

From the Desk of Father Frank Pavone

National Director, Priests for Life

National Director, Gospel of Life Ministries

September 22, 2011

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

I used an overnight delivery service to get this letter to you as quickly as possible because I had to reach you right away and address some important issues that concern you, me, our work together at Priests for Life, and the entire pro-life movement here in the United States.

But before I go into any of that with you, I must first tell you that it is critically important that you send me a response of some kind to this letter.

In light of all that's happened in the past couple weeks – and again, I'll discuss this with you in just a moment – it is vital that you maintain your unconditional support for Priests for Life and the fight to end legalized abortion-on-demand in America.

Right now that means doing whatever is necessary to send Priests for Life the largest gift you possibly can today.

Not tomorrow. Not next week. But right now!

Forgive me for being so blunt, but there's a reason for it.

Due to all the many and various means of getting information today, I have no idea what you may or may not have heard or read about me and my bishop, the Most Reverend Patrick Zurek.

In any case, over-zealous members of an abortion-friendly news media, as well as enemies directly involved with the abortion industry, have spent the past week or so spreading a lot of misinformation and totally false allegations against me and Priests for Life.

I suspect they did so in the hope that you, as well as everyone else who makes our work possible, might pull back on your support ... or abandon us completely.

In order to keep you from falling victim to their agenda, I decided the best course of action would be to go on the offensive and tell you everything that's happened over the past two weeks so that you will have no misgivings whatsoever in continuing to support Priests for Life as

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faithfully and as generously as you have in the past.

Here's the official position of the Amarillo diocese concerning me:

First, I am *not* suspended and I never was. You can call the Amarillo chancery if you feel like you need to. The number is 806 – 383 – 2243. You'll probably be connected to Deacon Floyd Ashley, the diocese's Executive Assistant. He will confirm what I just told you.

Second, I have *not* lost any of my priestly faculties. Again, Deacon Ashley will confirm that.

Third, and perhaps most important to you, Monsignor Harold Waldow, the Vicar of Clergy for the Amarillo Diocese, has sent out a letter in which he states that I have not been "charged with any malfeasance" nor even been "accused of any wrong doing with the financial matters of Priests for Life."

Fourth, while Bishop Zurek wants to clear up any misunderstandings, he made it clear that he does not want the work of Priests for Life to be harmed.

Fifth, for the time being, my ministry is restricted to the diocese of Amarillo and it will remain restricted until Bishop Zurek and I can sit down and reach a mutual understanding on my dual role as both a priest in his diocese and a priest dedicated to pro-life work on a full-time basis.

There you have it. That's it. That's everything.

For now I am here in Amarillo anxiously awaiting Bishop Zurek's return from a trip he'd scheduled some time ago so we can have our meeting and I can get on with the work of leading the People of Life to victory over abortion.

And in the end, that's all I'm concerned with. Because no matter what happens to me personally, the fight against abortion must continue without pause and without interruption.

But that fight is in real jeopardy now because of a misunderstanding between me and my bishop that someone leaked out to a news media filled with individuals who would like nothing better than to fracture the pro-life movement and bring Priests for Life down.

I'm writing to assure you that I am doing everything I can to keep that from happening.

Still, I'm not so naïve as to think that there won't be some fallout from this situation.

In spite of the fact that I am a member in good standing on the Vatican's Pontifical Academy for Life; that 21 bishops and cardinals sit on the Priests for Life Episcopal Advisory Board; that dozens of outstanding and highly respected pro-life leaders endorse Priests for Life's ministry, the fact remains that there are a great many pro-life individuals who will read the headlines and think that I have been suspended or that Priests for Life has been dissolved.

Again, neither situation is even remotely true.

But in today's world, more often than not, perception is truth.

And those heralds of the culture of death who seek to destroy Priests for Life and undermine the

pro-life movement will use my current situation to mislead people into thinking that they are wasting their precious pro-life dollars by entrusting them to Priests for Life. I simply cannot afford for you to fall victim to their lies and campaign of misinformation. So even though I am deeply grateful for the outpouring of support that I continue to receive from people all across the country, and even from around the world ...

... the only support I'm interested in securing right now is yours!

That's because there are literally millions of men and women here in the United States who share our pro-life convictions to one degree or another.

Regrettably, however, only a small percentage of them have the same commitment and dedication as you do. These are the people who will read the headlines and be fooled into thinking that they should hold off on giving any more financial support to Priests for Life until my situation is resolved.

But that's precisely what the devil wants them to do.

After years of extremely hard work and a lot of personal sacrifice on your part, we've got the abortion industry on the ropes! The polls show this. The efforts in states all across the country show this.

Now is not the time to restrict our work. It's time to advance it! Full speed ahead!

But we cannot possibly do that if you abandon Priests for Life in this its hour of greatest need.

In asking you to trust me in this way, I want to make it very clear to you that Priests for Life is above reproach in its financial management and the stewardship of the monies it has received from you and other dedicated pro-lifers.

And as relieved as I am to learn of Monsignor Waldow's letter confirming that, I must tell you that I'm not in the least surprised.

That's because I am painfully aware of the many sacrifices which you and other supporters make to send Priests for Life the contributions that enable us to fulfill our pro-life mission. I would never betray the trust you have put in me. You have my word on that.

And if you have any concerns about how your dollars are spent, call us up and ask. Come and visit our offices. Priests for Life is an open book and has absolutely nothing to hide.

Now let me address another important matter.

Due to the serious ramifications of how some in the news media, as well as those working to advance the abortion agenda, have used Bishop Zurek's letter to attack me and Priests for Life, I felt it necessary to begin a process of appeal to the Vatican. This process aims to correct any mistaken decisions of the bishop in my regard and to protect my commitment to full-time pro-life activity.

I am extremely confident that the Vatican will resolve this matter in a just and equitable fashion. And you will be pleased to know that, based on that confidence ...

... we are not currently making any changes in any positions at Priests for Life, or in any of our projects and plans.

In closing, let me assure you that Priests for Life will continue to be out front leading the fight against abortion. I refuse to allow this current incident to deter me from giving everything I have to the cause of life. Our bishops correctly teach that the right to life is the fundamental right upon which all human rights are based. Our nation's founding documents insist that the first of man's inalienable rights, those that come to us from God alone, is his RIGHT TO LIFE!!!

Knowing this, Priests for Life will continue to support our bishops here in the U.S. and act as a megaphone to help spread their pro-life statements far and wide.

What's more, Priests for Life will continue to serve dioceses – both clergy and laity – without asking for so much as a penny in compensation ... no speakers fees, no reimbursements to cover travel expenses when we preach at parishes, no printing costs to help pay for the millions of pieces of pro-life literature we provide for dioceses at no charge, nothing.

Our commitment to winning the fight against abortion remains firm and complete.

And we will not be deterred in the work God has called us to fulfill.

Again, though, in order to make good on that commitment, Priests for Life must have your financial help ... especially now when so many false stories and news reports are out there damaging our reputation and our good name.

I cannot write to every American and tell them the truth.

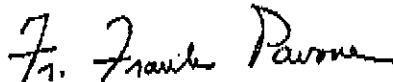
But I can write to you. And that's what I've done today.

Like I said, as grateful as I am for all the support and encouragement I've received over the past several days, the only person I'm interested in hearing from right now is you!

Please tell me you're still with us. If ever I needed to hear that from you, I do now.

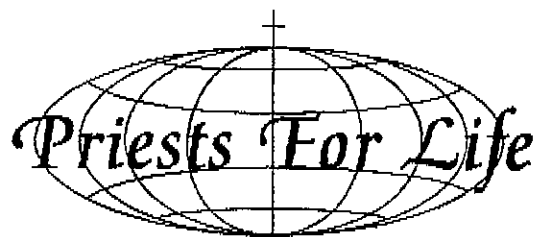
And know that in anticipation of your receiving this letter, I am praying for you; especially at each Mass that I offer. Thank you again for your constancy and your commitment. May God bless you.

Sincerely,



Fr. Frank Pavone

P. S. There is one more thing I need you to do: PRAY! Pray for Bishop Zurek. Pray for me. Pray for all those who may be harmed as a result of this minor misunderstanding ... in particular, our unborn brothers and sisters. Thank you again for your friendship and trust. I do not know how I would ever survive trials such as these without you and dear friends like you. God bless.



*Assisting God's People to Proclaim, Celebrate, and Serve the Gospel of Life.
"The Spirit God has given us is no cowardly spirit." (2Tim.1:7)*

Official Statement from Fr. Frank Pavone

For the past several years, my Ordinary, the Most Reverend Patrick Zurek, Bishop of Amarillo, has given me permission to do the full-time pro-life work that I have done since 1993. In 2005, I made a public promise in a Church ceremony in Amarillo, presided over by a Vatican Cardinal, that this full-time pro-life work would be a lifetime commitment. That's a commitment I promise to fulfill without wavering.

This past week, however, I received a letter from the Bishop insisting that I report to the Diocese this Tuesday, September 13 and, for the time being, remain only there.

I am very perplexed by this demand. Despite that, because I am a priest of the diocese of Amarillo, I will be obedient and report there on the appointed date, putting the other commitments that are on my calendar on hold until I get more clarity as to what the bishop wants and for how long. Meanwhile, I continue to retain all my priestly faculties and continue to be a priest in "good standing" in the Church. The bishop does not dispute this fact. Rather, he has said that he thinks I am giving too much priority to my pro-life work, and that this makes me disobedient to him. He also has claimed that I haven't given him enough financial information.

Now, although Bishop Zurek is my Ordinary, he is not the bishop of Priests for Life. Each of our staff priests has his own Ordinary, and the organization has an entire Board of Bishops. We keep them all informed of our activities, and of our financial audits.

I want to say very clearly that Priests for Life is above reproach in its financial management and the stewardship of the monies it receives from dedicated pro-lifers, raised primarily through direct mail at the grassroots level. To this end, Priests for Life has consistently provided every financial document requested by Bishop Zurek, including annual financial audits, quarterly reports, management documents—even entire check registers! Priests for Life has been *completely transparent* with Bishop Zurek and any other bishops who have requested information regarding our management and finances. Indeed, we have 21 bishops and cardinals who sit on our Advisory Board, and they are kept fully informed about our finances.

Therefore, in the interest of preserving my good reputation as well as protecting the valuable work done by the Priests for Life organization, *I have begun a process of appeal to the Vatican*. This process aims to correct any mistaken decisions of the bishop in my regard and to protect my commitment to full-time pro-life activity for my whole life. We are very confident that the Vatican will resolve this matter in a just and equitable fashion. Because of this confidence, we are not currently making any changes in any positions at Priests for Life, or in any of our projects and plans.

I also want to point out that, according to the canon law of the Catholic Church, because I have begun this

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process of appeal to Rome, the Bishop's order that I return to Amarillo has been effectively suspended. Nevertheless, because of my great respect for this Bishop and my commitment to be fully obedient at all times, I am reporting to Amarillo this Tuesday, in hopes that I can sort this problem out with the Bishop in a mutually agreeable and amicable way.

I would like to note that, unlike other organizations, which have sometimes been critical of the Church hierarchy or other institutions within the Church, Priests for Life has always remained 100% supportive of the Bishops, never criticizing any Church official, and always acting as a megaphone for the Bishops' pro-life statements. Moreover, we serve dioceses and their priests and laity without asking for any speakers' fees, and distribute millions of pieces of pro-life literature to dioceses completely free of charge. We do not seek parish collections, and we work to reinforce in each diocese the local pastoral plan which the bishop wants to implement for pro-life activities.

We are committed to going forward with that same spirit, regardless of the recent action taken by Bishop Zurek.

In the interest of full transparency, I would like to make it known that I do not receive any salary or financial remuneration from either the Diocese of Amarillo or from Priests for Life. Priests for Life, as a Private Association of the Christian Faithful, does provide for my residence and the expenses associated with the ministry, but these expenses are very small. Though, as a diocesan priest, I have never taken a vow of poverty, I have basically chosen to live in that fashion in solidarity with the pre-born children we are trying to protect—who are the poorest of the poor.

I want to be clear that I do not harbor any ill will towards the Bishop of Amarillo, nor do I foster suspicions about his motives. I am merely confused by his actions. It is impossible for me to believe that there is no place in the Church for priests to exercise full-time ministry in the service of the unborn. We do it for the sick, the poor, the hungry, and the imprisoned. But where in the Church is the place where a priest can exercise the same kind of full-time ministry for the children in the womb? That is the question that is at the heart of my own calling.

I am confident that we will be able to resolve this difficulty soon, without any harm to either my own reputation and without any slowdown of the valuable pro-life work we do at Priests for Life.



St. Mary's
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Msgr. Harold L. Waldow, Rector

September 15, 2011

Priests for Life
Staten Island, New York

As the Vicar of Clergy for the Diocese of Amarillo and the Moderator of the Curia I want to publically state that Reverend Frank Pavone of Priests for Life is a priest in good standing with the Roman Catholic Church. He has all the faculties for ministry that every priest of our diocese has in and for the Diocese of Amarillo.

I would also like to clarify a point that because there is dispute about the auditing process and the complete audit for all the entities of Priests for Life, Rachel's Vineyard, and the Missionaries of the Gospel of Life does not mean that Father Pavone is being charged with any malfeasance or being accused of any wrong doing with the financial matters of Priests for Life.

Sincerely yours,

Rev. Msgr. Harold Waldow

Reverend Monsignor Harold Waldow
Vicar of Clergy
Moderator of the Curia
Rector of the Cathedral

Father Frank Pavone
National Director, Priests for Life
National Director, Gospel of Life Ministries

Hubert, since I'm in Amarillo and not Priests for Life headquarters, just use this sheet of my letterhead to let me know God's innocent children in the womb can continue to rely on you to give your wholehearted and unconditional support - both your prayers and your financial gifts - to Priests for Life. Again, it's very important that you respond to my letter in some way today! Thank you again and may God bless you.



Here's my answer, Father Frank:

___ Of course you can count on me! I have never doubted your leadership and I don't doubt it now. Knowing how our enemies will use this to hurt Priests for Life, I have gone the extra mile to send the largest contribution I can make today. My tax-deductible gift is for:

___ \$340 ___ \$255 ___ \$170 ___ Other \$ _____

As always, make your check payable to Priests for Life. If you prefer to use a credit card to make your contribution, please complete the following:

___ VISA ___ MASTERCARD ___ AMERICAN EXPRESS ___ DISCOVER

Card #: _____ Exp: ___ / ___ Zip Code: _____

Signature: _____ Phone #: _____ - _____ - _____

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