

AN OPEN LETTER TO CFC-FFL WORLDWIDE

April 30, 2008

My dear brethren,

Grace and peace from our Lord Jesus Christ!

The turn of events

Events have moved quickly since an article entitled “Vatican admonishes CFC over GK” appeared on ABS-CBN online news last April 16 (note: we had nothing to do with that article, and the writer is unknown to me/us). Then the letter of Cardinal Rylko of the Pontifical Council for the Laity (Vatican) to Joe Tale dated March 11 surfaced on the Net (note: this did not come from us as we had no copy, but came from them as they tried to downplay the ABS-CBN news item). The letter told Joe about going back to the essentials, and the priority of building up the family, in fidelity to the Church. It talked about counterbalancing the overemphasis on the social work. It talked about the public scandal due to the mistakes committed, and the need to correct them. It urged Joe to issue a public declaration in the Philippine newspapers recognizing the errors and publicly apologizing. It directed CFC to stop receiving funding (from those producing or marketing contraceptives).

The reaction of some on the CFC-GK side was fast and furious. Boy Montelibano, the right-hand man of Tony Meloto in GK, issued a series of writings, basically maligning me, Bishop Gabriel Reyes, Cardinal Rylko of the Vatican, and the Church hierarchy in general. He used strong words such as Pharisees and hypocrisy. Other newspaper columnists such as Esposito and de Quiros, connected with Boy, joined in on the personal attacks on me and on the hierarchical Church.

We are in a time of intense spiritual warfare!

God’s action in our lives

Last year, the Lord brought us to Lamentations, to teach us a stern lesson, that we would lose it all if we are unfaithful to our covenant, just as what happened to His people Israel. I took command responsibility for our collective guilt, and made a spiritual offering of resignation from the Int’l Council. That should have brought us back to God’s grace, if we all repented and turned back from unfaithfulness to our covenant and veering away from our calling. But that did not happen, as there was disrespect and disobedience to our bishops, and there was maligning and attacks against those who wanted to restore CFC to its authentic charism.

We all allowed the enemy (the devil, our common enemy) to enter our gates, with the result that CFC plunged into deep crisis and then split.

But given that bringing us to Lamentations did not have the desired result, since there were those with hardened hearts who would not repent and turn away from errors, God then allowed the split to happen. If we had not split, CFC would soon have disintegrated, as the enemy wanted to destroy us all. With the split, the tensions between the social and the spiritual dimensions of our work were eliminated. We in CFC-FFL, the restored CFC true to its authentic charism, moved on, with great joy and starting to experience the return of God's anointing.

The enemy, thinking he had succeeded in seriously weakening CFC with the split, now saw God bringing victory out of seeming defeat. He now saw the emergence of a restored CFC, once again totally focused on the charism given it. Once again God's work of family renewal and evangelization could proceed in the power of His Spirit. And once again the enemy raged.

Since many bishops have recognized CFC-FFL, and since the Holy See, through the Pontifical Council for the Laity, has recognized the errors committed by CFC, so now it is the hierarchical Church herself that is under attack.

This is where we see that indeed we are into more intense spiritual warfare. The devil rages against the Church and her authentic work. The conflict is not just about us in CFC, but about the whole Church.

Call to prayer

What should we do?

First, be not afraid. The gates of hell will not prevail against the Church.

Second, rejoice in persecution for the sake of righteousness, for you are blessed (Mt 5:10-12). Such is God's way of purifying us and moving us on to holiness.

Third, do not retaliate in kind. Continue to love your "enemy" (the only real enemy is the devil).

Fourth, pray hard. Prayer is our lifeline to God, who is merciful, kind, just and loving. We are His children. He is committed to care for us. He knows our pains. He allows crosses into our lives. But He has a great plan for us, not for woe but for a future full of hope.

Let us pray for God's protective mantle on us all. Let us pray for our brethren who are in CFC-GK. They are our brethren and not our enemies. And let us pray for Mother Church, especially our bishops who guide and pastor us.

I ask every member of CFC-FFL, in addition to your regular daily prayer and Bible reading, to look to frequent participation in the Eucharist (daily if you can), to regular family prayer of the rosary (daily if you can), and to Eucharistic adoration (if you are

able). The different CFC-FFL groupings (households, chapters, districts, etc.) should look to communal prayer and intercession. The intercessory groups should intensify their prayers. Let us also pray the chaplet of the Divine Mercy.

I also call on fasting twice a week. We, and the whole Church, are into intense spiritual warfare. Certain demons “can only come out through prayer (and through fasting)” (Mk 9:29). We are on spiritual war footing. Be fit for the fight.

Finally, keep your hearts pure and humble. “‘God opposes the proud but bestows favor on the humble.’ So humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your worries upon him because he cares for you.” (1 Pt 5:5-7).

Rejoice in the Lord

It is appropriate that we in CFC-FFL have taken on the theme of joy for this year. God loves us, God has a great plan for us, God will never abandon us, God turns our pains and crosses into sanctification and holiness. And God is already victorious over the enemy. What more could we ask for?

I leave you with Peter’s wise words.

“Now who is going to harm you if you are enthusiastic for what is good? But even if you should suffer because of righteousness, blessed are you. Do not be afraid or terrified with fear of them, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope, but do it with gentleness and reverence, keeping your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who defame your good conduct in Christ may themselves be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that be the will of God, than for doing evil.” (1 Pt 3:13-17)

Mama Mary, please pray for us and keep us in your loving embrace always.

God bless us all.

Your brother in Christ,

Frank Padilla