

From the Desk of
Fr. Frank Pavone
National Director, Priests for Life

December 18, 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am immersed during these days in the planning of Priests for Life activities for 2023, starting with the events we are organizing at the March for Life and Walk for Life West Coast, and in preparing our activity report for 2022. In conjunction with all this, I continue to share with you all that I do each hour of each day (see www.PriestsForLife.org/Daily-Diary), a practice that I urge my fellow religious leaders (and all leaders) to adopt, in the name of the transparency and accountability that we owe to those we serve.

As I do all this, I want to say a few words of response to what is still only second-hand information I hear saying that the Vatican has dismissed me from the priesthood.

What took so long? This has been the plan of some of the bishops for many years, and what has unfolded has not been dialog, but a one-sided narrative of abuse. I have told and will continue to tell in great detail the story of the ongoing abuse that some in the hierarchy have subjected me to. You can read it and the supporting documentation at www.FrFrankPavone.com.

Various bishops have used and pressured Bishop Patrick Zurek (in whose diocese of Amarillo I have been incardinated) to try to block my ministry. (This is his final year in Amarillo, unless he gets removed sooner because of what I have reported to the authorities.)

Since Cardinal O'Connor granted my request in 1993 for permission to work fulltime to save the unborn from abortion, that has been my consistent – and only – request of Church authority: allow me to devote my life and ministry to saving the unborn. That has not changed in any way.

The Vatican has in various ways backed me up on that despite the obstruction of various American bishops. In 2005, the Congregation for Clergy granted my request for excardination from New York to Amarillo to continue to pursue and deepen my pro-life work. In 2012, the same Congregation ruled in my favor against the invalid attempts of Bishop Zurek to restrict my ministry, telling him instead to “be generous” in letting me do this work.

Then in 2019, the Vatican again declared invalid various punishments and restrictions Bishop Zurek placed on me, and authorized me to transfer to the Diocese of Colorado Springs, where Bishop Michael Sheridan was willing to receive me and let me continue this pro-life ministry. But for reasons that have never been explained to me, they indicated to the bishop that he could not let me do the work fulltime.

But my request remains the same: let me serve the Church with a fulltime ministry on behalf of the unborn.

Some call my refusal to turn away from that work “disobedience.” I call it faithfulness.

During all this process, people like Bishop Zurek, Cardinal Dolan, and Archbishop Pietro Sambi have lied about me and abused their authority against me and my ministry. Many bishops and Cardinals, here and at the Vatican, have on the other hand, have supported me and my work and proposed to the Holy Father the solution of allowing me to transfer to a favorable diocese.

To those who oppose my work, my question is, “What specific parts of it do you not want me to do?”

Is it the resources we give to priests to preach the pro-life message based on the readings of the entire Sunday lectionary, or the fact that we have provided those resources without charge for 30 years?

Is it my work in serving as pastoral director of Rachel’s Vineyard, the world’s largest ministry for healing after abortion, or my similar role in Silent No More, through which those who have had abortions share their stories of forgiveness and healing? Have there been too many retreats, too much healing, too many testimonies?

Is it my work guiding specific individuals like Bernard Nathanson, Norma McCorvey (the Jane Roe of Roe v Wade, whom I received into the Catholic Church), and Abby Johnson (ask her about my role)?

Perhaps it is the work we do directly for the Vatican? Ask the Holy Father’s Mission to the United Nations about the help my ministry gives them, or the Secretariat of State regarding the international work of Priests for Life in defense of the Church’s teaching on life.

Or is it my advocacy of the Church’s teaching on political responsibility? Have there been too many pro-life candidates elected, or one too many Justices on the Supreme Court willing to reverse Roe v. Wade and also restore religious liberty?

Exactly what do the opponents of my work want me to stop doing? My work is carried out as part of a team of pro-life professionals who have decades of experience, professionalism and integrity. The 50 people we employ at Priests for Life are solidly united in this mission and will remain so.

This latest development from the Vatican is the result of an abusive process, to which I have been objecting for years and during which all my advisors have instructed me not to have contact with Bishop Zurek. The process has lacked both transparency and commonsense. Again, it is all documented at www.FrFrankPavone. I have nothing to hide.

I want to offer a challenge here to anyone at the Vatican or from the Nuncio’s office who has been involved in this case: Sit down with me for a live on-air broadcast, during which we can walk step by step through the history of what happened here. I will give you all the time you need to explain what happened, and then I will ask you some questions. Let’s have some transparency and accountability for what has just occurred, and the People of God can judge for themselves.

I would like to address some specific people with a few further observations.

First, to the Holy Father, Pope Francis:

You have encouraged me personally in my work, in the several conversations we have had over the years. In particular you have encouraged me to move forward with the work of healing, through

Rachel's Vineyard, and you have written to my pastoral associate Dr. Theresa Burke to offer the same encouragement.

Your Holiness, I want to continue serving as a faithful priest and fulltime pro-life leader. You can allow me to do so under a supportive bishop, and many of the faithful understand that this is the most reasonable solution.

Second, to the Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, Archbishop Christophe Pierre:

Your Excellency, your communication to the bishops dated December 13th contains serious errors and omissions. But that has marked this process all along, so there is no surprise there, and those errors will be addressed separately and thoroughly.

But in particular, when you say there is "no possibility of appeal" to this decision, you speak only in a very narrow legal sense, and completely ignore the appeal that is being made to the People of God themselves. This is not just about me; it's about the millions of supporters of the movement I help to lead and will continue to lead, and of the work that the People of God have already evaluated and judged worthy of their ongoing support.

And speaking of that support, you mention in your communication that I am well known in the pro-life movement. Could you not work in a single expression of gratitude -- just in passing --for these past 30 years of my ministry in service to the Gospel of Life?

And finally, to the individual bishops of the United States:

To those of you who continue to support my pro-life work, I thank you.

To those of you who have been part of this travesty publicly or in the shadows, we will be taking all appropriate canonical and civil action as well as public communications to the Faithful.

I also strongly suggest that you exercise prudent regard for the reputations of my supporters and me if you communicate anything to the Faithful in your dioceses about this decision. Before you issue any statements, read the letter sent to you by Dr. Alveda King some months ago about my situation and the details leading up to this decision. She has worked fulltime with me and my ministry for 16 years and serves on the Board of Priests for Life to this day.

We will be following up with each individual diocese, and the Faithful within them, regarding any communications that are made.

Friends, thanks for reading this. I am an open book, will be commenting extensively on this situation and more importantly, will be continuing full force the work I have been doing for 30 years.

Let's stay connected on my daily broadcasts (EndAbortion.TV – see, for instance, <https://youtu.be/kHkUCGFnEwE>), on my Daily Diary (www.PriestsForLife.org/Daily-Diary) and on our main website, End Abortion.US.

I am grateful to all of you, brothers and sisters. We all fall short in many ways, and for any of my own failings, I ask forgiveness, and I know of your continued commitment to work together!

This work succeeds **not because of bishops or the Vatican**, and not even because of my priestly ordination, but because of the human commitment you and I both have to the defense of the lives of

the most defenseless children, the unborn! May they be protected, and may we continue achieving victory over abortion!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fr. Frank Pavone". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "F".

Fr. Frank Pavone
National Director, Priests for Life

[Video Comments from Fr. Frank on Saturday night Dec. 17, 2022](#)