

Assisting God's People to Proclaim, Celebrate, and Serve the Gospel of Life.

His Excellency, Msgr. Patrick J. Zurek
Bishop of Amarillo
4512 NE 24th Ave
Amarillo, TX 79107

December 4, 2017

Your Excellency,

As Members of the Board of Directors of *Priests for Life, Inc.*, we can no longer remain silent to your words, actions and omissions that have caused such grave damage to the economic state and reputation of both the association itself and to us, personally—words, actions and omissions that have also prevented what could have been tremendous growth for our association and progress in the fight against abortion and in the defense of the dignity of all human life. So many of the faithful remain confused and ask us why you—a Bishop of the Church—would take steps to block a ministry that is bearing so much fruit in educating people, saving lives and in propagating the Gospel of Life. We can no longer allow this confusion to continue.

It has been more than seven years that Your Excellency has personally and in the media, both directly and indirectly, defamed our association, our National Director and Board members (Can. 1390 § 2).

In that time, Rev. Frank Pavone has decided to maintain a respectful and collaborative stance toward you in attempting to deescalate tensions and heal differences. Rev. Pavone requested this respectful attitude of us, the Members of the Board, as well, and we have followed his desire with respect to the juridical and extra-juridical events that have occurred and been caused by your behavior. At this point, however, the best interests of the association oblige us to speak out clearly.

You know well that the accusations leveled against Rev. Pavone several years ago were not only spurious, but lacked even any semblance of foundation. This point was made very clear in the **decision of the Congregation for the Clergy that declared illegitimate and invalid** your decree of September 6, 2011.

Notwithstanding the clarity of that decision, you continued to publically damage the good name of our National Director, against the norms of can. 220 and 1390 § 2, and the good names of the Priests for Life Board Members. In particular, the accusations pertaining to financial mismanagement have yielded **tremendous moral and financial damage** to the association, our financial advisors and to us, personally. The divulgation of your letter was just one example of conduct that aggravated the damage caused, in which the news media was actually alerted to actions taken against our National Director, Rev. Pavone.

We had at that time desired to file charges against you before the competent civil authorities but Rev. Pavone insisted otherwise, seeking instead complete collaboration with the Apostolic Visitor. We once again adhered to his wishes. In direct contradiction to your false allegations, **the affirmation of the sound financial management of Priests for Life**, in the final report of the Apostolic Visitor, certainly came as no surprise to us. Independent audits from reputable organizations had at that time certified, and still currently continue to certify, the sound financial management of this organization.

Nevertheless, your defamatory actions continued without interruption, and as such are not subject to prescription (can. 1362 §2), and clearly demonstrate **your *intentio dolosa*** (can. 1321 §1). The continual and unjustified prohibitions issued to the apostolate of Rev. Pavone, the contradictory permissions given and unjustifiably revoked and finally the **imposition of a penalty for an undetermined period of time** have all gravely damaged the association, gravely affected its action in the defense of life and sought to *decapitate* the leadership of the association—especially in the light of both your abusively cornering Rev. Pavone into dismissal, and your declared intention to dismiss him regardless of his intentions.

Your damaging behavior has been pivotal in obliging the Board Members to reconsider the original decision it made to request canonical recognition for Priests for Life, notwithstanding that this was the great desire of Rev. Pavone. Your actions are positively responsible for the fact that today, the biggest and most important Pro-Life association in the United States, which brings together hundreds of priests and laity alike and assists thousands upon thousands of people, does not enjoy the title of “Catholic.” Suspicion of your **illicit, illegitimate and abusive interference in the activity of the association** is more than justified by your position taken with regard to our National Director and the very association itself, notwithstanding the fact that your actions were in the recent past declared invalid by Rome.

We find this *persecution* of Rev. Pavone—a priest entrusted to your pastoral care and whom you should sustain as is your episcopal duty for all your presbyters with special solicitude (can. 384)—to be extremely grave, and in turn we find altogether unacceptable the repercussions that have fallen, as a direct result, upon the weakest of the weak whom we serve. Your patently false accusations yielded a decrease in funds to our organization and a sharp decline in our speaking invitations, which in turn harmed our capacity to serve preborn children, their mothers, those who see abortion as their only way out, and the elderly, sick and weak threatened by the culture of death.

This is something that we cannot accept.

Even as the “Holy Innocents” honored by the Church have surely watched over our association, permitting us to, little by little, recover supporters and donations, your continued actions of disturbance undermine the effective carrying out of our apostolate. **We do not hesitate to remind you that this apostolate is sustained by the constant teaching of the Church Magisterium and in harmony with the Doctrine of the Church.** In this sense, the recent words of the Holy Father denouncing the “perversion of abortion” are emblematic.

In light of the above, **we now formally demand that you cease and desist from any and all behavior and decisions that, directly or indirectly, cause damage to the good name (can. 220) of Priests for Life, its National Director and its members. We request that you permit Rev. Pavone to actively and fully exercise his priestly faculties and his apostolate in favor of life without limitation.** In so

doing, steps will be taken toward restoring justice and repairing the scandal that you have caused among the faithful and in the pro-life community at large.

If this demand is not met, ***Priests for Life* will be obliged to disregard the wishes of Rev. Pavone and pursue all possible legal remedies against you in the various competent judicial forums available: be it civil and ecclesiastical (can. 1390 and 1729), be it through criminal and civil action.**

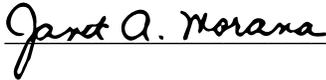
While we remain open to a conciliatory meeting and finding an extrajudicial solution (can.1713), we will not by any means, however, accept any longer the damage to our good name and the consequences therefrom.

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors of Priests for Life



Anthony DeStefano



Janet Morana



Father Walter Quinn, OSA



Father Denis Wilde, OSA



Father Dennis Cooney



Mark Crutcher



Dr. Alveda King



Michael Nierva



Paul Joseph A. Magahis



David Rosa



Andrew Smith



Roger Baler