



**Follow-up to Letter regarding "RCF"
from Most Rev. Robert D. Gruss
Bishop of Rapid City**

February 14, 2019

OFFICE OF BISHOP

As you can imagine, there has been a very strong reaction regarding my letter that was shared with the people of the Diocese regarding the group "Roman Catholic Faithful" coming to Rapid City on February 23. Many of the vitriolic responses from their supporters have accused me of calling this organization evil and that I am trying to protect Cardinal Cupich. Therefore, my comments in the letter were taken out of context either accidentally or intentionally.

On the website of Church Militant, the headline was: SD Bishop Calls Catholic Group 'Evil' for Opposing Cardinal Cupich. This headline takes what was written in my letter out of context to fit a certain narrative.

This is what was written in my letter: "The question on my mind — 'Is their true goal to rid the Catholic Church of clerical corruption or is it an attempt to destroy the reputation of Cardinal Cupich with whom they disagree regarding his approach to certain Church teachings?' Based upon what I have read in their materials, their goal is to attempt to destroy the reputation of Cardinal Cupich. Therefore, their mission is evil and guided by the Evil One. Any group that seeks to divide the Church by sharing false information is doing the work of Satan."

Whether one likes Cardinal Cupich or not, whether one likes his style of leadership or the decisions he has made throughout his Episcopacy, every person has a right to their reputation. Yes, this group or any other group has the right to challenge Church leadership and seek to hold them accountable. I do not refute this proposition. No bishop or anyone else is above the law and they should be held accountable for their choices if it is criminal or immoral. If they have committed a criminal offense, they should be made to suffer the consequences of their decisions. I do not promote the covering up of any offense by anyone.

When anyone or any group seeks to intentionally destroy the reputation of another person, their motives are not in line with the will of God. So I ask the question of Roman Catholic Faithful: Is your goal to destroy the reputation of Cardinal Cupich?

On the website of RCE.org you will find these words. "We are seeking information on Blazing Cupcake. If you know who this is, please contact Stephen Brady." Is this respectful to the human dignity of another person? From whose heart does this come? Is it from the heart of Christ? Is this type of language "seeking the truth in love so that all things may grow into Christ who is our Head" (Ephesians 4:15)?"

We all have been created in God's image and likeness. We are all sinners who have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. Each person has been given human dignity by God, our Creator. All people have an inherent and immeasurable worth and dignity that is considered sacred even if they believe something different from what you believe and regardless of any sin they have committed. Offering constructive criticism of the expressed thoughts or actions of another person is one thing, but this must never result in the destruction of their reputation.

To intentionally destroy another person is to tear down God who is within them. Jesus in the Gospel challenged the church leaders of his day, but did not seek to destroy them. He loved them. Isn't that the call of all of his disciples? "He who is without sin, cast the first stone."

In the end, an examination of our own conscience will reveal our motives for anything we say or do. And the purpose of my letter was to challenge the motives of people whom I believe are not seeking the truth in charity. Their websites speak of other motives.

"Ubi caritas est vera; Deus ibi est." The Gospel is a proclamation of truth, love and mercy. This is my only desire.

Please pray for our Church.

**Bishop's Calendar
February 19-March 18, 2019**

Subject to Change without Notice

February 19, Tuesday

Priest Gathering, Terra Sancta

February 20, Wednesday

5:30 p.m. Meeting with Confirmands, Our Lady of Victory, Kadoka

6:30 p.m. Confirmation Mass, Our Lady of Victory, Kadoka

February 24, Sunday

8 a.m. Mass Cathedral

March 6, Wednesday

Ash Wednesday

5:30 p.m. Ash Wednesday Mass, Cathedral

March 7, Thursday

8 a.m. Staff Mass/Gathering, Terra Sancta

1 p.m. Black Elk Cause Meeting, Oglala

March 10, Sunday

2 p.m. Mass, Rite of Election and Call to Continuing

Conversion, Cathedral

March 12, Tuesday

6:30 p.m. Mercy Night, Cathedral

March 13, Wednesday

9:30 a.m. Bishop's Cabinet Meeting, Conference Room

March 14, Thursday

10 a.m. College of Consultors Meeting, Rapid City

March 18, Monday

Chancery Closed for Staff Retreat

Update on the trial of Fr. John Praveen

On February 5, Father John Praveen pled guilty in a court hearing to one count of sexual contact with a minor. He will remain in the Pennington County Jail until his sentencing hearing on April 4.

Bishop Robert Gruss issued the following statement: "This kind of abuse by a member of the clergy or anyone is unconscionable and should never happen. We remain deeply saddened by these events. The Diocese of Rapid City will continue to offer our assistance to the victim and the victim's family. We are grateful that the legal process has led to this revelation of the truth. Our hope is that this decision and the subsequent sentencing will begin the process of healing for all those involved. We will continue to pray for the victim, the victim's family, and for all victims of sexual abuse as well as for Father Praveen."

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Editor: Laurie Hallstrom, lhallstrom@djorc.org

Assistant Editor: Becky Berreth, bberreth@djorc.org

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