

*Fr. Perozich comments —*

*Predator bishops have been protected until it became so public that the Vatican was forced to act: McCarrick, Zanchetta, Pineda, Ryan, and others.*

*A faithful bishop now joins faithful priests in being canceled. A French woman religious is saying that the Vatican is trying to wrest power in the church from the clerics in the church in order to place it into the hands of synods, where popular opinion then might be preached over the Truth of the gospel.*

*Canceling clerics places all power at the top making a pope the ruler of the church rather than its servant to proclaim unity in the Truth of Jesus.*

*A bishop is reported to have said that he is reluctant to excommunicate a pro abort politician because he would be disciplined and the politician would have the excommunication lifted by Rome, canceling him and promoting more confusion.*

*This is hard to say.*

*This is hard to see.*

*My brother priests, we do have votive Masses for the pope, for bishops, and for the church. On the appropriate days, I am celebrating such Masses that Christ purify the church in the persons of the pope, the cardinal, the bishop, the priest, the deacon, and all the faithful.*

## PRESS RELEASE

### Statement by Bishop Daniel Fernández Torres TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD WHO ARE PILGRIMS IN THE DIOCESE OF ARECIBO

When you receive the news of my replacement as bishop at the head of the Diocese of Arecibo, I want you to know that it is not up to me to explain to you a decision that I cannot explain to myself, although I accept it with the patience of Christ for the good of the Church. Nor is it up to you to judge what only God and history will do at the proper time.

In reacting to what has happened, I feel blessed to suffer persecution and slander (cf. Mt 5:10-11) for proclaiming the truth of man's dignity in circumstances like the present in which "it is uncomfortable: it is opposed to our actions..." (Wis 2:12). (Wis 2:12).

Today I can hold my head up high and, even though I am imperfect and a sinner, know that I have done the right thing, and this gives me great inner peace. I am also comforted by the Hebrew meaning of the name Daniel, which I providentially received at my baptism, "God is my judge".

**I regret very much that in the Church where mercy is so much preached, in practice some lack a minimum sense of justice.** No process has been made against me, nor have I been formally accused of anything and simply one day the Apostolic Delegate verbally communicated to me that Rome was asking me to resign. **A successor of the apostles is now being replaced without even undertaking what would be a due canonical process to remove a parish priest.**

I was informed that I had committed no crime but that **I supposedly "had not been obedient to the Pope nor had I been in sufficient communion with my brother bishops of Puerto Rico."** It was suggested to me that if I resigned from the diocese I would remain at the service of the Church in case at some point I was needed in some other position; an offer that in fact proves my innocence. However, **I did not resign because I did not want to become an accomplice of a totally unjust action and that even now I am reluctant to think that it could happen in our Church.**

This personal experience, on the other hand, has helped me to realize in a new way **the grave responsibility that all of us bishops have in the governance of the Church, which is apostolic and not pyramidal, synodal and not autocratic.** I believe that for quite some time many of us bishops have been watching with concern what is happening in the Church and have been reluctant to believe what is happening. Today more than ever we must remember our call to be prophets. These are difficult times, but let us not lose hope.

The words of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, when he was a priest, can encourage us: "It seems to me certain that very difficult times await the Church. **Her real crisis has barely begun.** We have to reckon with strong shocks. **But I am also absolutely certain of what will remain in the end: not the Church of political worship, already without soul,**

**but the Church of faith.** It will certainly never again be the dominant force in society to the extent that it was until recently. But it will flourish again and become visible to human beings as the homeland that gives them life and hope beyond death."

I humbly celebrate what we have been able to do together from the Diocese of Arecibo, in these almost twelve years, in youth and vocational ministry, in the struggle for the dignity of human love, the family and respect for life, **in the freedom of the Church against political interference**, in the formation of holy priests and in having given a "House" to the Virgin in our diocesan Shrine.

**If by trying to be faithful to God I am replaced in office, it is worth it, because as a bishop I can be useful to the Church with my own witness.** I remember the words of St. John of Avila: "how honored we are to be dishonored by seeking the honor of God". **I manifest my communion in the Catholic faith, with the Pope and my brothers in the episcopate, despite my perplexity in the face of an incomprehensible arbitrariness.** And if, from now on, I can be of any service to you, I declare my full availability.

Today and always my greatest gratitude to God and to Our Lady of Perpetual Help, our patroness. Thanks also to all the priests for being good and faithful clergy. Thanks to all the faithful of my beloved diocese of Arecibo for your love and prayers. Thanks to all the staff of the bishopric for being an extended family. Thanks to my family for their unconditional support always. Thanks also to my brothers and sisters of different Christian denominations for the times when together we raised our voices in defense of the family.

God bless you all.

In Christ dead and risen,

+Daniel