

A Call for Accountability and Healing in the Catholic Church

By Faith Hakesly and Letitia Peyton

Your Holiness,

We write to you as victims of clerical abuse and representatives of those who have been deeply scarred by the actions of individuals who were meant to be our spiritual guides. Our wounds have been further exacerbated by the Vatican's continued use of Marko Rupnik's art, despite his reprehensible actions. This letter is a plea for justice and a demand for accountability within the Church that has so deeply betrayed us.

The Church has consistently promised transparency, accountability, and compassion for victims of clerical abuse. However, the recent controversy surrounding the use of Rupnik's art starkly highlights the Vatican's failure to uphold these promises. Dr. Paolo Ruffini's defense of Rupnik at a recent Catholic media event was a profound betrayal to all of us who have suffered.

Cardinal Sean O'Malley, President of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, advised all Curial offices not to use Rupnik's art. Yet, this guidance was blatantly ignored. This disregard highlights a lack of respect and empathy for the victims of abuse. The ongoing display of Rupnik's art within Church institutions serves as a painful reminder of the abuse we endured and the lack of serious action against those who have perpetrated such horrors.

Pope Francis has called for a unified, compassionate Church. However, the actions—or inactions—of the Dicastery for Communications under Dr. Ruffini's leadership have caused further heartache and trauma. His defense of Rupnik and the continued use of his art are indefensible. They undermine the Church's commitment to justice and healing for abuse survivors.

In light of these grievous oversights and failures, we demand Dr. Paolo Ruffini's immediate resignation from his position as Prefect of the Dicastery for Communications. The Church must demonstrate its commitment to supporting victims of abuse and ensuring that those who have inflicted harm, directly or indirectly, are held accountable. His resignation would be a small step towards rebuilding trust and showing genuine compassion and respect for victims.

Additionally, we call on all Catholic organizations, dioceses, parishes, and publishers of Catholic media to join us in this demand. We urge the removal of Marko Rupnik's art from all places of worship, churches, and publications. This collective action will send a clear message that the Catholic Church is committed to justice, healing, and the dignity of all survivors of abuse.

The Catholic Church must prioritize the well-being and healing of those who have suffered at the hands of its clergy. Only through sincere actions and accountability can the Church begin to restore its moral authority and offer true solace to its wounded flock. Together, let us take a stand and say enough is enough. Let us work towards a Church that truly embodies compassion, justice, and healing for all.

About the Authors:

Faith Hakesly is a wife, homeschooling mother, blogger, and author who has overcome tremendous challenges, including surviving rape by a Catholic priest and battling incurable cancer. She holds a B.S. in Criminal Justice from the University of Massachusetts Lowell and is the author of "Glimmers of Grace: Moments of Peace and Healing Following Sexual Abuse." Faith is the Vice President of the TentMakers of Louisiana Board.

Letitia Peyton is the Co-Founder and Executive Director of TentMakers of Louisiana. Motivated by her family's experience within the Catholic Church, she advocates for survivors of sexual abuse, promotes transparency and policy reform, and co-hosts the "Resilience in the Shadows" podcast. With a background in Payroll and Human Resources, Letitia combines professional acumen with a passion for advocacy.

Only By His Grace,

Faith Hakesly, Victim/Survivor and Vice President of the Board, TentMakers of Louisiana

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