

## **ENCLOSURE 1**

### ***Issues on the Merits of the Case to seek the assistance of the Diocese of Colorado Springs***

#### **I. The Secular Nature of Fr. Pavone's Spirituality and Mission**

1. Fr. Pavone has untiringly exercised this clerical ministry throughout the years in ecclesiastical apostolates, but most often too, in secular ministries within society at large.
2. Springing from his:
  - a. *undoubted dedication,*
  - b. *his personal talents*
  - c. and what could be a *unique charism of the Holy Spirit to the Church,*<sup>1</sup>

Fr. Pavone's entire *Spirituality and Mission* have been anchored in the *Sacred Dignity of Human Life* (called to partake in the Divine Nature and eternal beatitude) *as enlightened by the Incarnate Word* and as sanctified Christ's redeeming acts.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In discerning the spiritual origin of vocations which act as catalyst to new forms of life or new institutions or societies within the Church, the founder's (i) dedication, (ii) natural talents and (iii) unique charism from the Spirit need to be examined individually so as to ascertain that the authenticity of the unique Spirituality and Mission proposed have their proven origin from the Holy Spirit.

<sup>2</sup> "For by His incarnation the Father's Word assumed, and sanctified through His cross and resurrection, the whole of man, body and soul, and through that totality the whole of nature created by God for man's use. Thanks to this belief, the Church can anchor the dignity of human nature." *Gadium et Spes S*, 41. Cf. CCC, 460.

3. For this reason, Fr. Pavone is persuaded -by an internal and growing conviction- of founding his entire vocation upon a *form of life* whose basic **Spirituality** is grounded much upon one of the Magisterium's main documents on the Sacred Dignity of the Human Person as revealed by the Incarnate Word: *Gaudium et Spes*.
4. Correspondingly, however, as in the light of the Incarnation, one's call to holiness implies imitating Christ's oblation love for others, the Spirituality proposed by Fr. Pavone would also give birth to a **Mission** of love that calls for a more authentic social and structural respect for human life and its ensuing rights, as proclaimed by *Pacem in Terris*.
5. To end, the very nature of commitment springing from such a Spirituality implies:
  - a. A **Common bond** (among those who may wish to embrace the same Spirituality),
  - b. A full dedication of oneself to God, and therefore, one's **Consecration**,
  - c. An effort to **transform the world from within**, as the ensuing Mission seeks to serve and promote the Sacred Dignity of Human Life
  - d. And a Mission that is carried out within a large **spectrum of different fields of specialization and ministries**.<sup>3</sup>
6. For such reasons, it is now clearer to Fr. Pavone that the *form of life* which he feels called to pursue within the Church can only be most adequately expressed within a state of life akin to those of **Secular Institutes**. **Herein lies the merits of the type of life that he is proposing.**

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<sup>3</sup> So that the main thrust of the apostolic work and ministry is not expressed in a uniformity of Mission and Communal efforts or living (as in the case of Societies or Religious Institutes), but a plurality of ministries that gives rise to individuals living alone, though united by a common bond of Spirituality (as is the case for Secular Institutes).

## **II.**

### ***The impact of Fr. Pavone's apostolate and ministry in the lives of countless people***

7. ***As to the merits of his ministerial outreach***, it can confidently be said that Fr. Pavone has indeed touched the hearts and lives of millions of people, bringing many back to the Church and others, even pro-abortion key figures and iconic players, to convert to the faith and become champions of Human Life, such as Norma McCorvey, the “Jane Roe” of the Supreme Court’s Roe vs. Wade abortion decision that legalized abortion in the United States.
8. Unquestionably, his message and formation programs on the Sacred Dignity of Human Life have influenced and assisted countless priests, religious, lay faithful, other Christians and people of other faiths to grow in awareness of the Dignity of Human Life and to become staunch defenders of the right to life and its care, from conception to its natural end.<sup>4</sup>
9. Hypothetically, though very importantly, the flip side of Fr. Pavone’s positive impact upon millions of faithful, other Christians, and people of goodwill, is that if his vocation and ministry were to be really inspired by God, and yet, due to a failure of communication between himself and his Local Ordinary, his ministry and calling would ultimately fail or be suppressed, the widespread scandal that would result would seriously undermine the *credibility of the Church’s social teaching in every associated civil or ecclesiastical forum*, and also *the faith of countless faithful* both in the United States and beyond.

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<sup>4</sup> Among the Non-Catholic Christians we may note the influence which Fr. Pavone has had upon Dr. Alveda King, the American activist, whose pro-life message has matured and strengthened in her association with Fr. Pavone. Additionally, Fr. Pavone’s EWTN programs have had a significant and continued following, suggesting that his proclamation of the Sacred Dignity of Human Life and of God’s mercy for sinners has, throughout the years that he has appeared on screen has touched the lives of millions in the United States, and many more millions in other countries too.

10. That is why, in this regard, any concern to avoid harming both:
- a. the credibility of the Church's proclamation of the Sacred Dignity of Human Life,
  - b. and faith of countless Christians,
- certainly underscores the need for an urgent evaluation on the merits of the case.

### **III.**

#### ***The widespread and significant civil recognition and praise of Fr. Pavone's apostolate and secular ministry***

11. ***Concerning the merits of having received social appreciation for his work***, one can easily appreciate how many sectors of civil society have invited Fr. Pavone to deliver lectures, speeches and homilies (at both local and international events), and even to preach and pray, at the invitation of the Congress Members, in Capitol Hill.
12. Acknowledged as an *apostle of life* in religious circles, and a *champion of life* in civil sectors, Fr. Pavone's secular ministry has received widespread recognition and he himself has received more than 50 important awards, with most of these granted by Catholic or Christian inspired civil foundations.

### **IV.**

#### ***The Church's recognition of Fr. Pavone's charism and apostolate***

13. More importantly, ***to add to the merits of the above civil recognition, Fr. Pavone's charism and apostolate have also received important ecclesiastical praise and support*** from several Catholic Bishops and even the Holy See, when, for example:
- a. he was called by Cardinal Trujillo to assist the Universal Church at the Pontifical Council for the Family,
  - b. when he was appointed by the Holy Father as Member of the Pontifical Academy for Life,

- c. and when his work and charism received the praise of the Congregation for the Clergy in its competent evaluation of Fr. Pavone's pro-life work in 2013.

## V.

### ***The ongoing vocational aspirations of Fr. Pavone despite difficulties and misunderstandings as a possible sign of the authenticity of his charism and calling***

14. ***As to the merits of a ministry and vocation that could have been and should be tried by the sign of the cross***, we can say that notwithstanding the above significant endorsements from civil society and even the Holy See and the Church, it is true, however, to state that both Fr. Pavone and his apostolate have often faced periods of significant hardship resulting above all, from evident misgivings on the part of Bishops and faithful.

15. However, though these:

- a. on the one hand, could at a rational level *raise alarm as to the authenticity of Fr. Pavone's vocation*,
- b. on the other hand, it could mean (as is often the case with founders and new institutes) the presence of the sign that the Church looks for to discern that a charism (that appears troublesome and difficult) *is indeed an unrecognized gift of the Holy Spirit*, for God always allows His envoys to experience the unvarying history of a mutual relationship between *suffering and charisms*, and which -above every motive that may justify misunderstandings- is supremely helpful in discerning the authenticity of a vocation.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Mutuae Relationes*, 12. Throughout his hardships, Fr. Pavone has proved his docility and reverence for the Hierarchy. For despite having been accused of inciting hatred towards Bishops, the evidence we have compiled illustrates however, that such accusations lack any form of legitimate basis whatsoever. On the contrary, the evidence illustrates the fact that, despite

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hash treatment or flawed accusations, Fr. Pavone has always reacted with evident words of deep respect and devout regard for Bishops.

**VI.**  
***The paths taken by Fr. Pavone  
to pursue his unique vocation***

16. ***As to the merits of a pervasive dedication to explore God's calling that should characterise a vocation and new foundation***, it can be said that even before seeking to be accepted as a possible candidate for the priesthood, Fr. Pavone felt (from the moment of his first ever participation at the March for Life) strongly compelled to personal holiness, and from this desire, a call to promote the Sacred Dignity of Human Life, from conception to its natural end.
17. Indeed, this desire -that took over his entire spiritual focus and personal commitment to God- lead him to journey towards the priesthood and to embrace fully a clerical pro-life ministry.
18. However, Fr. Pavone feels that the fullest expression of his vocation within the Church has not yet been realized, despite the fact that he has already explored several paths to achieve this end. Yet notwithstanding the various failed attempts and efforts on his part, one thing is unquestionable: strongly compelled by his calling to promote Human Life, Fr. Pavone has never once slacked in his dedication to God.<sup>6</sup>
19. Indeed, while for some the failure of Fr. Pavone's vocational aspirations could give rise to some apprehension, *it must also be said in defence of a possible authenticity of Fr. Pavone's calling* that, by comparison, many founders of societies and institutes of consecrated life have had to mature their vocation precisely by being allowed by God to agonize over multiple failed attempts of vocational exploration, while all the while -as with Fr. Pavone- never ceasing in their complete and utter dedication to God.
20. As to the vocational paths taken by Fr. Pavone, we note that:  
a. In addition to initially joining the Salesian Congregation

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<sup>6</sup> Note that in following a Spirituality and Mission and is unique and novel within the life and charisms of the Church, it has been the experience of many founders of religious institutes, secular institutes or societies of apostolic life, to embark on several efforts, before they finally reach their vocational accomplishment when assisted at last by the informed and well directed regulations of a competent ecclesiastical authority.

- b. To transferring to the seminary of the Archdiocese of New York and be ordained therein as a Diocesan Priest
- c. Fr. Pavone, who since his first pastoral appointment dedicated himself thoroughly to the pro-life cause, sought at the invitation of His Excellency, the Most Rev. John Yanta, excardination from his original place of enrolment (namely, the Archdiocese of New York) to explore his vocational aspirations within the Diocese of Amarillo.
- d. With his vocational aspirations channelled -at the direction and decision of Bishop Yanta- as a member of a Society of Apostolic Life, entitled *Missionaries of the Gospel of Life*, we note however, that:
  - i. not only did this form of canonical “status in life” caused for Fr. Pavone a certain degree of dissatisfaction,<sup>7</sup>
  - ii. but that more importantly, the said Apostolic Society was, due to canonical errors on the part of Bishop Yanta, erected and declared invalid by the Holy See.
- e. Notwithstanding, Fr. Pavone has repeatedly expressed his desire to continue his full commitment to the promotion of the Sacred Dignity of Human Life, and through a clerical state of life that is different to that of Diocesan Priests.
- f. For such reasons, Fr. Pavone chose to explore his vocational aspirations under the discernment and auspices of an existing Clerical Secular Institute of Pontifical Right entitled *Voluntas Dei*.
- g. Despite this, the competent Superiors of *Voluntas Dei* felt that, as their Institute prefers to avoid being drawn into pro-life issues, Fr Pavone should instead, seek to found his own institute under the discernment of the only competent ecclesiastical authority that exists to this end, namely, a Diocesan Bishop or his equivalent.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> It appears that Fr. Pavone expressed repeated concerns to Bishop Yanta regarding the form of life attached to the foundation proposed to him by the Diocese of Amarillo. To be precise, with a spirituality that is akin to Secular Institutes (*namely, living in the world primarily as singles, so as to contribute in charity to the sanctification of the world, especially from within*), Fr. Pavone declared that the spirituality and communal life proper to a Society of Apostolic Life as proposed to him was not in harmony with his spirituality and mission.

<sup>8</sup>Indeed, when there is question of new foundations, Diocesan Bishops have the right and duty to interpret “the counsels, to regulate their practice, and also to set up stable forms of living embodying them”. *LG 43*. Cf. also Sacred Congregation for Religious and for Secular Institutes and the Sacred Congregation for Bishops, *Mutuae Relationes*, 51; *Perfectae Caritatis*, 19; CIC/83, 579.

- h. However, as at present, Fr Pavone finds his vocational aspirations in a situation of an involuntary standstill within his own diocese due to his Bishop's continued misgivings and limitations to his ministry (as evidenced by the canonical evaluation and advice outlined in Appendix 1),
- i. It is to this end, that Fr. Pavone is now seeking to resolve the present deadlock, by pursuing his vocational aspirations under the competent episcopal discernment of another Local Ordinary.

## **VII.**

### ***Recent responses on behalf of the Diocesan Bishops whom Fr. Pavone has approached for support for his vocational aspirations***

21. ***As to the merits of Fr. Pavone to seek to find the necessary episcopal support***, we note that in seeking the assistance of Diocesan Bishops to pursue his vocational aspirations, Fr. Pavone has approached:
  - His Excellency, the Most Rev. James Conley, Bishop of Lincoln, Nebraska
  - His Excellency, the Most Rev. John Gerard Noonan, Bishop of Orlando, Florida
  - And His Excellency, the Most Rev. Michael John Sheridan, Bishop of Colorado Springs, Colorado
22. In this regard:
  - a. Bishop Conley has expressed his full support, though has underlined the fact that at present his diocese is already discerning the process of the erection of a new religious congregation, for which reason, he believes it is not opportune, at this moment, for Fr. Pavone's vocational aspirations to be favourably received within his territory.
  - b. Bishop Noonan, however, has been approached only at the preliminary stage of establishing a good working relationship with *Priests for Life Inc.*; as the latter intends establishing an office within the Diocese of Orlando. However, Bishop Noonan's reception of Priests for Life's intention appears not to have been as

positive as desired. Instead, diocesan appreciation is still focused upon trying to understand Priests for Life's ministries and associative nature. Accordingly, Fr. Pavone has been advised to desist from pursuing his vocation within the said Diocese.

However, as Bishop Sheridan has manifested a willingness to consider Fr. Pavone's vocational situation, it is for this reason that we now appeal to His Excellency, attaching to this *Presentation on the Merits of Fr. Pavone's Vocational Aspiration*, some relevant appendices on salient matters for his consideration.