

STATEMENT OF ARLINGTON CARMEL, MAY 23, 2024

On the morning of May 22, 2024, the Diocese of Fort Worth published private decrees from the Holy See dated April 30, 2024, and a statement from the Bishop of Fort Worth on their diocesan website.

These decrees from the Holy See include one overturning Bishop Olson's peremptory and unlawful dismissal of our Mother Prioress from the Carmelite Order last year. It is time for Bishop Olson to apologise publicly, and in person to us, for this abusive act which has now been publicly recognised as such by the Holy See.

In respect of the decrees upholding Bishop Olson's investigation of allegations against our Mother Prioress, we repeat that his investigations were flawed *in radice*, carried out in an intimidatory manner and violated her ecclesiastical and civil rights. It is reprehensible that medical evidence proving these allegations to be completely unfounded and fabricated has been ignored by the Holy See.

In addition, we are surprised that, as we learn from the decrees themselves, these matters were decided by the Holy See on March 12th but were not communicated to us in April together with other documents dated April 18th. We can only speculate that some authorities hoped that they would not have to deal with our recourses and that these issues could be swept under the carpet.

We are profoundly disappointed that, in the place of the dialogue about which they speak so much, the relevant persons have once again chosen to resort to unproven narratives and attempted public humiliation to achieve their ends. This includes the fact that the members of the community never obstructed the so-called "investigation" by Bishop Olson. As stated in the Constitution of the U.S. and seconded by Pope Francis himself, every person - including every religious woman - has the right to counsel. For anyone, including a Bishop, to try to stop a person from consulting a lawyer, civil or canonical, is obstruction of justice.

On Wednesday May 22, 2024, without any notice or warning, the President of the Carmelite Association of Christ the King, accompanied by another nun, attempted to

enter Arlington Carmel in spite of the prohibition on her from so doing made in our statement of April 20, 2024. The next day she violated this prohibition again.

We maintain our rejection of any takeover of our community or its assets, as has happened repeatedly to other Monasteries of women in our country and throughout the world. We remain firm in following Our Holy Mother St. Teresa's directive that each monastery remain autonomous in its self-governance and life, including the election of its superiors from among its own members. We are astonished that in our day and age, even some members of the Holy See itself refuse to follow the guidance of our Holy Father, Pope Francis, regarding the dignity of and respect for women.

"Let us respect their dignity, their basic rights. And if we don't, our society will not progress. Let us pray that the dignity and worth of women be recognized in every culture, and for an end to the discrimination they face in various parts of the world,"

Pope Francis says in his video message for April 2024.

We thank our faithful friends and supporters and assure them of our continued prayers, just as we continue to pray for the Holy Father and for the Bishop and Diocese of Fort Worth.