



Activating the Church to End Abortion
www.priestsforlife.org

December 14, 2015

His Eminence Beniamino Cardinal Stella
Prefect, Congregation for the Clergy
Vatican City State
BY FAX: 06-6988-4845

Your Eminence,

I write on behalf of the Administration and Board of Directors of Priests for Life to thank you for your very helpful letter of October 1, 2015 (Prot. N. 20153127), in which you included for me a copy of the letter sent to Archbishop Joseph Kurtz, President of the USCCB, for him to share with the other bishops in order to clarify for them the canonical status of Priests for Life.

Since then, I have been in contact with Archbishop Kurtz, who, as I'm sure you know, has conveyed your letter to the other bishops. I have also been in touch with many of the bishops individually, and they were grateful for receiving the information.

The letter sent by Your Eminence makes it clear that bishops are free, according to their own pastoral judgment, to determine how they want to interact with Priests for Life as a civil corporation. This statement is made to them in the context of the assertion by Your Eminence that we do many excellent works, that we have not been found guilty of any wrongdoing, and that the changes in our canonical status have been triggered by our own free choices in how we have decided to grow and diversify our ministry.

Large numbers of the bishops interact with us in a regular and positive way, and will continue to do so. In moving forward, we will work with each diocese individually to answer their questions, and to help them understand our work, our status, and the ways in which we can work in communion with them and their people.

The letter of Your Eminence points out the efforts of the Congregation to present in a fair and balanced manner the trajectory and current status of our work. We have been quite aware of that over the years and are grateful for it. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said in regard to a number of bishops who have been in positions of responsibility towards us, and who have displayed -- and continue to display -- an amazing lack of transparency and fairness.

Just yesterday, I received word from a local deacon that the New York Archdiocese is going to inform its parishes that we have been "stripped" of our status as an association and that we "are no longer Catholic." On the contrary, and as you well know, we have quite freely and deliberately, and for positive reasons that have been adequately explained to the Congregation, chosen to refrain at the present time from seeking recognition as an Association of the Faithful. It is not our understanding that we are being punished, nor should that be the understanding conveyed to the faithful. Moreover, it is absurd for anyone to imply that the lack of canonical recognition as an association means one is not "Catholic."

In a spirit of transparency, therefore, I want to inform Your Eminence that we will take whatever steps are necessary to defend our reputation as we move forward with our ministry, and just as vigorously, we will work to foster open and transparent communication and communion with local ordinaries all over the world.

Once again, may I reiterate our gratitude to the Congregation for the Clergy for the many hours of work over these recent years that we have engaged in together for the growth and protection of the work of Priests for Life. For your information, I am sending under separate cover a more detailed report of the activities we have undertaken in the past year and some of our plans for the year to come.

Sincerely,



Fr. Frank Pavone
National Director

CC: His Eminence, Timothy Cardinal Dolan
His Excellency, Most Rev. Joseph Kurtz, President, USCCB