



CONVENTUS SS. MICHAELIS ET ANTONII
EX ORDINEM FRATRUM MINORUM
SUBSEQUENTIBUS

Prevented from Receiving our Brother

Itatinga-SP, May 7, 2026.

“Exsurge, Domine, et judica causam meam.”
“Arise, O Lord, and judge my cause.”

Pax et Bonum!

Dear faithful,

It is with astonishment, sadness, and a grave sense of responsibility that we announce the cancellation of the Solemn Mass that was to be celebrated by the newly ordained priest, the Rev. Fr. Lucas Oliveira, in our friary. And, in order to be just before God, before the Church, and before the faithful, we judge it necessary to offer here the appropriate explanations.

We are not moved by any taste for controversy. God preserve us from such misery. But there are moments when silence ceases to be prudence and begins to look like consent. In such moments, the words of Our Lord concerning His disciples apply: “I say to you, that if these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out.” There are hours when remaining silent is no longer a virtue, but an omission. And, after so many attacks, so many insinuations, so many public accusations, and so many maneuvers behind the scenes, the time has come to put some order into things.

Why was the Mass Announced so Late?

Many of the faithful may have found it strange that the Solemn Mass was announced only last Monday. The reason is simple: although it had been scheduled for a long time, its realization began to suffer strong pressure when the Rev. Fr. G., a Brazilian priest, and His Most Reverend Excellency Bishop P., an Argentine bishop, learned of the event.

Both began to intervene with His Most Reverend Excellency Bishop P., an American bishop, so that Rev. Fr. Lucas would not come to the friary and would not celebrate the Solemn Mass among us. After insistent pressures, the Mass was canceled even before it was announced.

However, through the intervention of Rev. Fr. Francis Miller and of the Franciscan community in Brazil, it was made clear to Bishop P. that such interference in the internal affairs of our religious

community was not legitimate. The Mass, then, was confirmed once again, and we received authorization to announce it. That is what we did.

But, as it seems, the mere announcement of a Solemn Mass was enough to cause great commotion behind the scenes. Rev. Fr. G could not bear the news and contacted Rev. Fr. Lucas, complaining about his decision.

The Curious Proposal of Secrecy

There was also a suggestion worthy of note. According to what we could understand from the matter, Bishop P., the American bishop, had suggested that Rev. Fr. Lucas could indeed come to the friary; he could indeed be with us; but all without publicity.

In other words: we would have Rev. Fr. Lucas among us, we would celebrate the Mass, we would give thanks to God for his priestly ordination, but all in hiding, so as not to displease Bishop P., the Argentine bishop, or Rev. Fr. G., the Brazilian priest. A beautiful solution, no doubt: to please both Greeks and Trojans, even if it were necessary to place the light under a bushel.

But the Church does not live by games of shadows. A Solemn Mass is not contraband. A newly ordained priest is not a clandestine visitor. And a religious community is not a suspicious house, where one enters through the back door so that no one may see.

If there was no real problem in Rev. Fr. Lucas' being with us, why the secrecy? If there was a real problem, why allow him to come? The proposal, by itself, already reveals the nature of the impasse: it was not a matter of doctrine, but of appearance; it was not a matter of objective scandal, but of convenience; it was not a matter of pastoral zeal, but of calculation.

The Justification Presented

The justification presented by Bishop P., the Argentine bishop, under the influence of Rev. Fr. G., was the following: since our community is currently assisted by His Most Reverend Excellency Bishop Rodrigo da Silva, and since this bishop also works with the Carmelite religious priest Brother T., the presence of the Rev. Fr. Lucas in our friary could make the faithful associate him with us, with Bishop Rodrigo, or with certain positions they wish to avoid.

The explanation is curious. Very curious. Almost edifying, were it not lamentable.

Because, in clearer language, the question is not properly doctrinal, nor sacramental, nor pastoral. The question is one of image. Of appearance. Of politics. Or, to use a more exact word, politicking.

Very well: since the official justification does not touch the heart of the problem, it is fitting to explain to the faithful what the real motives of this cancellation actually are.

The True Background

Many of the faithful have followed, in recent months, the disputes between our community and the bishops Bishop P., the Argentine, and Bishop P., the American, regarding the question of civil marriage in exceptional cases.

We shall not enter again into the technical merit of the question. This has already been amply treated by Rev. Fr. Boaventura in the video and in the article entitled *Civil Marriage: The “Novelty” that the Friars Teach*, available on the internet, with more than one hundred pages and numerous citations from moralists, canonists, and sound authors.

Our position, in summary, is this: in certain exceptional circumstances, civil marriage can be valid, provided that the necessary conditions are verified, as has already been explained, distinguished, and proven in the aforementioned study. We do not teach that civil marriage is always valid. We do not teach that it is a sacrament in itself. We do not teach that anyone may be married, in any situation, according to convenience. What we defend is the serious, specific, and prudent analysis of each matrimonial case.

It seems, however, that the mere word “prudence” has become offensive to the ears of some. And theological distinction, which has always been an instrument of sound doctrine, has begun to be treated as a crime.

The Persecution that Followed

From the moment our community, out of prudence, refused to celebrate a second marriage in a concrete situation, a bitter persecution began against us.

Rev. Fr. G. began to move heaven and earth to isolate, suffocate, discredit, and, in a word, relegate our community to ostracism. His influence over Bishop P., the Argentine bishop, became evident. The result was the denial of sacramental assistance to our community: ordinations, pastoral visitation, and confirmations for the faithful were refused to us.

This is grave. Most grave.

We then appealed to Bishop P., the American bishop, who, before his episcopal consecration, made a formal promise always to work for the unity of the Church.

During this entire process, we were publicly accused of heresy. Rev. Fr. C., an Argentine priest who works in Brazil, began to repeat, in his missions, absolutely false accusations: he said that the friars teach that civil marriage is always valid; that we teach that it is a sacrament; that we teach that there are only six sacraments; and other equally fanciful assertions.

In the face of this, our community preferred, for a long time, silence. Not out of fear, but out of love for the good of souls and the peace of the Church. However, as the months passed, the calumnies began to harm, in a notable way, the name of our religious institution, the confidence of the faithful, and the very work that, with so much sacrifice, we have sought to sustain.

When Calumny Becomes a Method

Rev. Fr. G. took upon himself the sad role of spreading, even in groups of faithful, attacks against our institution. It is painful to observe that, in this time of crisis, besides having to fight the external enemies of the faith, we still need to endure attacks from those who profess with us the same Catholic faith. The word of Our Lord is painfully fulfilled: “And a man’s enemies shall be they of his own household” (Mt 10,36).

As if the accusations were not enough, the faithful connected to our community also began to suffer. Many, simple and pious, withdrew from the “terrible” and “heretical” Franciscans. We lost faithful, benefactors, and public esteem. The few who remained with us were attacked, vilified, and, in some cases, treated as heretics.

According to what has reached us, Rev. Fr. C. even went so far as to forbid faithful connected to our community from receiving the sacraments in his missions. Behold the beautiful pastoral charity: if one cannot win by argument, one wins by ostracism; if one does not refute a thesis, one punishes those who read it; if one does not answer the study, one condemns those who dare to ask.

And then they still speak of unity.

The Recourse to Bishop Rodrigo da Silva

With the lack of assistance from Bishop P., the American bishop, from Bishop P., the Argentine bishop, and also from Bishop D., the Mexican bishop, we were obliged, after months of attempts at negotiation, to appeal to His Most Reverend Excellency Bishop Rodrigo da Silva.

Bishop Rodrigo paternally received our request for assistance, making himself available to come and confer orders upon the brothers who were prepared, as well as to ordain *ad Missam* one of the religious, in order to help maintain the regularity of conventual life and the sacramental life of the community.

We did not do this out of a spirit of rebellion. We did it out of necessity. When a religious community is deprived of assistance because of external pressures, intrigues, and accusations never proven, it has the right — and, in certain cases, the duty — to seek help where it may legitimately find it.

The Silence of the Accusers

After the announcement of Bishop Rodrigo’s visit, the attacks continued on social media. Nevertheless, at no moment did we see Bishop P., the American bishop, Bishop P., the Argentine bishop, Fr. G., or Fr. C. present a serious, documented, and solid refutation of what was defended by our community on the matrimonial question.

To accuse is easy. To refute requires study.

Anyone can call someone a heretic. To open the books, cite the authors, distinguish the cases, weigh the circumstances, face the arguments — that is another matter. And, curiously, this is exactly what they did not do.

They preferred another tactic: strategic silence. To wait for the faithful to forget. To smother the discussion. Not to answer the article. Not to face the video. Not to allow the question to be studied with serenity. We recall here that the whole question once debated was made public by the aforementioned clerics; yet they have not, up to the present moment, presented any satisfactory argument.

Rev. Fr. G., according to what has reached us, even said in a group of his faithful that whoever watched the video and read the article, and afterwards had doubts, should not seek him out to resolve them. Admirable pedagogical method: first one accuses; then one forbids study; finally, one refuses to

answer doubts. In former times, perhaps, this would have been called censorship. Today, probably, it is called “pastoral prudence.”

What is the Fear?

We have always said, with complete clarity: if someone proves, with documents, with the doctrine of the Church, with sound moralists and canonists, that our position is contrary to Catholic teaching, we shall publicly retract.

We do not ask for shouting. We ask for proofs. We do not ask for personal authority. We ask for argument. We do not ask for impressions. We ask for doctrine.

But up to now they have not presented it.

So the question remains: what is the fear?

Fear that we may be right? Fear that, for years, some matrimonial cases may have been treated hastily? Fear that people may have been united without due analysis of previous bonds? Fear that the “heretical” Franciscans may simply have touched a wound that many would prefer to keep covered?

It is a rather uncomfortable question.

Where does Rev. Fr. Lucas Oliveira Enter?

Someone might ask: but what does all this have to do with the Solemn Mass of Rev. Fr. Lucas Oliveira?

It has a direct relation.

Rev. Fr. Lucas Oliveira has known our community for a long time. And we do not say this for our own praise, but so that the truth may not be buried under the conveniences of the moment. Our community assisted him even before his ordination. When he wished to go to the United States for the seminary of Bishop P., the American bishop, he resided in our friary. There he was helped in the preparations for his journey, received assistance in learning English, and counted on our support during the years of formation. During his vacations, the community assumed all the costs of his round-trip tickets to Brazil and of almost all his domestic air travel. Moreover, our superior frequently hosted him in his home, and our community helped with numerous other expenses. From early on, he was received into the Franciscan family as a tertiary, and our relations were always cordial, fraternal, and sincere.

There is, therefore, between our community and the now newly ordained Rev. Fr. Lucas, a true history of friendship and brotherhood.

But, under the pressure of Bishop P., the American bishop, of Bishop P., the Argentine bishop, and especially of the Rev. Fr. G., who did not cease telephoning and pressuring the young priest to cancel the Mass, the Rev. Fr. Lucas ended up yielding. The Mass was canceled.

The True Scandal

They said that it would be a great scandal for the faithful of Brazil to see Rev. Fr. Lucas celebrate a Solemn Mass in the friary of the Franciscan friars.

But let us see.

The Mass had already been announced. Faithful from far away had organized themselves to come. A fraternal gathering had been prepared. Catering had been ordered. Tables and chairs had been rented. Everything was arranged to celebrate with joy the priestly ordination of a beloved brother.

And then, almost on the eve, everything was canceled.

This, yes, is scandal.

Not the fact that a priest would celebrate a Solemn Mass in a community that helped him. Not the fact that a newly ordained priest would visit brothers who esteem him. Not the fact that the faithful would gather to give thanks to God for an ordination. The scandal is to transform a priestly celebration into an instrument of pressure, fear, and political calculation.

This weight does not fall upon us. It falls upon those who pressured, manipulated, and imposed this cancellation.

They will answer before God not only for a canceled Mass, but for the harm caused to simple souls, to the faithful who had prepared themselves, to the honor of the community, and to the charity that should reign among Catholics.

The Real Reason for the Cancellation

The real reason for the pressure against the coming of Rev. Fr. Lucas is not our connection with Bishop Rodrigo da Silva. This is only the pretext.

The true reason is another: fear.

Fear that the presence of Rev. Fr. Lucas in the friary would break the plan of moral asphyxiation of the community. Fear that the faithful might see that the friars are not monsters. Fear that they might perceive that there are old, fraternal, and legitimate relations between us and the newly ordained priest. Fear that it might be concluded that not everyone believes the caricature that has been made of the Franciscans.

Because, after all, the plan seemed to be going well: the faithful had withdrawn; the chapel had emptied; benefactors had been lost; missions had been occupied; and the image of the friars had been sufficiently stained so that many no longer wished even to hear our version.

All this upon the fragile foundation of lies, intellectual dishonesty, and the absence of theological refutation.

This is how some set themselves up as defenders of Tradition: not by combating error with doctrine, but by smothering discussion with pressure.

The Curious Elasticity of “Unity”

There is still one very instructive detail.

Rev. Fr. Lucas cannot come to our friary. He cannot have public relations with us. He cannot celebrate a Solemn Mass among the friars. It would be, they say, a great scandal.

However, after being ordained, he will live with Rev. Fr. Francis Miller, our Superior General, at Christ the King Parish, in the United States. He will live under the same roof, eat at the same table, and celebrate at the same altar. And all this with the consent of Bishop P., the American bishop.

Now, the simple faithful may ask, with every reason: but is Rev. Fr. Francis Miller not a Franciscan? Is he not the Superior General of the friars of Brazil? If the friars are heretics, would he not also be under the same suspicion? How then can Rev. Fr. Lucas live with him, eat at the same table, and celebrate at the same altar in the United States, but not celebrate among us in Brazil?

A profound mystery. Almost mystical.

It seems that there is one unity for the United States and another for South America. One policy up there and another down here. A practical communion when convenient; a public condemnation when useful. And all this clothed with beautiful words: “unity,” “prudence,” “communion,” “ecclesiastical policy.”

Or, speaking without ornaments: politicking.

What the Friars Really Defend

We, Franciscan friars, are not heretics. We are Roman Apostolic Catholics. We believe in the seven sacraments. We believe in the traditional doctrine of the Church. We believe in the sanctity of marriage. We believe in the necessity of treating each case with seriousness, prudence, and fear of God.

We do not go about “marrying just anyone.” We do not unite people in adultery. We do not interfere in the chapels of other priests. What we defend is the specific study of each matrimonial case, in the light of Catholic moral theology, canon law, and the sound authors of the Church.

If we are wrong, let them prove it. If they prove it, we shall publicly retract, with all our heart, before God and Holy Mother Church.

But, if they are wrong, will they do the same? Will they repair the harm caused? Will they restore the wounded honor? Will they ask forgiveness of the confused faithful? Will they acknowledge the calumnies spread? Or will they continue hiding behind the word “unity,” as if it were a mantle wide enough to cover any injustice?

The Work of God passes through the Crucible

We have a tranquil conscience before God.

We know that every work of God must pass through the crucible of humiliation. It must be tested, despised, trampled upon, persecuted, almost reduced to ashes. But truth does not die because men silence it. Justice does not disappear because the powerful postpone it. And Providence does not allow itself to be overcome by human intrigues.

“And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

We hope in the good God that, in due time, He will cause the truth to shine forth. We do not desire vengeance. We desire justice. We do not desire division. We desire true unity. We do not desire anyone’s ruin. We desire that all submit sincerely to the truth of the Holy Church.

Let us pray, dear faithful, for the true unity of the Church. Let us pray that calumnies, pressures, manipulations, and false accusations may cease. Let us pray that God may grant us, as soon as possible, a true Supreme Pontiff. Because, if the Lord does not shorten these times, even the just may waver.

May God have mercy on us.

May Our Lady of Defense help us.

Da pacem, Domine, in diebus nostris.

In Jesus, Mary, and Joseph,

Friars Minor¹



Fr. Francis Miller, O. F. M. Sub.
Father Francis Miller, O. F. M. Sub
Superior General

¹**Note:** The present letter was corrected and approved in Conventual Chapter, presided over by the Rev. Fr. Francis Miller, O. F. M. Sub., and is in full accord with the mind of the community.