



May 20, 2022

Dear Brother Priests in the Archdiocese of San Francisco:

Today I am publishing a Notification that I sent yesterday to a member of our Archdiocese, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi, instructing her that she is not to be admitted to Holy Communion, in accordance with canon 915 of the Code of Canon Law. At the same time, I am also publishing a letter to the faithful of our Archdiocese informing them of this Notification (both attached for your information). By means of this letter, I wish to give you more background information on what has transpired.

I first wish to inform you of the attempts I have made to meet and speak with Speaker Pelosi, ever since she announced that she intends to codify the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision into the law of the United States, soon after the Texas State Legislature passed Senate Bill 8, prohibiting abortions after detection of an unborn child's heartbeat ([read her statement here](#)). (I have had interactions with her over the years before this time, but for the purposes of this letter I am just focusing on what has transpired since last September.)

1. After Speaker Pelosi made her announcement, I sent her a letter pointing out the scandal she was causing and advising her that, if she moved forward with this legislation, I would not be able to refrain from making a public response. I also earnestly requested a meeting with her. I received no response.

2. You will recall that around this time I also launched the "Rose and Rosary for Nancy Campaign." I received no communication from the Speaker's office about this, either.

3. Toward the end of last year I contacted her office to ask for a meeting. I was informed that the Speaker was unavailable due to her schedule.

4. Earlier this year, I once again asked for a meeting. My request was denied.

5. Early in April I sent the Speaker another letter, detailing the extreme position to which she has moved on the abortion question and explaining the scandal that it is causing and the danger to her own soul. I asked her to repudiate this position, or else refrain from referring to her Catholic faith in public and receiving Holy Communion. I also advised her that if she refused to do this, I would be forced to make a public announcement that she is not to be admitted to Holy Communion. Through a reply e-mail communication, the staff person who is our contact in her office said that the staff person would relay the letter. However, I received no response.

6. When, on May 4, Speaker Pelosi once again referred to herself as a “devout Catholic” in justifying her support for a radical abortion agenda ([read about it here](#)), I contacted her office once again urgently requesting to speak with her. I once again received no response.

In consequence of all this and all that has led up to it, it is my determined judgment that this resistance to pastoral counsel has gone on for too long, and there is nothing more that can be done at this point to help the Speaker understand the seriousness of the evil her advocacy for abortion is perpetrating and the scandal she is causing. I therefore issued her the aforementioned Notification that she is not to be admitted to Holy Communion.

I would like to clarify some concerns that may surface in your conversations with your parishioners and others.

1. Canon 915 is found in Book IV of the Code of Canon Law, which has to do with the Sanctifying Office of the Church. It is not in Book VI, which is the Church’s legislation on penal law. Thus, this is not a sanction, or a penalty, but rather a declaration of fact: the Speaker is “obstinately persevering in manifest grave sin” (canon 915). A sanction, on the other hand, such as excommunication, has its own particular process and reasons for being applied. This is quite distinct from the application of canon 915.

2. While the application of canon 915 is not a penal sanction, Pope Francis has recently promulgated the revised Book VI of the Code of Canon Law. In the Apostolic Constitution by which he promulgated it, *Pascite Gregem Dei*, he pointed out three pastoral motives that have also guided my discernment here: responding to the demands of justice, moving the offending party to conversion, and repairing the scandal caused.

3. Pope Francis’ purpose in issuing this revision of the Church’s canonical legislation on penal sanctions is clearly motivated in large part by the commitment to insuring the integrity of the Church’s sacramental life. It is for this reason that there is now a canon which punishes by suspension, to which other penalties can be added, one who “administers a sacrament to those who are prohibited from receiving it” (can. 1379, §4).

4. There are those who speak of such actions as I am taking as “weaponizing” the Eucharist. However, this is simply application of Church teaching. One would have to demonstrate that a person’s actions in following Church teaching is explicitly for a political purpose in order to justify the accusation of “weaponizing” the Eucharist. I have been very clear all along, in both my words and my actions, that my motive is pastoral, not political; I have been guided by the three principles noted above. I also hasten to point out that one can also violate Church teaching and take Holy Communion for a political purpose as well, thus “weaponizing” the Eucharist for one’s own ulterior motives.

Please know that I am not taking this decision lightly by any means. Indeed, this is the fruit of years of prayer, fasting and consultation with a broad spectrum of Church leaders whom I respect for their intelligence, wisdom and pastoral sensitivity, and it continues my efforts to invite the Speaker down the path of conversion. I have debated within my conscience for years what the right thing is to do and, although unpleasant, I’m at peace in my conscience with this decision.

As a resource to help you understand better the Speaker's increasingly more extreme position on this life-and-death issue, I have attached for your information a background document chronicling in detail her historical public record on the issue of abortion. Although lengthy, I hope it may be of some assistance to you in your efforts to help your people understand the seriousness of the situation.

Our churches are already being targeted for violence, and our worship services are being disrupted, which motivated me to send you the memo last week asking you to be more attentive to security measures on your property. These attacks may now likely increase. I realize this. But for us, as faithful disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ, this is a cause for rejoicing, for the only reason this is happening is due to the Catholic Church's consistent defense of the sanctity of human life in all stages and conditions, and especially at its beginning in the womb of the mother. I am convinced that this is a time that God is calling us to live the last beatitude: "Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven" (Mt 5:11-12).

Let us not fool ourselves: this is, essentially, a spiritual battle. It is not poetic rhetoric to call the proliferation of abortion demonic. The prophets of old excoriated the people of Israel when they passed over to the worship of Moloch, sacrificing their children to this pagan idol (cf. Lev 18:21; Lev 20:2; Ps 106:37-38). Recall that in the biblical mentality, pagan idols are synonymous with demons. It should come as no surprise, then, that the first one to challenge the Texas heartbeat law was the Satanic Temple, and precisely on the grounds of denial of religious freedom: they need abortion to carry out their rituals ([read about it here](#)).

I would therefore ask you to implement the following:

First, preach about it. This is no time to be intimidated into silence. Do not dodge addressing the grave evil of abortion, but do so, obviously, with great pastoral sensitivity, recognizing that many of your people in the pews listening to you have been personally affected by this terrible scourge. The Archdiocese has been and will continue to be fully committed to assisting women who find themselves in crisis pregnancies, both during the pregnancy and for years after the birth of the child. We also provide support for women wounded by abortion. The resources we have on this front are bountiful and can be found at: <https://www.sfarch.org/standwithmoms>. Ask your parishioners to help in our efforts as a Catholic people to be truly pro-life: both pro-child and pro-woman.

Second, promote living the consecration of our Archdiocese to the Immaculate Heart of Mary which I celebrated on October 7, 2017 (and renewed with Pope Francis on March 25th). Encourage your people to pray the rosary daily and once a week as a family, to fast on Fridays and perform other acts of penance along with increasing their participation in the sacrament of Penance, and to spend at least one hour a week in adoration of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

Third, pray the St. Michael prayer with your people after Mass. If, due to particular circumstances, it is logistically too difficult to pray it after Mass, then do so at some other time, such as before Mass or even during the homily time.

In closing, allow me to observe that what we are facing in this particular moment of history is a powerful reminder to us that the Priesthood is not for the faint-hearted. Of course, it never was. But for a long time, up until recently, we lived in a society that allowed us to imagine that it was. Let us not fool ourselves any longer. And know how deeply grateful I am to you for being with your people, shepherding them, challenging them, and leading them to the green pastures that are deeper life in our Lord Jesus Christ.

“Take courage and be a man” (1 Kg 2:2).

Sincerely yours in our Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Salvatore J. Cordileone". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Most Reverend Salvatore J. Cordileone
Archbishop of San Francisco