

STATEMENT BY THE REVEREND MOTHER Prioress AND CHAPTER



MONASTERY OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY
DISCALCED CARMELITE NUNS
5801 MT. CARMEL DRIVE
ARLINGTON, TEXAS 76017

August 18, 2023

+Praised be Jesus Christ: now and forever!

In recent months our Monastery in general and our Mother Prioress in particular have been subjected to unprecedented interference, intimidation, aggression, private and public humiliation and spiritual manipulation as the direct result of the attitudes and ambitions of the current Bishop of Fort Worth in respect of our Reverend Mother Prioress, ourselves and of our property. We have been caught off-guard. Since our foundation our relations with our bishop have always been cordial and filial. Each Bishop has always had our loving trust. We never imagined that our relations with the Bishop could be any different.

But our filial trust has been abused by the personal and public behaviors of a man who, in the pursuit of his unspecified personal ends, does not fear to shout at nuns or to humiliate them in private and in public when they protest that their rights have been ignored, who does not hesitate to violate their sacred enclosure through his officials, and whose actions in respect of personal property and privacy are more than seriously questionable.

In respect of the calumnies that have been published, the Chapter takes this opportunity to express its complete confidence in the personal and moral integrity of its Mother Prioress and in her leadership.

We are Carmelite nuns: prayer and penance are the substance of our life, not politics and power-plays. We cannot afford to invest our spiritual or material resources in vain disputes with authorities whose agendas are utterly foreign to ours and whose means to influence the outcomes of our appeals are beyond anything we can match.

Our duty before God is to ensure that this Carmel is a tranquil house of prayer in which every nun and novice can live her vocation in peace and integrity, for the salvation of her soul to the glory of Almighty God and for the edification of His people.

Therefore, because the salvation of our souls is our first duty before Almighty God, in order to protect the integrity of our monastic life and vocation from the grave dangers

that the continued abuse to which we are being subjected threaten, we hereby state 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. No one who abuses us as has the current Bishop of Fort Worth, has any right to our cooperation or obedience.

For our own spiritual and psychological safety, and in justice, we must remain independent of this Bishop until such time as he repents of the abuse to which he has subjected us, apologizes in person to our community for it and accepts to make due public reparation. Should that day never arrive, we hope and pray that in due course his successor will be a God-given instrument of that reparation and healing which, in justice, is now due.

In these circumstances we must state clearly that we remain utterly faithful to the doctrine of the Catholic Church and to affirm that the Pope and the Bishop of Fort Worth, whomever they are today or whomever they may be in the future, shall always be prayed for in this monastery, most especially in the Canon of the Mass.

We can, no doubt, expect much rhetoric to the contrary, maybe even sanctions, but *we* are breaking Communion with no one. We are simply stating that the abuse to which we have been subjected is so gravely unjust and intolerably destructive of the vocation to which we are vowed before Almighty God, that in conscience that abuse cannot be cooperated with. This is no rejection of any article of Catholic faith or morals. Rather, it is a statement that, in these particular and peculiar circumstances, in conscience before Almighty God, we cannot permit *this* Diocesan Bishop to continue his abusive behavior towards us any longer.

In addition, the Chapter is resolved henceforth, the better to render unto Almighty God the glory that is His due, and in order more profoundly to enter into the contemplation of His Sacred Mysteries, to celebrate the Sacred Liturgy—the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the Divine Office, the sacraments, sacramentals and other rites—according to the older forms of the Roman rite according to the traditional Discalced Carmelite usages.

We must be clear that this decision is not a reaction to the abuse that has been visited upon us, even though we expect that it will occasion even more abuse from the same source. Rather, it is a positive recognition that has developed in our community over time that: “What earlier generations held as sacred, remains sacred and great for us too, and it cannot be all of a sudden entirely forbidden or even considered harmful. It behooves all of us to preserve the riches which have developed in the Church’s faith and prayer, and to give them their proper place.” (Benedict XVI, 7 July 2007) We believe this to be particularly true of those whose vocation is the contemplative life, ourselves included, and believe this to be something good that we can and should do for the Church in our times.

Our monastery chapel is and shall remain open to all who, in good faith wish to pray there or to participate in the liturgical rites we celebrate, regardless of any protestations that those who have abused us may wish to make in this respect.

We rely utterly on the Providence of Almighty God, who is our sole Judge and our Consolation in this time of trial, to send us good priests to assure our liturgical and sacramental life and, through the generosity of His faithful people, to send the material alms we need to continue in fidelity to our vocation in these truly extraordinary circumstances and to form those young women who come to us in our beautiful and traditional life of prayer and sacrifice before the Lord.

We apologize to any of our family and friends who may be distressed by recent events or by this statement. We have no wish to cause distress or scandal. But the fact of the matter is that if we are to be faithful to our vocation, if we are to live, we have no other choice. We beg your understanding and your prayers, and assure you all, even those who disagree with us, of our own.

May the Carmelite saints and martyrs intercede for us all!

+Praised be Jesus Christ: now and forever!