo24.mx.aol.com (mail_out_v22.4.)
> id aORDa14808 (14461) for <>;
> Sat, 14 Aug 1999 14:35:31 -0400 (EDT)
>X-UIDL: 934750140.003
>From:
>Message-ID: <>
>Date: Sat, 14 Aug 1999 14:35:31 EDT
>Subject: GREETINGS
>To:
>MIME-Version: 1.0
>Content-Type: text/plain; charset="us-ascii"
>Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7bit
>X-Mailer: AOL 4.0 for Windows 95 sub 21
>Status: RO
>
>I recently joined the ICHR (and am very happy about it)....
>>I am currently the custodian of over 30 First Class Relics.....do you know of
>any places where I can, canonically, obtain additional relics for veneration and protection?
>
>Thank you for your time.
_____>

Hi again,

I'm not sure why you haven't responded to my past emails. I was trying to clarify some untruths you have in your web site about the ICHR. I have heard that people are very upset about the statements you made and that there is a meeting today with a team of Canon lawyers to talk about many issues including your web site. I think the point is that they are upset that you did not state the facts. You put the ICHR in a bad and inaccurate light.

I hope you do contact me so I may report to the others. There is no ill will intended by anyone, everyone just wants to stick with the true facts.

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Dear _____:

We receive about 100 e-mail messages a day. Twenty or so are from people attempting to acquire relics for public or private veneration. The remaining eighty are from people who have some complaint or another about us making relics available. Do forgive us if your email is lost in the "complaint" department and is not responded to. As a majority of the "junk" email is from people who identify themselves either directly or indirectly as members of the ICHR, it is sometimes difficult to sort out which are trying to be helpful and which are not. It has become our practice to let our web site speak for itself and to simply delete junk email unread.

It is not clear when you last visited our web site, but you may wish to do so again. The section on the ICHR and canon law has been revised to eliminate any unclear references to your organization. Any "lumping together" of the official views of your organization with the views of a few over zealous individuals has been clarified.

It is clear that we have a difference of opinion about how relics should be distributed and by whom. We are willing to agree to disagree on the subject and leave it at that. Unfortunately, with dozens of threatening and nuisance emails a day from people who identify themselves as being from your organization, it is difficult to disagree amicably.

We will continue in our crusade to assist the People of God in their quest to acquire relics. It is true that sometimes the prices on eBay become ridiculously inflated, even though we list relics at a starting bid of \$1.00 with no reserve. But for every over-priced relic that goes on eBay, we place ten relics in the hands of people who make an offering that is in no way excessive, and another five relics in the hands of people who cannot afford to make any offering at all.

We do not have official Vatican sources for these relics. We can't get them for \$40 or \$50. We rescue them from other auctions as well as from eBay under a variety of bidder names. We buy them at estate sales, flea markets, antique stores and other non-official places. Sometimes we are able to acquire them for a small amount of money. Sometimes we pay inflated prices for them. It is not unusual for us to pay \$200.00 for a relic that we will offer for much less; nor is it unusual for us to pay \$50.00 for a relic that we end up getting \$500.00 for at auction. But it all evens out, and whatever extra we have goes into a nonprofit fund used for the future purchase of additional relics.

Case in point: at a novelty/antique store in San Francisco, we found a large theca with the relics of 16 Jesuit saints. It was in a section largely dominated by occult items and the mocking of Christianity. They were asking \$4,000.00 for it; they obviously knew its value. It took every penny we had in reserve, along with a good chunk of change from some of our supporters to rescue this item.

We listed the item on our web site (it's still there). As of this morning, we have agreed to send it to a small mission in Puerto Rico that has been trying without success for five years to acquire relics through "official" channels. They were able to muster an offering of only \$100.00 for it, which we gratefully accepted.

This is what some members of your organization (as well as the ICHR web site) refer to as "profiteering." It is easy to point the finger at us when we get hundreds of dollars for a relic that we acquired for only \$50.00, but does your membership take into consideration that we often get only \$50.00 (or nothing at all) for a relic that cost us hundreds to acquire?

It is not our intention to be at odds with the ICHR or any other organization. We do not wish to enter into a debate about canon law or the semantics of whether we are "selling relics" or accepting an offering for them. What we would like is to be able to provide relics to those for whom it is nearly impossible to acquire relics through conventional means. We mind our own business, do not judge others, and go about doing what we feel is our ministry without having to attack those who disagree with us.

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We would hope that we could receive the same courtesy.

Father Curator

- Dear _____,

Thank you for your reply. I am puzzled when you say that you only take into consideration links that are one link deep. Could you please explain to me what is meant by the words "directly or indirectly" in user agreement paragraph 6.2 (g):

"(g) shall not link directly or indirectly to or include descriptions of goods or services that: (i) are prohibited under this Agreement"

I agree with you that the site in question does not say specifically which of the relics on offer contains human remains, but it makes it quite clear that first class relics are available from that site. Why does it have to say specifically which ones contain human remains for this to be a violation?

Incidentally the item has now been re-listed and is still linked to this site, item number 141770211.

Thank you for your attention in this matter,

- **At 1:12 03/08/99 -0700, you wrote:**

- Hello _____,

Thanks for writing with your concerns. I have looked into the auction reported and have determined the user isn't in violation of any eBay rules.

The site that the seller links to isn't offering items prohibited by eBay at this time. The site does not indicate if these relics are first class or contain human remains. Please also note that any links we take into consideration are one link deep.

Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Regards,

eBay Customer Support

Original message follows:

Dear Ebay Support,

Thank you for your reply about the items I brought to your attention on Friday. Could I please ask you to look again at item 138731251 entitled "EXTREMELY RARE RELIC OF THE TRUE CROSS !!!". If you follow the link on this auction to you will find that they offer for sale a variety of relics including human body parts. I quote: 'A "first-class" relic is an actual part of the saint's body. It could be a bone fragment, a hair, or even a bodily fluid like blood, tears or sweat which has been captured on a cloth or other object.' This does contavene 6.2 (g) which prohibits linking to a site which sells prohibited items (human bone fragments).

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May I also please draw to your attention a new item:

Item 139197688 "[i+i] Reliquary for displaying Relics".

This is currently also being auctioned on Amazon.com,
1829 /qid=93364/sr=1-14/002-83242-04765

This (concurrent auctioning on other sites) contravenes user agreement 6.3 (iii).

Thank you very much, once again, for your attention,

Sincerely,

Tom,

I have been fighting with eBay for some time now. A number of representatives, including "Lynn", have told me what the eBay policy now is. They will only close down an auction if the Seller states that the item is a "first class relic" or "contains bones or human remains". They adhere to the "four corners rule" (I don't know what this means, and I am waiting for an clarification from eBay). The only exception to this is if the violation is "obvious on its face" (I also have asked them for an example of this).

Sellers at eBay have caught on and are selling first class relics using various ruses. I have drafted a proposal to "Lynn" at eBay - it is included below.

I hope that this leads to a final resolution, at least for first class relics at eBay.

Dear Ebay Customer Support,

I sent this yesterday but I think I might have sent it to the wrong address as I have received no reply and no action has been taken about this auction, which is selling prohibited items. Could you look into this please?

Please may I draw to your attention the following auction which contains prohibited items:

142105733 [+] Antique Reliquaries Collection, 25 relic

The seller claims that he doesn't know what is in these reliquaries, but if he were to translate the Latin he would know what some of them are at least, as the nature of the relic is stated on the label. Two of these relics are definitely human remains. One is labelled "Ex Ciner S.Catharinae Ian.Vid.", which means "of the ashes of St. Catharine"; another is labelled "Ex ossibus Ant. Gianelli", which means "of the bones of Anthony Gianelli"

Please take action to remove these prohibited items.

Dear Ebay Customer Support,

With regard to my previous email about item 142105733 "[+] Antique Reliquaries Collection, 25 relic", I notice that the seller has now removed the words "ex ossibus" and "ex cinere" from his description of these items (the words were there yesterday). However, they are the same items and those words are still clearly visible on the labels in the photograph accompanying this auction. I must emphasise that these words mean "from the bones" and "from the ashes", so these are beyond a doubt human remains.

The action the seller has taken indicates that he does know that these are human remains and that this has

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been pointed out to him (why else remove those words?). He is attempting to hide the fact by stating that he doesn't know what these things are. I don't know about US law, but in the UK that would constitute fraud.

Please take action to stop this sale of human remains immediately.

Sincerely,

Tom,

I am not sure that I am an "answer to your prayer"!! I am not a lawyer, but a scientist. Anyway, I am honored to help however I can.

Regarding - it is too bad, but you can't even really detest them. It seems like they have good intentions. Unfortunately, "the way to hell is paved with good intentions" and the "ends don't justify the means" (2 platitudes in one sentence!). They still are breaking the rules, and I fear that many people are spending money that they can't afford to obtain these relics. Life is never simple.

The irony of all of this is that I AM ONE OF THE PEOPLE who would like to be the guardian of such relics and use them for both private and public veneration, and yet I have managed to acquire only a single first class relic of St. E. A. Seton from the Seton Shrine. (It was interesting to see someone else offering the same relic at eBay and that it was up to \$76 at eBay before we shut it down, especially when the donation requested for this relic is only \$14 plus \$3.95 postage/handling). I will keep up the fight. If I have any other ideas I will pass them on. I have not gotten a reply from the Catholic League or MSNBC yet, and my web page hasn't been indexed yet (unless it went up today). In the Joy of the Cross,

Hello! I was just browsing some auctions at Amazon.com and came across what is surely a fraudulent relic of the Blessed Virgin's father. The link is:

[24632/qid=9341622/sr=1-19/002-6925-3291](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B000000000/qid=9341622/sr=1-19/002-6925-3291)

I know how your position on the selling of relics at auctions and thought I should call your attention to this. This relic is one of the Ferrente relics...I myself have had experience with these as I was once given one as a gift by a well-meaning friend.

Regards,

Tom,

I received the response below about the 25 relic auction from Lynn at eBay. Something got her attention - perhaps a combination of our missives.

Thanks for helping.

Most recent response to 25 relics auction

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Hello _____,

Thanks for keeping with me on this one and for staying on top of this.

I have contacted the seller and asked for clarification for the items listed. I have also informed the seller of our policy about how we do not allow the listing of human remains here on eBay. I also anxiously await and will then take the appropriate action upon the seller's response.

Have a great day here on eBay!

Regards,
Lynn
eBay Customer Support

Lynn,

I received the following email from a fellow member of an organization that has been working very effectively with eBay to curb abuses of your user's agreement. I have worked with for many months on these same issues, of the sale of human remains on ebay. Please confer with him and you will discover that ebay's legal department does not want any human remains to be sold through your company. He understands, and we have spoken at length, about the nature of Relics (human). All documentation is written in either Latin, Italian, or French. "Ex Ossibus", which is the most common description in the world, when it comes to human remains Relics, means "of the bone(s)". That is clear and not just an interpretation.

The auction this is regarding is a collection of what appears to be many "bone" Relics. One of them is clearly labeled "Ex Ossibus". You must, by your own terms and conditions of use, end the auction and notify the seller.

I must say that I am disappointed at how the "Relic Sellers", who are selling off the bones of human beings, have continued to get around your rules. I have received emails recently from people who say that the Relic is in fact "ex ossibus", or human bone, yet their description at ebay says something like "I have no idea what type of Relic it is and therefore I am not violating user's agreement 6.2". They also have said "I cannot prove that it is human, therefore it is not" in their descriptions.

I believe the burden must be on the seller to know and represent what he/she is selling. What is going on is like saying "I cannot prove that it is pornography, therefore I can sell it at ebay", or "I cannot prove that it is a working Glock 17 semi-automatic pistol", therefore I can sell it at ebay.

End the auction and create a better way to curb the abuses. My feeling is that at this time you should ban all Religious Relic sales unless the seller can prove that it is not human remains. I can honestly tell you that probably 85% of all Relics sold at eBay are in fact "ex ossibus", yet you end only about 20% of them due to your failure to recognize what the item is. Why not err on the side of caution, especially considering there are Church, State, and Federal Laws prohibiting the sale of Human Remains?

Thank you for your time,

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-----Original Message-----

From: saintsalive@earthlink.net

To: <

Cc: <

Date: Sunday, August 08, 1999 8:12 PM

Subject: fake relics

Dear Sir,

As an organization we have been pressuring e-bay and amazon.com but to NO avail. I have contacted numerous State and Federal authorities, unfortunately the internet much resembles the wild west of a 150 years ago!

Currently I am assembling a report on the abuses and sales of the remains of our great saints as it relates to the internet. I would appreciate any information you might have and your written permission to include it in the printed report.

In Christ Crucified,

Chev. Thomas J. Serafin, V.V.

Tom ,

I AM CONSIDERING POSTING THE FOLLOWING ON THE ICHR BULLETIN BOARD. PLEASE ADVISE IF I SHOULD DO SO OR NOT.

It appears that eBay is getting much more, and unreasonably, stringent, in the requirements to close down the auction of relics.

I have been challenging "Item #142457313 - [+] Antique Reliquaries Collection, 25 relic" at eBay. The picture shows a relic labeled "ex ossibus" "Ant. Gianelli". I explained that "ex ossibus" means "from the bones" in Latin - thus, this is a first class, bone relic that contains human remains. This is the reply from "Lynn", a representative at eBay.

"Hello _____,

We understand you concern.

We are not experts at determining whether a relic is first class or whether it contains human remains. Therefore it must state in English that it contains human remains or is first class. That is what we need to be sure that the item is in violation of any eBay rules. Before any accusations are made against a user the item must be in violation without a reasonable doubt.

If you have items which are blatant in violation of eBay rules please forward them to us anytime.

Regards,

Lynn

eBay Customer Support"

My response was as follows:

"Hello Lynn,

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I am sure you realize that the position that is now being taken by eBay is completely unreasonable. "Ex ossibus" is first class, by definition. What if the seller said it was a "firste clast" relic (purposely misspelling the two words so they don't directly, formally, admit "in English" that it is "first class")? Would you leave the auction open? What if they said it was a first class relic but stated it in Latin, Spanish, German, or French?

Would you allow the auction to continue?

There comes a point when common sense and reasonable judgement MUST supercede arbitrary technicalities.

I await your response.

I am frustrated.

P.S. I sent you an email on the "Final Solution" to the relic problem (a suggested amendment to Section 6.2) on August 5th. Did you get this? Has a decision been made regarding this suggestion?"

I am afraid, unless the Seller makes a stupid mistake, that challenging auctions of relics by email to eBay may soon be pointless.

It may be time to escalate the fight or give up.

Dear Friends,

I have been an admirer of your web site for some time now & fully support the cause which you stand for. I have recently become aware of a new website which has been set up to sell phony relics. The address of the site is : . The guy who is running this site has been selling relics (which always seem fake) on the Ebay auction website for some time. He is very clever & hides behind several different user names to hide his identity, & changes them often. He is currently going under the Ebay user name of _____ & currently has an auction for a phony looking relic of the true cross (auction #141770211).

I have been following this guy for some time & have recently reported him to Ebay authorities for his questionable activities. I was quite disturbed to see that this guy has recently set up a web site for the exclusive purpose of selling relics (which are most likely fake) & decided to contact you folks to report the situation, and see if there is anything that can be done to stop (or even slow down) this person. As I mentioned previously, this guy is very clever & even claims on his website to be somewhat of a supporter of organizations like yours, but feels it is OK to sell relics anyway. I believe that this is only a ruse to try and deflect negative criticism and possible harrasment from those who oppose the sale of relics. If you want, I can also provide you with a short list of other phony Ebay user names that this guy hides behind. In any event, I just wanted to update you folks on this situation & to let you know what a great site you have. I fully support your cause & will always help out, if you need me. I respectfully ask that you keep my identity confidential, in relation to the information that I have provided you with.

Thanks.

Dear Ebay Customer Support,

With regard to my previous email about item 142105733 "[+] Antique Reliquaries Collection, 25 relic", I notice that the seller has now removed the words "ex ossibus" and "ex cinere" from his description of these

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items (the words were there yesterday). However, they are the same items and those words are still clearly visible on the labels in the photograph accompanying this auction. I must emphasise that these words mean "from the bones" and "from the ashes", so these are beyond a doubt human remains.

The action the seller has taken indicates that he does know that these are human remains and that this has been pointed out to him (why else remove those words?). He is attempting to hide the fact by stating that he doesn't know what these things are. I don't know about US law, but in the UK that would constitute fraud.

Please take action to stop this sale of human remains immediately.

Sincerely,

Hello! I was just browsing some auctions at Amazon.com and came across what is surely a fraudulent relic of the Blessed Virgin's father.

The link is:

24632/qid=9361622/sr=19/002-895-32015

I know how your position on the selling of relics at auctions and thought I should call your attention to this. This relic is one of the Ferrente relics...I myself have had experience with these as I was once given one as a gift by a well-meaning friend.

Regards, _____

- Saturday, August 14, 1999 9:55 PM

. Although Ebay will not suspend a user for selling relics, they WILL suspend a user who uses fraud to promote their auctions by creating fake feedback.

Reporting those who use "shill feedback" is a great way to get these people off Ebay. Unfortunately, alot of relic sellers do not use shill feedback, but those who are stupid enough to do so, can be removed. I'm not sure how long an Ebay suspension lasts, but I imagine its for at least a month. This is not a permanent solution to getting rid of this guy and his new website, but it will definitely slow him down & sends a clear message that his actions are not appreciated by others. On a different note, I am interested in joining your organization. Let me know how I can do so.

Thanks.

- **Original message follows:**

Hello,

The following auction is in violation of Section 6.2 of the User Agreement. It contains first class relics, which are clearly seen as chips of bone. Second class relics are unknown for most of the saints listed here, and third class relics are pieces of cloth, which the picture shows they are clearly not. The statement made that "to the best of our knowledge it does not contain human remains" is false. The seller fully realizes that these are first class relics. Item #144508694 RELIQUARY WITH ALL TWELVE APOSTLES...

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Hello,

Thank you for your e-mail.

Thank you for alerting us to this auction. The auction in question has been ended by eBay. We really appreciate the terrific help from users like yourself. Together, we can all help keep eBay a safe and fun place to trade!

Please let us know if we can be of further assistance.

Regards,
Ras
eBay Customer Support

Original message follows:

Hello,

The following auction is in violation of Section 6.2 of the User Agreement. It contains first class relics, which are clearly seen as chips of bone. Second class relics are unknown for most of the saints listed here, and third class relics are pieces of cloth, which the picture shows they are clearly not.

The statement made that "to the best of our knowledge it does not contain human remains" is false. The seller fully realizes that these are first class relics.

Item #144508694 - RELIQUARY WITH ALL TWELVE APOSTLES...PLUS!- Section 6.2 Seller:

Auction ends: 08/16/99

Because this item violates Section 6.2, please close this auction.

Have a nice day,

Hello,

There are three auctions of relics at eBay that warrant investigation.

1) #142105733, [+] Antique Reliquaries Collection, 25 relic Auction ends - 08/11/99

Seller: o_r

This collection contains at least one First Class Relic. The left, top relic in the picture on the top (viewed at hi res) and THE TEXT ITSELF states that one of the relics is:

"ex ossibus Ant. Gianelli" - "ex ossibus" is Latin for "from the bones".

Therefore this is a bone relic, contains human remains, and violates the Prohibited Items Clause of Section 6.2 of the User's Agreement.

THIS AUCTION INDISPUTABLY MUST BE CLOSED!!!!

2) #1418329, 3 Relic's *St. Joseph*Ste Anne*S. Caecilihe V.M. Auction ends 08/10/99

Seller: s_____

The Ste. Anne and S. Caecilihe relics may be First Class, bone relics (human remains). Please contact seller. No statement is made in this listing denying that these are first class relics or contain human remains. The seller is obligated to confirm in the listing that no human remains are being offered, as per Section 6.2 of the User Agreement.

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2) #141026956, Relic of S. Gemma Galgani in gilt reliquary Auction ends 08/09/99

Seller: _____

This relic may be First Class, bone relics (human remains). Please contact seller. No statement is made in this listing denying that these are first class relics or contain human remains. The seller is obligated to confirm in the listing that no human remains are being offered, as per Section 6.2 of the User Agreement.

Thank you,

Hello,

Thank you for taking the time to inform us about a potentially illegal or infringing item.

We appreciate your concern, and will now begin an investigation into this matter.

Thank you again, and we appreciate your help in keeping illegal and infringing items off of our site.

eBay Community Watch

Tom,

I have been fighting with eBay for some time now. A number of representatives, including "Lynn", have told me what the eBay policy now is.

They will only close down an auction if the Seller states that the item is a "first class relic" or "contains bones or human remains". They adhere to the "four corners rule"

(I don't know what this means, and I am waiting for an clarification from eBay). The only exception to this is if the violation is "obvious on its face" (I also have asked them for an example of this).

Sellers at eBay have caught on and are selling first class relics using various ruses. I have drafted a proposal to "Lynn" at eBay - it is included below. I hope that this leads to a final resolution, at least for first class relics at eBay.

God bless,

I noticed the following auction:

Item #142457313 - [+] Antique Reliquaries Collection, 25 relic Contains Bone Relic

Auction ends - 08/12/99

seller - _____

This auction was shut down yesterday (when it was labeled item #142105733)

because it contains at least one obvious first class relic. In the text description it was stated yesterday that one of the relics was : "ex ossibus Ant. Gianelli. 3 of the four red threads intact". I pointed out that "ex ossibus" is Latin for "from the bones". Therefore, this contains human remains and violates Section 6.2 of the User Agreement. The auction was correctly closed.

The seller has relisted the EXACT SAME ITEMS today (I have saved the page and jpgs from yesterday on my hard drive!). This time he deleted the "ex ossibus" from the text description in an attempt to sell the same first class relic that HE KNOWS contains human remains. However, he used the same picture. If you click on the top picture to get the hi rez picture (or on the first "here" under "Featured Image") you will see that the upper left hand relic says, "ex ossibus" and then "Ant. Gianelli". It's the same first class relic !!!

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The seller removed the "ex ossibus" from text, but left the picture that says the same thing. "Ex ossibus" in the picture is STILL Latin for "from the bones". *THIS IS A BONE RELIC AND CONTAINS HUMAN REMAINS, AND IT IS "OBVIOUS ON ITS FACE."* **PLEASE CLOSE THIS AUCTION.**

Lynn at eBay Community Watch told me once that "we believe that people are basically good". This may be true. **HOWEVER, YOU NOW HAVE PROOF THAT AT LEAST " _____ HAS LIED BY SAYING THAT THERE ARE NO "HUMAN BODY PARTS".** He was caught yesterday and relisted the same item, and is now caught again.

Besides closing down this auction, please consider two additional actions:

- 1) Ban "_____" from selling at eBay. His dishonesty has been revealed.
- 2) Institute a blanket policy requiring sellers to provide written document that show that the item is NOT a first class relic - **I SENT AN EXAMPLE TO LYNN YESTERDAY.** "_____" is not the only seller who lies and violates the contractual agreement (Section 6.2 of the User Agreement) with eBay regarding the sale of first class relics (human remains). He just got caught twice!!!! Only when you require the seller to prove conclusively that the item contains no human remains (is not first class) will this situation be resolved.

Have a nice day,

Hello,

- 1) Item #142457313 - [+] Antique Reliquaries Collection, 25 relic Contains Bone Relic
- 2) Click on top picture - look at upper left relic. It is labeled "ex ossibus Ant. Gianelli"
- 3) "ex ossibus" is Latin for "from the bones". Therefore, this is a first class, bone relic.
- 4) This auction violates the Prohibited Items clause of Section 6.2 of the User Agreement.

PLEASE CLOSE THIS AUCTION IMMEDIATELY.

Hello,

Thank you for taking the time to inform us about a potentially illegal or infringing item. We appreciate your concern, and will now begin an investigation into this matter. Thank you again, and we appreciate your help in keeping illegal and infringing items off of our site.

I have looked into the information that you provided regarding this situation. However, at this time, it has been determined that the member involved has not violated any eBay rules. Have a nice day here on eBay!
Regards,

Lynn e-bay Customer Support

- **Original message follows:**

Hello,

There are three auctions of relics at eBay that warrant investigation.

- 1) #142105733, [+] Antique Reliquaries Collection, 25 relic Auction ends - 08/11/99
Seller: _____

This collection contains at least one First Class Relic. The left, top relic in the picture on the top (viewed at hi res) and THE TEXT ITSELF states that one of the relics is:

"ex ossibus Ant. Gianelli" - "ex ossibus" is Latin for "from the bones". Therefore this is a bone relic,

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contains human remains, and violates the Prohibited Items Clause of Section 6.2 of the User's Agreement.

THIS AUCTION INDISPUTABLY MUST BE CLOSED!!!!

2) #141528329, 3 Relic's *St. Joseph*Ste Anne*S. Caecilihe V.M. Auction ends 08/10/99 Seller:

The Ste. Anne and S. Caecilihe relics may be First Class, bone relics (human remains). Please contact seller. No statement is made in this listing denying that these are first class relics or contain human remains. The seller is obligated to confirm in the listing that no human remains are being offered, as per Section 6.2 of the User Agreement.

2) #141026956, Relic of S. Gemma Galgani in gilt reliquary auction ends 08/09/99
Seller: _____

This relic may be First Class, bone relics (human remains). Please contact seller. No statement is made in this listing denying that these are first class relics or contain human remains. The seller is obligated to confirm in the listing that no human remains are being offered, as per Section 6.2 of the User Agreement.

Hello,

We appreciate your taking the time to contact us with your concerns.

I have looked into the information that you provided regarding this situation. However, at this time, it has been determined that the member involved has not violated any eBay rules.

- **Original message follows:**

Hello,

I noticed the following auction:

Item #142457313 - [+] Antique Reliquaries Collection, 25 relic Contains Bone Relic
Auction ends - 08/12/99 seller - _____

This auction was shut down yesterday (when it was labeled item #142105733) because it contains at least one obvious first class relic. In the text description it was stated yesterday that one of the relics was : "ex ossibus Ant. Gianelli. 3 of the four red threads intact". I pointed out that "ex ossibus" is Latin for "from the bones". Therefore, this contains

human remains and violates Section 6.2 of the User Agreement. The auction was correctly closed.

The seller has relisted the **EXACT SAME ITEMS** today (I have saved the page and jpgs from yesterday on my hard drive!). This time he deleted the "ex ossibus" from the text description in an attempt to sell the same first class relic that **HE KNOWS** contains human remains. However, he used the same picture. If you click on the top picture to get the hi rez picture (or on the first "here" under "Featured Image") you will see that the upper left hand relic says, "ex ossibus" and then "Ant. Gianelli". It's the same first class relic !!!

The seller removed the "ex ossibus" from text, but left the picture that says the same thing. "Ex ossibus" in the picture is **STILL** Latin for "from the bones". **THIS IS A BONE RELIC AND CONTAINS HUMAN REMAINS, AND IT IS "OBVIOUS ON ITS FACE." PLEASE CLOSE THIS AUCTION.**

Only when you require the seller to prove conclusively that the item contains no human remains (is not first class) will this situation be resolved.

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Have a nice day,
Hello Lynn or other Representative,

How could eBay have "determined that the member involved has not violated any eBay rules" for Item #142457313 - [+] Antique Reliquaries Collection, 25 relic? I have attached the picture of the relic in the collection that violates the Prohibited Items clause of Section 6.2 of the User Agreement. "Ex ossibus" is Latin for "from the bones". The relic says "ex ossibus". This is as "**OBVIOUS ON ITS FACE**" as is possible !!! By including this picture the seller is admitting that this is a First Class Relic. This is as blatant as can be. If eBay does not close this auction, it is violating its own rules.

THIS AUCTION MUST BE CLOSED. IF IT IS NOT CLOSED BY "COMMUNITY WATCH" AND "SAFE HARBOR" I WILL FORWARD THIS INFORMATION TO THE HIGHEST ADMINISTRATIVE LEVELS AT EBAY, TO INDICATE THAT THEIR STAFF IS NOT CARRYING OUT ITS RESPONSIBILITY.

Thank you,

Below is a complaint that I filed through the New Users option on the eBay web site. I have not yet received a response from eBay nor an acknowledgement that this communication was received. In case you did not receive it, it is duplicated below.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

On 7/14/99 I alerted eBay [policies (KM5681CK)] to an item that apparently violated the Users Agreement with eBay, specifically the prohibition of the sale of "human" remains as per Section 6.2 (Prohibited Items List). The auction was correctly ended by eBay.

This same item has been relisted for auction by the seller, as Item #138239. It is obvious to any trained observer who knows the nature of relics and views the picture, that this contains first class relics that are, by definition, parts of the body of a human being (human remains). If this item were purchased by a scientist (e.g., biochemist, molecular biologist, anatomist) and subjected to biochemical or histological (i.e., microscopic) analysis, the results would show that human remains are present, in violation of Section 6.2. Thus, the seller's statement that "as per ebay instructions, the reliquary contains no human body parts" cannot be made and is false.

This would be similar to a seller offering a "Blue, pistol-shaped mass of steel" and describing it as "having a barrel-shaped extension, a cylinder with six holes, a trigger mechanism, a hammer, and a handle" and then saying that "because there are no papers indicating that it is a gun and I have not fired a bullet from this item, it does not violate ebay's instruction against selling firearms". It appears as if the Seller

is attempting to violate his Users Agreement and avoid adherence to the prohibition against selling human remains at eBay. Given the excellent reputation of eBay and its commercial success and the very small percentage of sales that are accounted for by questionable items such as these, I am concerned that eBay might be inadvertently putting itself at risk by leaving this item up for auction. To whom it may concern,

Close inspection of the scan, including digital sharpening and enhancement, clearly shows that the relics in Item #138830 at auction at eBay are not pieces of cloth. The texture, shape, and color indicate, in my scientific opinion, that they are almost certainly bones and pieces of human tissue.

Because the auctioning of human remains (which include bone and tissue fragments) are prohibited by

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eBay by Section 6.2 of the User's Agreement, I request that this auction be closed.

BECAUSE THIS AUCTION ENDS IN LESS THAN 24 HOURS, PLEASE DEAL WITH THIS PROBLEM QUICKLY.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Dolores,

Thank you for looking into this auction. As you know, it has been completed. However, this seller, "" (who has now changed his Used ID to "L____a") has consistently violated the "Prohibited Items" clause of Section 6.2 of the User's Agreement.

He is offering ANOTHER collection of bone relics (Item #130306) at eBay. This seller is flaunting the rules and everyone who bids on these items realizes that he is making fools of the people at eBay and members of eBay (like myself) who abide by the rules.

Items #128230 (which has been completed) and #170307 (which is active) both contain human remains, which is prohibited by Section 6.2. The seller knows it and the bidders know it.

Thank you,

- **----Original Message-----**

From: eBay Customer Support

Sent: Monday, July 26, 1999 2:57 PM

To:

Subject: Re: Item #128830 (KMM12660CM)

Greetings,

Thank you for your e-mail. Thank you for contacting us about your concern in this situation. The auction(s) reported are currently being reviewed. Although we may not be able to keep you abreast of our actions, we pledge to thoroughly investigate the information you have provided. We appreciate your concern in helping to keep eBay a safe and reputable forum in which to conduct business. If you have any other questions or problems, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Have a great day!

Regards,

eBay Customer Support

- **Original message follows:**

To whom it may concern,

Close inspection of the scan, including digital sharpening and enhancement, clearly shows that the relics in

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Item #128830 at auction at eBay are not pieces of cloth. The texture, shape, and color indicate, in my scientific opinion, that they are almost certainly bones and pieces of human tissue.

Because the auctioning of human remains (which include bone and tissue fragments) are prohibited by eBay by Section 6.2 of the User's Agreement, I request that this auction be closed.

BECAUSE THIS AUCTION ENDS IN LESS THAN 24 HOURS, PLEASE DEAL WITH THIS PROBLEM QUICKLY.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Hello,

Thanks for writing. I have looked into all the auctions reported and have taken the appropriate action.

Relics 1,2,4,5 and 6 have been determined to not be in violation of any eBay rules. I have contacted the seller for clarification on relic number 3. Relic number 7 has been ended by eBay and all participating parties have been notified.

Thanks and have a great day here on eBay!

Regards,
Lynn
eBay Customer Support

- **Original message follows:**

Hello,

There are 7 relics for auction at eBay that appear to violate the Prohibited Items clause in Section 6.2 of the User Agreement that prohibits the sale of "human remains".

The seven relics are virtually certainly first class relics that are, by definition human remains. I have listed them below and have suggested the action that eBay could take. When responding to me on the outcome, please comment on all 7 individually. I am challenging all of them at once to reduce the work that you have to do in investigating these auctions. If you are unable to give me a report on EACH of seven using this mechanism, I will have to resort to challenging each relic separately in the future.

1) Item #148781 {WOW} VINTAGE RELIC "SS. MM. MAROCHII"

Seller <

Ends 08/17/99, 10:28:29 PDT

The seller does not state what class of relic this is and does not affirm that it is in compliance to eBay regulations. Please contact seller and inform him/her against the prohibition against selling human remains and ask for clarification regarding this item.

2) Item #148173Vintage Unusual St. Francis Assisi Relic

Seller <

Ends 08/17/99, 11:57:35 PDT

The seller does not state what class of relic this is and does not affirm that it is in

compliance to eBay regulations. Please contact seller and inform him/her against the prohibition against selling human remains and ask for clarification regarding this item.

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3) Item #157289 **MARGARET OF CORTONA** relic, 19th century

Seller _____

Ends 08/18/99, 21:09:13 PDT

The seller states, "As the relic has no document or label specifying what the relic is, this piece complies with e-bay rules." This is a false statement. A lack of documentation does not make a first class (human remains) relic comply to eBay's rules. Seller should give clear documentation that this is NOT a first class relic.

4) Item #1489455 **S. Teresiae a J. Inf.** relic

Seller _____

Ends 08/19/99, 02:53:05 PDT

The seller does not state what class of relic this is and does not affirm that it is in compliance to eBay regulations. Please contact seller and inform him/her against the prohibition against selling human remains and ask for clarification regarding this item.

5) Item #1458628 Relic of **S. Gemma Galgani** in gilt reliquary

Seller _____

Ends 08/19/99, 08:37:23 PDT

The seller does not state what class of relic this is and does not affirm that it is in compliance to eBay regulations. Please contact seller and inform him/her against the prohibition against selling human remains and ask for clarification regarding this item.

6) Item #1859178 Relic of **St. Therese of the Infant Jesus**

Seller _____

Ends 08/19/99, 09:13:51 PDT

The seller does not state what class of relic this is and does not affirm that it is in compliance to eBay regulations. Please contact seller and inform him/her against the prohibition against selling human remains and ask for clarification regarding this item.

7) Item #165059 **SPECIAL!!** Gilt reliquary w/ 1st class relic

Seller _____

Ends 08/21/99, 19:27:45 PDT

*NO DOUBT about this one !!! The seller admits it's a first class relic (human remains) and shows the documentation to prove it. This auction should be **CLOSED IMMEDIATELY.***

If there are clear violations of Section 6.2 or if the seller cannot provide documented proof that the items offered are NOT first class relics containing human remains, the auction should be ended. IT IS THE SELLER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO CONFORM TO EBAY REGULATIONS AND TO BE ABLE TO PROVE THAT HE/SHE IS IN COMPLIANCE.

Thanks and have a nice day,

Hello,

Please note that Item #137006, Multiple Relic, 7-Jesuits, Antique,Ornate is a "bone relic" that violates the

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Prohibited Items Clause of Section 6.2. It contains human remains. Even though there are no papers accompanying this relic, the seller is aware that human remains are present.

PLEASE CLOSE THIS AUCTION !!

Thank you,

Item #137306, Multiple Relic, 7-Jesuits, Antique,Ornate

Seller - _____

Auction ends - 08/01/99

Hello,

I have noticed that there is an item, #137006, Multiple Relic, 7-Jesuits, Antique, Ornate for auction at eBay. To the eye of any trained scientist, such as myself, it is obvious that these are "bone relics". This is in violation of the "prohibited items" clause of Section 6.2 of the Users Agreement.

Please consider this analogy. A clear plastic bag containing a dark red liquid is placed for auction at eBay. It is labeled "West Side B. B. (abbreviation for 'Blood Bank'), A+ ". The seller say that he has no paperwork to confirm that this is human blood - it could be cranberry juice. Therefore, this item "contains no human remains". The bag is the theca, the label on the bag is the name labels in the theca, and the bone fragments are the red liquid, and the seller says that there is no documentation so there are no human remains. Would you allow this auction of the bag of red liquid to continue?

Item #137076 is clearly a prohibited item.

PLEASE STOP THIS AUCTION.

Hello,

Why has this auction not be closed?

Dr. _____

• **---Original Message-----**

From: eBay Customer Support []

Sent: Wednesday, July 28, 1999 11:36 AM

To: Subject: Receipt of your email to eBay Customer Support (KM17436C0M)

Hello,

Thank you for taking the time to inform us about a potentially illegal or infringing item.

We appreciate your concern, and will now begin an investigation into this matter.

Thank you again, and we appreciate your help in keeping illegal and infringing items off of our site.

eBay Community Watch

Hello Dr. _____,

Thank you for writing eBay. The user has been contacted regarding the auction in question. He has stated that the relic contains no "Human Remains" and has no documentation to prove otherwise. He has been informed of our policy regarding relics. "eBay is Only a Venue. Our site acts as the venue for sellers to

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conduct auctions and for bidders to bid on sellers' auctions. We are not involved in the actual transaction between buyers and sellers. As a result, we have no control over the quality, safety or legality of the items advertised, the truth or accuracy of the listings, the ability of sellers to sell items or the ability of buyers to buy items." Please let us know if we can be of further assistance.

Regards,

Dolores
eBay Customer Support

- **Original message follows:**

Hello,

I filed a report to you yesterday about an infringing item being offered for auction. Your automated response appears below, followed by my original communication.
I was wondering what progress was being made in closing down this auction.

Thank you,
Dr. _____

- **---Original Message-----**

From: eBay Customer Support []
Sent: Wednesday, July 28, 1999 11:36 AM
To: Dr. _____
Subject: Receipt of your email to eBay Customer Support (KM31746C0M)

Hello,

Thank you for taking the time to inform us about a potentially illegal or infringing item.
We appreciate your concern, and will now begin an investigation into this matter.
Thank you again, and we appreciate your help in keeping illegal and infringing items off of our site.

eBay Community Watch

I respectfully disagree with this decision on four points:

- 1) This seller (who used to be) has a long history of violating Section 6.2 and has had many auctions closed for this reason. Thus, his "assurance" that there are no human remains is highly suspect.*
- 2) Who is more likely to tell the truth - a Seller who has a vested interest in making a profit, or those who point out these violations and have absolutely nothing to gain?*
- 3) The current bid on this item is over \$3000. Look at the object. It is obviously not worth this amount to a bidder UNLESS it is the most desirable class of relic, First Class, which by definition contains human remains. Obviously the bidders have reached the same decision that I have - the item contains human remains.*
- 4) While eBay only acts as a venue and is free from liability, this exemption from liability is only in effect until eBay is informed by a knowledgeable person about an illegal item. At this point, liability shifts to*

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eBay, as they have been informed of an infraction. Judgements to close auctions are always being made at eBay - thus, eBay is acknowledging responsibility and liability for items offered for auction.

PLEASE CONSIDER THESE POINTS AND I URGE eBay TO CLOSE THIS AUCTION.

Thank you,

• -----Original Message-----

From: eBay Customer Support

To:

Sent: 7/30/99 11:21 PM

Subject: RE: Progress on eBay Customer Support ? (KM321610KM)

Hello Dr. _____,

Thank you for writing eBay. The user has been contacted regarding the auction in question. He has stated that the relic contains no "Human Remains" and has no documentation to prove otherwise. He has been informed of our policy regarding relics. "eBay is Only a Venue. Our site acts as the venue for sellers to conduct auctions and for bidders to bid on sellers' auctions. We are not involved in the actual transaction between buyers and sellers. As a result, we have no control over the quality, safety or legality of the items advertised, the truth or accuracy of the listings, the ability of sellers to sell items or the ability of buyers to buy items." Please let us know if we can be of further assistance.

Regards,

Dolores
eBay Customer Support

• **Original message follows:**

Hello,

I filed a report to you yesterday about an infringing item being offered for auction. Your automated response appears below, followed by my original communication.

I was wondering what progress was being made in closing down this auction.

Thank you,

Dr. _____

• -----Original Message-----

Why hasn't this auction been closed down. The seller is in violation of Section 6.2. The auction ends in 3 HOURS.

Thank you

• -----Original Message-----

From:

• Sent: Monday, July 26, 1999 10:27 AM

To:

Subject: Item #134153 - Section 6.2

Hello,

Item #134153 at auction at eBay is a relic. This appears to be a first class relic, which means that it contains a piece of "bone" or "tissue". As such, this violates the "Prohibited Items" clause of section 6.2

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of the Users Agreement that prohibits the auction of human remains. Please terminate this auction.
Thank you.

Hello,

Thank you for your e-mail.

We have reviewed the auctions you have brought to our attention and taken appropriate action. We would also like to explain eBay's policy with respect to reports like yours. eBay is not in a position to make judgments about the authenticity or authorized nature of auction items, except in the most extreme circumstances. Although you may be extremely knowledgeable about these types of items, we often cannot remove items upon the representations of third parties whose credentials we cannot verify, unless of course the alleged infringement is obvious on its face.

We appreciate your vigilance in helping us to keep inappropriate auctions off eBay.

- **Original message follows:**

Hello,

There are 5 new relics up for auction at eBay, one listed on Aug. 14 and 4 listed yesterday !!! As you can see, sellers are realizing that eBay is not aggressively enforcing its prohibition against the sale of human remains (first class relics) and activity is increasing. Please investigate all of these auctions, take the appropriate actions and, when you can, let me know what action has been taken. My reporting of more than one auction in a single email has worked satisfactorily recently, and it significantly reduces work for both you and me.

It is clear to all - human remains are being auctioned at eBay.

Have a nice day,

1) Item #148182229 ++BEUTIFUL VINTAGE RELIQUARY +STE.C.LABOURE

Seller:

Auction ends: 08/23/99

This is CLEARLY a first class relic. Inspection of the scan shows a rough, irregular appearance because it is bone. It is not cloth or other material. This relic is human remains. Please contact the seller and inform him that the sale of human remains is prohibited at eBay and have this auction closed.

2) Item #147093229 [+] Ornate Multiple Relic of Early Martyrs

Seller:

Auction ends: 08/21/99

Relics of early martyrs are almost always bones. The nature of the saints listed here virtually assure that these relics are human remains. This seller (whose previous ID was) is a notorious violator of eBay's rules against the sale of first class relics (human remains). He has had numerous previous auctions shut down for flagrantly violating Section 6.2. If he can not provide evidence that these are not human remains, that the auction should be closed.

3) Item #1482724 EARLY RELIC OF S.TERESA OF LISEUX-LITTLE FLOWER

Seller:

Auction ends: 08/21/99

AND

4) Item #1482471 EARLY RELICS OF S.GABRIEL & S.PAUL OF THE CROSS

Seller:

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Auction ends: 08/21/99

The seller of these two items should be informed of the prohibition of the sale of human remains (first class relics) at eBay. From a description of the items it is most likely that they violate Section 6.2. Please contact the seller and inform him of the prohibition and request that he close the auction if human remains are present.

4) Item #148221471 EARLY RELICS OF S.GABRIEL & S.PAUL OF THE CROSS

Seller:

Auction ends: 08/21/99

The appearance of the relics (irregular and rough) indicate that they are first class relics (human remains). Please contact the seller and inform him about the prohibition of the sale of human remains at eBay. Please have him close this auction.

Hello _____,

We have reviewed the auction you have brought to our attention and have taken no action. We would like to explain eBay's policy with respect to reports like yours. eBay is not in a position to make judgments about the authenticity or authorized nature of auction items, except in the most extreme circumstances. Although you may be extremely knowledgeable about these types of items, we often cannot remove items upon the representations of third parties whose credentials we cannot verify, unless of course the alleged infringement is obvious on its face.

We appreciate your vigilance in helping us to keep inappropriate auctions off eBay. If we can be of any further assistance, please let us know.

Regards,

Kai C.
eBay Customer Support

- **Original message follows:**

Hello,

Yesterday I alerted you to "five" relics that appeared to violate section 6.2. Unfortunately, I made a mistake and item #5 was the same as Item #4. The item that I did not challenge by mistake is below. Sorry for the inconvenience.

5) Item #147939360 - Religious relic case (PHOTO) Seller:

Auction ends: 08/23/99

The appearance of the relics (irregular and rough) indicate that they are first class relics (human remains). Please contact the seller and inform him about the prohibition of the sale of human remains at eBay. Please have him close this auction.

Have a nice day,

Hello,

There is a clear violation of Section 6.2 for an auction at eBay. The seller admits in the TITLE that this is a first class relic. First class relics are human remains, which are prohibited from sale at eBay.

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Item #1450549 - SPECIAL!! Gilt reliquary w/ 1st class relic
Seller:
Auction ends - 08/21/99

PLEASE CLOSE THIS AUCTION. Have a nice day,

Hello,

Thank you for your e-mail.

Thank you for alerting us to this auction. The auction in question has been ended by eBay. We really appreciate the terrific help from users like yourself. Together, we can all help keep eBay a safe and fun place to trade!

Please let us know if we can be of further assistance.

Regards,
Ras
eBay Customer Support

Dear Ebay Customer Support,

Please may I draw your attention to the following item:

155024 Relic/Relics(AltarStone) Byz Rite.Antimension

This is a square of linen into which relics of martyrs have been stitched and which has then been consecrated by a bishop. These are used in the eastern Church as portable Altars, and were used in the Western (Roman Catholic) Church as well for a period in the 1960s and 70s. I suspect the one on sale here is one of the latter type as Eastern ones tend to be richly decorated. By the Canon Law of both Eastern and Western Churches, the relics used to consecrate Altar stones and Antimensia (**such as this**) ***must*** be actual pieces of the martyrs' bodies. This item therefore necessarily contains human remains and thus contravenes user agreement 6.2.

If you wish I can provide references for the fact that Altars and Antimensia have to contain human remains relics. Please let me know if you would like this information.

Thank you for your attention,

London, UK

Confidential from _____ to _____.

Hello,

I just read an email from _____ and thought I would follow up. His claim is real and this is not a sick joke. Unfortunately, it is a sick reality.

However strange it may sound, the Catholic Church, as well as other Christian communities, have distributed Relics of Saints and other Holy persons to the faithful for thousands of years. The purpose was

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to have a "real" physical tie to the Saint. Typically, a 1st Class Relic contains a fragment of the Saint (bone, tissue, hair, etc.). This is a tradition that goes back more than 2,000 years and is referenced in the Bible as well as other religious writings. The guardian of such a Relic would venerate (pray to) the Saint to intercede on behalf of the guardian. In other words, praying to the Saint to help.

Throughout history, the Church has distributed these Relics upon request and was compensated just a few dollars to cover the cost of the preparation of the Relic. Usually, only Priests and Nuns obtained Relics. Unfortunately, upon the death of a member of the Religious Orders, Relics can find their way into the hand of antique dealers who auction off or display these Holy items in shops around the world.

Typically, The Relic is mounted on a red cloth with a label with the Saint's name. This cloth is usually 1" in diameter. That is placed inside a metal container. Then red silk threads are criss-crossed and sealed with red wax. Then a backing is placed on the container. You view the Relic through a glass front. The Relic cannot be removed without breaking the threads and or seal. All of this preparation can cost the Church say \$30, which is refunded by the person obtaining the Relic.

There are many Relics that are contained in elaborate Reliquaries, made of silver or gold, which may have a physical value of hundreds, thousands and possibly up to millions of dollars. There may also be significant artistic value of Reliquaries. One should, however, be reminded that the "bone" of a human cannot have a value placed on it. What many Relic sellers say, which you can see if you look at ebay, is "you are bidding on the Reliquary, the Relic and documentation are a gift". This is also a way the sellers have tried to get around Church law and ebay rules. The result of this tactic is a sale of the Relic, which cannot be separated from the Reliquary, for say \$500. That is \$500 for a \$10 base metal container that may have been made 10 or 20 years ago and may have been obtained from Rome two weeks ago for a donation of \$35 (again, for the \$10 container and then \$25 for the process of assembling the item, packing, shipping, etc.).

Today, there are people who are obtaining such Relics from legitimate sources and listing them at places like eBay where the ignorant may pay hundreds or thousands of dollars for the item. Sellers have received their Relics from Rome on Monday, listed at eBay on Tuesday, and receive \$300 to \$3,000 the following Tuesday from a desperate buyer who thinks all of life's problems will be solved by having a Relic of a Saint. Granted, part of the problem is the distribution of Relics, which the Church has recently started to discontinue due to the abuses. One problem is that we have some 2,000 years worth of Relics out in the world and this has created a market place for people to profit.

Profiting of this nature is considered a sin - the sin of Simony. Taking a holy object that is distributed for \$30 and making \$500 off a "faithful" person is just not right. We may consider that the faithful should therefore not "buy" a Relic for that amount, but there are many desperate people in the world. A buyer may be a good practicing Christian with a severe problem. That has pushed people to pay any amount to obtain a Relic of their favorite saint to pray to. I have heard people say "although it may break your Church law to sell Relics, it is not a "sin" or against the law". Consider that according to the Bible, which all Christians base their faith on, it is a sin to profit from such items. I've shared email with an individual who has a web site selling Relics. This person suggests that because he is not Catholic, he is not bound by Canon Law. I suggest that he has obtained Catholic Relics and therefore the morally correct thing to do would be to honor the Catholic Law regarding the Relics.

Despite repeated pleas to ebay since people started to sell Relics there, ebay has been slow to react. They now admit that the listing of "human remains" is against ebay policy. They admit that a Relic of a saint that has bone or tissue would violate that rule. The problem is enforcement. Even today, there are a dozen "human remains" Relics listed at ebay. The sellers have educated themselves on how to avoid having their auction closed. At first, sellers would capitalize on the type of Relic. People would describe their item as "1st Class Bone Relic of St. John". When ebay started to close those auctions, they started saying "1st Class Relic of St. John". Just by taking out "bone", they are now exempt from ebay action.

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I believe that in cases like this the auction should be "guilty until proven innocent". In other words, treat the Relic as though it was "human remains" unless the seller can prove otherwise. How would you react to a listing that showed a picture of a gun (prohibited from ebay) along with a listing that said something like "It looks just like a Glock 17, but I cannot prove it is and so therefore it does not violate ebay policy". That is exactly what the Relic sellers are saying in their descriptions today. Just go look at one and you will see people saying "I have no documentation that this is human remains, therefore this auction does not violate ebay rules". The same logic would apply to explosives or other banned items.

I can honestly say that about 90% of all Relic traffic at ebay is "human bone". Because the Church freely distributed these, there was not much call for the 2nd class version of the Relic. In other words, the faithful would rather have a 1st class bone relic than a 2nd class Relic of a piece of the Saint's clothing. Both required the same materials and labor for the container.

This may sound strange, but it is all true. There is a web site published by the group that _____ and I are members. Feel free to look at it:

Personally, I have a problem with this practice on many levels. One is the excessive profiting off the innocent. Second is this type of treatment of "human remains" of Saintly people. Third is the "double standard" I detect from ebay. I could go on, but you get the point. Although I am not sure if any of this violates any laws, it feels immoral to me. I do know there are state and federal laws that prohibit the sale of human remains (mummies, native american bones, etc.). These should also apply to the bones and remains of Christians (Saints, martyrs, Blesseds, etc.).

Do check ebay and look up "relic", "relics", "reliquary", etc. Under expired auctions and current ones you will notice many such items. Recently, the Relic sellers have even artificially blurred the scans so that ebay Support cannot visually identify the Relic as being bone. The old listings, however, may have descriptions saying that the item is "bone".

Please consider this information, but you may not use my name without my permission. Nothing I have said is any secret, but I value my privacy. Consider this correspondence confidential.

These comments are my personal views. For an official position on this, please feel free to contact Tom Serafin, the U.S. leader of our group, who asked me to give you his information. He can be contacted via email at (he is on the cc list of this email).

Chev. Thomas J. Serafin, V.V.

ICHR/usa

P.O.Box 21301

Los Angeles, Ca. 21301

Thank you for your interest, _____

- Tom,

Please read this from the bottom up. My intent was to see if I could get a blanket "yes" - then we could see if Vatican City was "under Canon Law" or had a specific prohibition. Looks like that won't work. But at least Rob is listening (and almost seems to want to help). Maybe we can have some of our foreign members look into it. I would think that Germany might be very restrictive, due to past history (e.g., holocaust). Do we have any German members who could check this out?

If nothing else, these approaches continue to bring the issue to the forefront at eBay, and cost them time and money. As long as we do not harass them, we should (gently and respectfully) tax their resources as

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much as possible.

In the Joy of the Cross,

• -----Original Message-----

From: []

Sent: Tuesday, August 17, 1999 3:05 PM

To: 'Chesnut, Rob'

Subject: Relic Report (resend) - did not go through the first time

Rob,

Just to update you on the relic situation at eBay.

By my count, about 16 relics in thecas or reliquaries were being auctioned at eBay over the last week. The vast majority were clearly first class relics, as evidenced by simple visual inspection. Two auctions were closed; one because of fraud and one because an apparently naive seller stated that the item was a first class relic.

Activity is increasing.

Sellers are realizing that eBay is not aggressively enforcing its prohibitions against the sale of human remains. They are making fools of eBay by thumbing their noses at, and making a mockery of, Section 6.2.

- Have a nice day,

-----Original Message-----

From: Chesnut, Rob []

Sent: Wednesday, August 18, 1999 7:50 PM

To:

Subject: RE: Relic Report (resend) -

- Again, eBay has no policy against the sale of relics. If brought to our attention, we will remove auctions that contain human remains (except hair) based on a review of the plain wording of the auction, or clear evidence in the picture. I know that you disagree with the sale of relics, _____, but that's our position. If you can point to any federal or state law banning the sale of relics, I would be happy to reconsider our osition. Rob

----Original Message-----

From: []

Sent: Thursday, August 19, 1999 5:25 AM

To: 'Chesnut, Rob'

Subject: Legal aspects of the sale of relics

Rob,

Because eBay is international (due to the nature of the internet), what if there were a law of another nation or sovereign government that banned the sale of relics. Would that be sufficient to stop this practice on eBay?

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• -----Original Message-----

From: Chesnut, Rob []
Sent: Thursday, August 19, 1999 11:56 AM
To:
Subject: RE: Legal aspects of the sale of relics

Not on our main site, which is based in the US. But we have another core site in Germany that follows German law, and will have other core sites in other countries, each following the law in their respective countries. If you aware of laws barring relic sales in other countries, feel free to pass them on to me, and I'll make sure they are incorporated in the proper core site laws.

-----Original Message-----

From:
To:
Date: Thursday, August 19, 1999 12:56 AM
Subject: SALE OF SAINTS' RELICS

Hi,

I just read your information concerning the sale of relics of the Saints. I recently bought a relic of Saint Hyacintha Mariscotti from an Ebay seller. I won the relic with a bid of \$350.00.

I am Catholic and didn't realize until recently that selling a relic for profit is not allowed. My intention for the purchase of the relic was to add it to my nun collection. Eventually I plan to open some sort of exhibit in honor of the countless women who served God as nuns. So my intention was never to re-sell the relic to make a profit. I am a little concerned, however, with my purchase of the relic. How do I justify spending \$350.00 on the piece? Should I give the relic back to the Church?

I hope you can help.

Thanks,

Dear _____,

I always try to justify my own actions by wondering if my intentions were pure of heart. I'm sure yours were.

Enjoy your relic, venerate it, and give thanks to God that you were able to save this relic from possible decreation.

Chev. Thomas J. Serafin, V.V.

ICHR/usa

P.O.Box 21301

Los Angeles, Ca. 21301

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- **Date:** Wednesday, August 18, 1999 8:39 PM
Subject: Re: SALE OF SAINTS' RELICS

Thank you so much for your response. I made a promise to the Blessed Mother that as long as I live I will ensure the safety and proper veneration of the relic. And while I'm sure She believed me, it was certainly nice to receive your email as a confirmation that I haven't done anything sacrilegious.

Take care,

The following is an actual internet website that sells relics!

Relics of the Saints

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AVAILABLE RELICS IN OUR CURRENT COLLECTION

Updated August 16, 1999

We currently have quite a few relics of saints in our collection. To list them all would be counter-productive, as the list is in a constant state of flux. If you are looking for a particular relic, please us and ask us if we have it.

Below is a list of relics that are currently being featured:

Featured Saints:

St. Ambrose, Bishop, Confessor
St. Basil, Bishop, Doctor & Confessor
St. Dominic Guzman, O.P.
St. Edward, King, Confessor
St. Francis Xavier Cabrini, Virgin
St. Gemma Galgani, Virgin
St. Jerome, Doctor and Confessor
St. Nicholas, Bishop
St. Pius V, Pope

Apostles and Evangelists:

St. Paul, Apostle, St. Andrew, Apostle, St. Bartholomew, Apostle, St. James the Greater, Apostle, St. James the Less, Apostle, St. Jude-Thaddeus, Apostle
St. Mark, Evangelist, St. Matthew, Apostle, St. Matthias, Apostle St. Phillip, Apostle

*Need a reliquary to display your relic? Click on the image above to contact **Sacerdote** for more information on how to purchase a beautiful reliquary like this one. Tell him you saw it on the **Relics of the Saints web site**.*

Special Collections:

Reliquary containing the relics of Sixteen Jesuit Saints

**Reliquary containing the relics of Fourteen Apostles
(the "Twelve" plus St. Paul and St. Barnabus)**

Please note that we have only ONE of each of the above available at this time, and some are in the possession of our associate collectors at different locations around the world. Once the above relics are gone, they are gone, and it is unlikely we will have many more in the near future.

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Relics of other saints and blessed are available upon request. Please us to ask if the relic you are seeking is in our collection or those of our associate collectors.

A NOTE ABOUT "FAKE" RELICS

The history of many relics--which the Roman Catholic Church refers to as "invented" or "discovered" relics--would lead any "rational" person to understand that a number of relics that have been certified by church authorities were never "real" in the first place. But for the person of faith, it wouldn't matter if the wood that St. Helena allegedly found 300 years after the crucifixion was really the "True Cross" or if the DNA in the relics of St. Peter and St. Andrew prove that they were not brothers. Believing that the saints intercede for us, and enlisting the aid of a relic, icon or statue as a visual focus of our prayers is part of our belief system.

Recently much has been said about so-called "fake" relics being circulated. It is alleged that relics which come in a particular type of theca or which have documentation bearing the signature of a particular postulator are not genuine. While it is possible that there are intentionally faked relics or forged documents out there, *it is highly unlikely that every relic that comes in a particular type of theca or which bears the signature of a particular postulator is fake.*

We never knowingly sell fake relics. To the best of our knowledge, all relics that we offer come from sources which we believe to be authentic. We are not experts on how to determine whether a relic is fake or not. All we can do is provide you with all the information we have available to us without breaching the confidentiality we have established with the people who have supplied relics to us--people whom we believe to be honest and trustworthy. We will tell you what the theca looks like, whether the threads and seals are intact, give you a description of the seal and even send you photographs of the relic and/or the documentation when it is available. When given permission from the supplier of the relic, we will also tell you the history or original source of the relic. But *you* must make the decision as to whether the relic is "real" or not. ***If you have any doubts at all, we strongly advise you not to purchase a relic from us or anyone else.***

Relics are instruments of faith, which St. Paul defines as, "...the assurance of things hoped for; the evidence of things not seen." When you acquire a relic, you should be seeking to bring yourself closer to God as the saint whose relic you venerate gives you faith to do so. If you are buying a relic because you want a scientifically verifiable piece of history, or because you want to collect souvenirs of church celebrities, please don't buy our relics; neither fake or real relics are going to do you any good.

Relics are like statues, icons or other religious images. They provide for the faithful a physical point of contact whereby we might venerate a saint for whom we have a particular devotion, or whose life we seek to emulate. Relics--like statues and icons--do not perform miracles nor do they have magical powers. They only help to remind us what we can be, and provide us with an image of that to which we aspire.

Relics of the Saints

THE ICHR AND CANON LAW

The International Crusade for Holy Relics (ICHR) is an organization which attempts to protect the relics of the saints from desecration and make them available for public and private veneration. We applaud their efforts and support their cause.

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However, we disagree with their philosophy with regard to the distribution of relics. We do not believe that the relics of the saints "belong" to the Roman Catholic church (or any other organized church), and therefore reject the idea that they are governed by Roman Catholic Canon Law.

We believe that the relics of the saints are the property of the People of God--who *are* the Church--and that the People of God should have full and unhindered access to them. Accordingly, we favor the distribution of the relics by any legal means, including the distribution for an offering to the provider.

While there can certainly be abuses of the distribution of relics freely and without the "permission" of ecclesiastical hierarchs, we feel that this is the exception rather than the rule, and therefore promote the distribution of relics to the People of God through any lawful means.

It should be noted that some members of the ICHR will often quote "Canon Law" which they say prohibits the "sale" of relics. The "Canon Law" to which they refer is the Canon Law of the Roman Catholic Church. While it is true that the "sale" of relics is prohibited by Roman Canon Law, there is no prohibition against acquiring of relics for private veneration. As for the "inflated prices" that relics can fetch, we can only offer a bit of common-sense advise: never pay more than what you believe the relic is worth to YOU.

There is also no prohibition in Roman Canon Law against receiving an offering for relics; as a matter of fact, if you are fortunate enough to have a bishop give you a letter authorizing you to receive relics from the Vatican, you will discover that they require you to make an offering to cover the "expenses" of providing you with a relic. One of our clients relates his experience acquiring relics from the Vatican: "The first thing they did was hand me a price list."

Also of note is the fact that non-Roman Catholics, e.g., Eastern Orthodox, Anglicans, Traditional and Independent Catholics, are not bound by Roman Canon Law. As a matter of fact, Canon 1 of that very law states that the canons (laws) contained in the volume are binding *only* on the Latin (Roman Catholic) church. While all Christians bear a responsibility to protect and revere the relics of the saints, only Roman Catholics are prohibited from "selling" relics by Roman Canon Law.

We certainly appreciate and support the cause of the ICHR, but we respectfully disagree with their stand on the unhindered distribution of relics. We are grateful for the hard work of their very important apostolate, and wish them continued success.

Atheists attack relics on the internet!

Of Bones and Boners: Saint Peter at the Vatican

The Probing Mind

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Down in the Vatican cellar, Catholics are "venerating" the bones of chickens, pigs, and a mouse -- in the belief that they are the relics of St. Peter. How this fraudulent situation came to be is a tangled tale going back to problems encountered by Pope Pius XII when he tried to find a place to stave his predecessor.

Pope Pius XII said in his Christmas radio message on Dec. 23, 1950: "The essential question is as follows — has the tomb of St. Peter really been found? The final conclusion of the work and studies answers that question with a most clear yes. The tomb of the Prince of the Apostles has been found. A second question, subordinate to the first, concerns the relics of the saint: have they been found?" ... New investigations, most patient and accurate, were subsequently carried out with the results that we, comforted by the judgment of qualified, prudent, and competent people, believe are positive. The relics of Saint Peter have been identified in a way we believe convincing...

[W]e believe it our duty, in the present state of archaeological and scientific conclusions, to give you and the church this happy announcement, bound as we are to honor sacred relics, backed by a reliable proof of their authenticity... [I]n the present case, we must be all the more eager and exultant when we are right in believing that the few but sacred mortal remains have been traced of the Prince of the Apostles, of Simon son of Jonah, of the fisher-man named Peter by Christ, of he [sic] who was chosen by the Lord to found His church and to whom He entrusted the keys of His kingdom ... until His final glorious return.

Pope Paul VI, June 26, 1968 ... own in the basement of the Vatican, less than twenty feet beneath the high altar of St. Peter's Basilica, there is an ugly, graffiti-covered brick-and-plaster wall. Inside the wall there is a rectangular cavity containing nineteen clear Plexiglass boxes filled with old bones, some of which are claimed to be the mortal remains of St. Peter himself. A small breach in the wall allows two of the boxes and their bony contents to be seen through the open bronze work of a gate set some distance in front of the wall. Ten of the bones thus carefully preserved at this most holy focal point in all of Christendom, however, are the remains of domestic animals — goats, sheep, cows, swine, and a chicken. Scripture tells us [Mk 14:30,72] that Peter denied his master thrice before the cock could crow twice. Could this chicken be the remains of Peter's fabled cock?

The presence of pigs at the most sacred focus of a church such as St. Peter's is startling, to say the least. When we reflect that Simon Peter was supposed to have been Jewish before converting to Catholicism, the mixing of his alleged remains with those of swine cries out for an explanation. None of the popes, however, has ever even mentioned that pigs were being venerated in their cellar — let alone offered an explanation for this astounding fact.

One box contains the skeleton of a mouse. Perhaps it is being kept as the universal standard church mouse. The rest of the boxes, stowed away to await the Second Coming, contain what arguably may be considered to be the fragmentary remains of a man who was over the age of sixty at the time of his death.

The bones have been certified to be the veritable remains of the Prince of Apostles himself, St. Peter. That these are the actual remains of St. Peter we cannot doubt: a successor of St. Peter, Pope Paul VI, has confirmed the fact — although he never made it clear how the mouse bones and barnyard cattle parts functioned in Peter

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when he was alive. Most precious among the relics remaining of Peter's skeleton in the Vatican are 29 fragments of one of his skulls. (St. Peter's other skull is preserved in a reliquary at the Cathedral of St. John Lateran.)

The skeleton and skulls now venerated as the remains of St. Peter are not the only relics of the Prince of Apostles to have been discovered by the Roman Church, however. In 1949, Vatican archaeologists discovered a different skeleton of the bony saint, several yards away from the wall in which the bones presently worshipped reside. The bones were reported to have been found in a "hypogeum" — apparently a rough cavity hollowed out at the base of a wall coated with red plaster (the so-called *Muro Rosso* or "Red Wall" against which the graffiti-covered wall abuts, see Fig. 1). They were reported to have been found in "a sepulchral urn of plain terra cotta."

The bones were kept for fourteen years by Pope Pius XII himself, in his private apartment. Although he later hedged somewhat concerning the authenticity of the bones, it is obvious that privately he felt they were genuine. After all, his personal physician Dr. Galeazzi-Lisi and several medical experts had studied the bones minutely *chez Le Pape* and had stated that the bones were those of a man, powerfully built, who had been perhaps sixty-five or seventy years old at death. If that wasn't St. Peter, who else could it have been?

A rather surprising answer to this question was given by Venerando Correnti, an anthropologist hired by the Vatican in 1956 to study the pope's prized bones — the ones found in what Pius had certified to be the genuine tomb of St. Peter. Correnti first suspected that something was amiss when he pulled a *third fibula* from the pile of bones the pontiff had been hoarding for so long. Normal humans, of course, have only two fibulas — one in each leg. Then he discovered *five tibias* to supplement the three fibulas. This meant that he was dealing with five to eight legs! Although Peter was noted for his aquatic exploits — both as a fisherman and a water-walker — he

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was never mistaken for an octopus. And so, Correnti quickly must have realized the pope had been guarding the remains of more than one person: two men and an old woman, he finally decided. The men were adjudged to have been in their fifties when they died, the woman in her seventies.

In addition to the human remains, Correnti's collaborator Luigi Cardini identified bones that once galumphed around as hogs, sheep, and goats — and some that scratched around as chickens. Perhaps a fourth of the bones extracted from the alleged authentic grave of Peter — fifty or sixty fragments altogether — came from a Roman barnyard instead of from the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Unlike the bones said to have been found inside the graffiti-covered wall, the bones actually taken from the "true tomb of the Prince of Apostles" are not venerated. Quietly, they have been stored away in some secret location.

The mixing of sows and saints certainly creates a problem for Catholic apologists. The presence of animal bones mixed in with human bones can easily be explained by a variety of believable hypotheses if St. Peter never existed as a historical figure or if the bones have nothing to do with an actual St. Peter; it is very difficult to explain if any of the human bones discovered really are those of a historical Prince of Apostles and first pope.

There are other problems too. Why, for example, should the remains of the most famous person in Catholic history be stashed away in a grubby hollow wall instead of being placed in a magnificent sarco-phagus inside something looking like a tomb? (According to the sixth-century *Liber Pontificalis*, the emperor Constantine built the basilica at the site of the "Temple of Apollo" and enclosed St. Peter's body in a five-foot-high, cubical bronze structure.) Why is there no carefully chiseled Latin inscription reading:

**Here Lies Saint Peter
Put Penance Pence in Pot**

Amusingly, when Pope Paul VI pronounced the relics authentic back in 1968 he unwittingly highlighted this fundamental deficiency by quoting the fourth century church historian Eusebius to the effect that the tomb should have borne a label:

It is said that Paul was beheaded by him (Nero) and Peter crucified at Rome and the *monuments inscribed with the names of Peter and Paul* still testify to this and are still visited in the cemeteries of the city of Rome.

We may note further that Eusebius speaks of *cemeteries*, not *basilicas*, as housing the "monuments" of the apostles. Since Eusebius — so intimate with the emperor — must have known of the newly-built St. Peter's Basilica in Rome but didn't say anything about one of the monuments being recently enclosed in it, the natural inference is that it was located elsewhere — ruling out the Vatican digs. Moreover, when Eusebius wrote his *Theophania* in CE 333 (well after the completion of the basilica), he said that the Romans had honored Peter "with a splendid sepulcher overlooking the city — a sepulcher to which come crowds from all over the Roman Empire as though drawn to a great sanctuary and temple of God." Again, no hint that the tomb was inside a church. And if it was, why did the modern excavators find a miserable unmarked grave instead of "a splendid sepulcher"?

Despite the underwhelming appearance of the miserable structure uncovered by the Vatican excavators, Paul VI declared it to be not only the "tomb" of St. Peter but the fabled "*Tropaion* of Gaius" as well.

In his *Ecclesiastical History* [II xxv 6-7], Eusebius tells of an ecclesiastic named Gaius who, around the year CE 200, was quarreling over who had the best holy sites

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with a certain Proclus. "Gaius," Eusebius writes, "in a written dialog with Proclus, the leader of the Phrygians, says the following about the places where the sacred relics of the apostles mentioned [Peter and Paul] are deposited: 'But I can point out the *tropaia* of the apostles; for if you go to the Vatican or the Ostian way, you will find the *tropaia* of those who founded this church.'"

Even Catholic apologists agree that Gaius was wrong about who founded the Church of Rome, but they still grasp at his allusion to the *tropaia* of Peter and Paul. But what are *tropaia*? Monuments? Graves? Tombs? Memorials? Relics? Despite the arguments of Catholic apologists, from the context of Gaius' argument with Proclus it is clear that *tombs* or *graves* can be ruled out as meanings of *tropaia*, The Red Wall structure cannot be a *Tropaion* of Gaius.

Suspicious History Of The Discoveries

On Monday, 22 August 1949, the front page of *The New York Times* carried an article headlined "Bones of Saint Peter Found Under Altar, Vatican Believes." The subtitle stated that the relics were "Reported to Be in Urn Guarded by Pontiff." Written by Camille M. Cianfarra, the article announced that "The bones of Saint Peter, 'Prince of the Apostles,' who, according to Christian tradition, was crucified in Rome during the second half of the first century AD., are understood to have been found less than twenty feet below the pavement of St. Peter's Basilica." Without noting any contrast to honest, scientific, archaeological procedures, the article continued:

Vatican archaeologists who directed the excavations have taken an oath of secrecy and are therefore forbidden to confirm or deny the discovery. However, statements made over a period of months by various persons in the Vatican are said to have supplied enough circumstantial evidence that the remains of Saint Peter have been recovered in the hypogeum, or subterranean cell, where tradition said he was buried.

This crypt was unearthed two years ago in the course of secret excavations in the Vatican Grottoes. The bones are being preserved in an urn closely guarded by Pope Pius XII himself, in the private chapel next to his study, Vatican circles said.

Concerning the all-important question of just where the holy bones had been found, Cianfarra wrote that "In the middle of the hypogeum Vatican archaeologists were understood to have found a sepulchral urn of plain terra cotta. In it there were bones. The Pope... was informed immediately and visited the crypt, in complete secrecy, after the doors of the Basilica had been closed to the public."

Actually, the excavations had been going on in secret for more than a decade when this story went to press. Several days after Eugenio Pacelli had been elected Pius XII, in March of 1939, he ordered Msgr. Ludwig Kaas, the "Secretary and Administrator for the Fabric of Saint Peter's" — a sort of glorified head janitor — to find a suitable place in the cellar to bury his predecessor, Pius XI.

Why all the secrecy? Cianfarra explained:

According to officials the reason for keeping the discovery secret is that the Pontiff, before making the announcement which, they said, will certainly be of tremendous interest for both Roman Catholics and non-Catholics, wants his archaeological experts to gather proofs so incontrovertible that no one will be able to challenge their authenticity. Accordingly, tests were said to have been made, the nature of which was not disclosed.

Of course, this was an admission that discovery of truth was not the guiding principle in the decade-long enterprise. The experts were "to gather proofs" for predetermined conclusions, not go where the evidence might lead. They had to make sure the data

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were “cooked” properly — so that “no one will be able to challenge their authenticity.” The Vatican proceedings were no different than the “research” done by creationists who sign an oath declaring what they shall find if ever they should carry out an investigation.

The pope was to wait until the end of his jubilee year, 1950, before saying anything more on the subject. Strangely, when he did talk about the bones he backed off from the position everyone expected him to advance. Reporting on the pope’s Christmas message broadcast on 23 December 1950, *The New York Times* quoted the pope the next day:

The excavations... at least inasmuch as they concern the tomb of the Apostle (explorations which have been the object of our thoughtful attention from the first months of our pontificate), and their scientific examination have been brought to a happy conclusion... Has the tomb of Saint Peter really been found? To that question the answer is beyond all doubt: Yes. The tomb of the Prince of the Apostles has been found. Such is the final conclusion after all the labor and study of these years. ...

A second question, subordinate to the first, refers to the relics of Saint Peter. Have they been found? At the side of the tomb remains of human bones have been found. However, it is impossible to prove with certainty that they belong to the body of the Apostle.

It was not until the following year, however, that the Vatican published the official account of its underground activities. Printed in two great folio volumes, the report was entitled *Explorations Carried Out Under The Confession Of Saint Peter In The Vatican During The Years 1940-1949*. Notwithstanding the impressive appearance of this treatise, it can hardly be considered a scientific report of the excavations. It would not allow reconstruction of the discoveries as they occurred. Despite the interesting photographs contained in these volumes, it is an admitted fact that photographic “control” during the excavations was completely lacking. Since some structures were destroyed in the course of work, it is now impossible to reconstruct the scenes confronting the excavators as they worked.

Perhaps the biggest shock one gets from these two tomes comes from the almost complete lack therein of information on the bones or the circumstances of their discovery: no information on which of the four investigators had found them, how many there were, nor what they looked like. And no mention of any terra cotta ossuary urn. There are two diagrams which show a spot labeled *O* for *ossa* (“bones”), roughly below the *Muro Rosso*. In the text there is the off-hand comment that “At the bottom of this [niche at the base of the Red Wall] scattered and intermingled on the ground were found some human bones which were collected with care.”

In a personal memoir by one of the excavators, the Jesuit Engelbert Kirschbaum, we are told that “A heap of human bones was found, as if expressly concealed in the earth, beneath the Red Wall, at the spot where its foundations show the triangular break. They lay in a heap, and to a depth roughly, of 30 centimeters.” A footnote, however, tells us that “The corresponding sketches in *Esplorazioni*... do not bring this out and require emendation.” No corrected diagram is presented, leaving us with nothing that even claims to show the true discovery site and situation of the Red-Wall bones.

Concerning the space in the graffiti wall — the cavity which today contains the Plexiglass-boxed relics from Old MacPeter’s Farm — the official report notes only that “In this little box we found remains of organic material and of bones, intermingled

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with dirt, a strip of lead, two strands of silver thread, and a coin from the Viscounty of Limoges, datable between the 10th and 12th centuries.”

There is only one photograph of these bones of contention in the *Explorations* report. Reprinted in nearly every book written on the subject of St. Peter’s bones, it shows several human bones lying on the dirt inside a triangular crevice under the *Muro Rosso*. Readers of the report can only suppose that this is what the excavators saw when they first reached this spot. But the photograph was faked. A footnote in Kirschbaum’s memoir reveals that “They [the Red-Wall bones] had to be removed temporarily from this spot before they could be photographed.”

What kind of archaeology is this? Not only is there no minutely detailed account of the layout and disposition of the bones when they were discovered, there is instead a completely false picture of the discovery! Instead of being shown a picture of bones piled up about a foot deep — thus indicating that this was not an original burial — we see two or three bones lying on the ground in what conceivably could be an original burial. Just why is it that the bones had to be removed before they could be photographed? Only nefarious reasons come to mind as possible answers.

Although the official report gives no useful information on the circumstances surrounding the discovery of the bones under the Red Wall, Kirschbaum, as we have seen, does mention the subject several times in his memoir *The Tombs Of St Peter & St Paul* and tries to account for the fact that the bones were found piled up, not scattered on the ground as implied by the *Explorations* report and the faked photograph. “It might be surmised,” he writes, “that scattered remains had at one time been collected and placed beneath the Red Wall. In that case, anatomical investigation would have showed that they belonged to different skeletons. Medical examination, however, gave the contrary verdict, *i.e.*, that all these bones belonged to one and the same person. That person was further described as an elderly and vigorous man. The skull is missing.”

A dead ringer for St. Peter! Especially since it was believed that Peter’s skull was in a reliquary in the Cathedral of St. John Lateran. But alas, poor Engelbert! As we have seen, Correnti’s anthropological study of the Red-Wall bones subsequently showed that they were the remains of at least three individuals (one of them a very old woman) and included 29 skull fragments and some livestock parts. Moreover, Kirschbaum’s comment that the bones had been found in a small heap — implying that they had been piled up by someone — is at variance with the original report, of which he was a co-author. It had claimed that the bones were found “scattered and intermingled on the ground.” Both accounts contradict the report in *The New York Times* indicating that the bones had been in a terra cotta urn in the middle of a hypogeum. Worse yet, all three seem to contradict the pope’s comment that the original set of bones was found “at the side of the tomb”!

What difference does it make whether the bones were scattered or piled up when found, exposed or enclosed in an urn or wall? A great deal, as it turns out.

When Constantine built the old St. Peter’s Basilica over the surface of a magnificent pagan cemetery *ca.* CE 320-325, numerous tombs and burials were violated in the process. As the supreme pontiff of the Roman religion, Constantine could grant official pardon for this *violatio sepulchri*. Even so, care was taken to minimize the degree of outrage committed. When his builders could not avoid disturbing a burial, the bones were carefully stacked within sarcophagi. But this respectful procedure for dealing with the remains of disturbed burials existed long before the time of Constantine, and was clearly practiced at the time the so-called graffiti wall was built beside the Red-Wall shrine alleged to mark the site of St. Peter’s burial. On the north

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face of the so-called “Tomb of the Egyptians,” one of the many tombs discovered beneath the floor of St. Peter’s, a pre-Constantinian, chest-like masonry structure was discovered filled with human bones, obviously the remains of earlier burials reburied when the tomb was built.

The mixtures of bones found by the Vatican investigators — whether we consider the bones found beneath the Red Wall or in the cavity of the graffiti wall — can be explained simply as bones unavoidably or unexpectedly uncovered and collected by tomb builders.

More Suspicious History

We have already seen that the bones now venerated are those which are supposed to have been found in the cavity of the graffiti wall, not the bones reported back in 1949 to have been found in an urn at the base of the Red Wall. Why is this? If the true grave of the apostle is the cavity at the base of the Red Wall, why did Pope Paul VI ignore the bones found in it and certify instead the bones associated with the graffiti wall? In two words, the answer almost certainly is “Margherita Guarducci.”

Margherita Guarducci was a devoutly Catholic epigrapher engaged by the Vatican in September of 1953 to study the graffiti exposed over a decade earlier – including the graffiti which covered the so-called “graffiti wall.” She decided that many of the graffiti involved a Christian secret code, revealing not only that the spot had been frequented (probably secretly) by Christians up to the time Constantine built his basilica over it, but also that a cult of Peter had existed there. Much of her “decipherment” is fanciful and fails to recognize possible Mithraic significance in at least some of the graffiti. (Abundant archaeological finds attest the worship of Mithra as well as the Great Mother on the Vatican hill very close to the site of the present church.)

Naturally, Guarducci concluded that all these Petrine graffiti meant she was close to a site of great significance to Peter-worshippers. What else could it be but Peter’s grave, as Pius XII already had concluded? Moreover, one fragment of incised Red-Wall plaster seemed to clinch it. Written in tiny Greek capital letters – letters no taller than the capitals in the title of this article – the graffito when whole (see Fig. 2) is claimed to have read *(Petros eni, “Peter is inside”)*. But inside what? Were these tiny letters on a big wall all there was to mark the most important tomb in all of Christendom? If they were inscribed on the Red Wall, wouldn’t it imply Peter was *on the other side* of the Red Wall rather than below it? If Peter really was under the Red Wall as originally supposed, shouldn’t the graffito have been the Greek equivalent of “Peter is below” instead of “Peter is inside”?

The plaster fragment had been discovered by Antonio Ferrua, one of the four original excavators. Although it had not been seen when the marbled cavity of the graffiti wall was originally studied, it suddenly appeared one day late in December of 1950 when, for no special reason, Ferrua had shone a light into the supposedly empty chamber. He concluded that it had become dislodged from a part of the *Muro Rosso* onto which the graffiti wall abuts and had fallen into the cavity. According to Walsh, Ferrua came to treat the piece of plaster as his own property, withholding it from study by other scholars. Worse yet, he included an incorrect sketch of it in an article written for *La Civiltà Cattolica*, and did not relinquish the piece to the Vatican until 1957.

As is often the case with evidence adduced to support religious claims, one has to use a bit of imagination and “reconstruction” to get from what is real to what is

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claimed. In point of fact, not all of the letters in the supposed message are to be found on the surviving bit of plaster, and not all of what can be seen upon the piece necessarily fits easily into the reconstruction. If the piece of plaster simply fell off the Red Wall, wouldn't it be logical to examine the Red Wall carefully to see if the missing letters are still there *in situ*? No one reports having done this, or even suggests that it would be desirable to do so. The closest thing to recognition of the problem is found in Guarducci's official report of her study of the graffiti. "The detachment from the wall," she writes, "unfortunately had the consequence of altering the margins of the fragment so that it is no longer possible to restore it to its exact position on the face of the *Muro Rosso*."

How handy! If the graffito were in fact Mithraic or of some other pagan nature, we will never be able to know. All we have left is a tiny fragment which arguably fits into a sentence meaning "Peter is inside," and we have no way of knowing if the fragment had been altered while in the possession of Antonio Ferrua.

Confession in the *Confessione*

With so many graffiti supposedly indicating the presence of Peter, Margherita Guarducci was puzzled that almost nothing was found inside the cavity of the graffiti wall. It was 1953. More than ten years had gone by since the excavations had been completed and she just happened to be in the part of the church known as the *Confessione*, standing before the graffiti wall with Giovanni Segoni, one of the Vatican workmen. As John Evangelist Walsh tells it, she recalled that Segoni had taken part in the work of excavation and so she asked him if he remembered anything having been in the wall cavity. To this not only did he answer yes, he confessed that he himself had taken a bunch of bones out of the marbled space, put them into a wooden box, and stored them away. He then led her to a room filled with dozens of boxes holding "bones and other things turned up in the early digging" – none of these remains being known to the four excavators who authored the official Vatican report! Obtaining a particular box, he handed Guarducci the remains of an identifying attached small card which is alleged to have said simply: "*ossa – urna – graf*," i.e., "bones – urn – graf[ititi wall]."

Why had a common workman done such a thing? A monsignor had made him do it.

The monsignor had been none other than Msgr. Ludwig Kaas, nominal head of the excavation project and author of the glowing preface for the *Explorations* report. It was the same monsignor who told of the "methodical exploration" conducted "with the strictest scientific principles," of solving "scientific and technical problems with the most rigorous method and absolute objectivity." It was the same Msgr. Kaas who assured readers of the official report concerning "scientific scruples" and wrote of "illustrating with sober objectivity and documented completeness the discoveries and ascertained facts of the last decade, determined to clear the path of the prejudices of now-outworn polemic, the path on which we seek the truth and nothing but the truth," concluding with a reference to the "very serious work carried out with objective criteria, sustained by rigorously scientific arguments."

Encountering effusions such as these, one naturally is led to say, "Methinks he doth protest *too* much!" — and rightfully so in the case at hand. For Kaas is charged with having sabotaged much of the excavation proceedings and having made any pretense of "scientific objectivity" a laughing matter. If any part of the charges be true, the entire matter of St. Peter's grave and bones need be taken no more seriously than a Three Stooges film.

The *Reader's Digest* editor John Walsh indicates that very early in the proceedings a rift had developed between the four excavators and Msgr. Kaas – who "knew little or

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nothing of archaeological technique.” Soon nearly all contact between Kaas and the team had ceased. Walsh elaborates:

It was Kaas' practice late each evening, after everyone had departed and the excavations lay quiet, ...to tour the whole area accompanied by one of the foremen of the Sampietrini, Giovanni Segoni. Almost never present during the day's work, on these daily tours Kaas would inspect every detail of the most recent digging and dismantling. As the work beneath the body of the basilica brought to light stray parts of skeletons, he had made it his personal duty to see that no human bones should, in the confusion of cleaning up, become mixed with the mounds of dirt and debris and be accidentally thrown out. Whenever bones were found, including an occasional skull, he had them placed in special boxes and stored away for reburial. The other four knew of Kaas' inspection routine and grudgingly accepted it, though they were seldom informed of its daily results.

Readers may note that the four excavators not only were Four Stooges, they were Four *willing* Stooges. It appears that all the results of the explorations were rendered meaningless by the actions of Kaas. At a minimum, it means that we have no reliable information concerning any of the Vatican bones. The proceedings overall were too confused to be dignified with the adjective “scientific.” We continue.

One evening early in 1942, a day or so after the team had first exposed the graffiti wall and peered briefly into the man-made cavity, intending to return later for a closer look, Kaas had come to the area on his rounds, along with the foreman. Segoni... inspected the cavity with a light. When he reported what appeared to be a number of bones mixed with some debris, Kaas unhesitatingly told him to remove them for safekeeping.... Besides lumps of mortar and brick which had fallen down from the wall-fill above, there were many human bones, all bleached to a stark whiteness. Reverently, Kaas placed them one by one in a box...

Without telling the investigators what they had done, Kaas and Segoni hid the box of bones away in the Vatican basement. And then Kaas died, taking to the grave priceless information concerning the most remarkable pagan Roman cemetery ever discovered, as well as information necessary for understanding the true circumstances of the supposed tomb and relics of St. Peter.

Because she believed the bones produced by Segoni to have been associated with the graffiti wall, and because she believed its graffiti plus the *Petros eni* fragment of the Red Wall proved that the grave complex was none other than the “*Tropaion* of Gaius,” Margherita Guarducci persuaded Pope Paul VI to allow the osteological studies we have already discussed. Ultimately, she persuaded him that the bones in the box taken from the storeroom were those of the legendary first pope himself. But is there any reason *we* should believe it?

Can we be certain that the bones in the wooden box really were once inside the graffiti wall? Can we be certain that whatever bones were in the graffiti wall were once in the cavity beneath the Red Wall? Can we be certain that the Red-Wall structure really was the “*Tropaion* of Gaius”? And even if it is, is there any reason to suppose Gaius had reliable knowledge? Is there the slightest reason to suppose that any of the non-barnyard bones found near the monument belong to Peter?

According to Walsh, Segoni filed an affidavit (now in the Vatican archives) on 7 January 1965 which noted, among other things, that the bones were all stark white. But apart from the mouse bones, none of the bones examined by Luigi Cardini were white. Many were quite dark, yellowish or brown, due largely to adhering soil. Moreover, the note attached to the bone box indicates the bones had been in an urn

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– *urna* – just as reported by *The New York Times* back in 1949. That would seem to rule out the graffiti wall, which no one has reported to have contained an urn. Was Segoni lying about the color of the bones or about which bones had been in the wall? Of course, he might just have been confused – considering how many bones he had helped to hide.

As to whether or not the bones in question had once been in the ground beneath the *Muro Rosso*, studies of the soil associated with the bones in the box produced by Segoni indicate they never resided in the “true tomb of Peter.” Thermal analysis curves published by Lauro and Negretti rule out the Red-Wall site, and these authors themselves relate the bone-box soil to a different grave.

Did Gaius know where Peter’s tomb really was? We must realize we are dealing with a second-hand report given by the notorious Eusebius of Caesarea – a not especially trustworthy source. Moreover, the Latin version of Eusebius’ version of what Gaius had written a century before him places the *Tropaion* of Peter at a different place than does the Greek version! The Greek version has it on the Vatican hill itself; the Latin places it on a public road leading to the Vatican. Reflecting on the fact that Eusebius knew of the newly-built St. Peter’s Basilica when he retailed the polemic of Gaius, it is impossible to believe he would not have mentioned the incorporation of the *Tropaion* into the basilica if that had in fact occurred. We can only conclude that whatever the mysterious *Tropaion* might have been, it is not to be found under the high altar of St. Peter’s.

Upon Which Rock To Build The Church

While we can be sure that none of the bone collections discovered under the Vatican have anything to do with any historical St. Peter, we still need to explain the fact that Constantine seems to have been convinced that Peter’s grave was indeed located near what became the focal point of the church he erected. The project required not only the desecration of many pagan tombs, but the cutting away of a large part of the Vatican hillside and the infilling of a large platform on the slope below. It would have been much easier and cheaper to locate the church elsewhere in the neighborhood. Clearly, some tradition relatable to St. Peter must have led to this extravagance. There is no good reason to suppose, however, that the “St. Peter” of this tradition was the same as the St. Peter of Catholic tradition.

The Vatican hill in ancient times was a place where many deities were worshipped – including some I believe contributed much to the “biographies” of St. Peter, the Virgin Mary, and Jesus. Numerous altars to Cybele (the Great Mother or *Magna Mater* and prototype of Mary) have been found very close to St. Peter’s Cathedral, and in 1949 a pagan altar was dug up in the Piazza San Pietro – just several yards north of the statue of Saint Pete himself! The altar is inscribed with the names not only of the Great Mother, but of Mithra and her son Attis as well. Attis, we may remember, was a dying and resurrecting god who bore the title of *Papa* (“Father”), just as did the Mithraic pontiff and the pope today. Mithra, the dying and resurrecting god born of a virgin on 25 December, not only bore the epithet *Peter* (“Rock”), but was often represented as carrying the key to a gate of heaven. A key was just as much a Mithraic symbol as a symbol of St. Peter – and Mithra had it earlier!

Very close to the Vatican cult complex is the Janiculum hill where, according to the testimony of the apocryphal Acts of Peter and Paul, Peter was crucified upside-down. Here too in ancient times the oldest of Italian gods, Janus, was worshipped. (By the first century, Janus had largely fused with Mithra – and with St. Peter as well.) Interestingly, the Feast of St. Peter is celebrated on 18 January, the date on which the sun enters the sign of Aquarius – an alias of Janus and the beginning of the

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Mithraic zodiac. Janus too was a fisherman, since Pisces follows Aquarius. He is the oldest god said to have held the keys to the gates of heaven.

Given just this sampling of information on the religious significance of the Vatican hill and its environs, can we be surprised that someone was able to convince Constantine that St. Peter was to be found there? For at least a century before Constantine, "tour guides" were taking advantage of Christian credulity by "pointing out" (to use a phrase of the second-century churchman Origen) the sacred sites where every miracle in the Bible supposedly took place. It can hardly be doubted that Constantine's mother St. Helena (a former barmaid who gave up entertaining the troops when she became attached to Constantius, the future Caesar) was duped by such con artists when she "discovered" the site in Bethlehem where Jesus was born and the place on the Mount of Olives whence he was yanked up to heaven. We can only suppose the fellow who led her to the "true cross" on which Jesus was crucified was richly rewarded by the gullible empress. Although we have no documentary evidence to indicate that St. Helena was involved in the siting of her murderous son's Vatican basilica, it is altogether possible. But if it was not she who led Constantine to the building site, certain it is that there was no shortage of entrepreneurs who, when asked about a man who had borne the keys of heaven, could have "pointed out" the same or an equally suitable spot.

Conclusion

When Pope Pius XII told his Christmas radio audience that the tomb of St. Peter had been found, he was wrong. When Pope Paul VI announced in June of 1968 that the bones of the apostle had been identified, he too was wrong. An aura of chicanery amplified by incompetence surrounds these modern relics no less than it enfolds all the other relics of Catholic Christianity. We have just as much reason to believe that Peter's eleventh-century skull at the Lateran is genuine, or that all the teeth claimed to have come from John the Baptist are genuine – teeth numerous enough to fit out dentures for a crocodile. And that, of course, is no reason at all.

Volume 2000

My latest letter to the Chancellor.

-----Original Message-----

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From: _____, _____
Sent: Tuesday, October 19, 1999 1:04 PM
To:
Subject: AH1 auctions by James _____ (10-19-99)

Dear Chancellor,

Just to inform you that Mr. _____ (User name - latria), who resides in your Diocese, has another relic for auction at AH1 this week. The link is: _____
2d Cl. Relics of Stations in Large Cross

He also has numerous other liturgical items for auction, including sacred vessels. A listing of these can be found at: _____

I pray that something can be done to stop this. If you no longer want me to inform you of Mr. _____'s activities, please let me know.

In the Joy of the Cross,

Original message follows:

Hello,

I have noted 8 auctions that violate Section 6.1 of the newly revised AH1 ser Agreement, that prohibits the sale of HUMAN REMAINS. Please investigate these and close these auctions.

All are reported together to reduce work. Auctions are listed from those that end earliest to those that end latest to insure that action can be taken before the sale occurring, except for a grouping of auctions by the same seller. When responding, please use the numbers below when referring to actions take on specific auctions.

Have a nice day.

1) Item # 178715741 - [+] Relic, St. Francis of Assisi, 1181-1226 Seller: latria
Ends: 10/16/99, 17:12:16 PDT is seller is a well-known violator of Section 6.1. This seller says that he cannot state what the relic is. The reason for this is that this is clearly a first class relic and, if he admitted it, he would be admitting to violating AH1's rules. Unless he can document that this is not a first class relic (which he cannot), this auction must be closed.

2) Item #180503735 - Relic Crucifix w/ St. Theresa & other saints

Seller:

Ends: 10/17/99, 14:02:51 PDT

This crucifix contains first class relics. St. Venantius was a martyr, and his relics are bone (human remains). Please investigate and close this auction.

THE FOLLOWING THREE AUCTIONS ARE BY THE SAME SELLER. THEY ARE GROUPED TO HELP IN YOUR CONTACTING THEM ONE TIME FOR ALL FOUR AUCTIONS.

3) Item #180380218 - RELIGIOUS RELICS LOT OF 3

Seller: stein69

Ends: 10/19/99, 09:22:46, PDT

Inspection of the scan reveals reliquaries that contain first class relics.
Please investigate and close this auction.

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4) Item #180947631 - RELIGIOUS LOT OF 6 SMALL RELICS

Seller: stein69

Ends: 10/19/99, 08:48:33, PDT

This violation is "OBVIOUS ON ITS FACE". The seller admits this by stating:

"...the third one is Ex Ossibus B Joanns Pelingotto..."

ex ossibus = from the bones (English words - ossify, ossiferous, all refer to "bone")

IF AH1 SUPPORT DOES NOT CLOSE THIS AUCTION, THEY ARE NOT DOING THEIR JOB IN ENFORCING THE USER AGREEMENT AND STOPPING THE SALE OF PROHIBITED HUMAN REMAINS.

5) Item #180959326 - RELIGIOUS RELICS-3

Seller: stein69

Ends: 10/20/99, 09:16:16, PDT

This violation is "OBVIOUS ON ITS FACE". The seller admits this by

stating: **"...with the words Exoss. Vest.Locula S. Hyacinthae Mariscotti..."**

Exoss is an abbreviation for "ex ossibus" = from the bones (English words - ossify, ossiferous, osteology all refer to "bone")

6) Item #181446853 - [+]Reliquary With Relic Saint Pius X

Seller: philomena3

Ends: 10/20/99, 22:42:04 PDT

This seller is a well-known violator of Section 6.1. No photo is shown because she knows that this item is in violation (first class relic - contains human remains). Unless she can document that this is not a first class relic, this auction must be closed.

7) Item #180884070 - RELIC of S.Theresiae a J. Inf. INTACT

seller: dancollector

Ends: 10/20/99, 04:18:47 PDT

This is a first class relic. The seller must be contacted and asked to provide evidence that it does not violate Section 6.1. Please contact seller, investigate, and close this auction.

8) Item #179893952 - Circa 1920's Saint Louise Religious Relic

Seller: adamsantiques

Ends: 10/21/99, 13:56:05 PDT

Hello,

I have noticed two relic auctions that almost certainly violates Section 6.1, which prohibits the sale of human remains. Both of these are by the same seller.

1) Item #181954167 Italian multiple relic, 17 relics, dated 1932

Seller: taffyrags

Auction ends: 10/24/99, 19:50:38 PDT

This item almost certainly contains First Class relics (human remains), as the 7 relics are offered. The scan clearly shows typical human remains found in first class relics. The seller asserts that the item conforms to AH1 regulations. how can such an assertion be made, when no document is offered to support this assertion? This is illogical and deceitful. Without such an assurance this auction violates AH1 regulations

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2) Item #181966220 French chapel reliquary w/4 relic 19th Cent.

Seller: taffyrags

Ends: 10/24/99, 20:06:30 PDT

This item is almost certainly a First Class relic, as four relics are offered, all in two thecas. The seller asserts that the item conforms to AH1 regulations but, IN THE SAME SENTENCE, she says that she can't be sure because there are no papers indicating that there are no body parts present!!! This is illogical and deceitful. Without such an assurance this auction violates AH1 regulations.

PLEASE CLOSE THESE TWO AUCTIONS IMMEDIATELY.

Have a nice day,

Hello,

I noticed an auction that is in obvious violation of Section 6.1.

It is a first class relic (admitted by seller) that contains human remains. The document states that it is a "particle from the remains found in the coffin"!

PLEASE CLOSE THIS AUCTION IMMEDIATELY!!

Item #181998993 - Saint (Mother) Elizabeth Seton 1 Class Relic Seller: traceyg

Ends: 10/24/99, 20:43:16 PDT

Hello _____,

Thank you for alerting us to this auction. The auction in question has previously been ended by AH1. We really appreciate the terrific help from users like yourself. Together, we can all help keep AH1 a safe and fun place to trade!

As always, if you have a question or problem, please contact us and we will gladly assist you. If you would like to report a questionable item please visit:

Thanks for using AH1!

Regards,

_____ AH1 Customer Support

Hello,

I have noticed a relic for auction that almost certainly violates Section 6.1, which prohibits the sale of human remains.

Item #182048918 - [+]Religious relic S Maria Goretti V.M.

Seller: philomena3

Ends: 10/19/99

Seller claims that document accompanies relic, but WILL NOT RESPOND TO ME when I request information on what the document says (at the very least this is rude and unbecoming of an AH1 member). The seller is hiding the fact that this is a first class relic that contains human remains. Please contact seller and you will learn that AH1 regulations are being broken.

PLEASE CLOSE THIS AUCTION!!!

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Have a nice day,

Hello,

Thank you for taking the time to contact us with this information.

We have looked into the information that you provided regarding the religious relic. However, at this time, it has not been determined that the member involved has violated any AH1 rules.

If you should have additional information regarding this member's activities, please forward it to us and we will gladly review it.

As always, if you have a question or problem, please contact us and we will gladly assist you. If you would like to report a questionable item please visit:

Thanks for using AH1!

Original message follows:

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Seller: philomena3
Ends: 10/19/99

Seller claims that document accompanies relic, but WILL NOT RESPOND TO ME when I request information on what the document says (at the very least this is rude and unbecoming of an AH1 member). The seller is hiding the fact that this is a first class relic that contains human remains. Please contact seller and you will learn that AH1 regulations are being broken.

PLEASE CLOSE THIS AUCTION!!!

Have a nice day,

Hello,

I have noticed a relic for auction that almost certainly violates Section 6.1, which prohibits the sale of human remains.

Item #182143918 - [+]Religious relic S Maria Goretti V.M.
Seller: stein69
Ends: 10/2/99, 08:59:56 PDT

The tektites are no problem. However, the relic of St. Blasii, E.M appears to be a first class relic (human remains). Please contact seller to get confirmation that this relic does not contain human remains. They will be unable to provide this confirmation. Therefore, this auction violates AH1 regulations.

PLEASE CLOSE THIS AUCTION!!!

Have a nice day,

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International Crusade for Holy Relics – Internal Report - Members Only

Hello Cindy,

Thanks for contacting me. I requested information about you because I saw your Relic (Item #182672783 - Reliquary with Relic S.Ludov Reg. MUST SEE) for auction at AH1. You might be interested in knowing more about it.

The Roman Catholic Church prepared this relic and distributed it for proper veneration. The Church also has specific laws about relics. For example, Canon Law 1190 prohibits the selling of Relics. You probably were not aware of this and so I thought I would take a moment to share the information with you.

"Can. 1190 §1 It is absolutely wrong to sell sacred relics."

I don't know if you are Catholic or not. Because Catholics are forbidden to sell relics under Canon Law, it is a sin (that of simony, the sale of blessed and sacred articles) to do so. If a Catholic does this unknowingly, of course, they are not responsible.

If you are a Catholic perhaps you could retain this relic and venerate it yourself. Alternatively, if you wish, you can donate it to a Catholic Church in the area, where it will be properly cared for.

Finally, you may not be aware that the sale of human remains is strictly forbidden by Section 6.1 of the AH1 User Agreement. The item that you have looks to be a first class relic, that is, part of the saint's actual body, and therefore are likely human remains that cannot be sold at AH1. I urge you to please close this auction for the reasons given above.

Please feel free to contact me for any further information and assistance.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

God bless,

Hello,

I have noticed a new relic auction that almost certainly violates Section 6.1, which prohibits the sale of human remains.

Item #184524595 - Relics in a Cast Metal Crucifix

Seller: denis

Ends: 10/26/99, 11:57:54 PDT

These crosses typically contain first class relics of the saints. This is a new seller of relics who may be unaware of the prohibition against selling human remains at AH1 (Section 6.1). Please notify this seller and close this auction if the seller does not agree to do so.

Have a nice day,

Hello,

I have noticed a new relic auction that almost certainly violates Section 6.1, which prohibits the sale of human remains.

Item #184701557 - S. Pius Pp. X Relic

Seller: this1is4u

Ends: 10/26/99, 16:58:42 PDT

This appears to be a first class relic (human remains). Please contact seller and notify her that this is prohibited by Section 6.1 of the User Agreement. If she does not close the auction, please have AH1 Support do o.

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Have a nice day,

Hello,

I have noticed a new relic auction that almost certainly violates Section 6.1, which prohibits the sale of human remains.

Item #184524964 - Antique Religious Relic w/8 Saints Names

Seller:

Ends: 10/29/99, 11:59:13 PDT

This is a new seller of relics who may be unaware of the prohibition against selling human remains at AH1 (Section 6.1). relic holders that have multiple saints certainly contain first class relics (humna remains). Please notify this seller that this is prohibited, and close this auction if the seller does not agree to do so.

Have a nice day,

-----Original Message-----

From: AH1 Customer Support []

Sent: Friday, October 29, 1999 9:19 AM

To:

Subject: Re: 5 Relic Auctions of Human Remains - Violates Section 6.1
(09-29-9 9) (KMM4814696C0KM)

Hello,

Thank you for your report. We have reviewed the auctions you have brought to our attention and taken the appropriate action. We appreciate your vigilance in helping us to keep inappropriate auctions off AH1. As always, if you have a question or problem, please contact us and we will gladly assist you. If you would like to report a questionable item please visit:
Thanks for using AH1!

Original message follows:

Hello,

I have noted 5 auctions that violate Section 6.1 of the newly revised AH1 User Agreement, that prohibits the sale of HUMAN REMAINS. Please investigate these and close these auctions. All are reported together to reduce work. Auctions are listed from those that end earliest to those that end latest to insure that action can be taken before the sale occurring. When responding, please use the numbers below when referring to actions take on specific auctions.

Have a nice day.

1) Item # 170640906 - Beautiful reliquary with a relic

Seller: jgbeau

Ends:10/02/99, 16:08:25 PDT

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Crosses such as these often contain first class (bone) relics that are prohibited by AH1. Please contact seller and confirm that this does not violate Section 6.1. If it does, the auction must be closed.

2) Item #171236254 - [+] Altar Stone, Marble, Cut Crosses, Trad.

Seller: latria Ends: 10/03/99, 16:35:37, PDT

Altar Stones such as this (PARTICULARLY ONE THAT IS OVER 100 YEARS OLD AND CONTAINS 3RD CENTURY MARTYR RELICS) MUST contain first class, bone relics of the saints. Furthermore, these relics must be large (not just a chip of bone) so that the source of the bone can be identified visually. THIS IS A CLEAR VIOLATION OF SECTION 6.1, AND THIS AUCTION MUST BE CLOSED IMMEDIATELY.

3) Item #172590888 - St. Theresa Relic Crucifix & other saints

Seller: Ends: 10/03/99, 20:18:41 PDT

This crucifix contains first class relics. St. Venantius was a martyr, and his relics are bone (human remains). Please close this auction.

4) Item #171694750 - Beautiful Crucifix, containing Relic, *PIC

Seller: Ends: 10/04/99

This violation is "OBVIOUS ON ITS FACE". The seller provides a scan of the document that confirms this. He even reproduces it in the text.

"...particulas ex corpore S.P.N. Pauli...in Hispania et ex ossibus Beati Dominici..."

ex corpore = from the body (English words - corporeal, corpus, corporal punishment all refer to "body") ex ossibus = from the bones (English words - ossify, ossiferous, osteology all refer to "bone")

IF AH1 SUPPORT DOES NOT CLOSE THIS AUCTION, THEY ARE NOT DOING THEIR JOB IN ENFORCING THE USER AGREEMENT AND STOPPING THE SALE OF PROHIBITED HUMAN REMAINS.

5) Item #172615604 - French monstrance relic S. Antonii Pa. 19th

Seller: taffyrags Ends: 10/05/99, 20:49:37

This seller is a well-known violator of Section 6.1. No photo is shown because she knows that this item is in violation (first class relic - contains human remains). Unless she can document that this is not a first class relic, this auction must be closed.

Hello,

There are 8 auctions of religious relics by the same seller currently running at AH1. All of these clearly violate Section 6.1 that prohibits the sale of human remains, because these are first class relics (ex ossibus). These are all being reported at once to reduce multiple complaints and reduce your work. PLEASE INVESTIGATE THESE AUCTIONS AND CLOSE THEM. The seller is "stein 69".

"EX OSSIBUS" - The Seller provides INDISPUTABLE evidence that these are all auctions containing first class relics). He states that these are "ex ossibus" (or "Ex Oss" or "Ex Ossi", abbreviations) which is Latin for "from the bones". The English words ossify" and "ossiferous" are clear derivatives from the Latin. This is universally understood by buyers and sellers of religious relics. *THIS IS A VIOLATION THAT IS ADMITTED AND OBVIOUS ON ITS FACE, AND THESE AUCTIONS MUST BE CLOSED OR AH1 SUPPORT IS NOT PERFORMING ITS JOB. FAILURE TO CLOSE THESE WILL BE REPORTED TO THE HIGHEST ADMINISTRATIVE LEVELS AT AH1.*

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International Crusade for Holy Relics – Internal Report - Members Only

#185713864 - RELIGIOUS RELICS LOT OF 2 - stated in description -
"Exoss.SS.Innocentium...reads Ex Ossibus S.M. Bertillae..."

#185742960 - CATHOLIC BRASS RELIC - stated in description -"are Ex Oss
S.Antonii Padua CD."

#185787437 - BRASS RELIC DOUBLE FRAME - stated in description -"read Ex Oss
S.John Eudes and Ex Oss.Sevss.Reciusae V."

#185796443 - RELIGIOUS RELICS - 2 BEAUTIFUL L@@K! - stated in description -
"reads Ex Ossibus Sanctorum Martyrum Ugandensium...reads Ex Ossi B. Leonard
Mufialdo"

#185822208 - BRASS RELIGIOUS RELICS - stated in description - "Ex Oss. S.
Dorothea V.M."

#185828411 - RELIGIOUS RELICS -2- stated in description - reads "Ex Oss.
S.Helenae Iop."

#185835819 - BRASS FRAMES AND RELICS LOT OF 2 - stated in description "Ex
Oss. S. Catharinae Alex."

#185858472 - Religious Picture Frames & Relics -2- L@@K!! - stated in
description - "read EX OSS SAINT ANNE MATRIS B.M....reads EXOSS. Sanrti
Francisci Assisii"

Hello _____,

Thank you for emailing AH1 with your concerns.
Unfortunately, at this time the questionable items reported did not violate AH1 policy. The seller did not mention any bones in the relic.
We can not go on the Latin term alone. We apologize we could not help.

Hello _____,

Thank you for taking the time to contact us.

We have looked into the information that you provided regarding relics being listed on AH1. However, at this time, it has been determined that the member involved has not violated any AH1 rules. As you know, our policies do state that we do not allow the listing and or sale of humans, body parts and or remains. Although some relics do contain human remains others contain materials in some way came in contact with the person in which the relic is praising. By description, we are not able to end these auctions. They may contain a piece of cloth and or a writing. However, if you should have additional information regarding this member's activities, please forward it to us and we will gladly review it.

Again, we thank you for your assistance and concerns. If you have any further concerns, please feel free to contact us. Good luck on AH1 and happy trading!
Regards,

Original message follows:

Hello,

There are 10 auctions of religious relics by the same seller currently running at AH1. All of these almost

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International Crusade for Holy Relics – Internal Report - Members Only

violate Section 6.1 that prohibits the sale of human remains because they contain first class relics. These are all being reported at once to reduce multiple complaints and reduce your work. *PLEASE INVESTIGATE THESE AUCTIONS AND CLOSE THEM AS REQUIRED.*

*****The seller is "stein 69"*****

#185721859 - BRASS RELIGIOUS RELICS -2-
#185727801 - RELIGIOUS RELICS BRASS -2-
#185734419 - BRASS CANDLE HOLDER WITH RELIC
#185802428 - CATHOLIC RELICS -2-
#186272290 - RELIGIOUS FRAME WITH ANGELS AND RELICS
#186285410 - VINTAGE CLOCK FRAME AND RELIC
#186299193 - RELICS LOT OF 2 - BEAUTIFUL-
#186309247 - TWO FRAMED RELIGIOUS RELICS L@@K
#186323496 - RELIGIOUS RELIC BEAUTIFUL LOT OF 2!!!!
#188170959 - RELIGIOUS RELIC

Hello _____,

Thank you for taking the time to contact us.

We have looked into the information that you provided regarding this situation. However, it has been determined that the member involved has not violated any AH1 rules at this time. Relics are classed from First and on. In the descriptions provided, we are not able to end these auctions. Although there are relics that contain human remains, some do contain materials.

Original message follows:

Hello,

There are 6 auctions of religious relics by various seller currently running at AH1. All of these almost violate Section 6.1 that prohibits the sale of human remains because they contain first class relics. These are all being reported at once to reduce multiple complaints and reduce your work. *PLEASE INVESTIGATE THESE AUCTIONS AND CLOSE THEM AS REQUIRED.*

#187556869 - Antique multiple relic with 15 relics - There are first class relics present. I can see part of a finger bone in one of the scans.

#188196448 - Relics in Gold Locket-St Francis de Sales - scan shows human remains

#186492312 -Fantastic Religious Relic S. Gemmea G.- human remains are likely to be present

#187893781 - Italian relic B. Innoc. A Bert, 20th Century - This is a routine seller of first class religious relics. She refuses now to show any scans of these items because they will reveal human remains. The lack of documents does not mean human remains are absent. The seller cannot state that this conforms to AH1 regulations.

#187904424 - Italian multiple relic, 19th/20th century - This is a routine seller of first class religious relics. She refuses now to show any scans of these items because they will reveal human remains. The lack of documents does not mean human remains are absent. The seller cannot state that this conforms to AH1 regulations.

#187941356 - Chri. Reliquary Silver/Gold Filigree Sealed! - The description states - "pieces EX OSSIBUS and". "Ex ossibus" is Latin for "from the bone"

(hence our word ossify). *THIS IS A CLEAR ADMITTED VIOLATION. AH1*

SUPPORT MUST FULFILL THEIR ROLE IN CLOSING AUCTIONS THAT VIOLATE THE USER AGREEMENT.

PLEASE CLOSE THESE AT ONCE FOR VIOLATION OF SECTION 6.1, PROHIBITS THE SALE OF HUMAN REMAINS.

Tom,

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Below is my final missive to Rob _____. This is the reponse to what I wrote appears first.

Dear _____,

I agree that it is a waste of time to keep challenging auctions at AH1. I will only do so if it says "first class relic" or identifies, in English, a human body part. I am getting drained by "stein69". Therefore, I will no longer be sending you a weekly reports. I will, however, send you a couple more emails today about this topic to wrap things up.

In the Joy of the Cross,

----Original Message-----

From: _____, Rob []

Sent: Friday, November 05, 1999 10:43 AM

To:

Subject: RE: Religious Relic Update - Major Change in Strategy - My Final email to you
thanks _____ -- appreciate your interest and sincerity on this issue, and please let me know if there are legal developments in this area that would be helpful. Rob

-----Original Message-----

From: []

Sent: Friday, November 05, 1999 8:07 AM

To:

Subject: Religious Relic Update - Major Change in Strategy - My final email to you

Hello Rob,

I did not send you a relic report last week, as I was out of town (I am sure you missed getting it!). This email will be a little more general.

Report for week of 10/15-22/99 -- 9 relic auctions, 35 relics, most first class, none closed by AH1

Report for week of 10/25-29/99 24 relic auctions, most with multiple relics, probably 60 total, most first class, none closed by AH1

1) There is a new "Super Relic Seller" at AH1 named "stein69". They have about 30 religious relic auctions running. Most first class. They do not respond to my emails. Religious relic auctions are now more prevalent than Civil War relic auctions.

2) I have challenged auctions of relics labeled "ex ossibus" (from the bones) and "ex Carne" (from the flesh) to AH1 Support. I included a link to a Latin Dictionary on the Web. I received the standard reply "Although you may be extremely knowledgeable about these types of items, we often cannot remove items upon the representations of third parties whose credentials we cannot verify, unless of course the alleged infringement is obvious on its face."

The link that I provided was to the archives of the prestigious Notre Dame University in South Bend, Indiana. I do not understand how Support accepts the credentials of a Seller and not that of a University! Or why this is not "obvious on its face". I have rechallenged these auctions.

3) I hate to admit it, but "stein69" have succeeded in exhausting my resources. I just don't have the time or energy to continue this path. Therefore, I will not be challenging many more relic auctions at AH1 (unless they are blatant) because it is futile, and the number of relic auctions has gotten out of hand.

4) I am going to send a letter to the President at AH1 describing the relic problem. You will probably hear about it, so I am just giving you a "heads-up". I will mention that you have been patient and respectful in our personal interactions.

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5) I have found a state representative who has agreed to introduce a _____ in the Louisiana State Legislature to prohibit the sale of religious relics in the state. I have passed this information on to the Archbishop's right hand man (a good priest friend of mine) for the Church's opinion. I had hoped that AH1 would reconsider their position and that this would not be necessary, but I feel that waiting for AH1 to change their position is hopeless. I will let you know if and when the law is passed.

6) I will no longer be sending you a "Weekly Relic Report", as I am going to pursue other approaches. I will only contact you if there are developments regarding legal issues, or if there is something so egregious at an AH1 relic auction that it warrants your attention.

NO RESPONSE TO THIS EMAIL IS REQUIRED.

THIS IS INFORMATION IS FOR YOUR RECORDS ONLY.

Tom,

Read this from the bottom up. Basically, AH1 Support acknowledges that they THEMSELVES realize that human remains (bones) are being sold in "ex ossibus" auctions, but they still will not close them! Incredible.

Hello _____,

Thank you for emailing us with your concerns.

We apologize, but at this time the policy will allow the sale of relics with that state the Latin term for bones. We will only disallow them if they say bone in English. We are not disregarding the fact that the Latin term Ex Ossibus means bone. We believe that to be true. We have to work around legal issues. We hope that we have answered your question.

Original message follows:

Hello Angus,

(Note: This response is the same as the one I sent you regarding the "ex carne" auction, with the exception that the link has been changed to fit these auctions. I apologize if this is redundant, but I did not know if "Angus Og" would get this or some other member of AH1 support).

I cannot understand how you have come to this decision. I provided you with IRON-CLAD PROOF that this auction violates Section 6.1 that prohibits the sale of human remains.

The link that I provided you with is from the archives of Notre Dame University. Do you think that this is "the representations of third parties whose credentials we cannot verify." If you cannot accept and verify the credentials of one of the premiere Universities in the United States, what credentials would you accept? The word of the Seller?

Please be reasonable. In spite of the template response that you sent me, YOU KNOW that this auction is in violation, don't you? I have given you the most solid evidence you probably have ever received that an auction violates the sale of human remains. I ask you to reconsider closing this auction. I am certain that if you include the link that I sent you () the Seller will accept your decision. He has no recourse given this indisputable proof.

As a member of the AH1 Support team, it is your duty to make informed judgements. Don't you feel that you have judged incorrectly in this case? I really don't want to have to bring this to the attention of the higher administration at AH1, but I will be forced to if AH1 Support does not perform its job.

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---Original Message-----

From: AH1 Customer Support []
Sent: Thursday, November 04, 1999 7:58 PM
To:
Subject: Re: 13 Human Remain Relic Auctions -
Clear Violation of Section 6.1 (11-03-99) (KMM5878648C0KM)

Hello _____,

We have reviewed the auctions you have brought to our attention and taken appropriate action. We would also like to explain AH1's policy with respect to reports like yours. AH1 is not in a position to make judgments about the authenticity or authorized nature of auction items, except in the most extreme circumstances. This may mean that we cannot remove the item about which you contacted us. Although you may be extremely knowledgeable about these types of items, we often cannot remove items upon the representations of third parties whose credentials we cannot verify, unless of course the alleged infringement is obvious on its face. We appreciate your vigilance in helping us to keep inappropriate auctions off AH1. If we can be of any further assistance, please let us know.

Original message follows:

Hello,

There are 13 relic auctions currently running at AH1 that are indisputably First Class Relics containing human remains, which is prohibited by Section 6.1 of AH1 regulations. These auctions are offering relics labeled as "ex ossibus". Please click on the following link before reading the rest of this email: As you now know FOR A FACT "ex ossibus" means "from the bone". Therefore, these auction all contain bone fragments (human remains) and are first class relics. This is a blatant violation and is "obvious on its face". The evidence is "indisputable" Listed below are the numbers of the auctions that CLEARLY violate Section 6.1. WHEN YOU CLOSE THESE AUCTIONS, please cut and paste the link above to the email that you send to the Sellers to show why they are in violation of AH1 regulations. There is no doubt about these violations. AH1 Support must close these auctions to fulfill their duty and job.

Item #187941356 Item #190091846 Item #190453898 Item #190531995
Item #192187562 Item #192196771 Item #192248074 Item #192885301
Item #192906504 Item #192903317 Item #193481039 Item #193473728
Item #193362455

Tom,

I found the name and email address of a Sephardic Rabbi in the Los Angeles area on the Internet. Below is my communication to him regarding "stein69". Pray that it helps this intolerable situation. If no action is taken, I will move to a higher level of the hierarchy of Sephardic Judaism.

In the Joy of the Cross,

-----Original Message-----

From: _____, _____
Sent: Friday, November 05, 1999 4:28 PM
To:

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Subject: A serious issue about a Sephardic Jew

Dear Rabbi Adatto:

A situation has arisen that may require your attention. Alternatively, it may need the attention of Rabbi Hillel Benshimol. If the person that I describe below is a member of Rabbi Benshimol's Congregation, or if a different Rabbi is now head of the other Sephardic Jewish Congregation in the Los Angeles or Ventura area, please pass this information on.

Lou B. Mendoza, co-owner of a business entitled "What's-It Worth" describes himself as a "Sephardic Jew" on the web site of this business. Mr. Mendoza and his partner are involved in the auctioning of items at an Internet auction site called AH1. A list of their current auctions (under the Seller ID name "stein69") can be found by activating the following link:

The vast majority of these items are relics of Catholic saints. These include a large number of first class relics, which are the actual human remains of these people, mostly fragments of bone. I have contacted Mr. Mendoza and told him that it is highly offensive to Catholics and many _____tians to be auctioning these sacred items. In fact, it is against Roman Catholic Canon Law to do so (this, of course, only applies to Catholics). I have emailed Mr. Mendoza twice about this. These emails are attached. He was not responded to either email.

I do not know much about Sephardic Judaism. I only recently researched it on the Internet because Mr. Mendoza identified himself as a Sephardic Jew and I was deeply disturbed by his relic sales, which appear to be increasing daily. It seems that Sephardic Judaism is very Orthodox and Conservative, carefully following the prescriptions of the Torah. As a Roman Catholic, I also am orthodox and conservative in following the teachings of my _____tian faith. I would never consider participating in an activity that blatantly offends the Jewish people. I would hope that those who describe themselves as Sephardic Jews would have the same sensitivity to those of the _____tian faith. I also do not feel that purposefully offending those of another faith helps in trying to build bridges of understanding or for improving dialogue.

I do not know what the role or authority of a Rabbi is in Sephardic Judaism. I do know that Rabbi means "teacher". I implore you, or the Rabbi of Mr. Mendoza's congregation, to please contact him and teach, counsel, and if appropriate, reprove him for selling relics of _____tian saints, which is so offensive to many Catholics and other _____tians. At the very least, you may wish to suggest to Mr. Mendoza that he remove his affiliation with Sephardic Judaism from the web site of "What's-It-Worth". His activities in auctioning relics of _____tian saints, in total disregard for the sensibilities of _____tians, may be seen as being representative of all those who identify themselves as Sephardic Jews. I doubt that this is true.

I would greatly appreciate your responding to this email, since I have gotten no response from Mr. Mendoza regarding this situation.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Hello,

I have visited your web site recently. This message is for both of you, but especially it is directed to Mr. Mendoza.

Mr. Mendoza, it is so uplifting to see someone who is not afraid to witness, and proclaim, their faith publicly. I was most impressed that you proudly proclaimed on the web site that you are a Sephardic Jew. I also try to live my faith and witness it as a Roman Catholic. As you know, Jews and Catholics share the same "Father of Faith", Abraham.

It is for this reason that I am contacting you. I noticed that you are offering many Catholic relics for auction at AH1. This is very offensive to devout Catholics like myself. Imagine if the bones of

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Abraham (or Moses, or Joseph) were discovered. What would be your reaction to their being auctioned at AH1? Would you offer them at auction yourself? This is entirely analogous to the auctioning of relics of the _____tian saints. In fact, many of the early officially-recognized (canonized) saints of the Catholic faith (the Apostles and early disciples of Jesus) were Jewish by birth.

Or, what if the Ark of the Covenant were discovered? What would your reaction be to fragments of it being offered for auction at AH1? Or swatches from Joseph's "multicolored coat"? Would you sell them? Would you be offended if someone else did? And yet, many sellers at AH1 think nothing of offering relics of the True Cross to the highest bidder, some of whom are into the occult (this just occurred last week at AH1). Again, an entirely analogous situation.

Finally, what if the gold fillings, hair mattresses, and human-skin lampshades from the victims of the Holocaust were auctioned at AH1? The martyrs for the _____tian faith deserve as much respect as the Jewish martyrs of Nazi Germany. Mr. Mendoza, I humbly ask you to bring this matter in prayer before God. Ask Him if the auctioning of holy, sacred, religious relics at AH1 is what he wants you to do with the talents with which he blessed you. Listen to the Lord, open your heart to him.

And Mr. Lawrence, I do not know what your religious beliefs are. But anyone who raises nearly 1 million dollars for charity, enjoys the company of his wife, and loves his grandsons (I have a granddaughter and two grandsons myself), AND publicly states this on a web site, obviously has a good heart. Please also consider the points above and let your heart and conscience guide you.

Hello,

A couple of weeks ago I complimented Mr. Mendoza on the witnessing of his faith as a Sephardic Jew on the "What's It Worth" web site. I also commended Mr. Lawrence on his generosity to charity. It seemed that your backgrounds provided good grounds for discussion regarding something that was disturbing me.

The subject of my previous email was my distress at the sale of religious relics at AH1 by you. I tried to explain why this was offensive to Catholics and other _____tians, and why it is inappropriate.

Sadly, I received no response. Even more sadly, not only have you not ceased to sell religious relics at AH1, but this activity on your part has increased tremendously. There seems to be only three possible reasons why you would continue to sell religious relics after my appeal.

- 1) You were not swayed by my argument.**
- 2) Money generated by the sale of these relics is more important to you than offending the sensibilities of many other people.**
- 3) One or both of you were wounded by someone in the Catholic Church, and this is a way of extracting some kind of revenge driven by hatred from the past. If this is the case, I urge you to meet with someone from the Church and try to get healing for whatever hurt you endured.**

I would greatly appreciate it if you would answer just one question.

Why do you continue to sell Catholic Religious Relics at AH1? A response to this would be greatly appreciated.

Please be assured that you are both in my prayers.

Dear Mr. Serafin,

I believe that the body of St. Catherine of Sienna is incorrupt. Am I correct about this. That fact does not appear on the New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia - but I am almost sure she is featured in the book, The Incorruptibles - of which I am no longer in possession. I wonder if you have an opinion about the probable legitimacy of ANY supposedly Ex Ossibus relic of St. Catherine of Siena, who was a Virgin, and also a Dominican - thus VOP. ?? Perhaps also, you have some knowledge about how or why supposedly First Class relics of saints DO circulate - who are known to be incorrupt.

This particular auction is part of an estate of a deceased Catholic Man who had collected over 140 relics in

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his lifetime. I'm sure that even a devout soul such as he, could have been hoodwinked. I would imagine that there may have been relic forgeries long before _____ was ever accused of it. When you think of pilgrimage sites, like Lourdes, or Guadeloupe - but especially in Rome, it does not take a rocket scientist to realize that less than honest vendors would concoct, or create such reliquaries to sell to tourists. *What do you think the odds are that he below relic is genuine??* <http://cgi.AH1.com/aw-cgi/AH1ISAPI.dll?ViewItem&item=192196771>

RELIC S. CATH.SEN. V.O.P.

Item #192196771

Bidding is closed for this item.

Currently	\$179.00	First bid	\$20.00
Quantity	1	# of bids	12
Time left	Auction has ended.	Location	SUNNY VENTURA, CA
Started	11/01/99, 11:02:44 PST	Ends	11/08/99, 11:02:44 PST

Dear Terri,

Thank you for your reply. I am afraid I have to draw this matter to your attention once again as the problem is continuing and I haven't heard anything from the owner of the company.

There are currently some 83 auctions of relics for "Stein69" on AH1, listed by your company. Most of these are pieces of human bone (labelled "oss" or "ossibus") - this contravenes the AH1 user agreement which bans the sale of human remains.

The sale of relics is, as I pointed out before, gravely offensive to catholic and orthodox _____tians. Moreover, some of these relics are being bought by people who seem to be involved in the occult. Check out for example the two home pages of AH1 user "Laylah" who is currently the high bidder on a number of the relics you are listing:

<http://hometown.aol.com/lilthldy/goddess.htm>
and <http://hometown.aol.com/lilthldy/amuse.htm>

I shudder to think what kind of abuses these holy relics will be subjected to by the owner of those pages. Please draw this urgently to the attention of the company owners and ask them to stop listing relic auctions. Selling _____tian relics to people involved in the occult is like selling the Torah to the KKK - you just *know* they don't want them for any good purpose, and it is horrifying for those who hold that these items are sacred to contemplate such a thing.

Yours sincerely,

_____ wrote:

Dear Eventura,

I notice you are currently running some 14 auctions of catholic relics on AH1, for "Stein69". I hope you will not mind me commenting on this. These relics are prepared by Roman Catholic bodies such as religious orders or the Vicariate in Rome, and given away to Churches and devout individuals for a small donation to cover the cost of the container. Unfortunately sometimes relics appear on the open market (usually in estate sales) and people who have no idea of their religious significance try to sell them for a profit. It is completely against both the general ethos and the laws of the Catholic faith community to sell

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relics - they are a spiritual gift, and it is offensive to religious ideas to put a price on something like that.

Furthermore, AH1 rules prohibit the sale of human remains (user agreement para 6.2) and most of the relics you are selling are in fact human remains. The vast majority of relics distributed by the Church are fragments of a saint's bones. Those labelled "Ex Ossibus" or "Ex Oss" are definitely bone (oss/ossibus = Latin for bone), but most other relics are bone fragments as well, whether or not they are labelled. Sometimes one finds other body parts used as relics, such as skin, muscle tissue or internal organs. Some relics (about 20%) are not actually human remains but are other things such as pieces of a saint's clothing or coffin. These are usually obvious on inspection.

Could I please ask you to examine this issue and refrain from listing relics on AH1? I assure you that this is not at all a criticism of anyone personally at Eventura. I am sure you were not aware of the implications of these relic sales, but I hope you will be able to take this information into consideration. For more information about relics, may I invite you to check out the Saints Alive website.

Yours sincerely,

Hello,

I noticed your auction at AH1 (Item #223508188 - [i+i] Relic of True Cross and Holy Family etc.), and I detected an error in your description. It says, regarding this reliquary that, "it does not contain anything that would not conform to AH1 guidelines." If you look closely at the picture you will see that one of the relics is labeled "ex Oss S Ann". You may not realize that "Ex Oss" is short for the Latin "ex ossibus", which means "from the bone". Therefore, unfortunately, this auction violates the User Agreement, Section 6.1, that prohibits the sale of human remains, including bone, at AH1. Since I am sure that you would not want to violate AH1's rule, you probably will want to close this auction. Have a nice day,

Hello _____,

and thanks for the opinion. As there is no documentation to PROVE the ASSERTION that it is "ex ossibus" under the Church's own rules on relics, I cannot say, nor can you, nor can anyone else, that it is in fact "ex ossibus".

Now YOU have a nice day.

From: (_____, _____)

To: "" <

Subject: Item #223508188 - [i+i] Relic of True Cross and Holy Family etc

Date: Wed, 29 Dec 1999 11:52:44 -0600

Hello,

I noticed your auction at AH1 (Item #223508188 - [i+i] Relic of True Cross and Holy Family etc.), and I detected an error in your description. It says, regarding this reliquary that, "it does not contain anything that would not conform to AH1 guidelines."

If you look closely at the picture you will see that one of the relics is labeled "ex Oss S Ann". You may not realize that "Ex Oss" is short for the Latin "ex ossibus", which means "from the bone".

Therefore, unfortunately, this auction violates the User Agreement, Section 6.1, that prohibits the sale of human remains, including bone, at AH1. Since I am sure that you would not want to violate AH1's rule, you probably will want to close this auction.

Have a nice day,

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-----Original Message-----

From: _____ []

Sent: Thursday, December 30, 1999 11:09 AM

To:

Subject: Re: Item #223508188 - [i+i] Relic of True Cross and Holy Family etc

Hello _____ and thanks for the opinion.

As there is no documentation to PROVE the ASSERTION that it is "ex ossibus" under the Church's own rules on relics, I cannot say, nor can you, nor can anyone else, that it is in fact "ex ossibus". Now YOU have a nice day.

From: (_____, _____)

To: '_____' <

Subject: RE: Item #223508188 - [i+i] Relic of True Cross and Holy Family etc

Date: Wed, 29 Dec 1999 20:47:38 -0600

Hello _____,

You're correct. You cannot say, nor can I say, that it is in fact "ex ossibus". But we both know. And so does He.

God bless,

-----Original Message-----

From: _____ []

Sent: Thursday, December 30, 1999 11:09 AM

To:

Subject: Re: Item #223508188 - [i+i] Relic of True Cross and Holy Family etc

Hello _____

and thanks for the opinion.

As there is no documentation to PROVE the ASSERTION that it is "ex ossibus" under the Church's own rules on relics, I cannot say, nor can you, nor can anyone else, that it is in fact "ex ossibus". Now YOU have a nice day.

-----Original Message-----

From: _____ []

Sent: Thursday, December 30, 1999 1:01 PM

To:

Subject: RE: Item #223508188 - [i+i] Relic of True Cross and Holy Family etc

Then He should've provided the papers. And how do you know He is He?

From: (_____, _____)

To: "" <

Subject: Item #223508188 - [i+i] Relic of True Cross and Holy Family etc

Date: Wed, 29 Dec 1999 11:52:44 -0600

He did provide the papers for the previous relic of St. Anne that you offered (#222819767), "ex domo". Although "from the home" does not violate AH1's User Agreement, the Church does prohibit a Roman Catholic (Canon 1190) from selling relics. Perhaps you are not a Roman Catholic and this law does not apply to you. I am very glad that you did not use the "I am only auctioning the theca, the relic is a gift" line that others use. As I read the text for the "ex domo" St. Anne relic, I wondered, sadly, if you told the "community of enclosed nuns in Italy" that the relic that you obtained from them would soon be auctioned on the internet.

From: (_____, _____)

To: '_____' <

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International Crusade for Holy Relics – Internal Report - Members Only

Subject: RE: Item #223508188 - [i+i] Relic of True Cross and Holy Family etc

Date: Wed, 29 Dec 1999 20:47:38 -0600

Hello _____,

You're correct. You cannot say, nor can I say, that it is in fact "ex ossibus". But we both know. And so does He.

God bless,

Dear _____

I do not doubt your sincerity and am grateful, in a funny kind of way, for the trouble you go to, but I am constantly amazed by the antics of you self-appointed "CANON LAW POLICE" and would like to just share a couple of things which happened to me in Rome (yes, that's the same eternal city of all our dreams) just a few weeks ago: At one famous enclosed convent I got all the business about "Oh it is expressly forbidden by the Holy See...", and then I dropped the name of an Australian priest who helped them out of a pickle a few years ago, and every door opened for me! Relics everywhere, with price tags.

Later I was at another relic-providing convent and when the Sisters said it was tough these days, with Roman laws, etc etc, I merely said I had bought some of their relics from a certain shop in Rome, to which they had 'illegally' sold them - hey presto - out came the relics - "and what would you like?" I even got one of St Peter Apostle WITH PAPERS out of them! (No papers can be provided for anything before 4th century now, by Vatican edict!!!) At the end of the session, Rev Mother liked me so much she sent one of the Sisters out the back to fetch something which she presented to me - a Relic of the True Cross!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! - as a gift!!!

Later I went to the General House of another Order and was shown a cupboard FULL of first and second class relics of the saints of their Order - and told the price was the same for all.

I also know, too, that another enclosed convent which provides relics and is strict about the bishop's letters always waives the rules for young seminarians who go help out with the sisters' heavy work! On my last day I popped into the Generalate of the Jesuits and asked if they had any relics available. A woman came to the door. In one hand she had an envelope, in the other a sign reading "L15.000" (you would know this is about US\$8). No questions. No drama. So I paid and thanked her and went out into the street. Opening the package I expected to find a piece of the shoelace of some insignificant Jesuit Blessed. Not so. It was a piece of the bone - YES - EX OSSIBUS ST. IGNATIUS LOYOLA!!! That was mid December!!! But the best story of the lot is the one from a shop quite near Gammarelli the Papal tailor. I walked in with a friend and said to the woman "I would like to obtain some relics" "Oh" says she "it is expressly forbidden by the Holy See to sell..." I motioned her to be silent. "I have been here before, Signora, and I would like to see the white box you keep locked in that cupboard" "Aaahhhh, well, why didn't you say so" says she, as she opens the cupboard, and gets out the box, revealing relics of every saint imaginable, and some unimaginable!

So, my energetic and apologetic friend, you must always remember that OUR attitude to Roman Law is entirely different from THEIR attitude to it! The relic-providing nuns will still have to put bread and pasta on the tables, and this is the way they have been doing it for hundreds of years. They call it providing, you call it selling, I call it auctioning. It is always the same thing.

Your zeal will not stop it. May I just for one moment assume the position you and your fellow zealots have made your own, and suggest you turn your New Testament (which you ought to be a lot more familiar with than your Canon Law) and immerse yourself in _____ 25 - I'm pretty sure that's the chapter - it's all about judgement. Then, having read it, get off your butt and get out and visit the sick, the prisoners, the lonely, clothe the naked, feed the hungry, and leave me alone.

Yours,

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Dear _____,

I was in the process of responding to your last email when I received this one. Guess what I was going to ask? "Did you tell the nuns at the enclosed convent that you were going to auction, on the internet, the "ex domo" relic of St. Anne that they provided to you?" When I read the email below, I realized how naive I am. They probably would not even have cared if you had told them. It was a rude awakening to be sure. Thanks for the reality check. I confess that it saddens me to hear your stories. I will pray for all that you mentioned.

In spite of this, all I can say is that I am responsible for MY own actions, not the actions of others. I must be true to MY attitude to Roman Law, not THEIRS. I must answer to MY own conscience, no matter what the rest of the world does. That is the only principle that I must follow.

Finally, you are correct - it is _____ 25. Now I hesitate to mention this, because of what Jesus said in Mt 6:3-4. However, I feel that I must respond in some way. Please don't get the impression that all I do is just sit around and look at relic auctions on AH1. I also do not, I am sorry to say, follow the precise instructions in Mt 25, as I must assume that you do since you quote it. But I try to do so indirectly by tithing 10% of my gross annual income to charity. I am also very active in my parish, and in the Catholic community beyond that. I know it's not exactly the same as Mt 25, but I do TRY to live out all aspects of my faith, from Sacred Scripture to Canon Law.

God bless, _____

Dear Tom,

Send this information for action regarding the e-Simony of Mr. _____ (aka "saot" on AH1). I'm sure that any information you could provide the following authorities would be appreciated. Am also sure that on his recent trip to Rome he contacted the OCD's for the relics of St. Terese and other OCD's. The current listing of the Little Flowers relic (hair) contains a relic which must have been recently obtained as it recognizes her as "doctor of the Church."

I am not including addresses of other official relic sources in Rome as I know that you are already in contact with them (OP's and OSA's). Please inform me of any progress regarding your efforts.

Blessed Jubilee! Fr. _____

Dear Tom and Fr. _____,

I have managed to set up a dialogue with _____ after pointing out a discrepancy in one of his listings. PLEASE READ THIS FROM THE BOTTOM UP.

Three things of note:

- 1) You will probably find the "relic travelogue" of saot interesting, and pretty disturbing. I am not sure that contacting the OCD's will have any effect if what _____ says is true (and I believe it is).
- 2) PLEASE - keep these communications confidential. What I mean is, do not use them in your communications with any religious orders in Rome or the authorities in Australia, or with _____ himself. He seems to like to "talk" via email, and I want to keep my lines of communication open with him. I still have hope that he may be convinced to cease and desist his activities with some gentle instruction.
- 3) Please pray that the Holy Spirit will guide me in my communications with _____.

In the Joy of the Cross,

-----Original Message-----

From: _____ []

Sent: Thursday, December 30, 1999 7:18 PM

To:

Subject: RE: The Canon Law Police

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I didn't mean to say you weren't living out your own vocation as a _____tian - I just meant to tell you that you don't have to live mine as well. You'd probably do better to stop looking at the auctions, or the next thing you'll find yourself looking at the pornography so that you can email its originators to tell them how sinful that is.

Happy Jubilee!

Hello again _____,

I could not reply to your last emails as I needed some sleep!!

As a Catholic (I assume that you are a Catholic, since some of your incredibly complete descriptions of the saints in your relic auctions could be collected into a "Lives of the Saints" book and because of other things in your emails to me), I do not know why my actions amaze you. Or maybe I do - historically, Catholics have not been known for sharing and witnessing their faith and evangelizing.

My vocation is of prime importance - my vertical relationship with God. As _____t said, " You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, your whole soul,..."). I try, and regularly fail, at this vocation. But the second greatest commandment is to "Love your neighbor as yourself". Therefore, I am called and compelled to strengthen my horizontal relationship with the members of the Body of _____t, especially my brothers and sisters in the Catholic Church. We all have our "causes", and I am sure that you have your particular cause. My wife is very active in the Pro-Life Movement (abortion being an abomination that dwarfs relic auctions), and I support her eagerly in this cause. My cause is to promote the proper treatment and veneration of relics. An obscure cause, perhaps, but someone has to do it! I try not to pass judgement on those who sell relics - I just try to share my concerns and pray for them.

If you were a non-Catholic, I would not be so distressed. Most of them who sell relics just are just uninformed. But I am a compulsive rule follower. If Canon 1190 (1) says, "It is absolutely wrong to sell sacred relics", I, as a Roman Catholic, am bound by that edict. I just can't understand how this can be interpreted in any other way or rationalized. To me, it is clearly simony if relics are sold or auctioned.

So, my friend, I have to do what I do. I feel compelled to bring this to the attention of the individual who is involved in this practice. I know that trying to convince a pagan to stop putting porn on the Internet is a waste of time. They do not care how sinful their actions are. Praying for the Lord to touch their hearts and cause a conversion is the only way. But I grieve when a fellow Catholic strays from the teaching and laws of the Church. That is why I spend my time on relic auctions. Not only to stop what I feel is a wrong practice, but with the hope that somehow someone else's vocation will be helped. I cannot live out your vocation for you, and that is for the best. I can only live out my vocation, you are responsible for yours.

The Lord is the only one who can guide us. I have but one request. Please spend an hour before Our Lord in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament and bring your actions and life to the foot of the monstrance. Have Him guide you - not me.

May you have a Blessed and Holy Jubilee Year,

-----Original Message-----

From: _____ []

Sent: Thursday, December 30, 1999 7:18 PM

To:

Subject: RE: The Canon Law Police

I didn't mean to say you weren't living out your own vocation as a _____tian

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- I just meant to tell you that you don't have to live mine as well. You'd probably do better to stop looking at the auctions, or the next thing you'll find yourself looking at the pornography so that you can email its originators to tell them how sinful that is.
Happy Jubilee!

From: (_____, _____)
To: '_____' <_____
Subject: RE: The Canon Law Police
Date: Wed, 29 Dec 1999 21:48:31 -0600

Dear _____,

I was in the process of responding to your last email when I received this one. Guess what I was going to ask? "Did you tell the nuns at the enclosed convent that you were going to auction, on the internet, the "ex domo" relic of St. Anne that they provided to you?" When I read the email below, I realized how naive I am. They probably would not even have cared if you had told them. It was a rude awakening to be sure. Thanks for the reality check. I confess that it saddens me to hear your stories. I will pray for all that you mentioned.

In spite of this, all I can say is that I am responsible for MY own actions, not the actions of others. I must be true to MY attitude to Roman Law, not THEIRS. I must answer to MY own conscience, no matter what the rest of the world does. That is the only principle that I must follow.

Finally, you are correct - it is _____ 25. Now I hesitate to mention this, because of what Jesus said in Mt 6:3-4. However, I feel that I must respond in some way. Please don't get the impression that all I do is just sit around and look at relic auctions on AH1. I also do not, I am sorry to say, follow the precise instructions in Mt 25, as I must assume that you do since you quote it. But I try to do so indirectly by tithing 10% of my gross annual income to charity. I am also very active in my parish, and in the Catholic community beyond that. I know it's not exactly the same as Mt. 25, but I do TRY to live out all aspects of my faith, from Sacred Scripture to Canon Law.

God bless,

P.S. I am sorry that my communication with you has upset you so.

-----Original Message-----

From: _____ []
Sent: Thursday, December 30, 1999 1:13 PM
To:
Subject: The Canon Law Police

Dear _____

I do not doubt your sincerity and am grateful, in a funny kind of way, for the trouble you go to, but I am constantly amazed by the antics of you self-appointed "CANON LAW POLICE" and would like to just share a couple of things which happened to me in Rome (yes, that's the same eternal city of all our dreams) just a few weeks ago:

At one famous enclosed convent I got all the business about "Oh it is expressly forbidden by the Holy See...", and then I dropped the name of an Australian priest who helped them out of a pickle a few years ago, and every door opened for me! Relics everywhere, with price tags.

Later I was at another relic-providing convent and when the Sisters said it was tough these days, with Roman laws, etc etc, I merely said I had bought some of their relics from a certain shop in Rome, to which they had "illegally" sold them - hey presto - out came the relics - "and what would you like?" I even got one of St Peter Apostle WITH PAPERS out of them! (No papers can be provided for anything before 4th century now, by Vatican edict!!!) At the end of the session, Rev Mother liked me so much she sent one of the Sisters out the back to fetch something which she presented to me

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- a Relic of the True Cross!!!!!!!!!!!!!! - as a gift!!!

Later I went to the General House of another Order and was shown a cupboard FULL of first and second class relics of the saints of their Order - and told the price was the same for all. I also know, too, that another enclosed convent which provides relics and is strict about the bishop's letters always waives the rules for young seminarians who go help out with the sisters' heavy work!

On my last day I popped into the Generalate of the Jesuits and asked if they had any relics available. A woman came to the door. In one hand she had an envelope, in the other a sign reading "L15.000" (you would know this is about US\$8). No questions. No drama. So I paid and thanked her and went out into the street. Opening the package I expected to find a piece of the shoelace of some insignificant Jesuit Blessed. Not so. It was a piece of the bone - YES - EX OSSIBUS S IGNATIUS LOYOLA!!! That was mid December!!!

But the best story of the lot is the one from a shop quite near Gammarelli the Papal tailor. I walked in with a friend and said to the woman "I would like to obtain some relics" "Oh" says she "it is expressly forbidden by the Holy See to sell..." I motioned her to be silent. "I have been here before, Signora, and I would like to see the white box you keep locked in that cupboard" "Aaahhhh, well, why didn't you say so" says she, as she opens the cupboard, and gets out the box, revealing relics of every saint imaginable, and some unimaginable! So, my energetic and apologetic friend, you must always remember that OUR attitude to Roman Law is entirely different from THEIR attitude to t!

The relic-providing nuns will still have to put bread and pasta on the tables, and this is the way they have been doing it for hundreds of years. They call it providing, you call it selling, I call it auctioning. It is always the same thing. Your zeal will not stop it. May I just for one moment assume the position you and your fellow zealots have made your own, and suggest you turn your New Testament (which you ought be a lot more familiar with than your Canon Law) and immerse yourself in _____ 25 - I'm pretty sure that's the chapter - it's all about judgement. Then, having read it, get off your butt and get out and visit the sick, the prisoners, the lonely, clothe the naked, feed the hungry, and leave me alone.
Yours

-----Original Message-----

From: (_____, _____)

To: '_____' <

Subject: RE: Item #223508188 - [i+i] Relic of True Cross and Holy Family etc

Date: Wed, 29 Dec 1999 20:47:38 -0600

Hello _____,

You're correct. You cannot say, nor can I say, that it is in fact "ex ossibus". But we both know. And so does He.

God bless,

-----Original Message-----

From: _____ []

Sent: Thursday, December 30, 1999 11:09 AM

To:

Subject: Re: Item #223508188 - [i+i] Relic of True Cross and Holy Family etc

Hello _____ and thanks for the opinion.

As there is no documentation to PROVE the ASSERTION that it is "ex ossibus"

under the Church's own rules on relics, I cannot say, nor can you, nor can anyone else, that it is in fact "ex ossibus".

Now YOU have a nice day.

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From: (_____, _____)
To: "" <
Subject: Item #223508188 - [i+i] Relic of True Cross and Holy Family etc
Date: Wed, 29 Dec 1999 11:52:44 -0600

Hello,

I noticed your auction at AH1 (Item #223508188 - [i+i] Relic of True Cross and Holy Family etc.), and I detected an error in your description. It says, regarding this reliquary that, "it does not contain anything that would not conform to AH1 guidelines."

If you look closely at the picture you will see that one of the relics is labeled "ex Oss S Ann". You may not realize that "Ex Oss" is short for the Latin "ex ossibus", which means "from the bone".

Therefore, unfortunately, this auction violates the User Agreement, Section 6.1, that prohibits the sale of human remains, including bone, at AH1. Since I am sure that you would not want to violate AH1's rule, you probably will want to close this auction.

Have a nice day,

Hello _____,

I was not going to contact you again unless you contacted me, but I have found a great inconsistency in your logic and relic listings. Please forgive me having to point this out. You remember that my first email to you pointed out that the multiple relic that you were offering had an Ex Oss relic of St. Anne. I pointed out that this violated AH1 regulations against the sale of human remains. You replied:

"Hello _____ and thanks for the opinion.

As there is no documentation to PROVE the ASSERTION that it is "ex ossibus" under the Church's own rules on relics, I cannot say, nor can you, nor can anyone else, that it is in fact "ex ossibus"."

However, you now have an auction of an "ex corpore" (from the body) relic of St. Gemma Galgani, and you state that it comes WITH PAPERS. Therefore, by your own logic, "under the Church's own rules on relics" we can ALL SAY that this relic "is in fact" from the body of St. Gemma.

So how can you possibly say in the listing for this relic that:

This item conforms completely to AH1 guidelines. ??????

You surely must admit that you yourself have proof that you are violating Section 6.1 of AH1's regulations against selling human remains, since you have the document to prove it! You are not being truthful in your listing. As an active AH1er I am sure that you don't want to be in violation of their rules and will want to close this auction.

Sincerely,

P.S. With the "tidy profit" you made on the St. Therese lock of hair (what did you get for it, 100 times the offering that you made to the OCD's in Rome?), you can probably put on your own fireworks display over Sydney Harbor like the spectacular one they had for the New Year :o). I guess the buyer (nasusworldnet) proves the adage that "there is a sucker born every minute".

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You're a true Catholic.

The Popes have been using the term "____tian" for good reason in latter years, but to no avail We still keep turning out Catholic like Mussolini, Hitler and you. No wonder the Church is disappearing, Truth and all. Not that it's any of your business, but that sale is not going ahead. And in all your integrity, I suppose you would like to donate to me the AH1 costs I will have to pay? There's a test for you up there on your high moral ground.

Unless you are prepared to put your money where your big fat Catholic mouth is, please go and bother, and make all sorts of disgusting claims about, about else.

P.S. With the "tidy profit" you made on the St. Therese lock of hair (what did you get for it, 100 times the offering that you made to the OCD's in Rome?), you can probably put on your own fireworks display over Sydney Harbor like the spectacular one they had for the New Year :o). I guess the buyer (nasusworldnet) proves the adage that "there is a sucker born every minute".

Hello _____,

This is my calculation of the cost for listing the Little Flower Hair Relic on AH1:

\$0.25 Insertion Fee

\$14.95 Category Featured Auction Fee

\$1.25 5% of first \$25

\$28.12 (\$2,275 - \$25 = \$2,250 X 0.0125 (1.25%)

\$44.57 Total

If this is correct, please email me your address and I will forward you a personal check for this amount.

HOWEVER, there are stipulations. You must not ever sell or auction this relic. You must keep it for private veneration and/or make it available for public veneration, or donate it to a Catholic Church or individual who you can be assured will treat this relic with the proper respect and care that it deserves. Also, you should be as certain as is possible that the person to whom you transfer the relic also will not sell or auction it.

If you have already sold this relic, my offer is null and void.

I do not need any proof that these stipulations are met. I will take your word for it.

God bless,

-----Original Message-----

From: _____ []

Sent: Wednesday, January 05, 2000 3:49 PM

To:

Subject: RE: Ooops - There is a problem

The AH1 costs are easy to work out - they are accessible at AH1 - it's a sliding scale that starts at 5% of the first so many dollars, then the percentage drops down as the highest bid goes higher. You might be able to take a plate around. This will be interesting!

-----Original Message-----

From: (_____, _____)

To: '_____' <_____>

Subject: RE: Ooops - There is a problem

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Date: Tue, 4 Jan 2000 08:46:50 -0600

Please let me know what the AH1 costs are and I will see what I can do.

-----Original Message-----

From: _____ []

Sent: Tuesday, January 04, 2000 3:29 PM

To:

Subject: Re: Ooops - There is a problem

You're a true Catholic.

The Popes have been using the term "_____tian" for good reason in latter years, but to no avail We still keep turning out Catholic like Mussolini, Hitler and you. No wonder the Church is disappearing, Truth and all. Not that it's any of your business, but that sale is not going ahead. And in all your integrity, I suppose you would like to donate to me the

AH1 costs I will have to pay? There's a test for you up there on your high moral ground.

Unless you are prepared to put your money where your big fat Catholic mouth is, please go and bother, and make all sorts of disgusting claims about, about else.

P.S. With the "tidy profit" you made on the St. Therese lock of hair (what did you get for it, 100 times the offering that you made to the OCD's in Rome?), you can probably put on your own fireworks display over Sydney Harbor like the spectacular one they had for the New Year :o). I guess the buyer (nasusworldnet) proves the adage that "there is a sucker born every minute".

_____,

I think I made a mistake on my last calculation. Here is the revised one.

Math was never my strong subject!!

\$0.25 Insertion Fee

\$14.95 Category Featured Auction Fee

\$1.25 5% of first \$25

\$24.38 (\$1,000 - \$25 = \$975 X 0.025 (2.5%))

\$15.94 (\$2,275 - \$1,000 = \$1,275 X 0.0125 (1.25%))

\$56.77 Total

I think that this is now correct. My offer still holds for this new amount, provided that the stipulations listed below are met.

P.S. I am not independently wealthy. But do believe that one must back their faith up with action.

Hello _____,

This is my calculation of the cost for listing the Little Flower Hair Relic on AH1:

\$0.25 Insertion Fee

\$14.95 Category Featured Auction Fee

\$1.25 5% of first \$25

\$28.12 (\$2,275 - \$25 = \$2,250 X 0.0125 (1.25%))

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\$44.57 Total

If this is correct, please email me your address and I will forward you a HOWEVER, there are stipulations. You must not ever sell or auction this relic. You must keep it for private veneration and/or make it available for public veneration, or donate it to a Catholic Church or individual who you can be assured will treat this relic with the proper respect and care that it deserves. Also, you should be as certain as is possible that the person to whom you transfer the relic also will not sell or auction it.

If you have already sold this relic, my offer is null and void.

I do not need any proof that these stipulations are met. I will take your word for it.

God bless,

-----Original Message-----

From: _____ []
Sent: Wednesday, January 05, 2000 3:49 PM
To:
Subject: RE: Ooops - There is a problem

The AH1 costs are easy to work out - they are accessible at AH1 - it's a sliding scale that starts at 5% of the first so many dollars, then the percentage drops down as the highest bid goes higher. You might be able to take a plate around. This will be interesting!

-----Original Message-----

From: _____ []
Sent: Tuesday, January 04, 2000 3:29 PM
To:
Subject: Re: Ooops - There is a problem

Hello _____,

Sorry, but I must respond. Regarding the stipulations that I set forth, you stated:
"Do those conditions etc make you feel better, or is it just 'having the upper hand' or 'occupying the high moral ground' that does it for you?"

Actually, it is none of the above. It's a principle involved in the specific action that I am proposing to take. If I am attempting to "rescue a relic", then I was hoping to obtain some assurance (remember, I offered to take you at your word - no "control freak" proof was necessary), that the goal of the action would be achieved. That is, if I covered your costs for the auction of this relic, and then you went ahead and sold it or auctioned it later anyway, I would actually (at least indirectly) be contributing to an action (the eventual sale of this relic) that I am opposed to. Now, philosophically, one could argue that ANY contribution made to you might be suspect. For example, you could use the money I sent you to obtain a different relic and then auction it. However, if I had an assurance that the St. Therese relic would not be auctioned or sold, I could at least justify my contribution to you as the "cost of a rescue" of THAT particular relic. So, I really am not trying to control you or anybody else. I am just trying to be completely consistent in my actions and in my philosophy regarding the sale of sacred relics. I hope that you can understand this.

Having said all that, I do realize that you are not going to go through with the sale of the St. Therese relic at

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\$2,275. This is to your credit, and I commend you for this decision and commend you on your action.

Regarding your original undiluted, unconditional, challenge (re: my "big fat Catholic" mouth). Without any assurances about the St. Therese relic, I must take this to prayer. I will be spending an hour of adoration before the Blessed Sacrament tomorrow evening. I will bring this matter to the Eucharistic Lord in prayer for guidance. (By the way, the Trinity and _____t present in the Eucharist are MY "notion of the Divine").

Because you

also seem to have some anger, I will pray also that you will be healed of whatever is troubling you. I should be able to let you know on Friday about what I am led to do regarding your challenge.

God bless,

-----Original Message-----

From: _____ []

Sent: Thursday, January 06, 2000 2:22 AM

To:

Subject: Re: OOPS - I made a mistake

The title of your email surprises me. I did not think mistakes were recognisable up there on the high moral ground (oh, they're made alright, just usually not observed).

_____,

I think I made a mistake on my last calculation. Here is the revised one. Math was never my strong subject!! The amount is immaterial. It is between you and your notion of the Divine.

P.S. I am not independently wealthy. But do believe that one must back their faith up with action.

IN THAT CASE YOU WON'T BE NEEDING TO WORRY ABOUT THE STIPULATIONS! JUST START WRITING THAT MONEY ORDER.

1. As it happens, my idea of the Divine is the same. You guys, you see, don't have a monopoly on It, or belief in It, or adoration of It. (I, however, seem to have a monopoly on a sense of humor about It, and everything else.)
2. I'm not angry, just sick of being preached to (see # 1 above).
3. I am not and will not be interested in knowing - either way - what comes out of your holy hour (unless of course the monstrance bleeds, or makes audible noises, in which case I would be interested in chopping it up into little pieces, and selling it as relics to devil-worshippers for use with consecrated virgins at black masses) - I JUST WANT YOU TO PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR ... need I go on? Don't contact me, just do it.

THE HOST IN THE MONSTRANCE DID NOT BLEED OR MAKE AUDIBLE SOUNDS. SORRY THAT I COULD NOT HELP YOU WITH YOUR REQUEST (THIS IS SARCASTIC HUMOR).

4. Your constant need to talk about it rather than do it, incidentally, is VERY "orthodox" Catholic. Just do it.

I AM ORTHODOX, AND I THANK GOD FOR THAT.

I DON'T HAVE A CONSTANT NEED TO TALK ABOUT IT.

From: (_____, _____)

To: '_____' <_____>

Subject: RE: OOPS - I made a mistake

Date: Wed, 5 Jan 2000 11:35:33 -0600

Hello _____,

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Sorry, but I must respond. Regarding the stipulations that I set forth, you stated:

"Do those conditions etc make you feel better, or is it just 'having the upper hand' or 'occupying the high moral ground' that does it for you?"

Actually, it is none of the above. It's a principle involved in the specific action that I am proposing to take. If I am attempting to "rescue a relic", then I was hoping to obtain some assurance (remember, I offered to take you at your word - no "control freak" proof was necessary), that the goal of the action would be achieved. That is, if I covered your costs for the auction of this relic, and then you went ahead and sold it or auctioned it later anyway, I would actually (at least indirectly) be contributing to an action (the eventual sale of this relic) that I am opposed to. Now, philosophically, one could argue that ANY contribution made to you might be suspect. For example, you could use the money I sent you to obtain a different relic and then auction it. However, if I had an assurance that the St. Therese relic would not be auctioned or sold, I could at least justify my contribution to you as the "cost of a rescue" of THAT particular relic. So, I really am not trying to control you or anybody else. I am just trying to be completely consistent in my actions and in my philosophy regarding the sale of sacred relics. I hope that you can understand this.

Having said all that, I do realize that you are not going to go through with the sale of the St. Therese relic at \$2,275. This is to your credit, and I commend you for this decision and commend you on your action.

Regarding your original undiluted, unconditional, challenge (re: my "big fat Catholic" mouth). Without any assurances about the St. Therese relic, I must take this to prayer. I will be spending an hour of adoration before the Blessed Sacrament tomorrow evening. I will bring this matter to the Eucharistic Lord in prayer for guidance. (By the way, the Trinity and _____t present in the Eucharist are MY "notion of the Divine"). Because you also seem to have some anger, I will pray also that you will be healed of whatever is troubling you. I should be able to let you know on Friday about what I am led to do regarding your challenge.

God bless,

Dear Raymond,

It was nice hearing from you. I have also been interested in relics for a long time. Only recently I have begun to start a collection. Mine, however, is much smaller than yours (only 11 relics)! I obtained some duplicates as gifts from a priest and from a friend of mine. I also made a nominal donation to a couple of shrines (\$20) and to a postulator in Rome (\$25) for relics of some saints.

I have read over you email a couple of times and thought about it quite a bit. I have come to the conclusion that I just don't quite feel right about bidding on the relic of the True Cross that you are offering at AH1, even though I would love to have such a relic. It just doesn't seem right to me anymore. I thought that, if the relic were removed from its container, the bids would never get as high as they are now. Therefore, it seems to me

that the relic is actually being sold. It also doesn't seem to quite fit my idea of a donation, since there is a reserve price attached to it. As a Catholic, I don't want to take a chance that I am participating in the possible breaking of Canon Law. I'm not saying that Canon I am sorry that you are financially strapped at this time. If you have any other duplicate relics that you would like to transfer to me, I would be happy to reimburse you for the original cost of donation that you made to Rome for them, plus postage. This would not fetch a very high price, I'm afraid, but I would feel OK about this kind of transaction.

-----Original Message-----

From: []

Sent: Monday, December 13, 1999 4:58 PM

To: ;

Subject: Re: cross relic

Dear Friend,

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First off let me say that I am an avid collector of relics and have over 300 ranging from the True Cross, Crib of Our Lord, the Shroud, to my favorite saints. A few years ago I was friends with a high-up priest in Rome, who was best friends with one of the priests in charge of the relic vaults in the Vatican, hence I was able to enlarge my collection. The Holy Father closed the relic vaults a few years ago because of abuse with the Mafia and Satanists. The relic of the True Cross that is up on AH1 is an actual fragment of the Cross. The papers state "ex ligno SS. Crucis D. N. Jesu _____ti" which is Latin for "from the wood of the Cross of Our Lord Jesus _____t." The relic was made and sealed on November 12, 1991, by Petrus Canisius (the priest in charge of distributing relics for the Holy Father). The reliquary is only gold plated most likely, and is around 1 inch in diameter like that of a quarter. I have four relics of the True Cross, and being a little financially stressed just decided to list one. I see the selling amount as only a donation that someone is willing to make for the relic for it is against Canon Law to sell relics. I truly hope to find someone who really wants it for devotional purposes.

Sincerely, Raymond C.

Hello Raymond,

Now that is an interesting approach!!! I must say that I am relieved that you are not really auctioning the relic of the True Cross. I just gave a talk at our parish on relics, and I wrote an article for our parish newsletter about relics as well. Here are links to websites where the announcement and article appear.

I am a little swamped at work this week, but I will get back in touch with you soon about relics, and to seek your assistance in adding to my collection. I have some specific desires for certain relics, although I do not really want to have a large collection (at least, not yet!!).

God bless,

-----Original Message-----

From: []

Sent: Tuesday, December 14, 1999 12:14 PM

To:

Subject: Re: cross relic

Very nice to hear from you. I did set a high reserve price with the intention of not actually getting rid of the relic through AH1, but to actually meet some people who were interested in the cross relic, and other relics. I also have a problem with going through AH1 and the thought of selling it which can't be done. But I couldn't think of any other ways of getting in touch with people about the relic. Hope you understand what I am saying. I am sure the reserve price will not be met, and I will not be letting the relic go through AH1. But I have met a lot of nice people through emails about it. I would be more than happy to help you obtain more relics, I have a great deal of addresses for them at reasonable donation prices \$10-20. I did have some duplicate relics but I recently gave them away to a local lady who wanted to start a collection. I really do try to help people obtain these treasures. So please do not think of me as a bad person for listing it. The financial problems will be ok nothing major I promise, just a hard time of the year.

Please email me and let me know where your relic interests are such as favorite saints, stigmatists, visionaries, early martyrs and such.

Thanks, Raymond

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Hello Raymond (or Terry, I'm not sure which is right),

A while back you responded to me by email (see below) about having addresses for obtaining relics at reasonable donation prices. I responded that I am interested in increasing my collection with some specific relics. I am most interested in those from saints that are closely associated with the Eucharist, contemplation, and the Heart of Jesus. This is because I belong to a new work in the Church that emphasizes these, along with fighting the "poverty of affluence" in the world, particularly in those Catholics in leadership positions.

Any sources that you could point me to for the following list of relics would be greatly appreciated. I STRONGLY prefer that they have the accompanying "authentic" document, as I have permission from the pastor at my parish church to make these available for public veneration (which requires the authentic). However, if this is not possible, I might still be interested in obtaining the relic for private veneration.

First class relics (or when these are not available (e.g., for St. John, Mary, Joseph) a second class relic) are what I am seeking. The desired relics are listed in the order of preference. Thanks for any help that you can provide.

- 1) True Cross - this is obviously my first choice
- 2) Any other relics of Our Lord's passion - thorn, robe, etc.
- 3) Veil of the Blessed Virgin Mary - or sash ("girdle")
- 4) St. Joseph - robe
- 6) Single theca containing relics of all Twelve Apostles
- 7) St. Peter the Apostle - an ex ossibus relic of St. Peter has been my dream for MANY years
- 8) St. John, Apostle and Evangelist
- 9) St. Margaret Mary Alacoque
- 10) St. Louis IX, King of France (patron saint of my birthday, August 25)
- 11) St. Thomas Aquinas
- 12) St. John of the Cross
- 13) St. Teresa of Avila
- 14) St. John Eudes
- 15) Pope St. Pius X

-----Original Message-----

From:

To:

Sent: 12/17/99 10:11 PM

Subject: Re: True Cross Relic

Yes and I was shocked to see that it was. I mailed the relic to the priest in South Carolina though. I am trying to see what I can do for the high bidder, but rest assured it went to a priest as a gift.

Dear Mr. Serafin,

I read the article about you in Our Sunday Visitor, and you answered one question for me, that it was permissible to buy relics as a "rescue mission" for the purpose of veneration, but does that not encourage the sale of these relics by creating or sustaining a market for them? And how do you really define what is permissible to buy? These third class relic medals sell by the handfuls at most Marion centers, usually for a quarter. I can get a first class relic of John Neumann for a "donation" of \$25.00 to his

center, which is just as deceptive as someone selling a reliquary and giving the relic. It can be assumed that most of the vintage rosaries and medals are blessed, as are all the Church vessels and vestments. A friend in France told me that there are relics in the thousands there, and have been since Vatican 2; out goes the statues and paintings along with the veneration and now even in the belief of the Communion of Saints. There are enormous warehouses full of altars, statues, etc. that the Church had sold to them,

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knowing full well that they would be resold on the open market. Most of those who sell on AH1 seem to be pretty ignorant of what they're selling; to them it is the same as selling a lock of Marilyn Monroe's hair - they are selling "celebrity". This is a problem that the Church has created for Herself, I admire your efforts but don't know what the solution is. My biggest objection is the misrepresentation of a relic; these pilgrim tokens of the "true cross" are frauds. There are and have been thousands of them on the market for years. If these are taken from the ashes of the true cross, what the Church has had all these years are not, therefore, authentic. There is every reason to doubt their authenticity and they are being promoted by an anti-Catholic group. Please don't give them any credibility. Considering what the "relics" of celebrities have been bringing at auction, the relics of the saints have been selling very modestly. Personally, I would have a limit as

as a buyer because that saint would rather have the money go to the poor, but from what I've noticed, these bidders are not dealers. Many are a lot like me, buying them back for the Churches. If we didn't do this, what would happen to these relics? One thing that I've noticed in the _____tian category on AH1, is that the Catholics I know are not engaging in bidding wars, but auctions can certainly be a breeding ground for greed. I would be interested in hearing from you; what do you tell someone, for instance, who is selling a first class relic? If it has no meaning to that person and he can't sell it, what would prevent him from just tossing it away? In closing, it's the parish priests who are wanting these relics back, and some have been bidding on them. Yes, the saints are our heavenly brothers and sisters, as well as all our faithful departed ones, yet how many keep or sell personal items, even hair from their own relatives? The best way of safeguarding the dignity of the relics and sacramentals is to have them designated in your will, as most come on the market through estate auctions. Please do look a "stein 69". Unfortunately, auctions have become the prime vehicle in sales because no one can put a dollar amount on a first class relic of St. Francis, or Jackie Kennedy's paste pearls, or even autographs now. People are setting their own prices at auction, which I don't find to be a bad thing in itself. I have bought some of these relics from AH1, have placed three bids now, but your article has really gotten me confused if I am doing the right thing, and I certainly can't judge the motives of others. The Europeans are more interested in the quality of the reliquaries than the relics, so would not bid on such simple thecas. At any rate, mine will most likely not be the last letter you'll receive, but many are going to wonder like me, what are we supposed to do. How do we explain to people that this is different from the

Church giving important relics for very large donations? Sorry to keep rambling, but I want to do the right thing and was somewhat shaken and confused by Mr. Maynard's article.

My very best regards,

God bless,

Dear ICHRusa,

Thank you very much for your very quick response! You were a big help and gave some good guidelines. I look forward to purchasing your book. It always amazes me at all the good that God can bring from evil; if it weren't for "stein69", I wouldn't have looked you up and found out about your fine organization which I would definitely like to join and help in any way I can - it's the least I can do for all my dear friends in heaven! God bless you and your work, _____

Dear Mr. Serafin,

I have a question concerning the selling and purchase of relics. I read your article in "Our Sunday Visitor" on 11/14. The article stated that it is forbidden to sell relics but that it is not forbidden to purchase relics. Does this mean that relics should be only be given away or else kept in a secure place for viewing? I was a little confused about that statement.

Also, do you know of the places that the remains of St. Therese of Lisieux will be visiting?

Thanks.

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Fayetteville, AR

Hi Tom--

Caught your article in the Sunday Visitor this noon. Very nice--thanks for all your efforts in preserving and speaking out about relics. I recently (in the past month) discovered AH1 and have been amazed at the amount of Catholic articles being auctioned, and shocked at the sheer massive amounts of relics for auction, and at such ridiculous prices! It shows the spiritual hunger out there, but unfortunately at the cost of our saints' bones being sold to the highest bidder. My biggest fear, however, is, as I understand it, relics that get into the wrong hands are used by satan worshippers in ceremonies of dese- cration--it makes me sick to think about it.

I 'm sure you monitor some of the auctions on AH1, but one who you may have already contacted is named Stein69--they had probably 30 relics that they auctioned last week, and have had a bunch more come up this week. I just don't know how you can make non-Catholics understand the seriousness of this issue. I was just talking to someone last week who occasionally auctions religious goods on AH1. She said her husband has a warehouse full of religious stuff from closed churches-- some of which are 1st class relics that go for \$250 and up with papers. She was very wishy-washy and "cannot tell him what to do." What kind of approach do you take with 1)Catholics, 2) semi-Catholics and 3) non-Catholics when it comes to relics? If you can respond to this it might help me explain to various modes of thinking and get their attention through the greed.

On another note, I was entertaining the idea of starting an organization that would gather/accept first class relics from Catholic estates and those passing on as a means of preserving them and encouraging/re-establishing respect and devotion to holy relics. Any ideas on this? Maybe consult a priest who has a devotion to relics?

Tom, I realize you are a busy guy, but if & when you get a few moments to Email me some thoughts on these matters, it would be appreciated. By the way, I loved the book, and will be sharing some of the copies with friends as Christmas presents.

Yours in Christ,

John

Original message follows:

Hello,

I noticed an auction of a religious relic that violates Section 6.1 of the User Agreement that prohibits the sale of human remains. The seller admits that these are first class relics in the title of the auction, and describes it as "fragment of bone in some kind of red substance". Since first class relics of saints are, by definition, a part of the saint's body, this is a clear violation.

Please close this auction

Hello _____,

Thank you for alerting us to this auction. The auction in question has been ended by AH1. We really appreciate the terrific help from users like yourself. Together, we can all help keep AH1 a safe and fun place to trade!

Regards,

AH1 Customer Support

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Original message follows:

Hello,

I have noticed a first class relic at auction at AH1. This violates Section 6.1 that prohibits the sale of human remains, as first class relics of saints are, by definition, parts of the body. Here is the link to this auction:

The seller states that the relic is probably first class. He is correct, it is. *"This beautiful locket relic of Saint Pope Pius X is in excellent condition. It is 1" in Diam. and has a ring for hanging. The back of it opens up and has a wax seal in it. I think it is a first class relic, but I am not positive. Please note that payment for this item is due 8 days from auction close or transaction is null and void. Thank you for understanding and happy bidding!"*

PLEASE CLOSE THIS AUCTION.

Have a nice day,

Dear ICHRusa,

For some strange reason, I decided to check the internet for anything connected to relics. I now sit here at my desk completely humbled by what I've found your web site. I have 28 1st class relics. 2 of the relics I have are 2nd class...One is the habit of edit stein the other is from max kolbe. In Feb/2000, it will be 2 years that my wife and I lost our 3rd child. Joseph died at the age of 44 days from a heart defect. He was confirmed at 3 days old and his confirmation name is Mary. While he was alive and living life to the fullest at home with my other children, a friend let me borrow a 1st class relic of St. Francis and B. Kateri. The relics stayed with him where ever we went. After he died, knowing he went to heaven, I wanted to know the people he was now surrounded by. The saints. This is what has motivated me to obtain the relics I have. I also have a 6 foot statue of "our lady of Grace" at my house and the relics are next to the statue.

On April 20, 1999, my wife, daughter, and 4 month old son were just arriving to our Littleton home. (we live 30 yards behind Columbine High School.) To make a very emotional story short, we sheltered 13 students at our home. They prayed near the statue and the relics as they were hearing shots from the school. The students were allowed to leave our home about 4 hours later.

I am very interested in joining your organization. It sound like something God would want me to do. Please share any thoughts or insights regarding me finding a place as a member. I am 37 years old and love my Catholic faith and our saints....The idea of protecting Saint's relics takes my breath away!!!

Original message follows:

Hello,

I noticed an auction of a religious relic that violates Section 6.1 of the User Agreement that prohibits the sale of human remains. The seller states: "I was asked if the relics are bone. To the best of my knowledge AND my archaeological expertise, the relics in the case do indeed appear to be bone. I have no other provenience for this item; I leave the research up to you."

Thus, this is a first class relic (human bone). Since first class relics of saints are, by definition, a part of the

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saint's body, this is a clear violation.

Please close this auction

Hello,

I reported the following auction last week (see my original communication and your response to me below the dashed line). The seller previously admitted the presence of bone relics and then relisted it again after it had been closed.

WHY HASN'T THIS AUCTION BEEN CLOSED YET?

Have a nice day,

This auction was correctly closed by AH1 Support yesterday. The seller IMMEDIATELY relisted the item but deleted his statement about the relics being bone. **DELETING THIS STATEMENT DOES NOT CHANGE THE ITEM BEING OFFERED FOR AUCTION FROM "BONE" TO "NON-BONE"**. The seller admitted yesterday that this was a first class relic containing human remains. It still is.

This auction must be closed.

The seller should be barred from trading from AH1, as he has lied and committed fraud, and there is indisputable proof for it.

Have a nice day,

Hello _____,

Thank you for alerting us to this auction.

We have carefully reviewed this seller's auction and compared it with his previous posting for this same item. This item is prohibited on AH1.

I have ended this auction and warned the seller of our policy regarding human remains. We really appreciate the terrific help from users like yourself. Together, we can all help keep AH1 a safe and fun place to trade!

Please let us know if we can be of further assistance.

Regards,

AH1 Customer Support
Your Personal Trading Community (tm)

Original message follows:

Hello Tina,

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I don't quite understand. This auction was closed when the seller admitted that there were bones (human remains) present, but when the same item is offered after the seller deletes this sentence you cannot shut down the auction?

It is the SAME violating item in both cases. You did not possess or examine the item when you shut the auction down the first time for violating Section 6.1. What makes it different this time when you still know that the item is in violation?

Please explain this to me.

Have a nice day,

-----Original Message-----

From: AH1 Customer Support []

Sent: Monday, November 22, 1999 3:04 PM

To:

Subject: Re: 2nd NOTICE!!! - Item #203117724 - Beautiful Old Relic Box with 4 Saints Relics (KMM6439520C0KM)

Hello _____,

We understand your frustration in this situation. However, we have found this auction to be within our current rules and policies. Therefore no action will be taken on this item.

I understand that there may be some confusion when interpreting our policies and would like to take a few minutes to explain our current policy surrounding items such as the one you reported. Since AH1 does not possess or examine the items that are listed on our site, we are not in the best position to judge the legality or authorized nature of the item for auction. This means that we cannot remove items, such as the one you have reported.

Please let us know if you have any further questions.

Regards,

AH1 Customer Support

Original message follows:

Hello,

I have noticed a first class relic at auction at AH1. This violates Section 6.1 that prohibits the sale of human remains, as first class relics of saints are, by definition, parts of the body. Here is the link to this auction: The seller states that: "This rare Pope relic sits stately in a wooden cross 6" in height with 4" in width..was received by a nun in the Vatican...suspect it is a 1st class relic Bids Start 25.00 Shipping and Ins 5.00" As suggested by the Seller, this is indeed a first class relic that contains human remains, which is prohibited by Section 6.1 of the User Agreement.

PLEASE CLOSE THIS AUCTION.

Have a nice day,

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Dear Mr. Serafin,

I read the article about relics being sold on the internet in our catholic newspaper and saw your website and looked over it. It is great. If you think selling of relics is a horrible thing to do, how about Priests at seminaries who throw them in the trash. Thank God they were rescued, and thank God the person who rescued them is a very pious person, who shares the relics among the faithful. Needless to say he quit the seminary for alot of other reasons too. Anyway, I work in a Roman Catholic bookstore and he brought the relic in and allowed us to keep it for a week. Many people venerated the crucifix and I couldn't let go of it. There was authentic paperwork with it and it was still sealed with a red wax vatican seal. I presume that this was a crucifix of an exorcist because of the relics that were in it. They were true wood of the Cross, Veil of the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph, Ann, Theresa of Avila, Philomena, Margaret Mary Alcoque, Lucy, Anthony of Padua, Agnus, Pasquali, _____topher, Mary Magdelene, St. Peter the Apostle, Cur of Ars, Cecilia, Peter Julian Eymard, Thomas Aquanis, John the Baptist, Roche, John de Brebeuf, Carol Garnier. The lady that owns the store was touching St. Benedict Medals to it and gave them to a cripple child and her parents. I touched everything I had handy of my personal items to the crucifix, such as my chapel veils and my medals and religious articles. We had venerated St. Therese' the week before and I went the convent everynight she was here. It was a blessed miracle to then be able to venerate this crucifix. Good is being done with this blessed relic.

I wanted to share this with you to let you know and be comforted that at least one layperson was using his relics for the greater glory of God. I still can't fathom this blessed gift I was given to be able to venerate it for so long and I am very blest indeed.

Gods Blessings

Denise

Dear ICHRusa,

I found this website and thought you might want to look into it. Whatever is in the collection that is for sale is advertised as having belonged to a Catholic Msgr. in 1954.

Relics are not only being auctioned, they are being sold on websites such as this. I found this through the search engine dogpile, which brings up every site on every search engine.

Lovingly in Jesus and Mary

Denise

At 05:46 PM 12/21/99 -0600, you wrote:

Hello Jennifer,

I saw your Relic (Item #220257) of St. Pius X for action at AH1.

The description of this item seems to indicate that you are probably a very well-informed Catholic. The hard brownish substance is a fragment of bone, as this relic is the same as many more first class relics of St. Pius X. You may not be aware that Section 6.1 of the AH1 User Agreement prohibits the sale of human remains, and this includes human remains that are in relics. Unfortunately, many sellers at AH1 break this rule to sell their relics. Also, you mention that St. Pius X brought about a new Canon Law (in 1918). What you may not realize is that present Canon Law forbids any Catholic from selling relics. Here is the reference to that section of Canon Law.

"Can. 1190 §1 It is absolutely wrong to sell sacred relics.

Anyway - you sound like a devout Catholic, and so I wanted to just make you aware of this so you won't find out later and feel sorry or guilty for selling this relic. Many times people who bid on these items are associated with the occult and use the relics for horrible purposes. Perhaps you could keep the relic yourself, our donate it to the Catholic Church.

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I hope that this information is helpful and that you will decide to stop this auction.

God bless,

Thanks very much for your email and the information you provided.

As our listing states, we have no documentation for this reliquary. One AH1er stated definitively that the relic is skin. You state that it is bone. My partner and I have several relics, and this one looks very much like other relics we have which are wood or other materials which are glued on with a similarly colored glue. The fact is, we do not know what it is, you and the other AH1er can't know any more than we do, what it is. We

don't even know that it is a genuine relic, which is why the listing is for the reliquary, and the relic itself is being included for free. Our opening bid was comparable to what these types of reliquaries go for in retail stores, so we feel that the price for the reliquary is fair.

Since this cannot be proven to be human remains, we are not violating AH1 rules. Since we are selling the reliquary and not the relic, we are not violating Church canon law. But I would like to add a note about relics from my own experience. For example, this one belonged to a priest who completely neglected it for many years and had no interest in it. He gave it to a relative who had it in her dining room hutch for years, never bothering to find out who Pius X was, and finally she sold it to us. (By the way, we bought it for the exact amount of our opening bid). Sadly, this neglect and lack of interest in relics is true of many priests, and giving a relic to a Church often means that it will never be offered to the faithful for their veneration, but will instead sit in a closet somewhere or even tossed out. I know this from experience. I have also tried several times to give relics to priests, who have had no interest. Certainly there are exceptions (our pastor is one of them, but he already has every possible relic so would not be interested in this one!) Through AH1 I myself have been able to obtain several relics which are now regularly venerated. Did I pay for them? Yes. However, at least they are respected, venerated, and cared for. I am grateful to have them and could have gotten them in no other way.

Also, in over 200 transactions of primarily religious goods, in only one case (the sale of a book) have we had any reason to suspect that the high bidder was connected with the occult or in any way intending to use the item improperly. That incident bothered us, but we had to have some sort of perspective. First of all, someone who wants to will always be able to obtain a desired item. Secondly, ultimately these are objects, whose significance as holy items or sacramentals is connected with the disposition of the user and have no magical power or anything of that sort. Thirdly, we could give up selling these items, but we would not only lose our living, but legitimate, devoted Catholic buyers would have a harder time finding these special objects for their devotion.

We sincerely appreciate your concern, and hope this reply has been of some help.

Best wishes,

Dear Joyce and _____,

Thanks for your two emails. I understood all of your reasoning in the first email, as I have a great interest in relics myself. Ironically, when I first found AH1 about six months ago, I bid on a St. Pius X relic. I felt uneasy about this, and was actually glad when I was overbid. I have not bid on any relics since.

It is a difficult situation. The proper veneration of relics is very important, especially at this troubled time in history. As you obviously know, relics are another treasure of the church. Unfortunately, they are not

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properly appreciated - sadly, even by priests. A fellow parishioner, my wife, and I gave a presentation on relics at our parish church a couple of weeks ago. About 80 people attended and about 50 relics (lent to us for the evening by parishioners and other churches in the area) were available for viewing and veneration. Those who attended were touched by the talks and relics, and many said that they learned a lot. I hope that increased education will help bring the importance and veneration of relics back to the proper place in our faith. I wish that there were a way to get relics to the faithful in a better way than by auction, and am trying to think about how this could be done (a web site in which relics are offered for only a nominal donation, similar to that which is requested by the church for the materials and labor in preparing the relics?).

Thank you for ending the auction. It was a courageous decision that cost you some financial gain. I am certain that the relic of St. Pius X is now in its proper home. May he intercede for an even greater success for your business and for your journey in faith. Please be certain that I will keep you in my prayers, and I will offer a Mass and my Communion in thanksgiving for you both.

May you have a Blessed and Holy _____tmas and a Prosperous New Year,

-----Original Message-----

From: Jennifer Solomon []

Sent: Tuesday, December 21, 1999 6:07 PM

To:

Subject: Re: Relic Auction

Dear _____,

Having just sent you a long letter about our relic, I want you to know that we have decided to end our auction. On deeper reflection, though I do feel it is something of a service to make relics available to the faithful, we agree that selling them is wrong, and we have decided to keep the relic. So, you have done a good deed! We will end it this evening. God bless.

Joyce

Saved all images of relics from Stein69 that appear today (Feast of St. Martin of Tours).

Don't know if this would be helpful. This is really discouraging.

Do you think these are fakes? Would it be worth bidding on a couple to investigate?

Could these pictures be sent to the relic sources in Rome to see if there is a common

thread? Most look older...I don't recognize most of those shown to be in theca's

or decorated or labeled as anything I've gotten of late? So, maybe just a dead priests

stash he's stumbled upon?

Funny, with such a number that there's no authentication papers advertized?

Anyway, just some questions. You need not answer me...just hope that my late night ponderings may be of help! (I still can't get over the "ex ossibus" AH1 response...crazy man!)Keep up the good work Tom. Let us pray for wisdom!

**By David Streitfeld
Washington Post Staff Writer
Sunday, November 28, 1999; Page A1**

SAN JOSE – Thurman Munson, the great Yankee catcher, was killed in a plane crash in 1979. Bobby Brown became president of the Am _____an League in 1984. A baseball with the seal of President Brown and the signature of Munson is impossible, but that's exactly what some guy was trying to sell through the online auctioneer AH1 Inc.

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Rob _____, associate general counsel for AH1, telephoned the seller to determine whether he was pulling a scam or merely naive. The man couldn't explain the difference in dates. Nor did he seem embarrassed or surprised that he was selling a fake, which would have been an innocent person's reaction. To top it off, _____ knew the man had been bidding on his own auction to jack up the price, an AH1 no-no.

"We can't tolerate forged or fraudulent items," said _____. "I'm going to suspend your account."

With that, he clicked his mouse and banished the man, immediately making the auction site a little safer for law-abiding folk.

_____ is the AH1 prosecutor, judge, jury and, when need be, its executioner. Some days, he gives the boot to as many as a dozen people. The rest of the time, he's writing the laws for this burgeoning online community.

A few years ago, when _____ was still a federal prosecutor in Alexandria, the Internet was famous as a place where there were no rules, where you could drop your real-world identity and masquerade as whomever you wanted.

It was the Wild West all over again, with law enforcement often uncertain what the Internet was, much less how to track wrongdoers. E-commerce was so new that people were terrified about providing credit card information. Any deals were private negotiations between two parties, which meant caveat emptor.

As the Internet has become increasingly commercialized and positively suburban, the enforcers and legislators have arrived – nowhere more so than at AH1, where the company is the final authority on tens of thousands of transactions a day. Other consumer e-commerce companies watch AH1 so closely that, according to _____, they frequently plagiarize wholesale its user agreement – right down to the typographical error.

_____ recently prohibited the auction of bear claws, material from Cuba (unless it's art), stuffed migratory birds, police badges (even movie replicas), shares of stock, Native Am _____an masks, cigarettes and cigars, bottles of wine, human sperm, firecrackers, wild mushrooms, roach clips and bongos, TV descramblers and gravestones, and he's pondering what to do about used makeup.

"We all need rules to live by, and the Internet's no different," said _____. "We're posting new rules all the time."

When AH1 began four years ago, founder Pierre Omidyar envisioned it almost like a club, a place where people could informally buy and sell small items of value. As a business, it was low key; Omidyar ran it out of his home. But the notion quickly caught on, with some people using AH1 to empty out their house and others to fill theirs up.

At one point earlier this week, there were 3.36 million items registered for sale in 2,568 categories, such as vintage cap guns, thimbles and McDonald's memorabilia. The number of registered users, 7.7 million, is greater than the population of Chicago and Los Angeles put together.

The company's employees, most of them in a low-slung building in an anonymous office park here, never see any of the objects being sold. With 350,000 new items being listed every day, it would be difficult for AH1 to screen them ahead of time. It doesn't even try.

In its lengthy user agreement, AH1 makes clear that it does not vouch for the authenticity of any transaction. But as a publicly traded corporation with an astronomical market value of \$19 _____ion, it needs a good reputation – and as much new business as possible. The safer it is, the more it is likely to have both.

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Enter Rob _____. Until early this year, he was supervisory federal prosecutor for Helen Fahey, U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia. He handled many high-profile cases, including Russian spies Aldrich Ames and Harold Nicholson, and was well-liked by his boss. But newly married and approaching 40, _____ was a little restless.

He had a small business sideline of artistic photography, which required camera parts and accessories that weren't easy to get. A photo magazine led him to AH1, where he typed in "Polaroid" in the search box. Expecting to see only a few items, he was astonished to find 300.

He became an AH1 regular. While bidding late one night, he thought: "With millions of transactions, they could probably use someone with a legal background. Maybe even a prosecutor." Before he went to bed, he e-mailed his resume. The next day, the company called.

For the first 2½ years of its existence, AH1 had no lawyer on staff. The first one was hired in early 1998; the second, a general counsel, right before it went public that September. Neither had a law enforcement background.

User complaints about fraudulent behavior were handled by the AH1 staff, but this mostly consisted of telling aggrieved customers to contact the police themselves. These days, there's a whole fraud unit that is proactive as well as reactive.

"Rob was the lone sheriff initially, but that's ridiculous – you need an entire department," said Angela Malacari, who came to AH1 in June to run what is now called the Fraud Prevention Department.

A former Immigration and Naturalization Service agent based in Alexandria, Malacari's knowledge of _____ goes beyond the professional: She's his wife. "It's like that old TV show, 'Hart to Hart,' where the husband and wife are the investigator and the attorney," she said with a laugh. "We're a real law enforcement family."

Both Malacari and _____ stress that the actual amount of fraud committed on AH1, whether it's knowingly selling forged or illegal items or collecting cash for an object and then not delivering the goods, is extremely small. Still, dozens of auctions are stopped every day by AH1.

Malacari, moreover, feels that the Internet "is where crime is going. There's more anonymity. You can assume someone else's identity. The bad guy is not hiding on the streets, he's hiding behind his screen at home. It's a new specialty for law enforcement."

The AH1 transgressions that get the most publicity are those that involve body organs, such as livers and kidneys. In a somewhat related vein was the young Florida man a couple of months ago who was supposedly auctioning his virginity. He, like the organ sellers, was referred to authorities; in his case, for prostitution.

It's unclear how many, if any, of the attempted sales of body parts were genuine; _____ says the police don't report back to him. His guess is that many of them were hoaxes. Then there was the fellow who placed his entire company for sale. In that case, there was a picture of the building, and a request from the president of the firm for initial bids to exceed \$10 million.

An attorney for the company found the auction and alerted AH1 that it was a fake. The perpetrator, who had his account suspended, was a disgruntled employee. Hoaxes have declined since AH1 last month started requiring all sellers to provide a credit card number.

Even for the more professional criminal, AH1 is often a very stupid place to commit a crime. But then, some crooks are just dumb. There recently was a case where someone whose house had been robbed checked on AH1 and saw his property for sale.

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"Things go on in the real world, in a flea market or pawn shop, that no one notices," said _____. "But at AH1, the eyes of the world are watching."

The world, in fact, is watching more closely than AH1 management. Usually, the first notice of an illegal or fraudulent item is a complaint by a user. The auction house has instituted a Community Watch program, turning its customers into its police force.

Coin buffs wrote in about an auction involving an 1879 C.C. Morgan mint proof, worth at least six figures. The picture of the coin on the site included an authentication number that looked as if it had been crudely tampered with. _____ contacted the Secret Service, which investigates counterfeiting. A search warrant confirmed the fraud.

As the world of AH1 grows almost as multifaceted as the real world, people are always finding new things to sell. Last May, users noticed that several individuals were selling old tombstones on the site. Outrage immediately followed from genealogists, who worried that graveyards everywhere would be desecrated.

"After repeated objections from our group of genealogists, [you] allowed a federal military grave marker from Indiana to be listed," wrote one man. "I have had my fill of your arrogance. Accordingly, I am filing a legal request through the Indiana Consumer Protection Bureau to the Indiana State Attorney General requesting that you make your presence in Indiana to answer charges of racketeering and the breaking of federal laws restricting the interstate sale of stolen goods from the State of Indiana."

The sale of gravestones on AH1 was quickly banned, but the episode still garnered _____ a death threat, as well as a separate promise that his grave would be "a vile, disgusting place." Aldrich Ames was never so upset.

But then, AH1 always provokes fierce emotional reactions among its users, and _____ now bears the brunt of it. "I think he's been surprised at how high-profile the job has been," said Fahey, his old boss. "He's become a lot more famous out there than he ever expected or intended."

Despite the attacks and grumbling, most AH1 users are incredibly loyal. Competing auction sites at Amazon.com and Yahoo haven't been able to gain much traction. Unfortunately, even the crooks are loyal to AH1. Knock them off and they pop back up under a different name.

"At least when I was a prosecutor and the person went to jail, I didn't have to worry about him escaping and then having to track him down and put him back in again," said _____. "But in this environment, once you've suspended someone the job has just begun."

In extreme cases, AH1 has filed suit against users who are thrown out but keep coming back. The record for reappearances is 157, by a user in Japan who keeps harassing one particular seller over a deal gone bad. The runner-up, at 113, is a dealer in bootleg music.

All this means that the number of AH1 regulations, as well as the staff to enforce them, will continue to grow.

"The day where I can kick back and play golf and let my rules take over won't come any time soon," _____ said. "We're hiring another lawyer right now."

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Dear AH1 Customer Support,

Please may I draw your attention to the following two auctions of human remains which violate para 6.2 of the AH1 user agreement:

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2794139 EUROPE! Antique Framed Relic (?) gilt framed

This is an auction of a relic which is quite clearly a large piece of bone about 3-4" long (look at the photograph, it is quite "obvious on its face" that this is human remains).

476847 ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON Certified Body Relic

The seller of this item states quite openly that it is a body part.

Could you please take action as soon as possible to end these auctions which violate your rules.

Yours sincerely,

London, UK

At this time there is a first class relic on AH1 for St. Therese. It looks to be real and in very fine shape. I need a little help in my understanding of what the Church asks us to do in these cases. I myself would love to have a relic of St Therese and can not believe this person is selling her on AH1. My biggest problem here is that in trying to buy it to rescue her from being passed around by people who do not even care, am I helping this person damn their soul? How should I approach this situation. I can most likely afford this relic so that it can taken from those who would do such things. How should I proceed? What is the Church's stance on how I should proceed. Should I just allow him to sell this without trying to rescue her?

Thank you.

Thank you for responding so quickly.

You make very good points. I am very devoted to St. Therese. But, when you say intension...well I would just love to have a relic in many ways. For that matter you are correct. However, I would most likely wish to rescue her in any situation like this. What led me to even look was a little write up in the North Texas Catholic. I never realized people did this stuff...

I do not want in anyway for it to appear that I am purchasing my own sister...what would she think??? Never mind that...I know. At least I know how frustrating this is for you and the all those like yourself who seem to be doing everything you can about this. I simply can not believe people would do this to those in heaven who love us so much.....it is really sad. Thank you and pray for me as I do for you.

From: Thomas Serafin <

Reply-To:

To: St N Joon <

Subject: Re: St Therese relic

Date: Mon, 20 Dec 1999 08:46:18 -0800

St N Joon wrote:

At this time there is a first class relic on AH1 for St. Therese. It looks to be real and in very fine shape. I need a little help in my understanding of what the Church asks us to do in these cases. I myself would love to have a relic of St Therese and can not believe this person is selling her on AH1. My biggest problem here is that in trying to buy it to rescue her from being passed around by people who do not even care, am I helping this person damn their soul? How should I approach this situation. I can most likely afford this relic so that it can taken from those who would do such things. How should I proceed? What is the Church's stance on how I should proceed. Should I just allow him to sell this without trying to rescue her?

Thank you.

Please respond as quickly as you can.

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Dear Scott,

Canon Law does allow us to rescue a relic.

If you want it and can afford it, there is nothing to stop you.

As for the other person salvation, well that's their concern, in the face of it they are probably unbelievers anyways. The ICHRusa has done everything possible to educate the sellers and stop the sales via the internet, to NO avail. I would pray a little and ask yourself if your intentions are pure, and run with your conclusion.

In Christ,

Tom

Dear Angus,

Thank you for your reply and for the details and contact numbers you give.

I am afraid, in spite of your explanation, I still cannot understand how you came to the conclusion that these items are within your rules and policies. I see that what used to be section 6.2 of the user agreement, to which I referred, is now section 6.1, and perhaps this caused some confusion.

Item 218447 is clearly described as "Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton authentic body particle". AH1's list of prohibited items states: "the human body or any human body parts may not be listed on AH1". This appears to me to be an open and shut case. You do not need to depend on the credentials or accuracy of third parties for this one - the seller him/herself quite openly says what it is.

As for item 224139, you can see for yourself that it is obviously a bone, and thus prohibited. For comparison, if someone listed a firearm, said that it was a firearm, and provided a photo of it, you would not I presume have to actually hold the object in your hands and submit it to an accredited expert before you admitted that it was indeed prohibited?

I realise that AH1 is unwilling to act on the representations of third parties, in fact I have found this out myself in the past on many occasions. Even now there are several auctions of relics on AH1 that I have not reported to you because, even though I know perfectly well they are human remains, I also know that AH1 is unwilling to act on prohibited auctions that are (for example) described in Latin, even (which I really cannot understand) when AH1 representatives themselves admit that these are human remains.

The two cases I have referred you to here are different. Please may I ask you to review your decision? I really cannot understand how AH1 can allow the sale of these items which so obviously and openly violate the user agreement. If you are not going to enforce the user agreement in these cases I really wonder why you bother to have a user agreement at all.

Yours sincerely,

London, UK

At 06:06 20/12/99 +0000, you wrote:

Hello _____,

Thank you for contacting us to bring this item to our attention. I have reviewed these auctions and have found the items to be within our current rules and policies. Therefore no action will be taken on this item. I understand that there may be some confusion when interpreting our policies and would like to take a few minutes to explain our current policy surrounding items such as the one you reported. Since AH1 does not

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possess or examine the items that are listed on our site, we are not in the best position to judge the legality or authorized nature of the item for auction. This means that we cannot remove items, such as the one you have reported.

Of course there may be occasions where we do act on items such as these, but only in extreme circumstances.

We truly appreciate your knowledge about these types of items, however, we often cannot remove items based on representations of third parties. The reason for this is because we can not independently verify the credentials and accuracy of the information that is provided by third parties. As a result of this, unless the item is, in our judgement, plainly prohibited by law or by our own rules, we instead rely on help from government agencies for an authoritative view on the legality of a particular auction.

However, I can suggest, if you would like, you can contact the appropriate government or law enforcement agency regarding this issue. AH1 has a longstanding policy of providing full cooperation with law enforcement agencies and we will gladly assist them in an investigation of unlawful conduct. Law enforcement agencies can quickly contact AH1 by fax at (48) 58-78 or by email at .

Please remember that only law enforcement agencies should contact us through these means. Emails and/or faxes directed to these areas that are not from law enforcement will be routed to the appropriate mailbox or individual accordingly and may cause delays in our response time.

Again, please know that we sincerely appreciate your vigilance in helping us to keep inappropriate auctions off AH1. If we can be of any further assistance, please let us know.

Regards,

AH1 UK Customer Support

Dear Tom,

This is some correspondence from Jun of this year when I was trying to get a feel for who "Sacradote" is. I wrote using a fictitious name (thus "Joseph"). I may have sent this info to you earlier, but I send again. I would say that he may have found sources in the OCD's, OP's and possibly the OSA's in Roma. (judging from his recent posting on AH1). Am going to bid on the "Gemma Galgani Holy Card" if the price doesn't get to ridiculous...this way maybe we can find out a little more. (unless you already have complete info on him). There is a chance he's not an Aussie but an Am _____an (a say a "chance" because I remember in sending the June 99 email to him I received a response that would have been sent after midnite Aussie time). the correspondence follows:

Hi Joseph

Have managed to locate one of S Pio X without papers and the seller wants \$US250. The last Pio X on AH1 went for \$US560 (I was the seller) so it's not a bad deal, really.

Hello,

I have noted a relic auction that is in clear violation of Section 6.1 of the User Agreement that prohibits the sale of human remains at AH1.

The link to this auction is:

Besides admitting that there are first class relics of saints(which are, by definition, human remains) in the auction title, the seller includes the following in the description:

"Threads in tact, metal Reliquary, measures 2 ½" x 2". Pilgrim's Wheels were given to high-ranking dignitaries upon their pilgrimages to the Vatican earlier this century. First Class relics are defined as bone, blood or tissue mass, and personal effects such as clothing." and "The blood of 22 Jesuits executed

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crucifixion style by the Japanese is gathered into this sacred mass."

There is no doubt about this auction - it violates Section 6.1.

Please close this auction immediately.

Have a nice day,

Hello,

I have noticed a relic auction that not only violates Section 6.1 that prohibits the sale of human remains, but also provides proof that the seller is guilty of FRAUD. Thus, not only must this auction be closed, but the seller should be BANNED from trading of AH1.

The current auction can be found at the following link:

This is exactly the same item that was offered for auction at AH1 earlier this week. I reproduce my communication about this previous auction for you below.

This auction was correctly closed by AH1 Support previously. The seller immediately relisted the item but deleted his statement about the relics being "bone, blood, or tissue mass" and that it contains the "blood of 22 Jesuits". He also deleted the term "1st Class relics" in his relisting.

DELETING THESE STATEMENTS DOES NOT CHANGE THE ITEM BEING OFFERED FOR AUCTION FROM "BONE" AND "BLOOD" TO "NON-BONE" AND NON-BLOOD". The seller admitted earlier this week that this was a first class relic containing human remains. It still is.

This auction must be closed. Please compare these two auctions to confirm these facts. I have a copy of the previous auction saved on my computer if you need it.

The seller should be barred from trading from AH1, as he has lied and committed fraud, and there is indisputable proof for it.

Hello Mary,

Did you compare the two listings as I asked you to? I have indisputable proof that this is a violation of Sectin 6.1 and a deliberate breaking of the rules by the seller, who is knowingly offering an illegal item for auction. I am attaching the information from the previous listing of this item below. The proof is clear. Please close this auction.

<<AH1 item 2098455 (Ends 12-05-99, 170212 PST) - 1st Class Relics Renaissance Catholic Saints.htm <<Reliquary.jpg

If you feel uncomfortable with this, please pass the information on to Rob _____. If you don't want to do this, I will contact Rob myself.

Have a nice day,

-----Original Message-----

From: AH1 Customer Support []

Sent: Thursday, December 02, 1999 5:39 AM

To:

Subject: Re: DELIBERATE FRAUD - Item #212323712, Antique container for relics (12-02-99) (MM67325C0KM)

Hello _____,

Thank you for taking the time to contact us with this information. We understand how this situation could be of concern.

We have reviewed the information that you have provided and have determined that the member involved has not violated any AH1 rules. However, if you should have any additional information regarding this

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situation, please don't hesitate to send that to us and we will be happy to look into this matter further for you.

As always, if you have a question or problem, please contact us and we will gladly assist you. If you would like to report a questionable item please visit:

Thanks for using AH1!

Regards,

Rob,

I have gone back and forth with AH1 support on this one, and really didn't want to bother you. However, if you read this from the bottom up, you will see that this guy is, by his own previous admission and with prima facie evidence, violating Section 6.1 by selling human remains, including blood, at AH1. I have the proof and provided it to support, and they refused to close the auctions. Not only this, but this guy is being deceitful, and is surely not the kind of person that AH1 values as a member.

I am now only challenging auctions that are clear-cut violations. My activity has decreased drastically, much to the relief (I am sure) of AH1 Support. I don't even challenge "ex ossibus" auctions any more.

Please look into to this if you can.

Have a nice day

Original message follows:

Hello,

This auction has been closed twice before. This seller simply relists it over once it is closed and refuses to honor the User's Agreement. The link to the current auction is:

The links to the two previous auctions of this item are:

The link to item 209806455 is the one that indicated that this contained human remains and blood Violation of Section 6.1). Below is the original listing:

<<AH1 item 2806455 (Ends 12-05-99, 170212 PST) - 1st Class Relics

Renaissance Catholic Saints.htm <<Reliquary.jpg

This seller is simply going to continue listing this prohibited item and blatantly violate the User Agreement at AH1.

The auction should be closed and the seller banned from AH1.

Have a nice day,

Hello _____,

Thank you for alerting us to this auction. The relic auction you reported has been ended by AH1. We really appreciate the terrific help from users like yourself. Together, we can all help keep AH1 a safe and fun place to trade!

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Regards,

AH1 Customer Support

Original message follows:

Hello,

I noticed a relic auction that violates Section 6.1 of the User Agreement that prohibits the sale of human remains. The link to this auction is as follows:

The following occurs in the textual description of the item: "But this is only the beginning. In the other parts of this little temple, there are 32 RELICS of Great Saints, almost all 1st class, including..." As you know, first class relics are, by definition, parts of the body and, therefore, human remains.

Because, by his own admission, the seller says these are first class relics (human remains), and because auctions of first class relics are always closed by AH1 support, please close this auction immediately.

Have a nice day,

Original message follows:

Hello,

I have noticed an relic auction that is selling a body part (human remains). This violates Section 6.1 of the User Agreement. This is not a piece of hair, and assuming it is does not make it so. The document clearly states that it is "particle from the Body". The document is more authoritative than the seller's assumption, and it provides concrete, prima facie

evidence. These are human body remains. The link to this auction is:

Please close this auction. It is a blatant violation against selling human remains at AH1.

Have a nice day,

Rob,

Sorry to bother you. AH1 Support won't close this auction. It seems clear to me. Could you please look at it?

Merry Christmas,

P.S. No response is required. I will accept your judgement on this.

Garibaldi,

Please look at this auction again. It says "particle from the body". This could not be more clear. It is stated in black and white on the document. How can you state there is "no evidence" - it is right there for all to see. This is a first class relic - a part of the human body - it violates Section 6.1. This auction must be closed.

I eagerly await your response.

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Hello _____,

Thank you for alerting us to this auction. The auction in question has been ended by AH1. We really appreciate the terrific help from users like yourself. Together, we can all help keep AH1 a safe and fun place to trade!

Regards,

AH1 Customer Support

Original message follows:

Hello,

I noticed an auction of a first class relic at AH1. First class relics, in this case bone, are human remains that are prohibited from sale by Section 6.1 of the User Agreement. The link to this auction is as follows: In the description in the text the sellers says:

"Inside this very very old hand made box is a piece of cloth with braided real gold thread, along with the robe there are tiny fragments of bone from the saints who died as martyrs."

Thus, by the seller's own admission this auction contains human remains (bones).

Please close the auction.

Have a nice day,

Hello _____,

Thank you for alerting us to this auction. The auction in question has been ended by AH1. Because there is no way we can examine and approve every auction as its posted (we have approximately 400,000 new listings made every day in 2,500 categories) we depend on our members to bring questionable auctions to our attention. We really appreciate the help. Together, we can all help keep AH1 a safe and fun place to trade!

As always, if you have a question or problem, please contact us and we will gladly assist you. If you would like to report a questionable item please visit:

Thanks for using AH1!

Original message follows:

Hello,

I have noted a relic auction that is in clear violation of Section 6.1 of the User Agreement that prohibits the sale of human remains at AH1. The link to this auction is:

The seller includes the following in the description:

"An unique item. This little Medallion-Reliquary - first class - of St. Bonaventura, Bishop and Cardinal,

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Doctor of the Church, seems made of tin or lead."

The seller admits that the relic of the saint is first class. First class relics of saints are human remains (this one is bone). There is no doubt about this auction - it violates Section 6.1.

Please close this auction immediately.

Have a nice day,

-----Original Message-----

From: _____, _____

Sent: Monday, November 29, 1999 11:35 AM

To:

Subject: Relic Auction at AH1 - Mr. Michael Jarret

Dear Mr. Morris,

I apologize for contacting you with this information, but yours was the only email address that I found on the Diocese of Memphis web site, and I wanted to pass this information on quickly. Please forward it to the appropriate person (Chancellor?).

There is an individual in the Diocese of Memphis, M____J_____, who has regularly sold relics of the saints for auction at the internet auction site, AH1. He has the User Name ".

In the past, Mr. J____ has sold some first and second class relics. An example of a particularly egregious, current auction of his is a reliquary (containing 18 relics) at AH1 which can be found at the following link. It's description is reproduced below the link.

"This stunning reliquary shrine contains 18 total relics. The gem of this reliquary is a major relic of St. Theodorus. This is very rare! The other saints are: St. Timothy, St. Beata, St. Aucte M., St. Dominic, St. Chrysanthe M., St. Anne V., St. Hipolyte, St. Albert, and St. Denis and companions (upper chamber). The shrine contains an authentic that is dated 1860 from Rome. It is signed by a Cardinal. The back of the shrine is sealed with wax as to not to tamper with any of the contents. In addition, it appears that all the relics inside have additional seals. Delivery must be in person as this reliquary would not survive shipping. I am willing to hand deliver to any major airport in the continental U.S. There is a reserve, however, I will honor the high bid at my discretion if it is near the reserve price."

THIS IS A WORK OF CATHOLIC ART AND HISTORY!

I am concerned about Mr. Jarret's continuous practice of selling sacred relics of the Catholic Church at AH1. As you know, the sale of relics is against Canon Law:

"Can. 1190 §1 It is absolutely wrong to sell sacred relics."

I do not know if Mr. O_____ is Catholic or not (he DOES know what an "authentic" is). However, I ask that the appropriate authority in the diocese of Memphis please consider taking the following steps:

1) If Mr. J_____ is a registered Catholic, perhaps a representative from the diocese could contact him personally and tell him that he must stop the sale of holy relics, as Mr. Jarret is bound by Canon Law.

2) If Mr. J_____ is not Catholic, or does not appear willing to cease his selling of holy relics, perhaps the priests and nuns in the diocese could be alerted to the fact that they should not give Mr. J_____ any relics, as he may sell them.

Here is the contact information for Mr. J_____:

E-mail:

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User ID: ju
Name: M J
Company:
City: Memphis
State: TN
Country: United States
Zip: 38117
Phone: (901) 65-05

Thank you for your attention to this serious matter. I request that you not divulge the source of the information that you have received from me about Mr. J_____, as I am working with other diocese and Archdiocese to curtail this abuse of relic-selling, and I need to be able to work unencumbered to be effective.

Dear Chancellor,

Just to inform you that Mr. O (User name - lia), who resides in your diocese, has a relic for auction at AH1 this week. What is truly sad is that this is a relic of St. Therese of Liseux. Her major relics are travelling around the U.S. for veneration by the faithful. It is a shame that while these treasures are building the faith of U.S. Catholics, Mr.O is crassly selling a relic of the same Little Flower at AH1. The link to this auction is:

Item #219948127 - [+] Relic, St. Theresa Inf. Jesus, Document

I pray that something can be done to stop this. If you no longer want me to inform you of Mr. _____'s activities, please let me know.

In the Joy of the Cross,

Tom,

Unfortunately, at least for now, my attempts to shame _____ into ceasing the auction of relics has been unsuccessful. Let us pray and perhaps in God's good time. _____' hubris is most disturbing. It has been my experience that those who exhibit such pride are eventually brought to their knees by God. Usually painful, but for the eventual good of our souls. I will let you know where the "location" is to which _____ sent the money.

I assume that it will be some sort of charity to indicate that he is not such a bad guy.

Oh well...win some, lose some. But then, the losses keep me from becoming prideful myself and remind me that He is in control, not me.

-----Original Message-----

From: _____ []
Sent: Tuesday, January 25, 2000 2:51 AM
To:
Subject: Re: Money Order

Dear _____

I did receive the money order a few days ago and have sent it to where I intended it to go. You will no doubt be hearing from that location shortly.

In the meantime, I must say I admire your having put your money where your mouth was.

That having been said, you will probably notice that I have decided to auction relics again. My decision is irrevocable and spurred on by a mountain of supportive emails I have received.

It has also been helped by the fact that (with the exception of you) none of the anti-relic-auction people were prepared to do what you have done. In fact, you might be interested to know that one traditionalist

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Catholic priest who wrote a very pompous letter about how much of a sinner "_____" was for "selling relics" (etc etc etc - if only he knew how I will languish in purgatory for much more serious, and interesting, offences!) I actually gave names and addresses of places - convents, monasteries and shops - which

sell relics in Rome and challenged him to contact them - he refused.

Anyway, as you might have guessed, I have had enough of all this.

Much as I have enjoyed my joint role of "simoniac" and "prophet about the church's public hypocrisy" about relic selling, it has been too costly for me, and others, in terms of cash, time and emotional energy.

I will therefore no longer answer any emails which are not specifically from bidders about the items on auction, be they vestments, relics or whatever else.

So, if I get such emails, I will ignore them or send back a similar form of words as I have just typed to you.

The only reason I am going into this in a more detailed way with you is because you were the only person who took "the church" side who had the decency to put up - I admire your guts, and trust, too, I suppose.

Best wishes for the future.

Sincerely

Dear AH1 Customer Support,

Please may I draw your attention to the following auction of human remains which violates para 6.1 of the AH1 user agreement (which prohibits the sale of human remains). This is described as a first class relic which AH1 accepts means human remains (for example items 2318873, 2344584 and 2359013 were all described as first class relics and were all removed by AH1 during the last few weeks):

2460457 ST. THERESA OF AVILA FIRST CLASS RELIC PADRE

Hello,

I have noticed three cases of apparent fraud by a seller at AH1. Please pass this information on to the Fraud Division.

The seller's user ID is "saote". I have previously reported this seller to AH1, and Kalista dealt with the matter. She suspended the account of an unregistered user named "grial" but did not suspend "sate". I believe that they are the same person. I include some of this previous communication at the bottom of this email as supporting evidence.

The CURRENT three cases of fraud involve the sale of three relics by "saote" that were supposed to have been successfully sold within the last month.

1) Item # 2044270 - [i+i] Relic of Saint Maria Goretti

Seller - saote started: 01/24/00 Ends: 01/29/00

This is exactly the SAME ITEM (picture and description) that was auctioned between 12/25/99 and 01/01/00. That item number was:

Item # 2251435 - [i+i] Relic of Saint Maria Goretti

2) Item # 2018165 - [i+i] Relic of St Gemma Galgani

Seller - saote Started: 01/24/00 Ends: 01/29/00

This is exactly the SAME ITEM (picture and description) that was auctioned between 12/31/99 and 01/07/00. That item number was:

Item # 2269823 - [i+i] Relic of St Gemma Galgani with papers

3) Item # 2490670 - [i+i] Relic of St Anne, Mother of Our Lady

Seller - sacote Started: 01/24/00 Ends: 01/29/00

This is exactly the SAME ITEM (picture and description) that was auctioned between 12/19/99 and 12/26/99. That item number was:

Item # 2219767 - [i+i] Relic of St Anne, Mother of Our Lady

HOW CAN THIS SELLER SELL THE SAME THREE RELICS THAT WERE EACH SOLD LESS THAN A MONTH AGO??

IMPORTANT - When these three relics were auctioned the last time, there was NO RESERVE and there were multiple bidders. Therefore - these three items should have sold. Why is the same seller offering all three again??

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I believe that "sote" is using one or more aliases and/or skills to increase the price of the item and/or to improve his positive feedback.

Note that after the last investigation and the suspension of "gal", the seller, saote", is now using the private auction format. I believe that this is because this makes it impossible for those viewing the auctions to detect skills and aliases.

However, you must be able to view the bidders ID's. If you do so, I will bet that you will find the same bidders who bid on these items the last time, and that some will be skills or aliases for "sate". In the worst case, "saot" is abusing AH1's regulations to drive up sale prices and/or provide positive feedback for himself.

In the best case scenario, he is wasting the time of good AH1 members by offering items for auction that he ends up not selling. I hope you agree that the evidence is overwhelming that "saot" is a discredit to AH1 and its other responsible members.

Please immediately suspend "saot" from AH1 for his abuses.

Have a nice day,

PREVIOUS EVIDENCE OF POTENTIAL FRAUD BY "saot"-----

-----Original Message-----

From: AH1 Customer Support []
Sent: Saturday, January 08, 2000 2:46 PM
To: _____, _____
Subject: Re: For Kalista only (KMM90C0KM)

Hello _____,

Thank you for writing.

The account I suspended was 'gml" a name that you had mentioned in an earlier email. There was not enough evidence to suspend the account "saot" which you had mentioned along with 'gml'. I have reviewed the other information you have sent in and find there is not enough evidence to indicate the other members have broken any of our policies.

However, if you should have any additional information regarding this situation, please don't hesitate to send that to us and we will be happy to look into this matter further for you.

Kind regards,

International Investigations
AH1 Inc.

Original message follows:

There are two auctions for relics of St. Paul the Apostle. The first one is by "saot". It says it is without papers. Here is the link: The second is by "btml". It says that it comes with papers. Here is the link: _____ If you compare the pictures you can see that they are EXACTLY THE SAME ITEM. How can the same item (one with papers, one without) be offered by a seller in Australia (saot) and by one in the Midwest of the USA (btml).

Are these sellers working in collusion to drive up the price by having two competing auctions for the same item? Something is fishy here.

I think that these two auctions (and all others by "saot") should be immediately closed, and that the AH1

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membership privileges of these two individuals be discontinued.

Tom and Fr. _____,

Read from the bottom up.

Looks like ICHR members (and maybe others) are going to town on this guy.

By the way, this person is identical to, or closely allied with, our old friend A__t B____t. Two auctions (one by and this seller) have exactly the same text. When it gets closer to the end of the auction I am going to alert AH1 to keep an eye on these two auctions to see if they are cross-bidding to drive up the price.

-----Original Message-----

From: []

Sent: Friday, January 28, 2000 11:09 AM

To:

Subject: RE: AH1 User Information Request

Dear Mr. _____:

Thanks for the explanation. With all the crazies reacting to my relic sale, I guess I'm just a little on edge.

Original message follows:

Hello Alan,

Thanks for your response.

I still do not understand why a relic auction that shows a document that states that it contains "remains found in the coffin" does not clearly violate AH1's prohibition against the sale of human remains. This is not " a representation of a third party". This information is provided by the seller himself for all to see at AH1's venue.

Auctions of this particular relic with the same document have been closed in the past for violating Section 6.1. I don't understand why what was once prohibited is now allowed without any changes in the User Agreement.

Please look at this auction again and reconsider closing it. It is in clear violation.

-----Original Message-----

From: AH1 Customer Support []

Sent: Monday, January 31, 2000 7:22 PM

To: _____, _____

Subject: Re: Reliquary Locket/ Relic With document - Section 6.1 (01-31-00) (KMM8633507C0KM)

Hello _____,

Thank you for contacting us to bring this item to our attention. I have reviewed this auction and have found the item to be within our current rules and policies. Therefore no action will be taken on this item at this time.

I understand that there may be some confusion when interpreting our policies and would like to take a few minutes to explain our current policy surrounding items such as the one you reported. Since AH1 does not possess or examine the items that are listed on our site, we are not in the best position to judge the legality or authorized nature of the item for auction. This means that we cannot remove items, such as the one you have reported.

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Of course there may be occasions where we do act on items such as these, but only in extreme circumstances.

We truly appreciate your knowledge about these types of items, however, we often cannot remove items based on representations of third parties. The reason for this is because we can not independently verify the credentials and accuracy of the information that is provided by third parties. As a result of this, unless the item is, in our judgement, plainly prohibited by law or by our own rules, we instead rely on help from government agencies for an authoritative view on the legality of a particular auction.

Again, please know that we sincerely appreciate your vigilance in helping us to keep inappropriate auctions off AH1. If we can be of any further assistance, please let us know.

Regards,

Andy
AH1 Community Watch Team

Original message follows:

Hello,

I noticed a relic auction that violates Section 6.1 of the AH1 User Agreement that prohibits the sale of human remains. The link is:

The document shown states:

"we have extracted a particle from the remains found in the coffin of St.Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton"

I know that this is a first class relic because I have one just like it obtained from the Seton Shrine. Since this is a first class relic that contains human remains, it violates Section 6.1.

Please close this auction.

Have a nice day,

Hello,

I reported these two case of apparent fraud last week. No action has been taken.

It seemed to me that the evidence was clear and overwhelming. Could you please let me know why these sellers have not had their privileges revoked?

Thanks.

Have a nice day,

-----Original Message-----

From: AH1 Customer Support []

Sent: Thursday, December 23, 1999 11:49 AM

To: _____, _____

Subject: Re: 2 CLEAR CASE OF FRAUD (KMM7388704C0KM)

Hello _____,

Thank you for writing us. We appreciate you forwarding this information to us. Please feel free to send us any other information you might have. We will investigate this matter, although, we will not be able to keep you completely informed.

Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

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Regards,

Fraud Prevention Group

AH1

Your Personal Trading Community (tm)

Original message follows:

Hello,

I sent this email to Rob _____ yesterday, since it was a legal matter. However, I realized that maybe he took some time off for the holidays, and would not get to it.

Therefore, please take the following actions:

- 1) If Rob is in, DO NOTHING.
- 2) If Rob is out, please pass this on to whomever has been placed in charge of these matters.

Some additional information about Fraud Case 2 - the private auction (btml) is up to \$600, while the other auction (saot) is a little more than \$200. Private auctions are a good way for a shill to drive up a price on a non-existent item, so that the other item at auction fetches a higher price than it would normally get.

P.S. A cc: of this is being sent to Rob Cheshnut, so that, if he's in, he will be advised of hte new information provided above.

Rob,

Normally I go through AH1 support, but I decided to contact you directly about two clear cases of fraud at AH1. Since you are the only one who can rescind the privileges of AH1 members, I knew that Support would have to bring these two matters to you eventually, so I decided to save them the time and effort. Also, since these are legal matters, they fall under your jurisdiction.

Fraud 1

Remember the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Relic that said "particle of the Body" and the seller assumed it was hair? You decided to let that one go and the relic sold yesterday (12/21/99) for \$230. The seller was ". Here is the link to the completed auction:

Today, the SAME seller has the SAME item for auction! (This time, he doesn't even claim that it's hair).

The link to the current auction is:

If the relic sold yesterday, how can the same item be offered by the same seller today?? Even if the high bidder dropped out of the first auction, there were 28 bids on the item (one for only \$3 less than the winning bid) with NO RESERVE. Therefore, the item should have sold. Is a shill being used to drive up the auction price, and if the price isn't met (even with no reserve) the item is offered again? I think that this seller should have his privileges as a member of AH1 discontinued.

Fraud 2

There are two auctions for relics of St. Paul the Apostle. The first one is by "saot". It says it is without papers. Here is the link:

The second is by "btml". It says that it comes with papers. Here is the link:

If you compare the pictures you can see that they are EXACTLY THE SAME ITEM.

How can the same item (one with papers, one without) be offered by a seller in Australia (saot) and by one in the Midwest of the USA (btml). Are these sellers working in collusion to drive up the price by having two competing auctions for the same item? Something is fishy here.

I think that these two auctions (and all others by "saot") should be immediately closed, and that the AH1 membership privileges of these two individuals be discontinued.

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Thanks for your attention to these two matters.
I hope that this will be the last (3rd) time I get to wish you Merry Christmas.
Why do sellers do these things?

Hello _____,

Thank you for writing.

Sorry for the delay in responding to you.

I double checked the account 'gml' and it is indeed suspended from AH1. One of the only places on the site where you can actually see "not a registered user" next to the name is in the feedback profile of another member.

Take a look at the profile of 'aussi61'. There you can see the name 'gml' and 'not a registered member' next to it.

I hope I have helped alleviate some of your concern. If you have any other questions or problems, please email us anytime and I guarantee a shorter response time.

Have a great day!

Kind regards,

Original message follows:

Hi Kalista,

Sorry for my late reply.

You said that you suspended the account of "gml", but he/she is still listed as a member of AH1. Could you check this? Thanks, _____

-----**Original Message**-----

From: AH1 Customer Support []

Sent: Saturday, January 08, 2000 2:46 PM

To: _____, _____

Subject: Re: For Kalista only (KMM7806490C0KM)

Hello _____,

Thank you for writing.

The account I suspended was 'gml' a name that you had mentioned in an earlier email. There was not enough evidence to suspend the account "saot" which you had mentioned along with 'gml'.

I have reviewed the other information you have sent in and find there is not enough evidence to indicate the other members have broken any of our policies.

However, if you should have any additional information regarding this situation, please don't hesitate to send that to us and we will be happy to look into this matter further for you.

Kind regards,

International Investigations
AH1 Inc.

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Original message follows:

Hello Kalista,

Thank you for taking this action. Could you let me know which account you closed?
Fraud 1 involved one seller - ""
Fraud 2 potentially involved two sellers - "btml" and "saot"
Thanks,

-----Original Message-----

From: AH1 Customer Support []
Sent: Friday, January 07, 2000 12:01 PM
To: _____, _____
Subject: Re: FOR _____ B. (Fraud Prevention Group) - RE: 2 CLEAR CASE OF FRAUD D (KM755794CM)

Hello,
Thank you for your email. I have been able to obtain information for suspension of only one of the accounts which you have brought to our attention.
If you should have any additional information which may more conclusively link these two accounts, please email that to us and we'll be happy to review it for possible action.

Kind regards,

International Investigations
AH1 Inc.

Original message follows:

From: AH1 Customer Support []
Sent: Thursday, December 23, 1999 11:49 AM
To: _____, _____
Subject: Re: 2 CLEAR CASE OF FRAUD (KM738870KM)

Hello _____,

Thank you for writing us. We appreciate you forwarding this information to us. Please feel free to send us any other information you might have. We will investigate this matter, although, we will not be able to keep you completely informed.
Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Regards,

Fraud Prevention Group

Original message follows:

Hello M____m,

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Thanks for responding. Could you please tell to me how the seller "saot" explained his ability to sell these three relics on two separate occasions within a month and a half period, with no reserve and multiple bidders?

Thanks,

-----Original Message-----

From: AH1 Customer Support [] Sent: Tuesday, February 01, 2000 10:13 AM
To: _____, _____
Subject: Re: Fraud by the user named "saot" - 3 auctions
(KM84396COM)

Hello,

Thank you for taking the time to contact us with this information. I understand how this situation could be disconcerting.

I have reviewed the information that you have provided and have determined that the member involved has not violated any AH1 rules.

However, if you should have any additional information regarding this situation, please don't hesitate to send that to us and we will be happy to look into this matter further for you.

If you have any other queries or problems, don't hesitate to contact me.

Regards,

AH1 Investigations

Original message follows:

Tom,

I can't remember if I sent you this. You may recall that I sent "saot" (_____) a money order to cover his costs of listing the St. Therese relic at AH1, with the hope of rescuing it. I haven't seen this relic up for auction again. However, _____ is auctioning relics. I've done all I can do - the rest is up to God. Below is the final communication that I received from _____ (I think that I sent you some of his earlier abusive emails to me). I assume that he sent the amount of my money order to a charity to show that he really is a good guy. I haven't "heard from the location" yet, but I will let you know when I do.

In the Joy of the Cross,

-----Original Message-----

From: _____ []
Sent: Tuesday, January 25, 2000 2:51 AM
To: _____, _____ Subject: Re: Money Order
Dear _____

I did receive the money order a few days ago and have sent it to where I intended it to go. You will no doubt be hearing from that location shortly.

In the meantime, I must say I admire your having put your money where your mouth was.

That having been said, you will probably notice that I have decided to auction relics again. My decision is irrevocable and spurred on by a mountain of supportive emails I have received.

It has also been helped by the fact that (with the exception of you) none of the anti-relic -auction people were prepared to do what you have done. In fact, you might be interested to know that one traditionalist Catholic priest who wrote a very pompous letter about how much of a sinner "_____" was for "selling

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relics" (etc etc etc - if only he knew how I will languish in purgatory for much more serious, and interesting, offences!) I actually gave names and addresses of places - convents, monasteries and shops - which sell relics in Rome and challenged him to contact them - he refused.

Anyway, as you might have guessed, I have had enough of all this.

Much as I have enjoyed my joint role of "simoniac" and "prophet about the church's public hypocrisy" about relic selling, it has been too costly for me, and others, in terms of cash, time and emotional energy. I will therefore no longer answer any emails which are not specifically from bidders about the items on auction, be they vestments, relics or whatever else.

So, if I get such emails, I will ignore them or send back a similar form of words as I have just typed to you. The only reason I am going into this in a more detailed way with you is because you were the only person who took "the church" side who had the decency to put up - I admire your guts, and trust, too, I suppose.

Dear av____rial,

I have noticed your auction of a reliquary containing a relic of St. Patrick. I wanted to share with you a concern that I have regarding this auction.

The current high bidder on this auction is "ja____o12". This AH1 member has purchased a number of sexually explicit items at AH1. I have included links to these auctions below.

While no one is in the position to judge "ja____o12" (including me), I am not sure that a person with his buying history is the one who you would like to win your auction of a sacred relic of a saint in the Catholic Church.

I am only pointing this out for your information. You must decide if you wish to close this auction or risk the sale of your relic to "ja____o12".

God bless,

Dear Moses,
Great news!!!

I am a member of a group who works for the preservation and veneration of holy relics. (You have probably heard from some of them regarding your AH1 auctions. I hope that not too many of these interactions were strained). It is wonderful that you will no longer be selling relics. It is the right thing to do (and I am sure that "God has decided what to do" through you).

I have a small collection of relics that I obtained through the proper channels (nominal donations to valid sources). Two other parishioners and I recently gave a talk about relics along with a display for public veneration at my parish. Here is a link to a web site that describes the event:

Don't worry about St. Peter (one of my favorite saints). As a matter of fact, when I start feeling down about myself I sometimes bring to mind Peter's denial of Jesus. What a merciful and forgiving God we have!!!

Thanks again for your courageous (and financially costly) decision to cease selling relics. I plan to see you in heaven.

God bless,

-----Original Message-----

From: []

Sent: Friday, March 03, 2000 12:31 PM

To: _____, _____

Subject: Re: j____o12 and your relic auction

Hello _____,

I had made the decision on Tuesday to stop the transfer of Holy Relics over the internet through my auctions. Discussions with my wife, customers and others have let me to believe that I can no longer in

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International Crusade for Holy Relics – Internal Report - Members Only

good conscience (and as a good Christian) continue to be involved in the commercialization of these wonderful heirlooms. I sent out the following letter to many of my AH1 customers (that I could readily remember) earlier this week and I hope this explains my predicament better. I too had noticed this gentleman's bidding history and it's orientation and am also deeply concerned about this problem. I have several more militant customers that promise that the relic will not go to the wrong home and rest assured there will be no more of these precious objects in my auctions. I hope that St. Peter will still let me go through the gates when it's my time. If in the future I receive a great old reliquary and it comes with Holy Relics, I will notify a select few that beside the reliquary in my description, the relic will be passed along only to those who have legitimate use for them, it will not be pictured or described in the description. These include a few priests and deacons and those who have proven to me in the past to be worthy guardians of these treasures. I have discussed this problem with the Good Sisters that I am selling them for and they wanted me to let "God decide what to do". This doesn't help me much so I will speak with them again.

Subject:

just a note

Date:

Wed, 01 Mar 2000 18:58:39 -0500

From:

To:

I recently offered several great old reliquaries with relics in them, they had been entrusted to me for sale by a monastery of Dominican Sisters. Their numbers had dwindled to a handful and they had to close up their huge old building. The reason that I mention this is that I have serious reservations about finding homes for these Sacred things by auction and will no longer be offering them on AH1. I have been giving them away for years and will go back to that way (although I will miss the huge sums they bring), as it gives me great pleasure. I pray that my customers will forgive my mistake, I was trying to help and now feel guilty.

Peace in Christ,

Hi again,

We are pleased that you and others approve of my choice. One of the most influential persons in my discussion on this matter was one: He's very articulate and knowledgeable about Canon law and Vatican viewpoint on relic handling. I sent him 6 or 8 relics that needed proper homes for helping me decide about where I should stand on the relic/AH1 issue. I read your relic presentation with great interest and have decided to hold any more that I might get in the future for the perfect home. I have some of the more unusual ones locked up and will keep them as they are very beautiful and of interesting historic backgrounds. I have had hundreds over the years and have found homes for them all. Thank you for your interest in saving my soul and for your gentle tone. I feel that I am more of a Good Christian than ever. God's Blessing.

In Christ

Dear Tom,

Peace!

I am forwarding you a success story of how a relic was saved. This is a series of e-mails I had with a seller on E-bay trading a first class documented relic of St. Lucy. In this case, what I did was to place the highest bid on the relic and win the auction at the price of \$468.00 last 2/27. From then on I started working on the case to teach the seller what is the relic all about and why it is wrong to sell them. The first e-mail you will read is my reply to her mail when she acknowledged the receipt of the check I mailed for the auction and read on the following correspondence as our dialogue continued. May God be praised for the blessings

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of our apostolate! Amen!

Dear Cathy,

Thanks for the e-mail. I just have a question regarding this relic. Do you know how your father obtained this relic? I'm just curious about its origins as it is very difficult to get something like this from the Church. It is a major relic of a popular saint (St. Lucy, the early Christian martyr from Syracuse) that is in the relic. The document states that the relic is an ex ossibus which is a particle of a bone. In fact, it is forbidden by the Church to sell or trade them (it is considered simony), I got it for the purpose of saving it from improper use and re-using it for the Church. I also wonder why you didn't keep this for yourself as it is a very special object of veneration. I hope you'll help me understand a bit more about the background of this relic. Thanks.

-----Original Message-----

From: Cathy

Sent: Tuesday, March 07, 2000 12:52 PM

To:

Subject: Religious relic

Hello _____,

I do not know how to say this any other way but to be up front. In the process of trying to find the information that you requested, it has been brought to my attention by the Catholic Church that I can not sell this relic. I have been told by the Church that I can sell the holder but not the contents. I believe and hope that you agree that separating them is not a good idea. Many of my friends and neighbors are Catholic and have impressed

upon me their feelings about selling any religious relics. I have also been informed by the police department that the selling of this item may also be illegal according to some new law in Wisconsin pertaining to Native Am _____an artifacts, cemetery items and archeological dig sites. In what I believe to be the best solution, I am going to donate this relic back to the Church. I apologize for the inconvenience that I know this has caused you. I have not felt good about this matter for days and wish it never happened. Please

accept my sincere apology. I have recovered your check and will mail it back today.

Cathy

Hello _____,

I will check around to see if I can find out anything about its origin. I was born and raised as a Catholic in Milwaukee. Went to Gesu school and church. When we left Milwaukee we joined the Christian Reform Church. If I had known more about the item, I would have donated it to Gesu in Milwaukee. Have thousands of estate items to sell and I can not research them because of a lack of time. I would not keep an item such as the relic for myself. Now I will have to go and look up "simony", but it doesn't sound good. I've

heard that it is also improper to sell other religious articles. I do not know the purpose of these relics. I am glad that it is going to someone that will use it properly. Once I realized what I actually had I felt a little uncomfortable selling it on the net. It seems the witches and warlocks came out of the woodwork. I would think that you could contact the proper authorities for some information. Will contact you if I find out anything useful.

Cathy

-----Original Message-----

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Dear Mr. Jackson,

Thank you very much for your reply which has clarified this area for me. If I may suggest, perhaps it would avoid confusion if you were to add a note on the web page stating that only the containers are offered for sale, not the relics, at the price they cost you to acquire, and that "restrictions apply". That would make your intentions clear to informed people who are concerned about relics.

I too have been rescuing relics from antique markets, pawn shops etc for about 12 years now. In all I estimate I have recovered about 180 relics, a number of which have been returned without charge to the veneration of the Church in suitable parishes and other places. I know all about the ignorance of dealers and the tragic neglect of the relics they sell, and I have myself experienced the frustration of not being able to rescue all the

relics I would want to. My latest rescue was of a Relic of the True Cross in a 17th C silver filigree pendant - the dealer had no idea what it was, and warmly suggested that I could "clean out" the inside of the "brooch" and put in a photograph! I thank Providence that I got there first. I have also twice - in cities in Italy - come across entire shops filled with relics, some of them of notable size. I rescued what I could, and I just hope that the relics I couldn't rescue were later recovered by other like-minded people.

(By the way, if you are paying 400 dollars for a simple pendant reliquary, you are paying too much! The "going rate", if I may use so crude a phrase, in Europe, is about 20 to 30 pounds (30 to 45 dollars). The True Cross reliquary referred to above was 80 pounds. Some dealers are all too ready to increase their prices if they detect an unusual degree of interest in the customer, so beware, and act indifferent!)

Finally, I wonder if you have heard of the International Crusade for Holy Relics? I am an associate director of their preservation committee, please feel free to visit the web site at .

Yours sincerely,

At 12:03 14/03/00 -0600, you wrote:

Dear Mr. _____:

Thank you for sharing your thoughts regarding sacred relics which you emailed to my company Sacred Art Gallery. I too, like you, am quite concerned over the e-auctions of sacred relics. Perhaps you did not read the disclaimer following the catalog entry for the relics we offer. Simply put it reads; "Restrictions Apply." This means that we will not sell relics to anyone without approval of the church. I am quite aware of Cannon Law and a great deal of my time is spent rescuing relics from pawn shops, antique shops, the internet and the like. Perhaps I should not mention it as I do not know you well enough, but the reason my disclaimer does not simply read "relics can only be purchased by clergy," is because quite frankly some of the very liberal "New Age" clergy go against my orthodox beliefs and therefore I do not want relics to fall into their hand either. As you know it is not against Cannon Law to possess relics and it is I believe the duty of every orthodox Catholic to rescue relics from the hands of those who do not appreciate or understand their sacredness and meaning. On a more technical note, when I do sell a relic to a church or religious, I actually "sell them" the reliquary-container, and I give them the actual relic. Furthermore it is my goal to try and sell them for the price I pay to rescue them. Incidentally I was in New York five weeks ago and wandered into a antique shop which is owned by a young Jewish woman from London who had a display case full of first class relics for sale. I told her of my disapproval and bought all that I could afford including a first class relic of St.Teresiae of the child Jesus. If you ever want to hear some real horror stories give me a call and I'll tell you of some of the rescues I've made.

PAX

President CEO

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Remember this character from the last report?

How does an independent cleric, being that I am my own religious sponsor, join your organization?

Bishop Timlin

Tom, You'll see Mr. Timlin (AKA btml), listed as #5 in this lineage. Hey, wanna be a bishop? How about pope? Just a few dollars and it can be arranged! Heaven help us.

http://www.tboyle.net/Catholicism/The_Costa_lines-_F-J/The_Harms_lineage.html

SUMMARY

....03/07/1998 **Lawrence J. Harms**

.....1) 05/23/1998 **Joseph J. Gouthro**

.....2) 07/25/1998 **Yerry Villarie**

03/07/1998 Lawrence J. Harms (b. in 19xx; still living).

.....e-mail address: ACCMDBP@AOL.COM

Ordained a Roman Catholic priest on 04/07/1977 at Boston, Massachusetts,

by xxxx, Roman Catholic bishop of xxxxx.

Consecrated a bishop on 03/07/1998 at Fred _____k, Maryland,

by , a bishop of the *Free Catholic Church*,

assisted by , a bishop of the *Catholic Apostolic Church in North Am _____a*,

by , a bishop of the *Catholic Apostolic Church in North Am _____a*,

by **Jude N. Egbe**, a bishop of the *African Am _____an Congregation*,

by **William L. Timlin**, a bishop of the *Othodox Catholic Church*,

and by **Michael Scalzi**, a bishop of the *Am _____an Catholic Church*.

Since May 1998, Archbp. Harms has been the Presiding Archbishop of the *Am _____an Catholic Church In The United States*.

A New Bishop At CCCI

BISHOP CONSECRATED FOR MID-WESTERN USA

The Rt. Rev. James Judd of St. Paul, Minnesota, is the new Bishop of _____t Catholic Church International's new Holy Cross Diocese of the Mid-Western USA. He was consecrated during a special Mass in St. Paul Saturday, July 31, 1999.

Participants included, left to right, the Most Rev. Donald Wm. Mullan, Presiding Archbishop of CCCI, of Niagara Falls, Canada; Bishop Judd; the Very Rev. Mark Gilbert Cougar, Dean of the Diocese's Houston Deanery, of Texas; and the *Most Rev. William Timlin, Bishop with the Federation of Orthodox Catholic Bishops United Sacramentally, of Minnesota*.

A reception for the new Bishop followed at the Judd residence.

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Hello _____,

Thank you for your report. The auction has ended on its own however, we have warned the seller about listing this type of auction inappropriately. We appreciate that you took the time to alert us to this auction.

Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Regards,

Original message follows:

Sorry to be so late in responding to your e-mail. I don't always check this account. You would be best off sending future e-mails to me at:

Yes, the item is still available.

I have never opened the reliquary (it is just as I received it from the Dominican Order's Generalite in Rome. So I assume that everything is intact.

There is a certificate of authenticity (with a serial number) from the Procurator General of the Dominican Order. I don't have it in front of me right now, but to the best of my recollection the certificate has the following handwritten notation: "ex ossibus S.P. Dominice de Guzman." I would, of course, be most happy to fax you a copy of the certificate if you like.

I would be willing to sell this item for \$350.00, but we can talk about that.

If you're interested, I also have for sale a first class relic of St. John Neumann, in a stunningly beautiful reliquary.

Look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,
Stuart

Original message follows:

Dear _____,

Your request did not concern me, but I guess I was a bit confused by the e-mail notification that E-Bay sent me. In any event, I trust my call was not an intrusion.

With regard to the item I put up for auction, learned this morning that E-Bay cancelled my auction because it is apparently a violation of E-Bay policy to offer any item that contains human body parts. Despite the fact that only the reliquary was for sale, placing the item still violates their policy. In any event, since you expressed an interest in the item, I was wondering if you might like to arrange for a private sale. Please let me

know. Have a great day! Stuart

Hi Stuart,

Thanks for responding. Sorry that I used an email account that you don't often check.

I have a small collection of relics that I obtained from original sources (shrines, postulators in Rome, etc.). I also have a relic of St. John Neumann. In addition, I have bought a few free-standing reliquaries to display these relics.

Most of the relics that I obtained were gotten for a donation to the Religious Order in the \$15-25 range.

This covered the cost of the theca and labor in its preparation. I don't know what the free standing reliquary is like that you obtained from the Dominicans in Rome - perhaps it is very ornate. In any event,

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the amount that you request falls very far outside of the range that I am interested in.

Thanks again for your reply.

-----Original Message-----

Hello,

I noted a relic auction that violates Section 6.1 of the User Agreement that prohibits the sale of human remains at AH1.

The link is:

The seller states in the text "...HAVE BEEN TOLD THE SEALED PAPER HAS BLOOD..." Please close this auction.

Have a nice day,

Hello _____,

Thank you for alerting us to this matter. The auction in question has been ended by AH1. We really appreciate the help and concern from users like yourself. We are in continuous efforts in keeping prohibited items off of our site. Together, we can all help keep AH1 the safest, funnest and best online trading community!

If you would like to report a questionable item please visit:

Again, thank you for your assistance and good luck. If you have any further concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us. Happy trading and thank you for choosing AH1!

Regards, AH1 Customer Support

Hello _____,

Thank you for writing back to AH1.

The term first class relic alone is insufficient information to end an auction. A first class relic can contain human hair, which is allowed on AH1 and doesn't violation the user agreement section 6.1 or our human remains policy.

In the auction you submitted, #279274, there is no mention as to what the human part is, thus there is insufficient information for us to end this auction. If you happen to have additional information regarding this auction, please forward this information to me and I will gladly reevaluate the information.

If this information is in the form of email correspondence with the seller, please include the internet headers along with the message.

Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Regards,

Original message follows:

Hello Gabriel,

In ALL previous auctions at AH1 of religious relics, the use of the the term 1st Class Relic, which is universally accepted to mean an actual part of the saint's body, has resulted in the closure of the auction. Perhaps this is the first time that you have been confroned with this particular situation regarding a violation of Section 6.1.

Could you please check this with other members of the AH1 Support team and

you immediate supervisor? I have had extensive communications with Rob _____ in the past, and he has

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assured me that if the auction says "first class relic" then a violation of Section 6.1 is assumed.If this policy has changed, please have Rob email me about this
Thanks for looking into this further.

Sincerely,

-----Original Message-----

From: AH1 Customer Support []

Sent: Friday, March 10, 2000 12:46 AM

To: _____, _____

Subject: Re: ++RELIC 1ST CLASS++RELIQUARY with papers++ (03--9-00) -
Section 6 .1 (KMM17134C0KM)

Hello _____,

Thank you for taking the time to contact us with this information. I understand how this situation could be disconcerting.I have reviewed the information that you have provided and have determined that the member involved has not violated any AH1 rules. No mention of body parts is being made in auction. However, if you should have any additional information regarding this situation, please don't hesitate to send that to us and we will be happy to look into this matter further for you.

Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Original message follows:

Hello,

I noticed a relic auction that violates Section 6.1 of the AH1 User Agreement that prohibits the sale of human remains.The link is:

The text describing the relic states: "and small bits of bone or teeth in each. "
Since this is a bone relic that contains human remains, it violates Section 6.1.

Hello,

I am interested in the auction that you have of a first class relic of St.Elizabeth Ann Seton. The link is:
A number of months ago I received a first class relic of St. Seton from a religious source. It contained particles from the remains found in her coffin. This relic also came with an authenticating document. A donation of \$16 was requested for this relic to cover the cost of the container and the labor in the preparation of the relic. When shipping and handling was included, I sent a check for \$20 for this first class relic.

Could you please let me know what makes the relic of St. Seton that you are auctioning at AH1 worth so much more (the current bid is \$365) than the relic that I obtained? Is there something special about it?

Thanks for your help,

hello There,

I know about the seton relic you speak of.My mother gave a woman 100.00 dollars for it because at the time there were none to be found.she was advised by a friend,a Eucharistic Minister that they are not distributed from the shrine anymore,to keep it if she could.

My mother is disabled.I work nights,my father days.I believe she placed the \$ amount with her ad.People must really want it to bid high.Its good I guess that there are people that are religious to spend so much.I bought myself a beautiful relic of St.Neumann for \$308.00 about 7 months ago from AH1. I wanted it really bad,I read so much about

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him,I would have bid higher for the donation.

So,Iam not surprised that her item went high. If you received one as a gift,or bought it! Thats great. There are so many others I guess(like I was) unavaliable to get any,so we do it this way.Our Bishop said it was ok! As long as it is a donation,at any price by the bidder.

This same Bishop just returned from Rome and my mother was given a gift from the Pope and Blessed by him in his office in Jan. My mother is very religious,even before her disability. Iam getting close to 30 and she done a great job raising me. Iam a Holy Roman Catholic.I plan on becomming a Decon and will start shortly !If Our Lord permits.Funny,my mom has Holy friends she knows personally. I don"t know how she knows them.even Mother Teresa and she has medals touched and Blessed by Mother.She,I don't think at this point wants to give it up. She knows Joey He promotes "Our Lady of Garabanbal" she has rosaries, medals all holding a piece of a book Our Lady blew through every page.Beautiful! to say the least. She knows (by the neighborhood & phone calls) Mother Angelica,Fr. Groeschel. I love Religion and sorry I think,that I went on and on. by the way my name is _____! funny! I like the name. Thank You for corosponding,as always my mother will keep you and her other E-Mailers in her prayers! Viva _____to Rey!!

Dear AH1 Customer Support,

Please may I draw your attention to the following auctions of human remains which violates para 6.1 of the AH1user agreement (which prohibits the sale of human remains). These are described as containing "first class relics" which AH1 accepts means human remains:

3632970 PRIESTS PENDANT CROSS W/MULTIPLE RELICS

3639768 CROSS PENDANT WITH FOUR RELICS

(For your reference, in the past auctions 2318873, 2394584, 2359963 and 2724974, amongst many others, all contained the phrase "first class relic" and were accordingly ended by AH1.)

Thank you very much for your attention,

London, UK

Dear Lindy,

Thank you for taking this action so promptly. Unfortunately the seller has now relisted exactly the same items, this time omitting the words "first class". Surely AH1 cannot allow this flagrant disregard for its rules? Please could you take action to remove these items once again? They are now listed as:

365730987 7 RELICS IN CROSS RELIQUARY ""

365739400 CROSS PENDANT WITH FOUR RELICS

Thank you once again for your help,

At 09:17 23/06/00 -0700, you wrote:

Hello _____,

Thank you for alerting us to these auctions. The auctions in question have been ended by AH1. We really appreciate the terrific help from users like yourself. Together, we can all help keep AH1 a safe and fun place to trade!

Regards,

Dear Monsignori,

I am sorry to have to bring to your attention a distressing matter. A gentleman calling himself "s---te" has obtained a large and valuable antique reliquary full of relics from a nun, possibly in the Wesminster or Southwark areas, and is selling it for profit on the AH1 internet auction web site, . The exact URL of the auction is:

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Could you please examine this and see whether you recognise this item? If it has been obtained under false pretences from a Church in your areas swift legal action may be the only way of recovering it.

I am a member of a group which is trying to combat (by lawful means, of course) the sale of relics on the internet and I am afraid that "S-----te" is well known to us. He has in the past obtained quantities of relics and altar stones, not to mention vestments and other

liturgical items, from generous churches and orders in England and Italy. The donors are presumably under the impression that they are giving these items to a parish or mission, whereas "s-----te" immediately goes off and sells them to the highest bidder. He has in the past given the name _____, although we do not know if this is his real name, and at present describes his location as Westminster, UK, although in the past he has

given this as Sydney, Australia.

Please forgive me if I am taking up your time unduly, but I felt this was important and you ought to know.

Regards,

Dear Mr. Serafin,

I recently was given a link to your internet site from a friend. I'm so glad I found you and your site. Last year I ran into someone who claimed to be offering some first class relics for a donation. I didn't know then what I know now. I bought alot of them. Since then their authenticity has come into question several times. One priest said they were not real another said they were, this started a big hunt for information. I didn't find too much info at that time. Now i have a bit more but i still haven't solved the riddle. Could you authenticate a relic or two for me. I figure you are the highest authority I can find. The Archdiocese doesn't return my calls and/or they are eternally out at lunch, even if I have called a different one in another town. Could you help me, please?

I plan to join your group because I feel that the work you are doing is extremely important. Please e-mail me when you have time. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for all that you are doing for the saints. May God bless you and keep you safe.

Your Friend In Him,

Susan

Original message follows:

Hello,

I have noted a relic auction that is in clear violation of Section 6.1 of the User Agreement that prohibits the sale of human remains at AH1.

The link to this auction is:

The seller includes the following in the description:

Inside is a bone fragment set on a small star and the label "S. August. E.C.D.", all on a red satin backing.

Bone qualifies as human remains and their sale is specifically prohibited on AH1. There is no doubt about this auction - it violates Section 6.1.

Please close this auction immediately.

Regards,

Hello _____,

Thank you for alerting us to this auction. The auction in question has been ended by AH1. We really

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appreciate the terrific help from users like yourself. Together, we can all help keep AH1 a safe and fun place to trade!

Regards,

Lindy

Original message follows:

Hello,

I have noted a relic auction that is in clear violation of Section 6.1 of the User Agreement that prohibits the sale of human remains at AH1. The link to this auction is:

The seller includes the following in the description:

This reliquary contains a piece of cloth with blood and fragments of the flesh of Sainte Jeanne Françoise de Chantal (Ste Janes Frances de Chantal). Blood and flesh are human remains and their sale is specifically prohibited on AH1. There is no doubt about this auction - it violates Section 6.1. Please close this auction immediately.

Regards,

.

Hello _____,

Thank you for alerting us to these matters. The auctions in question have been ended by AH1. We really appreciate the help and concern from users like yourself. We are in continuous efforts in keeping prohibited items off of our site. Together, we can all help keep AH1 the safest, funnest and best online trading community!

Best Regards,

Moana

AH1 Community Watch Team

Original message follows:

Hello,

There is an relic auction that both violates Section 6.1 and is blatatly deceitful!! The link is: -----
This auction had been PREVIOUSLY CLOSED BY AH1 because the relics are first class, bone relics that are specifically prohibited by Section 6.1 Of the User Agreement. The link to the previous auction of the SAME ITEM is: If you do not still have the listing and picture for this violating item, I do and can email the information to you. The same violating item is being auctioned. Changing the description does not change the fact that this is a prohibited item (human remains).

Please close this auction immediately. I also suggest that you suspend the privileges of this dishonest member of AH1 and close all of his auctions. He does not belong in the AH1 community.

Regards,

Hello,

Thank you for contacting us to bring these religious relics to our attention. I have reviewed these auction and have found the items to be within our current rules and policies. Therefore no action will be taken on

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these items.

I understand that there may be some confusion when interpreting our policies and would like to take a few minutes to explain our current policy surrounding items such as the one you reported. Since AH1 does not possess or examine the items that are listed on our site, we are not in the best position to judge the legality or authorized nature of the item for

auction. This means that we cannot remove items, such as the one you have reported.

Of course there may be occasions where we do act on items such as these, but only in extreme circumstances.

We truly appreciate your knowledge about these types of items, however, we often cannot remove items based on representations of third parties. The reason for this is because we can not independently verify the credentials and accuracy of the information that is provided by third parties. As a result of this, unless the item is, in our judgement,

plainly prohibited by law or by our own rules, we instead rely on help from government agencies for an authoritative view on the legality of a particular auction.

Again, please know that we sincerely appreciate your vigilance in helping us to keep inappropriate auctions off AH1. If we can be of any further assistance, please let us know.

Regards,

Judi C. L.
AH1 Community Watch Team

Original message follows:

Hello,

There are nine relic auctions by the same seller that violate Section 6.1 of the AH1 User Agreement that prohibits the sale of human remains. These are the same auctions that AH1 support closed on April 14, 2000 when I brought them to your attention. The seller originally stated that these were first class relics of saints, that is, parts of their bodies. Visual inspection indicated that they were not hair. Thus, you correctly closed the auctions.

The claim of the seller in the present auctions that "This auction complies completely with AH1 regulations." is a lie, because they were prohibited in April because they are first class (human remains) auctions. First is listed the link to the current auction. This is followed by the link to the previous auction of the same item that was found to violate

AH1 regulations:

IF THIS AUCTIONS WERE IN VIOLATION IN APRIL, THEY ARE NOW. NOTHING HAS CHANGED EXCEPT THE FACT THAT THE SELLER IS HIDING THE FACT THAT THEY ARE IN VIOLATION. The AH1 privileges of this seller should be revoked.

PLEASE CLOSE THESE AUCTIONS IMMEDIATELY!! IF YOU NEED MORE DATA, I HAVE ALL OF THE PREVIOUS WEB PAGES OF THE AUCTIONS WITH THE EVIDENCE SAVED, AND I WILL EMAIL THEM TO YOU.

Thank you,

Hello Juan,

I don't understand why you did not close this auction when it had been closed TWICE BEFORE by AH1 support!! Attached is the original listing from the auction that shows that it violates Section 6.1, since it contains first class (as stated in text), ex ossibus (from the bone) relics.

Thank you.

-----Original Message-----

From: AH1 Customer Support [mailto:Report@AH1.com]

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International Crusade for Holy Relics – Internal Report - Members Only

Sent: Saturday, June 03, 2000 9:14 AM
To: Vedeckis, _____
Subject: Re: Relics of 10 Saints in Carved Gilt Frame (06-02-00) -
Section 6.1 violation (KMM13254775C0KM)

Hello,

Thank you for taking the time to contact us with this information. I understand how this situation could be disconcerting. I have reviewed the information that you have provided and have determined that the member involved has not violated any AH1 rules. However, if you should have any additional information regarding this situation, please don't hesitate to send that to us and we will be happy to look into this matter further for you.

If you have any further queries or problems, don't hesitate to contact me.

Regards,

Juan
AH1 Community Watch Team

AH1

Original message follows:

Hello,

There is an relic auction that both violates Section 6.1 and is blatantly deceitful!! The link is: ----- This auction had been CLOSED BY AH1 TWICE BEFORE because the relics are first class, bone relics that are specifically prohibited by Section 6.1 of the User Agreement. The links to the previous 2 auctions (WHICH WERE CLOSED BY AH1 SUPPORT) of the SAME ITEM are:

If you do not still have the listing and picture for this violating item, I do and can email the information to you. The same violating item is being auctioned FOR A THIRD TIME. Changing the description does not change the fact that this is a prohibited item (human remains). Please close this auction immediately. I also suggest that you suspend the privileges of this dishonest member of AH1 and close all of his auctions. He does not belong in the AH1 community. THE SELLER ("schola") CONTINUES TO LIST PROHIBITED ITEMS AFTER AH1 SUPPORT CLOSES THE AUCTIONS.

Regards,

Tom and Fr. _____,

Please read below. I am not sure what to do about this. I am not going to personally attempt a rescue of this relic. The seller said that I could pass this info on to my friends who might be interested. I almost posted it on the BB, but changed my mind because it seems like a gray area to me.. Please act on this (or not) as you see fit.

In the Joy of the Cross,

I have contacted a seller of a True Cross relic on AH1. He said that he got it from a priest friend. I asked if the priest friend would approve of this, and I also stated that it seemed like he (the seller) was Catholic.

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International Crusade for Holy Relics – Internal Report - Members Only

Here is his response:

"Thanks for the email...I appreciate your concern.

The money used for this auction will be sent to his order in Italy as a donation. I'm sure he'll be happy with what ever the item brings as his order is connected to taking care of the poor. This is what he asked me to do just before he died. I'd be happy to take it off of AH1 for you...I can give you an address to send a money order to. Your donation amount will be \$150. Thanks again for your interest and connecting with me...And your insight is correct...I am a Catholic.
p.s. If you want to donate more, I'm sure he and his order would appreciate it very much...
God Bless...."

I then asked if the relic had a document. He replied: "There is a document with the relic."
I did not ask him if the document was a Ferrante!!! Sorry.

I post this because the seller is willing to close the auction, carry out a private transaction, and because the donation requested (\$150) is, as I understand it, similar to what is requested by official sources. The link to the auction is: -----

Hello _____,

Thank you for taking the time to contact us regarding the listing for item 380186799.
The auction in question has been ended by AH1.
We really appreciate the terrific help from users like yourself.
Together, we can all help keep AH1 a safe and fun place to trade!

Regards,

Petre
AH1 Community Watch Team
Original message follows:

Hello,

I have noted a relic auction that is in clear violation of Section 6.1 of the User Agreement that prohibits the sale of human remains at AH1.

The link to this auction is: ----- The seller states in the description:

"This is a first class relic of St. John the Baptist." First class relics of saints are, by definition, parts of their body. These are human remains, and their sale is prohibited on AH1 (Section 6.1). Please close this auction IMMEDIATELY!!

Regards,

Hello _____,

Thank you for bringing this matter to our attention. The auction in question has been ended by AH1, and the seller reminded of our policy on human remains.

We really appreciate the terrific help from users like yourself. Together, we can all help keep AH1 a safe and fun place to trade! Please feel free to contact us with any other questions or concerns!

Regards,

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Baxter Rhodes
AH1 Community Watch

Original message follows:

Hello,

I have noted a relic auction that is in clear violation of Section 6.1 of the User Agreement that prohibits the sale of human remains at AH1. The link to this auction is:-----

The author states in the description: "Inside the reliquary, on an interior of red velvet is the relic itself, consisting of two pieces of bone, set in a white flower-shaped ornament."

Bones are human remains, and their sale is prohibited on AH1 (Section 6.1).

Please close this auction IMMEDIATELY!!

Regards,

Hello _____,

Thank you for taking the time to contact us regarding the listing for item 376749840.

The auction reported is currently being reviewed. Although we may not be able to keep you abreast of our actions, we pledge to thoroughly investigate the information you have provided. We appreciate your concern in helping to keep AH1 a safe and reputable forum in which to conduct business.

Regards,

Petre
AH1 Community Watch Team

Original message follows:

Hello,

I have noted a relic auction that is in clear violation of Section 6.1 of the User Agreement that prohibits the sale of human remains at AH1. The link to this auction is:-----

The document shown with therelics states that it contains: "a particle from the body"

This qualifies as human remains, and their sale is prohibited on AH1 (Section 6.1).

Please close this auction IMMEDIATELY!!

Regards,

Hello _____,

Thank you for taking the time to contact us regarding the listing for item 370545600.

The auction in question has been ended by AH1. We really appreciate the terrific help from users like yourself. Together, we can all help keep AH1 a safe and fun place to trade!

Regards,

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International Crusade for Holy Relics – Internal Report - Members Only

Petre
AH1 Community Watch Team

Original message follows:

Hello,

I have noted a relic auction that is in clear violation of Section 6.1 of the User Agreement that prohibits the sale of human remains at AH1. The link to this auction is:-----
The author states in the description: "Under each name is a bone fragment of each of the saints." Bones are human remains, and their sale is prohibited on AH1 (Section 6.1). Please close this auction IMMEDIATELY!!

Regards,

Tom,

The following are 2 emails I've recieved since I closed the auction. I'll give you time to get this message and then give you a call. I'm not interested in selling the relic but it sure would be nice to know the true. Everyone seems to have their own!!

Thank you for contacting me. I am an Independent Catholic Bishop [1] who follows Canon Law and have a degree in Canon Law. There are situations where the "purchase" of a relic is appropriate. As with many Laws there are always exceptions. You were most likely contacted by the group that calls itself the International Crusade for Holy Relics.
Let me quote from their own web site.

Is it ever justifiable to buy relics from antique dealers?

Sometimes, yes, but caution is needed. Whilst the sale of relics is sacrilege (technically it is simony, the sale of spiritual goods, cf. Acts 8 18-24) it is permissible to buy relics in order to save them from desecration. However, a principle of proportionality applies, that is, the money offered should be in proportion to the good to be achieved. Thus it would not be justifiable to purchase a relic if the good of rescuing that relic was less (in a reasonable judgment) than would be achieved by devoting the same amount of money to other objects such as the poor or homeless. Thus, generally, it will not be justifiable to spend very large amounts of money rescuing relics, although there may be exceptional circumstances. The possibility that rescuing a relic may encourage a market to develop should also be considered<<

To make something clear - the word "sacrilege" is not appropriate here since we are not talking about a Sacrament. Excessive language here is used to frighten people. How do you suppose some of these many relics ended up on the "market" in the first place? Catholic churches in the 70's and 80's denuded their churches of them. Just giving them away to anyone and everyone without a care for their safe keeping. As a Catholic I am outraged that this happened and obtain them as I can afford to place them in safe keeping again where they will be properly treated and venerated.

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[1] *Independent Catholic Bishop - What's this?*

Another quote from their site:

Some religious orders and jurisdictions do provide first class relics for private veneration. For example the Mother Seton Shrine in Baltimore distributes first class relics of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. The Eparchy of St. Maron of Brooklyn sometimes has first class relics of Blessed Rafka and Blessed Al-Hardini. In addition, if you go on pilgrimage to any shrine it is worth asking in the official gift shop or sacristy as relics are sometimes to be obtained from these sources.

As you can see - even solidly Catholic organizations sell them. Trust me if you don't have the recommended "donation" you do not get a relic. I have been there and have relics of both.

Many times individual members who contact you and talk you into not selling the item then contact you to sell it to them! These are private collectors who treat the Sacred Relics as mere baubles.....many have a "I have more then you do" mentality. It is both sad and pathetic.

You may sell the item on e-bay without further scruple as long as you are sure you are selling it to someone who will treat it with reverence and veneration.

I am still interested in making it my pectoral cross and offer you \$250 for it. That amount is not so over-inflated as to cause scandal as a good pectoral cross goes for that amount. The relic, of course, is a gift.

Please let me know one way or the other.

Many blessings and I will remember you at Mass tomorrow.

Tom, this was a second email sent my a nun....

Dear Carl,

Welcome to the slightly schizophrenic world of the relic collector! You have just met what I call the eGestapo, a group of people who will try to intimidate you by telling you that you are headed directly to Hell. Many of them are members of a group called the International Crusade for the Holy Relics. Their leader styles himself "Chevalier," which I assume is French for the posterior of a horse. [1] They usually try to tell you that the only way you can possibly redeem your soul is to donate the relic in question to one of them, because they are the only true Christians who are worthy of having relics. Nah, pride is not their overwhelming sin! Neither is greed.

OK, I'll admit that my point of view might be a little biased, because I've collected quite a few relics from AH1, but for what it's worth, here's my take on it:

Yes, selling a relic is a sin. A big, fat, MORTAL sin of simony, named for the magician Simon who tried to buy the Apostles' "tricks." (early clueless person) But until recently, the Church "sold" relics all the time. There was an office in the Vatican where you could trade cash for relics any time you wanted. Even now, I understand that the Passionist Nuns can be found at the top of the famous Stairs in Rome, and will gladly sell you a few.

What's the difference? They are very careful to tell you that you are only buying the theca, the container that holds the relic. THAT they are allowed to sell, plus a suitable donation" for the labor that went into making it. This usually translates into 20 to 50 dollars, depending on how fancy the theca is. They stress that the relic itself is a gift.

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Since you were careful to make this distinction, you were definitely not committing a sin of simony. Some sellers go so far as to auction a separate item, like a medal, with the relic. People bid on the medal, the relic is a gift to the winning bidder. OK, it's a fine and Jesuitical quibble, but if it's good enough for the Church, it's good enough for me!

AH1 is a little messed up when it comes to relics. Their policy states that you cannot auction body parts. This was to prevent desperate people from trying to auction off one of their kidneys, and to avoid the ethical backlash that would come from this. But it is this regulation that the eGestapo will cite to have first class relics yanked off. OK, you know and I know that it's seriously stupid to equate a living kidney with a chunk of bone from someone who's been dead for a thousand years or so, but that's the way it goes. You just have to work around it.

In your case, there is nothing in the AH1 regulations to forbid selling a relic of the True Cross, so they had to try to scare you with visions of eternal damnation. Tsk. Funny, I seem to remember that only God does the judging around here. "Judge not, lest you be judged"? and the gift of discernment, the ability to read people's hearts and minds is a rare one, given only to a few saints. Presumptuous of them to assume that they have it!

Interestingly enough, plenty of first class relics pass through AH1 without any attention from the eGestapo. I have never figured out what triggers their response. I had to bid three times on a frame reliquary, only after the sellers put a piece of tape over the "Ex Ossibus" label could they auction it without interference. Yet other relics that specifically state "First Class" or "Looks like a piece of bone" manage to go off with no interference. Go figger.

For an example of an AH1 member who has had it with the eGestapo, check this one: [ay item 377769489 \(Ends Jul-13-00 19:12:40 PDT\) - RELICS CLEARANCE: RELIC OF VEIL OF MARY \(BVM\)](#)
See, it's not just you!

As to the opinions from priests and bishops as to whether or not you can sell, I don't know how old you are or even if you're Catholic. Me, I'm a cradle Catholic, definitely pre-Vatican II. Once upon a time, there was only one Faith, only one Mass, only one set of rules and regulations. Nowadays, every single priest seems to think that he is the equal of the Holy Father, able to set policy and interpret regulations and Canon Law to suit his own ends. As far as I know, Canon Law hasn't even deigned to notice AH1 yet. All it says is that you can't sell the relic, only the reliquary. So, theoretically, and until a solemn pronouncement is handed down, you should be able to put the reliquary up for bid with a clear conscience.

Look at the fruit of your works, which I seem to also recall is what we will be judged on. By making a relic of the True Cross available to someone who never thought they could actually touch such a wonderful thing, you are doing a serious good work. If the person who gets the relic feels an increase in their spiritual life, if he or she shares it with others, you have helped someone closer to sainthood, and that ain't a bad thing.

I can't tell you how to form your conscience, only you can do that through prayer and reflection. Of course, I will pray for you, that you will reach a correct decision. Ask the Holy Spirit for inspiration, He always comes through!

Peace and happiness,

[1] Thanks, I've never been referred to as styling before!

From:

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International Crusade for Holy Relics – Internal Report - Members Only

To: "Carl ----"

Subject: Re:

Date: Mon, 17 Jul 2000 17:36:04 -0000

I am sure that these are not Catholic Priests, let alone Christians in good standing. There is info on the site regarding Canon Law. If you'd like to call me feel free, 1 818--- 212 A lot of phonies out there will sell anything for a buck!

Tom

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