

*Priests for Life is a recognized Catholic association and a 501(c)(3) corporation whose mission is to end abortion and euthanasia. With a full-time staff of over 60 people, it is a family of ministries, encompassing Deacons for Life, Seminarians for Life, Rachel's Vineyard, the Silent No More Awareness Campaign, Gospel of Life Ministries, and more.*

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*Assisting God's People to Proclaim, Celebrate, and Serve the Gospel of Life.*

August 31, 2014

His Holiness Pope Francis  
Vatican City State

Your Holiness,

It is with joy and encouragement that we, the leaders of national pro-life organizations in the United States, have received the news of the various initiatives of the Catholic Church this year and next year in favor of the family.

The Extraordinary Synod of Bishops, to meet later this year, will address the *Pastoral Challenges of the Family in the Context of Evangelization*. We, as pro-life leaders who advocate for the youngest members of the family -- the children still in the womb -- and work with the moms, dads, and other family members both to avoid abortion and to heal the wounds they suffer after abortion, see firsthand the pastoral challenges in regard to this critical issue. We have noted that the preparatory document (*Instrumentum Laboris*) of the Synod contains a major section on "openness to life," and we appreciate the work that has already been done by bishops' conferences and other organizations worldwide to give input and observations about how to build a culture of life.

We have also noted that the General Assembly of the World Synod of Bishops, to take place in October of 2015, will have an inspiring theme, namely, *Jesus Christ Reveals the Mystery and Vocation of the Family*. This promises to be a very fruitful avenue of reflection, meditation, study, and commitment on the part of so many people who strive to impact our culture today with the truth that the family is not a temporary, superficial, or man-made phenomenon, but rather, truly, a sign of God's presence that flows from his very heart, and that, as Scripture tells us, his gifts and his call are irrevocable (cf. Rom. 11:29). Foundational to those gifts are life and family.

*www.priestsforlife.org*  
*"The Spirit God has given us is no cowardly spirit." (2 Tim. 1:7)*

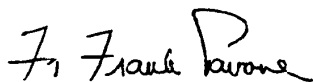
It is also a particularly exciting development that the World Meeting of Families, for the first time, will occur here in our own country in September of 2015. The theme of this gathering in Philadelphia, namely, *Love is our Mission: The Family Fully Alive*, is of particular interest to us as pro-life leaders. No family can be fully alive, of course, if the youngest children are devalued and killed by abortion. Moreover, as we strive to bear witness every day, the saving of lives is a mission inspired by and carried out by the power of love.

As men and women who strategize and labor each day to bring an end to abortion in America, we represent people of a wide variety of Christian denominations. We also realize that the effort to build a culture of life involves articulating truths and defending values that reach far beyond specific denominational boundaries. We build here on the very foundations of humanity and of civilization.

We therefore want to express our gratitude for these initiatives and our promise of prayers, particularly this September 28, which has been designated as a Day of Prayer for the upcoming Synod. Moreover, it would be our joy and honor to participate, as representatives of the pro-life movement in the USA, in the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia. We know that this is an event which is meant to embrace and involve the entire Body of Christ, and indeed all people of good will, and in that spirit we look forward to hearing how we can be of assistance, not only in the event itself, but in the work of education and service that will precede and follow it.

With sentiments of esteem, we are

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Father Frank Pavone  
National Director, Priests for Life  
Coordinator, Pro-Life Leadership Coalition  
President, National Pro-life Religious Council

*The following national pro-life leaders in the United States have also signed onto this letter:*

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Hispanics for Life

David Bereit  
National Director  
40 Days for Life

Bethany & Ryan Bomberger  
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Dr Angela Lanfranchi  
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Toda América con Cristo

Cc: His Excellency, Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, President, Pontifical Council for the Family  
His Excellency, Archbishop Charles Chaput, OFM Cap., Archbishop of Philadelphia