

ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE
OF CHARLESTON
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Dec. 21, 2023

My dear brothers in Christ,

May the advent of Christ's birth and the coming of our savior to redeem us once again bring you joy, strength and peace! I write you today to address the recent Declaration from the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith entitled *Fiducia supplicans* (FS). As you serve God's people daily in your priestly vocations, you understand this Declaration will be widely discussed, interpreted and misinterpreted. I encourage you during this time to celebrate the family and the gift of life, especially in this great season where the Holy Family exemplifies charity, unity and reverence toward the right order that God established in his creation.

Firstly, I ask that you emphasize to your parishioners that our Church has not changed its doctrine, and God's plan for love and life will not be contradicted. Some of the secular world willingly views *FS* as a reversal of teaching, that the Catholic Church now upholds homosexual unions. This is not the case. Blessings are not a new practice in our faith, and the blessings discussed in *FS* are inadmissible if they in any way cause public scandal, affirm irregular or same-sex unions or celebrate sin. To quote the document directly, "... this Declaration remains firm on the traditional doctrine of the Church about marriage, not allowing any type of liturgical rite or blessing similar to a liturgical rite that can create confusion."

The Church, Christ's bride divinely founded and inspired, is the dispenser of grace. We fallen sinners are called to the worthy reception of the sacraments and to lead each other to heaven. Any actions, behaviors or words that contradict these long-held doctrines are not sanctioned by the Church.

Secondly, this Declaration is an opportunity to reflect on our pastoral role to those in our congregations with same-sex attraction. More than ever, with the confusion of our modern world, they need encouragement to persevere and guidance to follow Christ in their call to holiness and bravely carrying this cross. Thank you for all that you have done in your ministry to bring these children of God comfort and knowledge. Please continue as you have been and approach the needs of persons with same-sex attraction on a pastoral level.

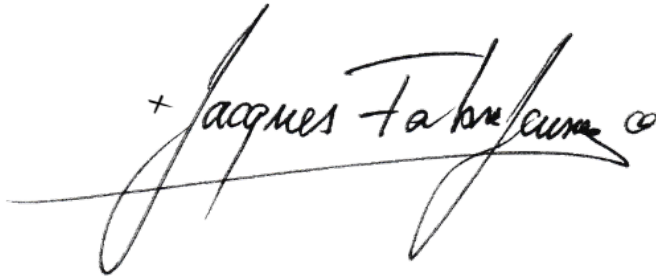
Thirdly, encourage the faithful to pray for Pope Francis, especially for the Holy Spirit to guide him as the head of the Church on earth. The papacy is a heavy responsibility, and our pope needs the support which the prayers of the laity help to provide.

Finally, we as a Church are called to be countercultural; this especially pertains to the family unit. Our nation and our world have twisted the definition of love and union, words that are beautiful and essential for Christian living. So let us be beacons of light and truth for those steeped in darkness and confusion. Let us act as messengers of the Word Made Flesh and proclaim the Gospel always.

As God's creatures, we have been instilled with a desire to seek his beauty in all things. What can be more beautiful than that peaceful moment that Christ made his presence among us in the arms of a loving family? The silence of that venerable night still pierces the noise of daily life. Encourage those around you to take consolation in the birth of a perfect Savior.

Thank you for your pastoral service to the Church in South Carolina. I pray that you and your parishioners are strengthened to respond to our call to "Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thess 5:16-18).

In Christ's love,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Jacques Fabre-Jeune ©". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning and a circled copyright symbol at the end.

Most Rev. Jacques Fabre-Jeune, CS
Bishop of Charleston