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Easter Monday  
April 22nd, 2019

**A Private Letter to the Priests of the Ordinariate**

My Dear Brother Priests,

On Sunday, May 3rd, 2015, by the grace of God, I was ordained to the Eternal Priesthood of Jesus Christ by the Most Reverend Andrew Cozzens, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul-Minneapolis, in the parish Church of the Holy Family, for service to Our Lord Jesus Christ in his One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church within the Ordinariate of the Chair of Saint Peter. On November 18th, 2014, without any mental or other reservations, I signed the *Profession of Faith and the Oath of Fidelity*.

Consonant with this act and in order to give public witness as to the constancy of my faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ, the one only Savior of the world, of my steadfast adherence to the Roman Pontiff, and my unwavering acceptance of the entirety of the Deposit of Faith as it has been faithfully proclaimed, taught, defended and conserved over the course of now two millennia “in the same sense and with the same meaning” by Saint Peter, the Holy Apostles and their successors, in this letter and with its attachment, I present the facts related to the accusations and charges made, and the decrees issued against me by our bishop, the Most Reverend Steven J. Lopes, Bishop, Ordinariate of the Chair of Saint Peter.

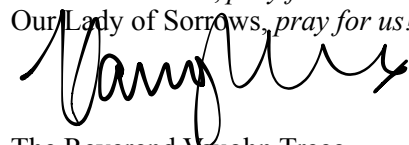
As the facts will make clear, I have been accused, charged, suspended and excommunicated in the absence of evidence, the rights and protections afforded to me by natural and ecclesiastical law have been ignored and set aside, and all this was conducted with undue haste.

This private letter constitutes my first “public” statement regarding the facts regarding my current situation. Previously, I was content to remain silent when the correspondence between our bishop and myself were ongoing and retained some hope for a just resolution. However, that period effectively came to a close on April 1st, 2019. On that day, His Excellency notified you of the Decree of Excommunication which he had issued against me. These acts has made it necessary for me to break the silence for in that email His Excellency made public statements about my person and actions that were contrary to fact or misleading or both.

*“No one is permitted to harm illegitimately the good reputation which a person possesses nor to injure the right of any person to protect his or her own privacy” (Canon 220)*

Since my name has been illegitimately harmed by Bishop Lopes’ public statements, it is only just that I or others make public statements in order to restore my good name among you. This letter and the attached document are being released for this noble purpose.

Saint Athanasius, *pray for us!*  
Saint Joan of Arc, *pray for us!*  
Our Lady of Sorrows, *pray for us!*



The Reverend Vaughn Treco



## **TIMELINE & BASIC FACTS: THE CASE OF THE REVEREND VAUGHN TRECO**

### **Sunday, November 25th, 2018: Homily preached on the Christ the King Sunday**

On the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, I preached a homily entitled “The Fathers’s Grapes and the Children’s Teeth” to the Saint Bede’s Ordinariate Community which I served as parochial administrator. This homily sought to describe the current crisis which engulfs Holy Mother Church, to identify its sources, and to propose a safe way forward for the Catholic faithful.

### **Wednesday, December 5th, 2018: Homily Published by The Remnant**

Having received permission from me to do so, The Remnant Newspaper, a Twin Cities based Catholic organization, published an audio recording of the same homily to its YouTube channel, and a PDF of the text to its website.

### **Tuesday, December 11th, 2018: Come to Houston Email Received**

I received an email from our Vicar General, the Very Reverend Timothy Perkins with the subject line: “Come to Houston.” In the body of that email, Fr. Perkins stated, “In a homily of yours recently published online in “The Remnant” you spoke in terms that amount to espousing heresy. Due to the seriousness of this matter, you are to call the Office of the Bishop at [*phone number withheld*] immediately. At that time, you are to arrange to come to the chancery in Houston to meet with the bishop and me about this and other matters.”

### **Tuesday, December 11th, 2018: Arrangements Made for Travel to Houston**

As per Fr. Perkin’s instructions, I immediately called the Chancery and confirmed that I would make the necessary arrangements to comply with the demands made in the Vicar General’s email. In a later call or email, I confirmed with Mrs. Laurel Miller, Chancellor, The Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of Saint Peter, that I had been successful in making travel arrangements for the following day. My meeting with Bishop Lopes was set for 2:00 PM, Wednesday, December 12th, 2018.

### **Wednesday, December 12th, 2018: First Chancery Meeting**

When I was ushered into the Conference Room at the Chancery, I was confronted by three men arrayed on the far side of a large conference table. No one rose to greet me or to extend a hand of welcome. With the wave of a hand I was directed to a seat on the opposing side of the table. Present for the meeting was His Excellency the Most Reverend Steven J. Lopes, the Very Reverend Timothy Perkins, Vicar General, and the Reverend Richard Kramer, Director of Vocations.

After opening in prayer, Bishop outlined the course that the meeting would follow: Fr. Perkins was to speak first, then Fr. Kramer, and finally, he would himself speak. The purpose of each presentation was to demonstrate the heretical character of my Christ the King homily.

As promised, Fr. Perkins spoke first. Two or three features of his presentation stood out to me. Fr. Perkins started his presentation by asserting that I had misinterpreted the passage which he believed served as the frame for my homily. Fr. Perkins correctly noted that the purpose of this Old Testament text was to dispel the then commonly held belief that children will be held guilty for the sins of their fathers.

However, Fr. Perkins seemed to have completely missed the poetic manner in which I was employing the text in my homily. Rather than making the case that the children of the Church will be held guilty by God for the sins committed by the Fathers of the Church, I was making the more subtle observation that the failure of the Fathers of the Church to be diligent in their duty to guard the Faith was having a deleterious effect upon the children of Holy Mother Church.

As a follow-up to his comments about my use of Ezekiel 18:2, Fr. Perkins asked two or three somewhat unrelated questions:

Q1: What is the translation authorized for liturgical use within the Ordinariate?

A1: The Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition, Version 2.

Q2: Why did you choose not to use this translation when you quoted from the Sacred Texts?

A2: I chose to use the Douay-Rheims translation because it provided a more poetically satisfying rendering of the biblical texts that I used within the homily.

Q3: Why did you choose to use the “Collect” for the Feast of Christ the King as established by the Pope Pius XI rather than the collect as published in Divine Worship: The Missal?

A3: I do not recall giving an answer to this third question. I believe that Fr. Kramer began his presentation before I was able to reply to this question.

Fr. Kramer opened his presentation by observing that I had a robust Internet presence. After noting this fact, he asked, “Did you know that?” I replied that I was not aware of this. I then commented something to the effect that “I simply post things to the web,” and noted that due to the fullness of my priestly life “I did not follow the discussions that may follow the upon the post that I made.”

He then continued, “Did you know that more than 20,000 people had viewed my Christ the King homily?” Again, I said something to the effect that I was not aware of that fact. Staying on point, Fr. Kramer observed that several hundred people had left comments in response to my homily. He then quoted one of the comments that was apparently made in response to my homily. If I recall correctly, he said that one such viewer had said, “Finally, a priest who gets it.” Fr. Kramer then asked me, “Do you get it?” To this question, which seemed calculated to entrap me, I said simply, “I am not sure that I know what the writer meant by ‘it’.”

After Fr. Kramer’s had finished his presentation, or at some other time during the meeting, I was asked if believed that the Popes John XXIII, Paul VI, John Paul I, John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis were legitimate popes. Quite honestly, I was taken completely off-guard by the question. It seemed to be quite unrelated to anything that had been said in the meeting thus far, and was surprised because the question was completely unrelated to the substance of my homily. Even so, I affirmed without hesitation that I believed that Popes John XXIII, Paul VI, John Paul I, John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis were each validly elected successors of Saint Peter.

I do not now recall much of Bishop Lopes’ presentation. By this time, I was feeling somewhat disoriented by the tangential character of the presentations. That said, I seem to recall what appear to me now as random, disconnected comments made by Bishop Lopes. At some point early in the meeting, perhaps even at the very beginning, Bishop Lopes stated that he was surprised that had not come with a letter of resignation. At another point, Bishop Lopes affirmed, “I have the mind of the Church” or something akin to that.

After they each had made their presentations, none of which identified a single specific statement from my homily that was heretical, I stated that it was not my intention to speak anything contrary to the teaching of Holy Mother Church. Not long after this, I proposed that it might be good for me to spend the evening in prayer.

Bishop Lopes concurred, and, in order to assist me with my prayers, he asked Fr. Perkins to give me a copy of the Profession of Faith and Oath of Fidelity which I had signed prior to my ordination to the priesthood. Bishop Lopes then assured me of his prayers, and that he would offer his morning Mass for me. Bishop Lopes closed in prayer. After he arose from his seat, I approached Bishop Lopes, knelt, kissed his ring, then embraced him.

After leaving the meeting, I engaged in a mindless search for gifts for my grandchildren, then I returned to my hotel to spend the rest of the evening in prayer. After some time in prayer, I arose and put myself to

bed. Even though — or perhaps especially because — I was still considerably shaken by my meeting with Bishop Lopes, Fr. Perkins and Fr. Kramer, I entrusted myself to the Blessed Virgin, seeking her guidance and protection in the night.

### **Thursday, December 13th, 2018: Second Chancery Meeting**

At 8:30 AM, I met again Bishop Lopes, Fr. Perkins, and Fr. Kramer. The fruit of my night in prayer was the conviction that my next step should be to offer a personal Profession of Faith so that the bishop would have a clearer sense of my mind. Again, Bishop Lopes concurred. As this brief meeting was winding down, Bishop Lopes made one or two comments which I thought were disparaging to those who he referred to as traditionalists. I left this meeting thinking that we had just begun what I anticipated might be a very difficult and lengthy journey.

### **Tuesday, December 18th, 2018: Personal Profession of Faith Sent**

I forwarded a PDF of the promised personal profession of faith by email to Bishop Lopes with a cover note which among other things recognized its deficiencies. In order that you would gain an appreciation for my disposition toward our bishop and the process which had begun a week earlier, I offer the full text of the cover email which accompanied the personal profession of faith:

On Dec 18, 2018, at 11:49 AM, Vaughn Treco <father.treco@icloud.com> wrote:

Good morning Bishop Lopes,

I pray your pardon for delay in submitting the attached Profession of Faith to you. Even as I offer it to you, I am aware of its deficiencies. Despite this, I submit it in the hope that its weaknesses are attributed to the constraints of time, rather than any reluctance on my part to speak with candor.

My hope is buoyed in this regard because during our last meeting, the attached Profession of Faith was intended to take its place at the beginning of a process which would allow for greater understanding, which would in turn provide occasion for instruction and correction, as you deem appropriate and necessary.

When I was a teenager, my father adopted a principal regarding the rules that he had established for his household, in order to facilitate the entry into adulthood of his young children. That principle could be stated in the following manner:

1. The rules that are currently in place are to be respected and obeyed until such time as your mother and I determine that they should be modified in some manner for the good of the family;
2. Within the context of this obedience, I will entertain and engage in respectful conversation and discussion about the current rules, and the reasons upon which they are grounded. Further, your mother and I will even engage arguments that dispute the reasons upon which the rules are built, provided that obedience to the current rules continues.
3. Such discussion is intended to bring about a greater conformity to the rules, or the refinement of those rules, if such should prove necessary or helpful to the good of our family.

Bishop Lopes, while I am not presuming that these same principles will govern the conversation that we are continuing today, I described my dad's approach so as to give you a sense of the operation of my mind and will as we continue forward.

—  
With Advent blessings,  
Fr. Vaughn Treco  
571-251-4471  
[paypal.me/saintbede](https://paypal.me/saintbede)  
"Stat Crux, dum volvitur orbis"

P.S. I ask your forgiveness in advance for any expressions that convey an unintended hubris. Although I will make every effort to avoid such language, I suspect that I will not always find language devoid of the same.

## Monday, December 24th, 2018: Bishop Lopes' First Letter

On December 20th, 2018, Bishop Lopes addressed his response to the personal profession of faith which I had submitted on December 18th, 2018.

There are two aspects of this letter (dated December 20th, 2018) that it is important to note: First among these is dismissive tone of our bishop's response. This tone is especially revealed in the following two paragraphs:

"Dear Father Treco, I have received your email dated December 18, 2018, to which you attached a statement of faith. This is in response to our meeting at the chancery last week on December 12 and 13, at which you were asked whether you could reaffirm the Profession of Faith that you signed exactly four years ago on December 18, 2014, as part of your petition for ordination in the Catholic Church. In that meeting, you stated that you would need time to compose your own statement of faith. The statement you have now sent is comprised of the Apostles Creed, the complete text of the Oath Against Modernism by Pope St. Pius X, and three brief paragraphs of your own authorship." (*Letter*, para. 1)

"(2) The majority of your statement is simply a citation of the *Oath Against Modernism*, which was in effect until 1967. While it is true that the current *Profession of Faith* does not diminish, nor does it abrogate the truth of the *Oath Against Modernism*, the principle at work here is that the faith is one and the same and that the current Profession of Faith both receives and interprets the prior articulation, not vice versa. Therefore, you get it precisely backwards when you state at the conclusion of the document that your earlier Profession of Faith (signed December 18, 2014) is best understood within the context of the fuller statement which you now submit (December 18, 2018). This begs the question whether, by this, you intend to rescind the Profession of Faith you made in 2014 in favor of the *Oath Against Modernism* as a "fuller profession of faith." (*Letter*, para. 4)

The second important aspect of His Excellency's response to take note of concerns the deadline that he established: This deadline appears to be needlessly swift. This letter, received in the post on Christmas Eve, required a response by the Solemnity of the Epiphany, January 6th, 2019, a mere 13 days later, and during a time of the year that most priests — whether of the Ordinariate or of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul-Minneapolis— are effectively and practically unavailable for spiritual guidance.

The letter made nine false, misleading or accusatory statements regarding my homily, none of which identified the specific problematic statement in my homily. Bishop Lopes false, misleading or accusatory statements are given below in the following quotes from the said letter. (I have inserted numbers enclosed in square brackets to identify the false or accusatory statements.)

"(1) Neither in our meeting nor in this statement of faith have you recanted or retracted the [1] **doctrinally erroneous positions you have publicly espoused**. Rather, you state that your intention, in submitting this statement of faith, is to speak with candor and to submit yourself to instruction and correction. You therefor fail to address the heart of the problem, namely [2] **erroneous positions which you take in your homily: that the true faith is that which is contained only in the "theological and spiritual resources that were approved by the Holy See prior to the revolution of the 1960s;"** [3] **that you do not accept the Second Vatican Council as an expression of the authentic and universal magisterium of the Church;** [4] **that you believe that the current crisis in the Church has been caused by Pope St. John XXIII, Pope St. Paul VI, Pope John Paul I, Pope St. John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, and Pope Francis who, in your words** [5] **all have denied Christ and** [6] **set aside the mandate given by Christ to St. Peter;"** (*Letter*, para. 3)

"(3) Your personal statement concerning your reception of the Second Vatican Council does not sufficiently reaffirm the Profession of Faith you made in in 2014 and [7] **intentionally calls into doubt the supreme magisterium of the Second Vatican Council....**" (*Letter*, para. 5)

"Given these deficiencies, and having concluded that you are not recanting positions that you take in your homily that [8] **incite confusion** and [9] **animosity among the faithful against the Apostolic See**, the question remains, Father Treco, do you stand by your homily or are you prepared to retract it and renew and sign the Church's *Profession of Faith*." (*Letter*, para. 7)

"(2) Because of the public nature of [10] **your dissent from Catholic Doctrine**, I require you to retract the homily, including asking the websites where it is published to remove the text. A statement of retraction is to be published in your bulletin, as well as to your personal website, Facebook pages, and any other social media platforms you administer. So that further scandal can be avoided, your reaffirmation of the



Profession of Faith is to be made known to your parish community. A copy of this retraction is to be sent to the Chancery for your personal file.” (*Letter*, para. 10)

“3) As [11] **your public dissent has caused harm** to our Ordinariate and calls into question the ecclesial fidelity and ministry of every Ordinariate priest, you are to author a brief note of apology to your brother priests of the Ordinariate of the Chair of Saint Peter. This you will send to me for publication to our presbyterate. (*Letter*, para. 11)

*Summary Observations from this Letter:*

Number of Paragraphs: 15.

Number of Sentences: 41.

Number of False, Misleading or Accusatory Sentences, Statements or Claims: 11.

Number of Full Quotations offered in Evidence: 0.

## **Monday, January 7th, 2018: Request for Extension Submitted & Granted**

On Monday, January 7th, 2019, I submitted a request for an extension of the deadline without giving any indication of a desired extension period. (Note: The tardiness of this request, and its transmission after the passing of the deadline established in Bishop Lopes’s letter was caused by a glitch in my email client.)

On Jan 7, 2019, at 10:01 AM, Vaughn Treco <father.treco@icloud.com> wrote:

Dear Bishop Lopes,

Please, pardon me if this email proves to be a duplicate of one which I tried to send earlier. However, since I cannot find the original email in my Sent Mail Box, I am proceeding on the assumption that my home email application encountered a glitch and that the original email was not sent.

I am writing to ask if you would grant me an extension on the deadline established in your letter to me (Dated 12/20/2018; Received 12/24/2018).

The chief reason for this request is that, likely due the demands of Christmastide, I was unable to receive the counsel of any brother priests.

Yesterday, Fr. Joseph Johnson indicated to me that — with the return of the deacon assigned to his parish — his schedule will now allow us to meet sometime soon. (Hopefully before week’s end.) Also, not long after, I received a first response from a brother priest of the Ordinariate.

I am seeking your kindness to allow me sufficient opportunity to speak with my brother priests and to receive whatever wisdom and counsel they may wish to share with me.

—

Sent respectfully in hope,

Fr. Vaughn Treco

571-251-4471

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"Stat Crux, dum volvitur orbis"

Bishop Lopes responded promptly, granting me an extension until Sunday, January 13th, 2019, the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. I responded with a note of gratitude. But, as the following quotation reveals, the extension granted did not appear to reflect anything akin to a genuine generosity of spirit.

On Jan 7, 2019, at 12:16 PM, Bishop Steven J. Lopes <bishop@ordinariate.net> wrote:

Dear Father,

The matter before you is not complex. Either you affirm the faith of the Church in its entirety, or not.

That being said, I am willing to grant you the rest of the week for prayer and discernment. I will expect a response no later than Sunday, January 13.

Just for the sake of clarity, the requirements outlined in my letter of December 20 are not open to negotiation.

Praying that the light of the Epiphany leads you to the sure path of Catholic faith, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+SJL

## **Saturday, January 12th, 2019: Profession of Faith Signed**

As per Bishop Lopes' demand, I renewed the Profession of Faith and Oath of Fidelity in the presence of the priest designated by Bishop Lopes, the Reverend Joseph Johnson, Pastor, Church of the Homily Family, a parish church of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul-Minneapolis. With my hand firmly placed upon the Book of the Gospel, on the high altar of the said parish church, and without any reservation mental or otherwise, I made and signed the said Profession and Oath.

## **Sunday, January 13th, 2019: Profession of Faith Submitted**

On the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, I submitted by email the signed Profession of Faith as previously mandated. In addition, I attached a letter in which I noted that I had asked The Remnant to remove the video of my homily from its YouTube channel.

In that same letter to Bishop Lopes, I described my current and unchanged state of mind with regard to the alleged heretical character of my homily, expressed my docility toward future formation, and, offered my resignation as parish priest of Ordinariate Community of Saint Bede the Venerable.

Your Excellency,

I'm sure that it will not be a surprise for you to learn that the current situation has caused me great pain—not only the pain that comes from being accused of a grave offense but of one that harms the very Church that I love and dedicated my entire life to serving. I am sorry that it has also strained my relationship with you.

I wish to inform you that I made the Profession of Faith and Oath of Fidelity on Saturday, January 12th, 2019, with Fr. Joseph Johnson as your designated witness. I had absolutely no reservations in doing so. And, I have asked The Remnant to remove the video of my homily from its YouTube channel.

I am open to learning how my homily on Christ the King contravenes any of the Church's teachings. In conscience, I do not yet see anything heretical in what I said. I hope that this can be an ongoing dialogue between us—or with whomever you would designate, including seminary faculty. What I can say most emphatically is that I would never intentionally preach anything against Church teaching or that would undermine unity. If the latter is the more relevant concern, then I can say that I am truly sorry without reservation.

If you have lost confidence in my ability to lead the community of St. Bede the Venerable, then I humbly tender my resignation as its parish priest (effective upon your receipt of this letter or on another date you might prefer). I wish only to serve according to how you see best. I love the holy priesthood and am open to however God may wish me to exercise this ministry going forward. If a more restricted ministry to the sick or the elderly seems more appropriate to you, then I would happily embrace it.

Thank you for your service as our shepherd and for your patience with me as I struggle to understand the intricacies of this difficult situation. Rest assured of my prayers for you and my complete loyalty to Holy Mother Church.

Sincerely yours in Christ,  
Fr. Vaughn A. Treco Parish Priest  
Saint Bede the Venerable  
Saint Louis Park, MN

## **Tuesday, January 15th, 2019: Bishop Lopes' Second Letter**

Late in the afternoon as I made my way to the Saint Bede's Ordinariate Community for Daily Mass, I received a second letter from Bishop Lopes. By way of this letter, Bishop Lopes withdrew my faculties to preach and to hear confessions. The Archdiocese of Saint Paul-Minneapolis was almost immediately to follow Bishop Lopes' lead. Upon receipt of this letter it became clear to me that I would require the assistance of canonical counsel going forward.

Again, in his letter Bishop Lopes made six false, misleading or accusatory statements regarding my homily. Once again, Bishop Lopes' failed to identify the specific problematic statements from my homily. His Eminence's statements are given below by way of quotes from his letter (dated January 15th, 2019).

“Your recent letter states that you do not understand how your statements constitute public dissent or an act of schism. Let me clarify. Now that you have communicated your subjective intention and disposition regarding the Church’s faith, it is important that you understand also the objective situation in which your actions have placed you. **[1] Your published denial of the magisterial authority of the Second Vatican Council and [2] your assertion that the Council itself and [3] a series of Popes are in error** constitutes a public act of schism (cf. *CIC*, Canons 751, 752). **[4] Asserting that recent Popes have betrayed the power of the keys** and further **[5] advocating that the faithful ignore magisterial statements and texts published after 1963** can be construed as publicly inciting animosity against the Apostolic See (cf. *CIC*, Canon 1373....” (*Letter*, para 2)

“Also, in my December 20 letter, I asked you to prepare a brief note of apology to your brother priests in the Ordinariate of the Chair of Saint Peter. Up until this point, neither I nor the chancery have responded to inquiries from priests about your published statements. This is further evidence of the harm **[6] your public dissent** has caused, and so I invite you once again to prepare a note to address your brothers in your own words. If I have not received an acceptable text by the end of the week (January 19), I will proceed with my own explanation to the priests in the *ad clerum*.” (*Letter*, para 4)

*Summary Observations from the Letter:*

Number of Paragraphs: 9.

Number of Sentences: 37.

Number of False, Misleading or Accusatory Sentences, Statements or Claims: 6.

Number of Full Quotations offered in Evidence: 0.

### **Wednesday, January 16th, 2019: Canonical Counsel Retained**

With the assistance of a brother priest, I was able to identify, contact, and retain canonical counsel. From this point on, and in an effort to understand and secure my rights that I possessed under the Natural Law, the Code of Canon Law and other relevant Church law, I have diligently and fastidiously followed that counsel.

### **Thursday, January 17th, 2019: Archdiocese of Saint Paul-Minneapolis Withdraws My Priestly Faculties Entirely**

At 7:30 PM, I met with Bishop Andrew Cozzens in the rectory of the parish Church of the Holy Family. The chief purpose of meeting was for Bishop Cozzens to deliver an unsigned copy of a letter from Archbishop Bernard Hebda, Archbishop, Archdiocese of Saint Paul-Minneapolis. By way of Archbishop Hebda’s letter, my priestly faculties for the archdiocese were withdrawn entirely. Although the letter was intended to withdraw my faculties with immediate effect. Bishop Cozzens approved my continuing service through the upcoming Sunday, January 20th, 2019. This decision was taken in order not to unduly impact those communities to which I had previously committed myself through that weekend. I received the signed copy of the same letter sometime in the following week.

### **Monday, January 21st, 2019: Bishop Lopes’ Email & Third Letter**

In a third Letter, Bishop Lopes made several false, misleading or accusatory statements. He wrote the following:

“I am in receipt of your letter dated January 19, 2019, in which you express **[1] your refusal to make a statement of retraction** of the erroneous doctrinal positions you articulated in your Christ the King homily and subsequently published. You also **[2] refuse to offer a word of apology to your brother priests** for your public denial of the Catholic faith.” (*Letter*, para 1)

“In my letter of January 15, 2019, I noted that the requirements articulated therein were not negotiable. **[3] Your current situation is therefore contradictory and untenable.** On the one hand, you have recently signed a Profession of Faith and have declared your willingness to abide by what you have signed. On the other hand, **[4] you refuse to retract doctrinal pronouncements about the Second Vatican Council and the Magisterium of the Popes that directly contradict the same Profession of Faith.** Since both positions cannot be true, I am led to wonder about the sincerity of your recent Profession of Faith. In any case, **[5] your refusal to withdraw statements contrary to the teaching of the Church not only contradicts but effectively nullifies the Profession of Faith you made last week.**” (*Letter*, para 2)



“At no point in our dialogues of the last weeks [6] **have you offered any word of regret or remorse for your schismatic act and promotion of schism among the faithful**. Your inability or [7] **unwillingness to recognize** the damage your actions have caused to your parochial community, to the Ordinariate, and to your own priesthood is a cause of great sadness to me. Also, you characterize [8] **your refusal to rectify your denial of Catholic teaching as a matter of conscience**. But this too is untenable and evidences a serious lack of theological understanding, as a properly formed conscience can never lead one to a denial of the faith or the teaching of the Church.” (*Letter*, para 3)

“In my letter, I outlined the grave canonical situation in which you find yourself. To underscore, [9] **your published denial of the magisterial authority of the Second Vatican Council** and [10] **your assertion that the Council itself** and [11] **a series of Popes are in error** constitutes a public act of schism (cf. *CIC*, Canons 751, 752). [12] **Asserting that recent Popes have betrayed the power of the keys** and [13] **further advocating that the faithful ignore magisterial statements and texts published after 1963** can be construed as publicly inciting animosity against the Apostolic See (cf. *CIC*, Canon 1373) These are defined in Church law as grave canonical crimes, subject to automatic penalties (cf. *CIC*, Canon 1364, 1371).” (*Letter*, para 4)

I ask you now to reconsider the [14] **refusals expressed in your last letter**, return to Catholic faith, and to recant publicly [15] **the erroneous doctrinal positions you expressed in your published homilies**. In accord with what is established in law (Cf. Can. 1339), this current letter serves as official warning that, should you fail to comply with my directive in seven days (by January 28, 2019), I will proceed to the imposition of canonical censures and suspend you *a divinis*, applying all the measures outlined in Canon 1333 §1. As the resolution of these matters is ultimately reserved to the Holy See itself (cf. *Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela*, Article 2 §1), I will forward the matter to Rome which might result in other censures, such as a declared excommunication (Cf. Can. 1331), or penalties, including expulsion from the clerical state (Cf. Can. 1336).” (*Letter*, para 5)

“For the good of your soul and of your priesthood, I beg you Father, return to the faith and teaching of the Church.” (*Letter*, para 6)

It is critical to note that at no time in this letter, in any previous letter or communication, or in those that were to follow, did Bishop Lopes identify and quote any specific statement made in my homily that serves as the evidentiary ground upon which the above and other claims, accusations or charges that he had made or was to make against me.

*Summary Observations from this Letter:*

Number of Paragraphs: 6.

Number of Sentences: 20.

Number of False, Misleading or Accusatory Sentences, Statements or Claims: 15.

Number of Full Quotations offered in Evidence: 0.

## **Tuesday, January 22nd, 2019: My Letter to Bishop Lopes**

In response to his letter dated January 21st, 2019, I wrote the following:

Tuesday of the Second Week after Epiphany  
January 22, 2019

Your Excellency:

Please, be assured that I will recant anything that I have said which is contrary to Catholic Faith; however I am not aware that I have articulated anything against the Catholic Faith. As a matter of accuracy, and so that I may be able to respond to what you believe I have articulated against the Catholic Faith, I ask that you please identify what I said that is contrary to our Catholic Faith? I will recant anything that was wrong to state as I remain faithful to the Church and Magisterium.

Most respectfully yours,  
Fr. Vaughn A. Treco

## Thursday, January 24th, 2019: Bishop Lopes' Email Response

On Thursday, January 24th, 2019, Bishop Lopes responded by email with the following:

On Jan 24, 2019, at 7:00 AM, Bishop Lopes <bishop@ordinariate.net> wrote:

Dear Father,

Your letters of January 22 are astonishing, either for their ignorance or for the depth of manipulation they evidence. [1] **For six weeks now we have been discussing exactly how** [2] **your published denial of the magisterial authority of the Second Vatican Council** and [3] **your assertion that the Council itself** and [4] **a series of Popes are in error** constitutes a public act of schism. [5] **We discussed the specific problematic points of your homily at length and in person.** [6] **We have discussed** how your assertion that recent Popes have betrayed their mandate, your assertion they are directly to blame for crises in the Church, and [7] **your advocacy that the faithful ignore magisterial statements and texts published after 1963 incites animosity against the Apostolic See.** These points have been reiterated in our conversation and in our correspondence. No further clarification is necessary. The canonical warning I issued remains in place.

Most Rev. Steven J. Lopes  
Bishop  
Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter  
p: 346.247.2201 (office)  
w: www.ordinariate.net

The following disclaimer applies to this message: <http://ordinariate.net/email-disclaimer>

### *Summary Observations Re Letter:*

Number of Paragraphs: 1.

Number of Sentences: 7.

Number of False, Misleading or Accusatory Sentences, Statements or Claims: 7.

Number of Full Quotations offered in Evidence: 0.

## Tuesday, January 29th, 2019: Decree of Suspension Issued

At 10:05 AM, I received an email from Mrs. Laurel Miller, Chancellor, The Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of Saint Peter, sent on behalf of Bishop Lopes to which was attached a PDF of a letter addressed to me informing me that he was suspending me *a divinis*, for the canonical crime of schism. Attached to the same was the Decree of Suspension which Bishop Lopes had issued against me.

### *Summary Observations Re Letter:*

Number of Paragraphs: 4.

Number of Sentences: 12.

Number of False, Misleading or Accusatory Sentences, Statements or Claims: 6.

Number of Full Quotations offered in Evidence: 0.

### *Summary Observations Re Decree of Suspension:*

Number of Paragraphs: 23.

Number of Sentences: 34.

Number of False, Misleading or Accusatory Sentences, Statements or Claims: 19.

Number of Full Quotations offered in Evidence: 0.

What follows is a list of the assertions made against me which served as the ground upon which the Decree of Suspension was founded.

**Assertion #1: That I asserted “the Council itself was a ‘departure from Catholic tradition,’ and that the Council is devoid of Magisterial weight.”**

**Response to Assertion #1:** I, Vaughn Andrew Treco, ordained to the Eternal Priesthood of Jesus Christ on May 3rd, 2015, by the Most Reverend Andrew Cozzens, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul-Minneapolis, do firmly and resolutely deny the truthfulness of the above assertion.

In my homily, given on the Solemnity of Christ the King, November 25th, 2018, I affirmed that “It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that this “spirit” of the Council, with its opening to the so-called



“modern world” in ambiguous texts unlike any that any previous Council had ever adopted, *has caused a rupture within the Church...* Recognizing the problem with the Council’s apparent departure from Catholic tradition, Pope Benedict XVI made a valiant effort to propose what he called a *Hermeneutic of Continuity* or Reform. That is, a way of interpreting the teachings of the Second Vatican Council so that they can be embraced together with the infallible teachings of the councils and Popes which came before...”

In affirming the above, even while noting the call of Pope Benedict XVI to the discipline of interpreting the documents in a manner consistent with the Church’s tradition, did in nowise assert that “the Council is devoid of Magisterial weight.”

**Assertion #2: That I asserted that Popes Paul VI, John Paul II, and Benedict XVI “set aside the mandate given to [them] by Our Lord Jesus Christ’ so that the Popes therefore do no exercise legitimate authority in the Church.”**

**Response to Assertion #2:** I, Vaughn Andrew Treco, ordained to the Eternal Priesthood of Jesus Christ on May 3rd, 2015, by the Most Reverend Andrew Cozzens, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul-Minneapolis, do firmly and resolutely deny the truthfulness of the above assertion.

In my homily, given on the Solemnity of Christ the King, November 25th, 2018, I affirmed that “the Conciliar Popes, the Successors of Peter have — in a way — repeated Peter’s Three-Fold Denial of Jesus Christ!” In nowise did in and through this statement assert that “the Popes therefore do not exercise legitimate magisterial authority in the Church.”

**Assertion #3: That I “urged [the faithful] by extension... to treat as suspect the ordinary and universal magisterium of the Church after 1963” or that I incited “animosity toward the Apostolic See.”**

**Response to Assertion #3:** I, Vaughn Andrew Treco, ordained to the Eternal Priesthood of Jesus Christ on May 3rd, 2015, by the Most Reverend Andrew Cozzens, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul-Minneapolis, do firmly and resolutely deny the truthfulness of the above assertion.

In my homily, given on the Solemnity of Christ the King, November 25th, 2018, I affirmed within the context of proposing “a safe way forward”, that the faithful should look to a period when the Church’s teaching was proposed in a less ambiguous manner, specifically proposing that “a helpful rule of thumb would be to return to those theological and spiritual resources that were approved by the Holy See prior to the revolution of the 1960s!”

In proposing “a safe way forward”, I did in nowise invite the faithful “to treat as suspect the ordinary and universal magisterium of the Church after 1963”, neither did I, thereby, incite “animosity toward the Apostolic See.”

**Assertion #4: That in publishing my “homily on a website known for extreme views” and the fact that my homily “received much attention in digital and social media” made it “superfluous” for “any penal investigation to prove its veracity.”**

**Response to Assertion #4:** I, Vaughn Andrew Treco, ordained to the Eternal Priesthood of Jesus Christ on May 3rd, 2015, by the Most Reverend Andrew Cozzens, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul-Minneapolis, do firmly and resolutely deny that the assertion that the act of publishing my homily obviated the necessity of Bishop Lopes’s obligations under natural and ecclesiastical law to exhaust every means available to him to properly ascertain the facts relevant to my situation and ensure that all of the rights and protections afforded to me by that same law to prove the veracity of the claims that he was making against one of his under-shepherds.

**Assertion #5: That “the Council taught ‘errors’ and departed from the true Catholic Faith... and [that I] refused to reaffirm the Profession of Faith made prior to his ordination.”**

**Response to Assertion #5:** I, Vaughn Andrew Treco, ordained to the Eternal Priesthood of Jesus Christ on May 3rd, 2015, by the Most Reverend Andrew Cozzens, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul-Minneapolis, do firmly and resolutely deny the accuracy of the above statement.

In the aforementioned meeting, I did not affirm in the manner described — or in any specific manner — affirm that the Council taught ‘errors.’ Further, at no time did I, whether within the said meeting or any time afterward, refuse to affirm the Profession of Faith that I made prior to my ordination to the Sacred Priesthood.

On the contrary, in response to the presentations made to me in the meeting of December 12th, 2018, I suggested that it would be best as a next step that I spend the evening in prayer. When Bishop Lopes

recommended that I take a copy of the Profession of Faith which I signed on December 18th, 2014 (which Bishop Lopes's asked the Very Reverend Timothy Perkins to provide to me) so that I would have recourse to it during my prayers, I welcomed this suggestion. Further, in our subsequent meeting on the morning of December 13th, 2019, I proposed that the next step that I should be to offer to Bishop Lopes a personal profession of faith. At that time, Bishop Lopes affirmed that he thought that the provision of the same would be a good next step.

**Response to Assertion #5 (*sic?*): That “in an in-person meeting and in a series of letters, [Bishop Lopes] outlined several requirements that would have to be satisfied for [me] to maintain faculties for ministry,” and that “in this same correspondence [Father Treco] was warned of the schismatic nature of his public declarations and that schism would inflict the penalty of excommunication.”**

**Response to Assertion #5:** I, Vaughn Andrew Treco, ordained to the Eternal Priesthood of Jesus Christ on May 3rd, 2015, by the Most Reverend Andrew Cozzens, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul-Minneapolis, do affirm the description given above coheres — at least generally — with my recollection of my in-person meeting with the Most Reverend Steven Lopes, Bishop of The Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of Saint Peter, but more so that the above statements more accurately reflect the content of his written correspondence with me.

Even so, I affirm that within that same correspondence, I clearly stated that I was unable in conscience — and not that I was unwilling — to comply with some of the demands being made because I did not believe that the content of my homily contradicted the Catholic Faith in any way. Despite this, at no time during the course of our correspondence, save that to be noted in the paragraph to follow, did Bishop Lopes attempt to identify for me in a precise way those statements in my homily which were offensive to our Holy Faith.

Additionally, however, I affirm that until his letter, dated January 29th, 2019, and, especially in the Decree of Suspension which was attached to the said letter, Bishop Lopes had not clearly and with precision presented to me evidence in support of the accusation that I “espoused what amounts to heresy” made by Fr. Perkins in his email dated December 11th, 2019, or of those of “schism” and the “inciting of animosity toward the Apostolic See” which Bishop Lopes made severally and from time to time in the said correspondence.

I further affirm that in his email (dated, January 23rd, 2019), sent in reply to my request for precision submitted in writing on Tuesday, January 22nd, 2019, Bishop Lopes effectively set aside my request. In his opening statement, Bishop Lopes said, “Your letters of January 22 are astonishing, either for their ignorance or for the depth of manipulation they evidence.”

Finally, I affirm that to date, Bishop Lopes has not identified any specific statements that I made in my Christ the King Sunday homily that “amounts to the espousal of heresy” or “schism” or an incitement to animosity against the Apostolic See.

**Assertion #6: That my ‘refusal to retract the erroneous propositions of [my] homily... indicates that [I continue] to hold schismatic positions contrary to the Catholic faith.’**

**Response to Assertion #6:** I, Vaughn Andrew Treco, ordained to the Eternal Priesthood of Jesus Christ on May 3rd, 2015, by the Most Reverend Andrew Cozzens, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul-Minneapolis, do firmly and resolutely affirm that — since up until Tuesday, January 29th, 2019, Bishop Lopes had failed to identify with precision anything in my homily which he believed to be erroneous and or schismatic and contrary to the Catholic faith — he has, in effect, neglected to secure my rights under natural law and the canonical protections envisioned in the Code of Canon Law.

Further, I affirm that to date, Bishop Lopes has still not identified any specific statement or statements that I made in my Christ the King homily that are either heretical, schismatic or that incite animosity against the Apostolic See.

Since Bishop Lopes can in good faith give ascent to at least some of the statements which I made in my homily, and since he has on a few occasions asked me to offer a recantation, and since Bishop Lopes has written that he believes that such a recantation is necessary for the good of my soul and for my return to communion with the Roman Catholic Church, it would seem necessarily to follow that he is obligated to specifically identify those statements in my homily that are contrary to our Holy Faith.

**Assertion #7: That Bishop Lopes “officially warned Father Treco that the censure of suspension (cf. can. 1331) would be imposed if he did not publicly recant his erroneous doctrinal positions and return to communion with the Roman Catholic Church by 28 January 2019.”**

**Response to Assertion #7:** I, Vaughn Andrew Treco, ordained to the Eternal Priesthood of Jesus Christ on May 3rd, 2015, by the Most Reverend Andrew Cozzens, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul-Minneapolis, do affirm that Bishop Lopes communicated much the same to me in his letter (dated, January 21st, 2019). But, I note for the record here, that the language and phrases that Bishop Lopes used in that letter are dissimilar to those which he used in his Decree of Suspension and, therefore, may not necessarily have conveyed the same thoughts.

#### **Thursday, February 7th, 2019: Petition for Revocation-Emendation delivered to Bishop Lopes**

In response to the Decree of Suspension issued against me, on my behalf, and in accord with the norms of Canon 1734, my canonical counsel delivered a “Petition for Revocation-Emendation” to Bishop Lopes. In this petition, my canonical counsel gave answer to the “Facts of the Case” that served as the basis for the Decree of Suspension. Despite the fact that my canonical counsel remained optimistic and hopeful that we would in full Christian integrity and charity bring these matters to resolution without contention, neither he nor I received any response to the petition from Bishop Lopes or any staff member of the bishop’s staff. Given that Bishop Lopes had previously expressed concern for the good of my immortal soul, his decision not to respond to a petition which sought that same end remains incomprehensible to me.

#### **Monday, April 1st, 2019: Bishop Lopes Sends Confidential Email to the Priests of the Ordinariate of the Chair of Saint Peter**

At 3:14 AM my email client recorded the receipt of an email with the subject line: CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE PRIESTS OF THE ORDINARIATE OF THE CHAIR OF SAINT PETER.

Over the course of this brief email, Bishop Lopes made a series statements which were either contrary to fact or reflects an ignorance of the facts.

In the opening paragraph of that email, the Most Reverend Steven J. Lopes, Bishop, Ordinariate of the Chair of Saint Peter, wrote the following: “It was my sincere hope that this time away from priestly ministry would allow him to reconsider his relationship with ecclesiastical authority, **particularly his rejection of the magisterial authority of an Ecumenical Council and a series of Popes.**” (*Emphasis added.*)

Response: Without any hesitation I can affirm that at no time has Bishop Lopes demonstrated how any particular statement or group of statements made in my homily can properly ground his assertion that I have rejected “the magisterial authority of an Ecumenical Council and a series of Popes.

In the second paragraph, Bishop Lopes stated that “**We have offered him the opportunity to work with several professors from St. Paul’s Seminary and the University of St. Thomas in the Twin Cities** in order to understand the doctrinally erroneous and schismatic nature of his statements.” (*Emphasis added.*)

Response: I, herewith, categorically deny that any such offer was made by Bishop Lopes nor did any party designated by him for that purpose make such an offer to me. But, I hasten to note that Bishop Cozzens, acting on behalf of Archbishop Hebda, did make such an offer. Further, since I had previously indicated my readiness to undergo whatever formation Bishop Lopes deemed appropriate, I simply said, “*I would be happy to do whatever Bishop Lopes wishes me to do.*” Again, when not many days later, Fr. Joseph Johnson, Pastor, Church of the Holy Father, offered his assistance in having one or more professors at the St. Paul Divinity School review my homily, I welcomed the offer and supplied Fr. Johnson with a PDF of my homily for this purpose.

Again, in that second paragraph, Bishop Lopes stated, “I received a communication from his canonical advocate informing me that **Father Treco understands himself to be entirely without fault and so “sees no reason to comply with [my] directives.”** (*Emphasis added.*)

Response: It is beyond mystifying to me that Bishop Lopes could so carelessly mischaracterize the thorough, thoughtful, and careful canonical defense humbly and graciously offered by my canonical counsel to His Excellency.



## Thursday, April 4th, 2019: Canonical Counsel Receives Decree of Excommunication

In the late afternoon, my canonical counsel received a copy of the Decree of Excommunication issued against me on Monday, April 1st, 2019. I received the said decree the following day.

“1. On January 29, 2019, I decreed that the censure of suspension *a divinis* is imposed upon Rev. Vaughn Treco for [1] **having committed the delict of schism** with all of the effects and consequences found in canon 1333....” (*Decree*, para 2)

“3. The period of suspension has now past without Rev. Treco repenting of this offense and making reparation for all damages and scandal (cf. can. 1347 §2).” (*Decree*, para 4)

“4. [3] **From conversations with him since November 25, 2018**, and [4] **the actions taken by him**, [5] **it is known that he will not recant from his schism and return to the Roman Catholic Church.**” (*Decree*, para 5)

“Therefore, in accord with all the premises above, acting with moral certitude that a delict in fact occur [6] **as was shown by all of the objective and subjective facts of the case**; [7] **an action which is not yet extinct** due to [8] **his continued contumacy in this schismatic state;**” (*Decree*, para 11)

“Considering that [8] **maintaining the teachings of the Second Vatican Council represent a “departure from Catholic tradition,”** and [9] **declaring that the Popes since that Council have “set aside the mandate given to [them] by Our Lord Jesus Christ”** is incompatible with the exercise of the sacred ministry, and that [10] **this action causing grave public scandal**, and that justice cannot be restored to the community unless he is formerly declared excommunicated; hereby” (*Decree*, para 12)

“that the penalty of excommunication imposed late sentential upon Rev. Treco for [11] **having committed the delict of schism** which is penalized by canon 1364 §1 is hereby formerly declared with all of the effects and consequences found in canon 1331.” (*Decree*, para 13)

“This censure may only be lifted in accord with the norms of law when Rev. Treco repents of this offense and makes reparation for all damages and scandal (cf. 1347 §2). This would include but not be limited to recanting [12] **his doctrinal errors** and return to full communion with the Roman Catholic Church.” (*Decree*, para 14)

### *Summary Observations from the Decree of Excommunication:*

Number of Paragraphs: 23.

Number of Sentences: 32.

Number of False, Misleading or Accusatory Sentences, Statements or Claims: 8.

Number of Full Quotations offered in Evidence: 0.

## Thursday, April 11th, 2019: Canonical Counsel Dispatches Remonstratio to Bishop Lopes

In the late afternoon, my canonical counsel submitted a “*Remonstratio erga decretum excommunicationis*” to Bishop Lopes. In the course of this “Remonstratio” my counsel offered the following facts demonstrating why the decree suspending me *a divinis* and the one declaring my excommunication should be revoked:

- **First: There was not any procedure, but simply the conviction decided by the Bishop:** in the first part of this document, we presented a ‘timeline’ clearly showing the ‘pastoral action’ of His Excellency who lawfully made his complaints and gave some instructions to his Priest to remedy. This cannot be equated to a legal procedure because Rev. Vaughn Treco was not treated (and safeguarded) as an accused person but was simply rebuked as a subordinate. Actually, it was the Bishop himself denying the judgmental nature of his actions when he wrote to Rev. Treco: “*I must nevertheless forward documentation regarding this incident to the Holy See for their authoritative consideration.*” These words clearly exclude the actual pending of a local procedure.
- **Second: The warranties of the accused Rev. Vaughn Treco were denied:** in addition to what we already explained in the prior point, we have to remark that all the requests sent to the Bishop from the undersigned Advocate were denied and His Excellency made his decisions on the basis of some informal meetings with Rev. Treco and his personal idea about the matter, without any formal *litis contestatio* and not involving the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith in any way.

- **Third: The statements made by Rev. Treco in his homily of November 25, 2018, were not ‘schismatic’:** the Priest explained what he really said and the true meaning of that. (*Nine points of explanation then follow.*)
- **Fourth: The essential components of schism are lacking.** Rev. Vaughn Treco did not even fantasize about his non-submission to the Pope, as Pope or about not being in communion with others who are subject to him, because of their subjection to him. Neither he showed a pertinacious will in that: in fact, after the criticized homily he sent a written ‘Oath of Obedience’ to his Bishop.
- **Fifth: It is impossible to define as a ‘formal heresy’ the statements of Rev. Vaughn Treco.** The lack of a schismatic intention clearly appears not only from the words of the accused Priest (and from the ‘Profession of Faith’ that he promptly subscribed to answer to the accusation) but from the Bishop himself who wrote (January 15, 2019): *“Your most recent letter states that you do not understand how your statements constitute public dissent or an act of schism.”*
- **Sixth: The alleged crime of schism was ‘de facto’ remitted.** We can read in the same letter: *“Now that you have affirmed Catholic faith, we may proceed towards regularizing your canonical status”*. Actually, the Bishop continues his letter writing, *“while I am willing to act within the authority I am granted by law and remit the automatic penalty you incurred ... I must nevertheless forward documentation regarding this incident to the Holy See for their authoritative consideration. It is imperative, therefore, that the public nature of this denial of Catholic faith and communion be effectively remedied prior to my doing so,”* but this is a very controversial statement. If the Bishop acknowledged that Rev. Vaughn Treco affirmed (as he really did) his Catholic Faith, there wasn’t any need to ‘regularize’ his status and to remit the ‘automatic penalty’. The purpose of the further ‘remedies’ that the Bishop required was not to reinstate a never broken (or, at least, a restored) communion, but to turn the eventual scandal off and to allow Rev. Treco to prosecute his Ministry: this is what one can understand by reading that *“the Profession of Faith you have reaffirmed is a necessary and important step for the good of your immortal soul. The other measures outlined in my earlier letter and reiterated here are in view of salvaging your priesthood.”* Additionally, we must note that if the Bishop really believed that Rev. Vaughn Treco was even now under excommunication *latae sententiae*, he could not ever have added: *“your faculties in the Ordinariate remain in effect, though modified, so that he may invite you to celebrate Mass for the community when he is unable to do so. You are always welcome to concelebrate the community Mass with him.”*
- **Seventh: Rev. Treco could not satisfy the further Bishop’s requests because he never received an answer to the explanation of his homily.** In the above-quoted letter, His Excellency asked *“that a statement of retractation is to be sent to me in the form of a letter and published in your bulletin, as well as to whatever social media you manage. So that further scandal can be avoided, your reaffirmation of the Profession of Faith is to be made known to St. Bede Ordinariate Community ... I asked you to prepare a brief note of apology to your brother priests in the Ordinariate of the Chair of Saint Peter.”* Maybe he could have reaffirmed the ‘Profession of Faith’ together with the Community (and we guess he did, because every member of the Christian Faithful does that in every Mass, together with his Priests) but how could he ‘retract’ what he tried to explain as right, without receiving any contrary explanation? We are not saying that Rev. Vaughn Treco was perfect in his actions: it is not up to us to judge that (we simply state – from a legal point of view - that it was not schism), but to obtain the desired result, His Excellency should have refuted the arguments that his Priest used to justify himself, instead of moving forward with excommunication because of the mistaken assumption that Father Treco *“will not recant from this schism and return to the Roman Catholic Church.”*
- **Eighth: Disobedience is not schism.** We explained why Rev. Vaughn Treco did not satisfy all the Bishop’s requests; we also noted that such further requests were not to reinstate a never broken (or, at least, a restored) communion, but to turn the eventual scandal off and to allow Rev. Treco to prosecute his Ministry. This is the reason why His Excellency could have complained about his omission, but he could not infer from the omission a delict of schism.
- **Ninth: The decree of excommunication is lacking administrative requirements.**
  - i. It is based on an incorrect evaluation of the *facti species*;
  - ii. Its motivation is inconsistent with the premises and is simply based on personal beliefs and opinions of the Bishop;

- iii. It is inconsistent with the previous act of the Authority who allowed Fr. Treco to celebrate Mass;
- iv. The procedure did not respect the warranties of the accused Priest and the rules about collecting evidence;
- v. The rights of Rev. Vaughn Treco were denied.

### **Friday, April 12th, 2019: Canonical Counsel Dispatches Appeal to the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith**

Early this morning, my canonical counsel dispatched an *Appeal from Decree of Excommunication* to His Eminence Luis Francisco Cardinal Ladaria Ferrer, S.J., Prefect, Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, on my behalf. This Appeal was transmitted through His Excellency Archbishop Christophe Pierre, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States of America.

The opening and final two paragraphs of the Appeal reads as follows:

“I hope this letter finds Your Eminence well. I write today on behalf of the **Reverend Vaughn Treco**, an incardinated presbyter of the Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter in Houston, Texas, U.S.A. Specifically, through this letter and the accompanying attachment to Bishop Stephen Lopes, I am seeking from him the revocation and/or emendation of the Decree of Excommunication issued by His Excellency, the Most Reverend Steven J. Lopes, D.D., against Father Treco on March 30, 2019. Through writing to Your Eminence Today, if the proper Dicastery for submission of our Appeal from the Decree of Excommunication imposed against Father Treco, is to Your Eminence, then we submit this Appeal to Your Eminence for the following reasons and incorporating as well both the substantive arguments and procedural arguments that we have presented to Bishop Lopes, against the Decree of Excommunication within the preemptory timeframe as established by Bishop Lopes....

Furthermore, Father Treco has complied with the wishes of Bishop Lopes and has signed anew the Profession of Faith that he first signed prior to his ordination. This not only demonstrates Father Treco’s adherence to the authority and unity of the holy Catholic Church, but it also shows his willingness to cooperate with His Excellency. Rather than merely issuing a decree, we would welcome greater dialogue in which any issues or confusion may be peaceably resolved.

Based on the foregoing, I present this enclosed Appeal to Your Eminence, along with the corresponding documentation for a full retraction of the Decree of Excommunication imposed upon Father Treco. I know that this is a very difficult and delicate matter. I thank Your Eminence for the time and consideration of this appeal. Should Your Eminence have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.”

### **Closing Observation: An unusual and immensely practical severity**

On January 16th, 2019, the Archdiocese of Saint Paul-Minneapolis did in fact follow Bishop Lopes’ lead, this episcopal act in a matter of days was to deprive me of 40-45% of my income. A little over two weeks later, on January 30th, 2019, the Archdiocese of the Military Services, having received notification that Bishop Lopes had suspended me *a divinis*, withdrew my priestly faculties. With these acts, both directly predicated upon Bishop Lopes’ actions, I was deprived of all means of income. At no time has Bishop Lopes or any member of the Chancery staff of the Ordinariate expressed any concern over this loss of income, about the immediate impact that it would have upon my ability to properly care for my wife and family or intimated that the income lost would be replaced by the Ordinariate during the canonical process that was to ensue.