

DEFENDING CFC LIFE AND MISSION, AND MOVING FORWARD!

July 19, 2007


Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The peace of our Lord be with us all! We in the CFC Council write this letter for the following very important purposes:

- (1) to exhort each and every member of our beloved Community to take a stand in defending the life and mission of Couples for Christ, from forces acting to divide or destroy these today;
- (2) to encourage each one of us to defend God's culture and tradition in our Community by living out what we have learned from our community teachings the past 26 years;
- (3) to update you with information pointing to the motivation and agenda of the group that calls itself the Easter Group (Easter/Playboy Bunnies);
- (4) to enjoin you to move forward with the beautiful and sacred Vision and Mission God has set for our community of Couples for Christ; and,
- (5) to update you on our Community's continuing efforts to improve our relationship with the Bishops.

TAKING A STAND IN DEFENSE OF GOD'S WORK

God has used Couples for Christ powerfully in these past 26 years as His instruments to fulfill His vision and mission.

	<p>[Indeed, CFC has been used powerfully. It is sad that the keeper of the charism that God used is the subject of personal attacks and being continuously maligned. Bro. Frank Padilla steered the community to where it now is for the past 25 years and he finds himself the target of a vilification campaign by no less than the Council]</p>
---	--

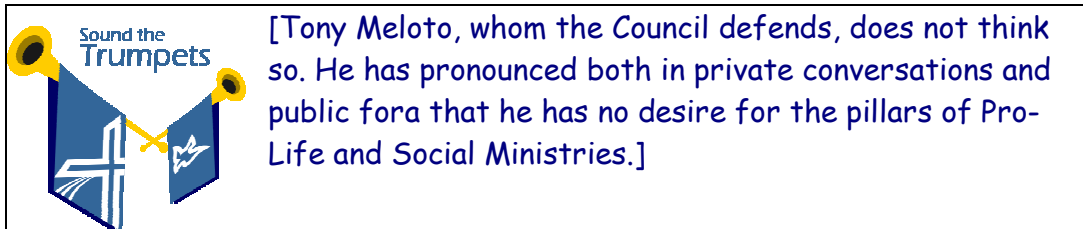
The work of God will continue even without us. Yet He loves us so much, that He has anointed us to be part of the joy and victory of His work through CFC. Our lives have been truly blessed because we are part of this Community.

We believe that God's anointed purposes for Couples for Christ ("Families in the Holy Spirit renewing the face of the earth" and "bringing glad tidings to the poor") are sacred, unchanging, and continuing, whether the community is in a state of great blessing or great trial. We have had trials along the past 26 years but these have not shaken us (1 Peter 4:12), for we trust that God can enter into the storm-center of any disturbance and calm any storm, as long as we allow His uniting and healing power to start in our own hearts. In the middle of a storm, we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus (Hebrews 3:1) and His mission, and keep moving forward with His work. We will always have issues and problems to fix, for we do God's work in an imperfect world, and with co-servants who, like us, also "fall short of God's glory." But we resolve our problems within the culture and structure of our Community, guided by the heart and by the tradition of our formation and teachings.

Today, as ever, the CFC Council and each and every member of Couples for Christ are compelled to defend the very life and mission of our Community from forces that knowingly or unknowingly are being used by the evil one to sow grave disunity in CFC and destroy God's mission. The enemy is not our brother or sister, but the evil one seeking to divide us. The real enemy is dividing us into factions, and if we succumb to being loyal to a faction or a person rather than to God's principles, then the real big casualty will be God's vision and mission for the Community. The evil one does not want us to be united. The evil one wants us to slow down, leave the community, or even destroy God's work from within. God wants us to defend His vision and mission with our lives. And though wounded, God wants us to press on with His work, so that we can have a Godly community and a Godly way of life that we can pass on to our children, and the future generations of this world.

OUR COMMITMENT TO THE VISION AND MISSION

The newly-elected CFC Council commits to fight for and defend CFC's vision ("Families in the Holy Spirit Renewing the Face of the Earth") and mission ("Bringing Glad Tidings to the Poor") with you. We believe that the 7 pillars are a blessing and a calling from God so that He can use us to bring His vision and mission to life. Each and every pillar is a gift from God, and is an essential part of the fullness of His mission for CFC.



We believe that we need to help our Community raise more leaders and servants who have the moral and spiritual capability to deliver the totality of God's work. We believe that each and every member should be a believer and advocate of each pillar, even if he or she will only have the strength and time to focus on and get heavily involved in one or two pillars. We believe that while God allowed the 7 pillars to evolve and develop at different paces, God wants servants across the different pillars to appreciate each other, to actively seek ways to help each other deliver, to share resources, and to integrate areas of common mission.


We believe that each member, regardless of the pillar they are called to serve in, should take on evangelization as one's primary mission. For example, a Gawad Kalinga servant, as would a Pro-Life servant, should look at each and every site (or audience) as an evangelization opportunity for God, and should work with the CFC sector to conduct the CLP at the earliest possible time. The Gawad Kalinga community work, as would a Pro-Life program, is a strong part of evangelization, because it demonstrates authentic Christian Life through action.

We believe that God's vision and mission for CFC are sacred, unchanging, and deepening, and that we should involve leaders and members in discerning and planning how we can improve the way we organize ourselves as an army, build our

mission capabilities, and strengthen/build our relationships as we deliver God's work through the pillars. Towards this end, the CFC Council will be conducting a Pastoral Congress with CFC leaders sometime in the last quarter of 2007, to focus on the top areas of Community life that the Lord would like us to improve as we move forward to the next 25 years.

OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHURCH

We would like to assure you, brothers and sisters, that we continue to be a Catholic community, submitted to the Church.



[That is not what the Council has shown our bishops, when they showed disrespect and disobedience to them. Bp Reyes clearly said as much in his letter dated July 12.]

Our different sectors and areas operate under the guidance of the bishops and priests in their respective dioceses and parishes.

In our relationship with our bishops and priests, we are guided by our CFC Statutes as approved by the Vatican. These statutes provide, among others:

“9.32 Couples for Christ looks to having a Spiritual Adviser appointed by the bishop for the CFC group within his diocese. Such Spiritual Adviser may be the bishop himself, or at his option, a priest or religious appointed by him.

“9.321 The Spiritual Adviser's competence is in doctrinal and liturgical matters, and will not involve organizational matters.

“9.34 Couples for Christ is to ask the bishops, in their role as shepherds, to provide spiritual formation for its members.

- Retreats and recollections for leaders and members.
- Instruction on Catholic and theological doctrines.
- Updates on the Church stand on various important issues.
- Consultation on moral and theological issues that come up.



[The CFC statutes also say that "CFC will live out its life and mission in communion with the bishops" (9.3). This means we do not just disregard their strong recommendations and show them disrespect.

Further, "CFC recognizes defers to and actively submits to the authority of the bishop as shepherd of his particular diocese" (9.31). The 3 bishops collectively represented the whole Church hierarchy, being the head of the CBCP (Archbp Lagdameo), the head of the Laity (Bp Reyes), and the representative of Cardinal Rosales, Archbishop of Manila, where the center of our work is (Bp. Soc Villegas). Still further, "CFC is committed to the renewal and strengthening of the Catholic Church" (9.4). The

bishops saw a great threat to the life and mission of CFC, which would then be a threat to the life and mission of the Church herself, and so the bishops intervened.

It is part of the Council's unfortunately misguided direction that it just quotes statutes that it thinks favor its insistence that the bishops have no business intervening in CFC' as it said in one of its earlier statements to the CFC community.

The bishops would not normally intervene, unless the conflict is really serious. Further, we can normally take care of internal conflict by ourselves. But what do we do when the conflict is at the very top? Where do we go? What is our protection? What may be missed here is the resignations received so much media attention and aroused the curiosity



of the CBCP. Bishop Soc Villegas, as delegated by His Excellency Cardinal Rosales was asked to look into the matter. The Council as well as Bros. Frank and Lachie were invited to a meeting at the good Bishop's place in Balanga, Bataan. In that meeting, only Bros. Joe Tale and Ernie Maipid showed up. As if by design, the council of 4 has not been completely represented in a lot of crucial meetings with the Bishops and later on, during the important dialogue which saw only Bros. Joe Tale and Rouquel Ponte representing the Council. In such meetings, it will always offer, up to the dialogue, that whatever agreements are arrived at cannot bind those who are not

present. This factor has been one of the causes of a lot of broken promises made by the council of 4 and resulted in failed agreements. All told, there were subsequent meetings with Bishops Lagdameo and/or Reyes before the Bishop Reyes released the final letter to the Elders' Assembly exhorting one and all to postpone the elections. Of course, the Council has claimed that the letter was solicited despite the meetings with the Bishops; indeed a great disservice to the wisdom, discernment and intelligence of these holy men of the cloth.]

Immediately after the elections, the CFC Council and their wives paid a visit to Bishop Gabby Reyes as a major step towards building our relationship with the clergy. We sought his understanding for our Community's decision (through our Elders Assembly) to push through with the elections, which seemed contrary to the Bishop's recommendation as well as to the proposal to elect only three. We also explained that the decision to proceed with the elections was the discernment of the overwhelming majority of the Elders Assembly that the Community is not veering away from the vision and mission and guiding Catholic principles of CFC and therefore, there was no basis for postponement of the elections. Everyone wanted to move forward in doing God's mission, supported by a unified, stable leadership, rather than a temporary one. We assured him of our Community's love and respect

and our plan to regularly update him of Community developments, to listen to his counsel as we move forward, and to seek his blessings and prayers. We will continue doing the same as we build on the mission relationship and partnership we have with our dear Bishops in the different dioceses.



[This was part of the deception that Bp Reyes found so hard to accept. The Council makes it appear that everything was all right after their visit. That was farthest from the truth, as was painfully evident when Bp Reyes responded with his letter of July 12. By the way, this letter was intended for all CFC members. But the Council does not talk about it. Have you received a copy?]

UNDERLYING REASONS FOR SEEKING POSTPONEMENT

The group of Bro. Frank

[Throughout this letter they will say the group of Bro. Frank." In reality, Frank was not part of the Easter Group, as he wanted to look to the interest of the whole CFC. Lately however he has seen the justness of the cause of the Easter Group and the wrong acts of the Council, and so has linked himself more closely with the group.]

tries to link concerns of faith and morals to the matter of Elections by requiring that the issues on Gawad Kalinga be first resolved,

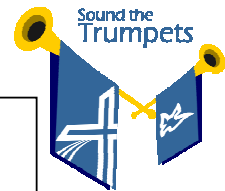
[The bishops were the ones who linked the two, saying that when there is intense conflict, no major decisions should be made, such as elections.],

alleging that GK is veering away from the vision and mission of CFC and is sacrificing evangelization and spirituality for the sake of social action. The CFC Council and our brethren on the ground do not agree with this premise. It is unfair to

[There is no problem with the caretaker teams, as they are CFC through and through. The problem is with top GK leaders who in their drive for GK777 have taken on a come one, come all posture that focuses on the social to the detriment of the spiritual.]

our various CFC caretaker teams in the GK sites to be labeled as veering away from spirituality. Christian Life Programs are being conducted in GK sites. Because of the desire of certain mayors to have GK in their towns, CLPs have even been organized where there was no CFC presence. There have been conversions to Catholicism in GK areas. There are of course certain issues on GK like in other ministries but certainly not veering away from our spirituality to social work.





The position of the group of Bro. Frank is simply very bias.

[Yes, Frank is indeed very biased, IN FAVOR OF GK. He has consistently extolled GK and said what a great work it is.]

On his

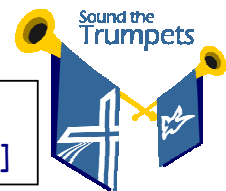
July 1st e-mail he wrote:” **Is this what we are now seeing in the direction of some of our very top leaders in GK? Not wanting to talk about CFC. Not having even an invocation during the recently concluded GK1MB in Manila this June. Just talking about heroism and nation building but not about holiness and building the kingdom of God. Allowing sects and cults entry into our GK villages. Allowing corporate partners with anti-life agenda into our education programs.”**

So as you can see clearly, this is not a bias against GK but having an issue against the direction GK is now choosing.

The position of the Group of Bro Frank against GK is simply very bias On his July 1 e-mail he wrote:” **Is this what we are now seeing in the direction of some of our very top leaders in GK? Not wanting to talk about CFC. Not having even an invocation during the recently concluded GK1MB in Manila this June. Just talking about heroism and nation building but not about holiness and building the kingdom of God. Allowing sects and cults entry into our GK villages. Allowing corporate partners**

with anti-life agenda into our education programs.”

The fact is, he was not even present in the event



[This is true. What Frank got was some very negative feedback from CFC leaders who were dismayed that there was no opening prayer or invocation.]

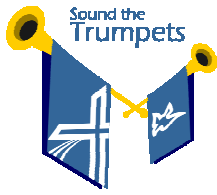
and was not able to be part of the invocation that was the prayer of St. Francis sang by Calvin Sheen



[So this proves precisely Frank's point. The prayer was sung creatively such that even CFC leaders did not see it as a prayer! Why are we afraid to pray outright?].

Bro Tony Meloto led two community prayers during the event. With such deep bias against certain leaders of GK, the Holy work itself of working with the poor, of

[This is clearly a value judgment and does not face up squarely with the valid issues?]



following Jesus Himself is maligned in the process.

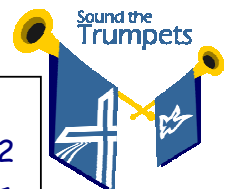
[The Council equates valid issues with maligning GK. They should not judge so they will not be judged. They should not malign if they are so concerned about not maligning. Working with the poor has not been maligned or questioned as not being noble and ideal. What will have to be re-examined are the various approaches of doing the work. We seem to have eroded our spiritual anchors by mistaking the social mission as the end all and be all of a meaningful and relevant existence on earth when it is just an enabler to the end state of personal transformation thru evangelization, of establishing the kingdom of God on earth thru a relationship with Jesus, of making out and moulding saints not just being heroes.]

Another reason that Bro. Frank told the bishops that his group wanted to stop the elections was because the nominees were unfairly chosen.

[This is not true. It was not about the manner of choosing, but about who were chosen. Many people saw the nominees as staunch GK advocates. That is not a negative comment on the nominees. But there were real fears that GK was moving to dominate CFC, with the collusion of the Council and the majority of the BOE.]

However, the nominees were chosen in the same manner as they have always been in the past -- by the Council and the Board of Elders. The nominees are long time leaders of CFC and have faithfully served in major capacities. Some of them were nominees when Bro. Frank was still serving in the Council. The position espoused by Bro. Frank raises the following question: Should this be the new culture of CFC -- that CFC postpone elections every time someone or a small group does not like the nominees?

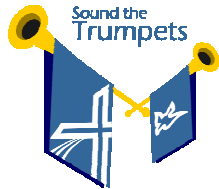
[This does not follow, a case of non sequitur. The small group had an attendance of more than 500 in its 1st restoration assembly with just 2 days' notice. As was said, the nominees were also staunch GK advocates and if elected might follow the directions of GK veering away from its original vision and mission. As we speak, you can visit the GK website and how the partnership with the Mormons has been played up. We all know the Mormons are an evangelistic community. It has suggested the building up of complete water systems in GK communities. With a lot of dependence on partners with unclear motives, what is to prevent them from proselytizing? As we speak, several partners with clearly anti-life and pro choice programs would like to take over GK's education programs. We need not say more. We leave it to your better judgment.



Notwithstanding the unreasonableness of Bro. Frank's position, in the interest of peace and reconciliation, we entertained his proposal to add more nominees coming from him.

[Frank never said it had to come from him.]

But at the last moment, he did not pursue this option



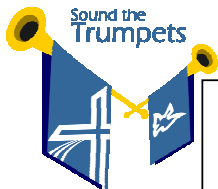
[The Council put so many legal roadblocks along the way that it was useless to even pursue the option.]

Clearly, the issue of the nominees was not the reason he and his group wanted to postpone elections. What then was the real reason they wanted to postpone the elections? The answer lies in a clever strategy hatched by their group, which they call the Easter/ Playboy Bunnies.

[The group is called the Easter Group. The "Easter/Playboy Bunnies" was a light-hearted comment made by the minutes recorder. It has never been used as a name by the group. For a more complete answer, we refer you to our Truth series: Rejoinders to the Latest Council Statement and the MC Teaching of July 17].

In the minutes of one of their meetings, one plan that was discussed was that if they succeeded in postponing the elections, they will ask the Bishops to appoint an interim Council which would reinstate Bros. Frank, Lachie and Tony to the Council.

[This actually came from the bishops, who looked to some sort of caretaker team if the elections were postponed. If this was the so-called plot of Frank, then why was Tony included?]



So, it is clear that, after all, the real objective was the desire of Bro. Frank's group to return Bros. Frank and Lachie to position and authority.

[Please answer the question: why was Tony included? The answer is simple. The group was just mentioning what the bishops' recommendation was.]

On the other hand, Bro. Tony has made it clear that when he resigned, he really resigned and has no intention of getting his position back.

[Frank likewise has consistently said that he is not after power or position. This is his position even up to now.]

CORRECTING SERIOUS ACTS OF DIVISIVENESS AND DISUNITY

The CFC Council's statement dated July 2 stated that "We sincerely believe that CFC is much more united as one body in Christ."

[If CFC is truly much more united now, then what is the purpose of this letter that seeks to do a demolition job on Frank? Why is the Council so insecure?]

It ended with: "Let us fight for our God by loving and encouraging each other and further the work of evangelization. Let us move as one body in Christ! Let us fight the good fight of faith!"

It is very unfortunate that some brothers disagreed with the CFC Council's view as well as the mandate of the Elders Assembly. The group of Bro. Frank immediately sent their contrary views through emails.

There is nothing wrong with disagreement. In fact, disagreements can be aired and discussed in the spirit of meekness and love with each other. Our Lord has provided us the right way to handle conflicts through our teachings. Specifically, we are quoting directly some pointers from Talk 5 of Living as a People of God titled "Unity and Disagreements:"



B. Conflict and meekness.. We have a choice whenever we discuss or disagree: a spirit of conflict or a spirit of meekness.

[Clearly the Council has not chosen a spirit of meekness. It is the one that is actually stoking the conflict by its actions.]

a) If conflict prevails, disunity results. If meekness prevails, unity grows and love thrives.

2. Spirit of conflict

a) What? An attempt to influence direction by applying pressure.

b) How? Manifestations:

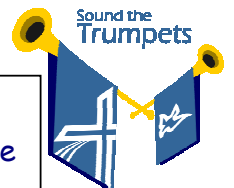
· Hostile speech, abuse, even physical violence



[It is the Council that spreads the untruths that Frank is after power and position, is envious of Tony, and the like. They do not stick to issues but becomes personal and judgmental.]

- Or less directly: being argumentative, critical, having a desire to debate.*
- High value placed on protest, confrontation, intimidation, public attack or criticism.*
- Factions, campaigns*

[The council has all the resources at its command to undertake these measures attributed to the "small" group. Like the website the Council has put up, which many including some in the BOE find divisive? Or how about the loyalty checks and signing up to support the Council?]



C. Dealing with issues/handling discussions:

2. In matters of major direction or teaching or culture in CFC (e.g. family life, evangelistic thrust, etc.):

a) All can have a role in the direction of the community

· You can have your own opinion.

[How come the Council tries to suppress all contrary opinions?]



- *The Lord may have a word for the community through you.*
- *b) But the Elders are the ones primarily responsible.*
- *They have responsibility for major decisions in CFC*

[Has anyone disputed that? When they conducted a 3-month long witch hunt against Lachie Agana, Lachie took the persecution meekly. When they fired Frank from all of his services, Frank did not dispute their unjustified moves.]

- *They listen to others and consult as needed, but they then make the decisions and expect others to accept and support these*

. [These they have not done, especially as it concerns Frank or members of the Easter Group. They have just insisted on their mandate to govern and have asked that people just simply obey. Are we a cult?]

- c) If you seriously disagree:*
- *Ask for reconsideration. Or also a wider consultation.*
- *Do not publicly oppose or organize opposition*
- *If you still can't personally accept the decision, you can request a judgment from the CFC Council, but should be willing to accept its decision.*



[And if the problem is with the Council itself? Then we must look to the Church for guidance.]

In this context let us look again at the July 2 CFC Council statement: "In this light, we reiterate our request for all to stop using broadcast emails for debate and argument. We believe this is causing disunity among the CFC family. We welcome suggestions or comments, but kindly send these through your leaders or even directly to us and not irresponsibly send the same to everyone."

[The very first one to send an email to the entire CFC global family was the CFC Council, on April 28. It was a highly irresponsible and judgmental piece that was not edifying or unifying. The first time Frank send out an email to the entire global family (excluding his daily scripture reflections of course) was one month later, on May 27!]

The group of Bro.Frank who call themselves Easter/Playboy Bunnies have been:
1. Continuously sending e-mails to the community, openly criticizing the CFC Council and emphasizing their view that there is deep division in CFC.

[This is simply untrue. The Easter Group sends out emails about issues, in its effort to seek the truth. Is the Council afraid of the truth? Are we a cult?]

2. Organizing a “restoration movement” propagating their contrary view that CFC is veering away from spirituality.

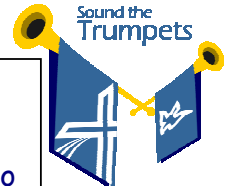
[CFC, including GK, indeed has veered away and the movement to restoration is a very noble one. It is a work of renewal from within. It should be endorsed by all. If the Council is not veering away, then what is there to fear?]

3. Meeting and planning against the CFC Council

[The Council has much more meetings that are just focused on putting down Frank and the Easter Group. It spends a lot of our hard-earned tithes to travel throughout the country and to have meetings in clubs and restaurants.]

4. Misrepresenting the real situation in CFC to our beloved Bishops.

[The only one that misrepresents the real situation to our bishops is the Council. Bp Reyes has already spoken clearly about this, in his letter dated July 12. Bp Reyes revealed the untruths of the Council. Do you even know there is such a letter, which is addressed to all CFC members. Why is the Council hiding this letter? Who indeed is misrepresenting the real situation?]



The CFC Council is compelled to share with you, brothers and sisters, all of our knowledge about the group of Bro. Frank, and the actions we have to immediately take to address serious wrongdoing, as it is our responsibility to God and to our community to defend the life and mission of Couples for Christ. We have been holding back in the past in sharing these with you publicly, in our hope that we could still take the path of dialogue and reconciliation with the few members of the group of Bro. Frank.

[Here is the Council once again resorting to trial by publicity. Frank has never committed any such wrongdoing that the Council might be hinting about here. If he did, please bring it out so that it can be judged in the light. Frank has nothing to hide. He has always served with utmost integrity.]

*(EPHESIANS 4:3 "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."
ROMANS 14:19 "Let's agree to use all our energy in getting along with each other. Help others with encouraging words; don't drag them down by finding fault.").*

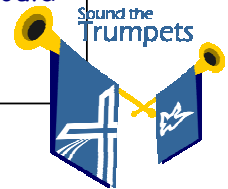
[Here again is another typical untruth. Frank has not called on any country to withdraw support. They have decided that themselves, based on what they see happening. Please show us that alleged email.]

However, the group of Bro. Frank's latest e-mail calling for CFC countries to withdraw support from the CFC International Council,



coupled with Bro. Frank's e-mail calling each and every CFC Council member to resign,

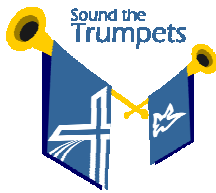
[Frank sees that the Council no longer has the mandate. The Council is the cause of our very conflicts, including with the bishops. They should have delicadeza and resign. But they keep holding on to power and position.]



puts the life of our community in great peril.

[Is it only this Council that can govern? We have very many capable leaders and these ones have displayed more impeccable integrity.]

This manner of handling disagreements goes beyond our CFC culture and is clearly in the spirit of conflict.



We have all been taught to obey and submit to our elders,

[Our constant teaching is active submission, not blind and absolute obedience. We are not a cult.]

trusting that God's hand has anointed them, and that God will use them to lead us in doing His work. Blatant disobedience to our **elders**,

[The Council equates having a contrary view with disobedience. Practicing active submission and critical collaboration is now taboo in the community]

and a rebellious call for CFC countries not to support Community leadership

[As has been said (and please ask them yourselves), they have not been solicited. Why can't this Council accept that it has done serious wrong in opposing the bishops and these countries are reacting correctly to that? Again, the Council resorts to a non sequitur and an ad hominem (judgmental and emotional calls) just like what they did to the Bishops. Again a great disservice to the wisdom and the discernment of the foreign communities' councils],

is very serious wrongdoing that threatens the very life of our community, and implies that the group of Frank does not trust that God will use our Council to lead the community.

[Where indeed is this Council leading our community? What are we being taught? How to be vindictive? How to witch hunt? How to be judgmental? How to tell outright lies? How to be insecure in their position? How not to be a servant?]

SAVING OUR COMMUNITY SO THAT WE CAN MOVE FORWARD IN UNITY

The Council exhorts each and every member to pray for God's strength, and to commit support to the life and mission of our Community. We call for the group of Bro. Frank to apologize to the community for their divisive acts



[We call on the Council to humble itself and make the sacrifice of resigning, for THEIR divisive acts, and so that we can all move forward on the path to healing and reconciliation.]

We request the group of Bro. Frank to categorically state if they still recognize the CFC Council.

[Some of us recognize that you have been legally elected, so why not be content with that?]

We request the group of Bro. Frank to respect and be submitted to the CFC Council and stop actions that cause division and undermine the mandate of the CFC Council.

[We request the Council to act as true servants, shepherds and pastors, and not as manipulators, witch hunters, and purveyors of untruth.]

We are a people of hope. And so we reach out to everyone in the spirit of love, in the hope that we can truly move forward – united once again in mind, purpose and vision.

[You have never reached out to us in love, and you have been the very cause of division.]

In the service of God,

The CFC Council

Joe Tale
Joey Arguelles
Ernie Maipid, Jr.
Rouquel Ponte
Lito Tayag
Melo Villaroman, Jr.
Joe Yamamoto

