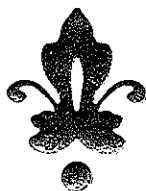


March 5, 2016



To Whom It May Concern:

I served as Vicar Episcopal for three consecutive bishops of the Diocese of Amarillo. I was Vicar for Hispanic Affairs under Bishop Leroy Matthiesen (four years) and Vicar for Clergy for Bishops John Yanta and Patrick Zurek (sixteen years). For nearly ten of those years, Father Frank Pavone was incardinated as a priest of the Diocese of Amarillo.

Father Pavone first came to the diocese under Bishop John Yanta. As Bishop Yanta explained to me after the fact of Father Pavone's incardination, the purpose of the incardination was to facilitate the founding of a Society of the Apostolic Life dedicated to the charism of the protection of the unborn. There was also to have been the development of an international center for pro life causes, most especially the unborn.

For a number of reasons, these two projects did not come to fruition. Bishop Yanta retired and Bishop Zurek was named ordinary in Amarillo. From the outset, the relationship between Bishop Zurek and Father Pavone was strained, even though Father Pavone was generally well received by clergy, laity and religious alike, when exercising ministry in the Diocese of Amarillo.

On occasion it was my responsibility to communicate with Father Pavone on matters relating to his ministry and the bishop's wishes. In all instances, I can state unequivocally that Father Pavone responded promptly, respectfully and appropriately. During Holy Week of 2010, on April 20 at 11 a.m., I was present at a meeting between Bishop Zurek and Father Pavone. During this meeting, Father Pavone related his discernment of many years' duration of having been called to pro life ministry in the Church and his concomitant frustration at the experience of failure in achieving the same within existing ecclesial polity. It was an open, respectful revelation on Father Pavone's part. Bishop Zurek responded with an expression of anger and withdrawal from the meeting. At that time I informed Father Pavone that it was my personal opinion that he should seek another bishop/diocese. The relationship between Bishop Zurek and him had long since become toxic and I encouraged Father Pavone to find a way out of the diocese and Bishop Zurek's reach.

Since that time and before, I have witnessed occasions at which Bishop Zurek was present for any variety of meetings, such as the presbyteral council, priests' retreats, Holy Week liturgies, and funeral celebrations, during which Father Pavone's name would come up, often in the context of positive comment about his ministry within the diocese and elsewhere. Bishop Zurek often takes these occasions to reveal the toxic nature of his relationship to Father Pavone. He makes remarks publicly about sensitive matters concerning Father Pavone. On more than one occasion he has seriously misrepresented the actual situation by his remarks. While there were occasions in which I had to speak with him about sensitive, even unpleasant matters, Father Pavone, in my experience, demonstrated himself to be an effective and generous priest, completely dedicated to the ministry, especially pro life ministry. I have seen the fruits of his ministry in the diocese and elsewhere on the national and international scene. It is in this context that I encouraged Father Pavone to leave the diocese and place himself beyond the impact of

Bishop Zurek's personal animus toward him, so that he could continue to flourish as a priest and that the fruits I had seen personally could continue to mature.

Sincerely in Christ,

*Rev. Msgr. Harold Waldow, Senior Priest.*

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