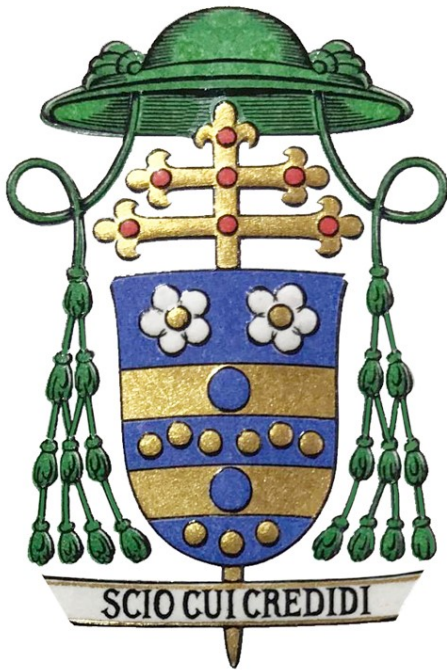


Editor's Note: Last Friday, the Monastery of the Most Holy Trinity released a [statement](#) by the Mother Prioress, Teresa Agnes Gerlach, and Chapter (community leadership) in which the Chapter expressed "its complete confidence in the personal and moral integrity of its Mother Prioress and in her leadership." And furthermore, "that, in conscience, we no longer recognize the authority of, and can have no further relations with, the current Bishop of Fort Worth or his officials, and forbid him or any of his officials or representatives to enter our monastery property or to have any contact or relations with the monastery or any of its nuns or novices."

This statement comes after months of controversy and conflict between this particular community of Carmelite nuns in Arlington, Texas and the local bishop, His Excellency Michael F. Olson, of the Diocese of Fort Worth (see [this archive of articles](#) for extensive background).

The following text is a statement of support for the Arlington Carmelites by Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò following the release of the community's statement last Friday. His Grace has expressed support for this community in recent months (see [here](#), for example).

Catholic Family News presents Archbishop Viganò's statement as a means of informing our readers about his position regarding this ongoing controversy. Since CFN is not privy to all the facts of the case, we cannot evaluate the accuracy of all of His Grace's assertions. In any event, we should keep the religious sisters in our prayers because we can say for certain that they are experiencing a difficult trial.



ARCHBISHOP CARLO MARIA VIGANÒ
in support of the Declaration of the Discalced Carmelite
Nuns
of the Monastery of the Most Holy Trinity
of Arlington, Texas

The repeated abuses of power by those who hold ecclesiastical Authority over religious Communities — especially communities of contemplative women — are part of a subversive plan carried out by corrupt and heretical Prelates whose purpose is to deprive the Church of the Graces which such Consecrated souls cause to descend upon Her. Beyond the specious excuses that characterize individual cases, the common thread that unites the expulsion of the Benedictine Sisters from their Monastery in Pienza, the Dominican Sisters of Fognano or Marradi (Italy), and the Carmelite Sisters of Arlington is plain for all to see: on the one hand, there is the ideological fury of the Vatican Dicastery for Religious, headed by an ultra-modernist Prefect and a corrupt and ruthless Secretary, both of whom are protected by Bergoglio; on the other, there are the immediate interests of the Holy See and the local Ordinaries, which are primarily financial in nature.

It is precisely these recurring elements — both ideological and financial — which demonstrate that these accusations, defamations, and falsehoods are merely pretexts used by Prelates who are without either moral scruples or charity, who usurp the authority of Christ for the opposite purpose to that for which Our Lord instituted it, namely, the Glory of God and the salvation of souls. They usurp Magisterial authority in order to teach heresies; they usurp authority in liturgical matters in order to suppress the celebration of the Apostolic Mass; they usurp disciplinary authority in order to force priests and religious to accept the conciliar indoctrination and apostasy of the Bergoglian church. All the spiritual tools which the Church has at Her disposal to fight against the Enemy of the human race are impeded and prohibited by those who ought instead to be encouraging the faithful to have recourse to them. This corrupt Hierarchy suppresses Convents and Monasteries committed to restore the Tradition and the ancient Observance of the Rule, while it does not disturb progressive communities where doctrinal errors and moral deviations are propagated, or where the Rule is systematically violated and betrayed. The good are punished and the evil are rewarded: the case of Marko Ivan Rupnik is a prime example of this.

In a climate of intimidation and real persecution, the Communities who resist the persecutory fury of the Hierarchy may be counted on one hand. I invite everyone to support the courageous resistance of the Carmelite Nuns of Arlington with prayer and material help, not only for the sake of supporting them but also in order to send a clear signal to those in the Church who believe that they hold absolute power, even to the point of contradicting with impunity the Authority of Christ, the Head of the Mystical Body. Resisting is a duty that Catholics of all times have never shirked: when the majority of the Episcopate embraced the Arian heresy, or when the German bishops sided with Luther, or when the English bishops sided with Henry VIII so as not to lose their benefices. This is not the first time that the Hierarchy has betrayed its mandate out of self-interest; however, it is the first time that this betrayal has been encouraged and wanted by the one who has seated himself on the Throne of Peter.

How are we to act in the face of this general subversion, this betrayal of ecclesiastical Authority? Obedience to them would imply disobeying Our Lord; disobeying exposes these communities to open persecution and unprecedented abuses of power.

This is why, in a state of evident necessity, it is necessary and indeed a duty of the Communities who wish to remain faithful to Christ and the perennial Tradition of the Church to make themselves canonically independent of those in the Church who act against the Church, of those who in the name of God act against God. This resistance is limited in time: it will consider its task fulfilled when this general phase of subversion of the Hierarchy

will have ended.

It is not a matter of rebelling against the authority of the Shepherds, but rather of recognizing how many among them are actually wolves in sheep's or mercenary's clothing, *who care nothing for the sheep* (Jn 10:13), and who are the first to disobey Our Lord. For *it is necessary to obey God rather than men* (Acts 5:29).

The Sisters of the Arlington Carmel have an example of heroic resistance against corrupt power in the martyrdom of the Carmelites of Compiègne, who knew how to face the guillotine in order not to submit to the constitutional Oath of a revolutionary government. It will not be Prelates without either dignity or faith who bend the bold resistance of souls in love with Christ.

+ Carlo Maria Viganò, *Archbishop,*
former Apostolic Nuncio to the United States of America

August 18, 2023
Quarta die infra Octavam S. Assumptionis