

MARCH 2, 2020

His Holiness, Pope Francis  
Apostolic Palace  
00120 Vatican City.

Dear Pope Francis,

Our organization led the largest international gathering of clergy sexual abuse victims and activists in Rome in February 2019 and 2020. Our conduct was peaceful and our message clear: Zero Tolerance.

Last month, during the first anniversary of your global summit on abuse we returned to Rome to deliver a report on the developments over the past year from around the world. Our presence was not acknowledged and no one from the Vatican or Church leadership approached us. This was in sharp contrast to last year when we were invited to meet with your planning group before the Summit and Cardinals dropped in to visit with us during the Summit for informal exchanges.

We came this year with the expectation of engagement with you or your representatives and to give you our assessment of the past year. We were met with indifference and silence. We were promised in our meeting with the planning group of the summit last year that there would be follow-up and dialogue with us. To date, there has been none.

Don't you want to know what is happening with survivors concerning this issue from around the world? You may recall you ended your 2019 summit by calling for an [“all-out battle” against a crime that should be “erased from the face of the earth”](#). How can you seriously resolve this global crisis without embracing the experience and wisdom from survivors around the world who are actively working to end abuse in the church?

Among the survivors traveling to Rome this year were Argentine deaf survivors of clerical sexual abuse from the Provolo Institute in La Plata and Mendoza, Argentina, who were raped, sexually assaulted and physically tortured by Catholic priests, nuns and lay people employed by the Company of Mary for the Education of the Deaf, a congregation that answers to the Vatican and to you. They requested a public audience with you along with their human rights attorneys and survivor-leaders who sponsored their trip. The request for the public meeting was ignored.

On February 21 they attempted entrance to the CDF to request their files of abuse but were denied entrance. They called Monsignor John Kennedy of the CDF to request their files and were unable to speak to him but left him a voice message. Their call has not been returned.

How does your continual, insistent public exhortation that you are listening to survivors and that bishops must do the same, translate into actuality when the response to these deaf survivors is the exact opposite?

We are particularly offended by a report on February 28, 2020 in the Novena News, where Charles Scicluna, the Archbishop of Malta who is also the Adjunct Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, one of the Vatican's top investigators of clergy sex abuse, insisted that with new papal initiatives "[silence and cover-ups](#)" in the Church are now "[a thing of the past](#)".

How can this be true?

Given the recent prosecutions of [Rev. Nicola Bruno Corradi, 83, sentenced to 42 years in prison, and the Rev. Horacio Hugo Corbacho, 59, of Argentina, sentenced to 45 years in prison](#), it is public knowledge that other survivors from the Provolo Institute in Italy have tried to talk to you since 2014 about the abuses in the Provolo Institutions but have not been successful. The Argentine attorneys also know that you directly received information about Provolo church personnel, accused of sexual abuse in Italy, who were in Argentina taking care of children.

We know you ordered the Judicial Vicar, Dante Simon, to investigate the events in Mendoza. This led to the immediate intervention of Bishop Alberto Bochaty, who to date has not cooperated in the criminal investigations. Both Simon and Bochaty have been criminally accused of obstructing justice, and they were summoned by the Public Prosecutor's Office to be questioned about these crimes. Despite the prison sentences given to the main perpetrators of these crimes, Bishop Alberto Bochaty, denies the Argentine survivors the recognition as victims and the required reparations for the damages caused by the abuse. Isn't this "silence and cover-up"? How does this conduct continue when you have abolished "papal secrecy" in abuse cases with the promulgation of your new law requiring church officials to fully cooperate with civil authorities in abuse cases? Of what value is this "reform" when your own appointed delegates can openly defy it?

Given this one case, which is a typical scenario of a global systematic strategy of cover-up, how then can Archbishop Scicluna publicly pronounce that silence and cover-ups in the Church are a thing of the past?

In our travels to Rome, survivors were embraced by strangers in our gatherings and actions. This is hospitality. That is how you treat strangers, as in the Biblical story of the widow and the

orphan. How the Church treats the widow and the stranger is crucial to church teaching. Survivors are the widows and the strangers in the church today.

We are saddened that you could not receive and welcome your own fellow countrymen and women last month. We wanted you to deliver to them some hope and words and actions signifying a change.

We again ask for a meeting in the very near future with you that includes the Argentine deaf survivors, their attorneys and ECA leaders.

We further ask that the Argentine attorneys be given the contact information for a senior person at the CDF with whom they can directly communicate to obtain any files related to their Provolo clients.

We ask for a follow up meeting with your Summit planning group as promised to continue our dialogue on these vital issues.

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***Ending Clergy Abuse (ECA)*** is a worldwide leadership network of survivors of clergy abuse and human rights activists. Its mission is to compel the Roman Catholic Church to end clergy abuse, protect children, and seek justice for victims. ECA assembly members represent over 21 countries from 6 continents. <https://www.ecaglobal.org> – [@ENDCLERGYABUSE](https://www.facebook.com/ENDCLERGYABUSE/) – <https://www.facebook.com/ENDCLERGYABUSE/> – [contactus@ecaglobal.org](mailto:contactus@ecaglobal.org)