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Viganò Responds to Vatican Sanctions of Pro-life Priest

A high-ranking prelate of the Catholic Church has come to the defense of Father Frank Pavone, the outspoken pro-life advocate and national director of [Priests for Life](#) who was recently [laicized](#) by Pope Francis.

On Thursday, Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, the former apostolic nuncio to the United States, released a declaration (published [here](#)) calling the action against Father Pavone, 63, an “unjust and illegitimate punishment.”

The current Vatican ambassador to the U.S., Archbishop Christophe Pierre, published the pope’s decision to remove Pavone from the priesthood in a letter to bishops dated December 13, according to the Catholic News Agency ([CNA](#)). It ambiguously claimed that the dismissal was provoked by Pavone’s “blasphemous communications on social media” and “persistent disobedience of the lawful instructions of his diocesan bishop,” without providing further explanation. Pierre wrote that the prefect of the Dicastery for the Clergy in Rome issued the decision to dismiss the pro-life priest on November 9, and stated that Pavone has “no possibility of appeal.”

Pavone told CNA that he found out about the decision from that news outlet’s inquiries. “How did CNA learn about this before I did?” he reportedly asked, adding that CNA’s request was “the very first communication that came to me about this.”

However, on his [website](#), Pavone says he is not surprised by the action, as it is the culmination of years of abuse leveled by Church authorities against him and his pro-life advocacy. His [history](#) is available in a 26-page document, summarizing “How Fr. Frank and Priests for Life Have Been Treated by Some in the Hierarchy.”

Viganò Answers

In his declaration, and in his characteristic straightforward style, Viganò accuses the Vatican of ulterior motives in defrocking Pavone. He sums up the situation, saying,

If a Roman Dicastery decides to electrocute a priest with reduction to the lay state, accusing



AP Images
Carlo Maria Viganò



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him of blasphemy and preventing him from having the ability to defend himself legally in a canonical trial; and if, at the same time, analogous decisions are *not* taken with regard to notorious heretical, corrupt, and fornicating clergy, it is not out of place to ask if such a persecutory action reveals a persecutory mind, and if an action against a good priest who has worked strenuously to oppose abortion reveals the hatred of the persecutor with regard to the Good and those who fight for it.

The archbishop cites Father Pavone's treatment as "the umpteenth demonstration" of the Vatican's "ferocious obstinancy" in "persecuting the good and promoting evildoers." He says the objective is twofold: "to feed a climate of terror among the clergy so as to constrain them into servile and fearful obedience and also to create disorientation and scandal among the faithful and others who still look to the Church as a moral point of reference."

According to Viganò, Pavone's mistreatment is only one symptom of a growing cancer in the Vatican, and he refers to Pope Francis' papacy as the "Roman Sanhedrin" ("Sanhedrin" denoting the Jewish tribunal which secured Jesus' death sentence) and the "Bergoglian sect" (because Pope Francis' birth name is Jorge Mario Bergoglio).

Viganò proceeds to say that Francis' administration "eclipses the Catholic Church with its arrogant occupation of leadership posts and scandalously abuses its authority for a purpose opposed to that for which Our Lord, the Head of the Church, has intended it." He accuses the current Vatican patriarchy of vandalizing doctrine, morals, discipline and liturgy, and argues that the Second Vatican Council, which was held during the 1960s and introduced many novel and modernist practices, has achieved a "systematic demolition" of the Catholic Church.

This is not Viganò's first clash with Roman hierarchy. He made international headlines in 2012 by exposing the Vatican banking scandal. Six years later he again caught media attention by revealing sex-abuse coverups among high-ranking clergy, calling on the pope to [resign](#) for having protected now disgraced ex-Cardinal Theodor McCarrick. More recently, he appeared on mainstream Italian television in a 30-minute [interview](#) in which he warned of a global coup planned by Masonic infiltrators of the Vatican and governments worldwide through organizations like the United Nations and the World Economic Forum — groups planning to set up a [New World Order](#).

In his defense of Father Pavone, Viganò focuses on the perversion he avers is rife among "Bergoglian acolytes," observing that "the graver their crimes, the more prestigious the positions they hold." Within a Holy See "infested with unpresentable characters who are notoriously corrupt and heretical sodomites and fornicators," Viganò specifically identifies Marko Ivan Rupnik, a Jesuit priest and Vatican artist accused in 2021 of sexual abuse against several consecrated women of the Loyola religious order. The Vatican dismissed the case because the alleged abuse took place more than 20 years ago and no minors were involved. Rupnik did incur the penalty of excommunication in 2019 for an ecclesiastical crime: he absolved a woman in confession who had committed sexual sins with him. According to the [Associated Press](#), he repented of that crime, and the excommunication was immediately lifted.

Viganò contrasts the Rupnik case with Pavone's treatment:

If serving the Church and defending the life of innocent creatures in this time of apostasy constitutes a crime worthy of dismissal from the clerical state, while promoting abortion and gender ideology and violating consecrated virgins is not deemed liable to excommunication,



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then Father Pavone ought to consider this shameful Vatican decision to be a source of pride, recalling Our Savior's words: *Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every manner of evil against you falsely because of Me* (Mt 5:11). And whoever has inculpated themselves as an accomplice of this persecution against the good ought to tremble at the thought of the judgement which awaits them. *Deus non irridetur – God is not mocked* (Gal 6:7).

Pavone's Plans

Meanwhile, Pavone declares he intends to continue both his priestly and his pro-life work uninterrupted. He told [CBN News](#) that he has not been officially informed of any sanction by the Vatican, but should the rumors prove true, he intends to fight to retain his priesthood. "This idea that any of this is permanent in terms of dismissal from the priesthood is simply incorrect, because we're going to continue," Pavone stated. "Then there will be a next pope, and the next pope can reinstate me."



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