



**Franciscan Friars
of the Renewal**

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Saint Teresa of Calcutta
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His Excellency Christophe Pierre
Apostolic Nunciature
3339 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008-3610

Your Excellency,

As sons of St. Francis, we write this letter out of deep love and concern for the Church and her pastors at this critical moment, praying ardently to the Holy Spirit, “Send forth your light and your truth. Let these be our guide” (cf. Ps 43). We wish, as Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, to reaffirm our filial obedience and our love for the office and person of the Supreme Pontiff. It is in this spirit of obedience and respect that we write to you.

Sadly, we find ourselves in the midst of a grave crisis in the Church caused by the sins of both priests and bishops. Sexual abuse and subsequent cover up of that abuse are crimes that have caused unimaginable suffering for the victims and scandal to all of us. These sins and crimes deeply wound the Heart of Christ and disfigure the face of His Bride, the Church. The first step towards purification and healing is the revelation of the full truth of what happened. Only then can judgment be passed by competent civil and canonical authorities, offenders be punished and removed, victims compensated, scandal repaired, and justice restored. Therefore, we join our voices to all those who are calling for an investigation by the Holy See into the specific allegations contained in the testimony of Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò. In particular, we echo the words of Cardinal Daniel DiNardo: “The questions raised deserve answers that are conclusive and based on evidence. Without those answers, innocent men may be tainted by false accusation and the guilty may be left to repeat sins of the past.”

We recognize that this investigation is solely the responsibility of Pope Francis and those whom he appoints to carry it out. Acknowledging the seriousness and urgent need for such an investigation, we pledge our continual prayers for Pope Francis and his collaborators. We are inspired by the example of devotion and love which St. Francis showed to both Pope Innocent III and Pope Honorius III. During a time when the Church was in deep need of reform, St. Francis recognized that Christ had entrusted to them the Petrine ministry of feeding, tending, and strengthening God’s flock. Today as then, this pastoral burden of governing the universal Church requires making many prudential and, at times, difficult decisions which, while always seeking the common good, may not always be free of error, misjudgment, or the influence of personal weakness. Therefore, as sons of St. Francis, we are offering our prayers and penances that the Holy Father may receive the grace he needs to courageously and thoroughly root out any weeds of corruption that might have sprung up in Christ’s Church, especially in the episcopacy.

Without this type of action which brings about true reform and renewal, we as a Church are severely hampered in our mission of evangelization. How can we persuasively invite others into the communion of Christ’s Church while this abominable cloud of suspicion and moral corruption

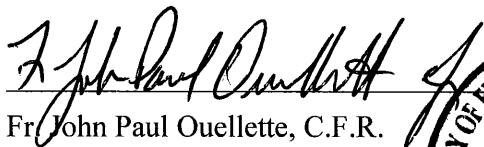


hovers over her? How can we point to the firmness of the Rock on which Christ built His Church when even the Pope and his closest collaborators remain under this noxious cloud?

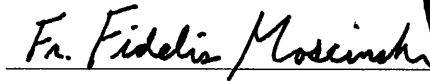
The specific actions which we believe are necessary in this critical time in order that this cloud be lifted are: First, each and every allegation raised in Archbishop Viganò's testimony needs to be either corroborated publicly with evidence or disproven. Second, we believe that priests and bishops, as Pastors of the Faithful, need to reaffirm publicly an unequivocal commitment to observe faithfully the moral teachings of the Catholic Church, especially in the area of human sexuality. Furthermore, we resolutely maintain that those responsible for the formation of priests, especially bishops, "while profoundly respecting the persons in question, cannot admit to the seminary or to holy orders those who practice homosexuality, present deep-seated homosexual tendencies or support the so-called 'gay culture'" (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2005).

Finally, we assure you, Your Excellency, of our prayers in the midst of this unprecedented crisis. It is our confident petition that the purifying fire of the Holy Spirit may be at work in the midst of so much distress and pain so as to bring about the sincere repentance that always precedes genuine renewal. May Our Lady of the Angels and St. Francis of Assisi assist you, Pope Francis and all our pastors to courageously bring justice and healing to the victims of abuse and restore moral integrity to our beloved Church.

With sentiments of esteem and respect,



Fr. John Paul Ouellette, C.F.R.
General Servant



Fr. Fidelis Moscinski, C.F.R.
General Procurator

