

## **ASSOCIATION OF CHICAGO PRIESTS**

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August 28, 2014

His Holiness, Pope Francis  
Apostolic Palace  
00120 Vatican City

Your Holiness,

The Association of Chicago Priests (ACP) has recently written the Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, at the suggestion of our Archbishop of Chicago, Francis Cardinal George. At our ACP Executive Board annual meeting with Cardinal George in June 2014, we asked how we could contribute to the process of the selection of a new archbishop for the Archdiocese of Chicago. He said that we could write a letter to the Papal Nuncio with our concerns and ideas, which is what we have done. We would also like to express the same to you.

The Association of Chicago Priests is the first priest's association in the USA and was formed while John Cardinal Cody was Archbishop of Chicago. Our organization has been in existence for 48 years and was formed in the collegial spirit of Vatican II. At the end of this letter is our Mission Statement, by which we continue to lead the presbyterate of Chicago. You are welcome to visit our WEB site, [www.ACPriests.org](http://www.ACPriests.org), to learn more about us.

We believe that we need to have an archbishop who will be pastoral and will have a primary concern for the poor, the powerless, and the marginalized. We have been inspired by your address to the Papal Nuncios on June 21, 2013, when you said:

In the delicate task of carrying out inquiries for episcopal appointments be careful that the candidates are pastors close to the people, fathers and brothers, that they are gentle, patient and merciful; animated by inner poverty, the freedom of the Lord and also by outward simplicity and austerity of life, that they do not have the psychology of "Princes". Be careful that they are not ambitious, that they do not seek the episcopate—volentes nolumus—and that they are married to a Church without being in constant search of another. That they are able to "watch over" the flock that will be entrusted to them, take care to keep it united, "vigilant" of the dangers that threaten it, but above all that they are able to "watch over" the flock, to keep watch, imbue hope, that they have sun and light in their hearts, to lovingly and patiently support the plans which God brings about in His people.

We strongly believe that the Archdiocese of Chicago needs an Archbishop that possesses these qualities. We also believe that he needs to be well disposed to creating a true fraternity of priests of the archdiocese, both the diocesan and religious priests, who need to pray together to enhance their working together. We desire a new archbishop after the manner and style of your pastoral ministry. We need this style to breathe new life and spirit into the lives of the presbyterate of the Archdiocese of Chicago. We have very many dedicated priests who love their people and strive to be good shepherds who smell like their sheep. Unfortunately, our varying models of ministry do not always promote a sense of collegiality and working together for the salvation of God's people.

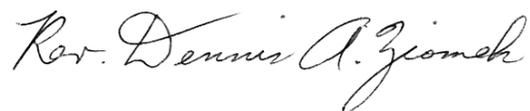
In 1982, when Joseph Cardinal Bernardin came to Chicago as Archbishop, he introduced himself to the priests of the Archdiocese as "I am Joseph, your brother." We believe that a pastoral archbishop who identifies with his priests as a brother, who inspires his priests by his example as you are doing for the entire People of God, would be the one who could and would energize the Archdiocese of Chicago.

We are truly grateful to Francis Cardinal George, who was installed as our 13<sup>th</sup> Ordinary in 1997. We appreciate the spiritual leadership he has provided for both the Church of Chicago and the Church of the United States. Our prayers are with him as he continues to battle cancer.

The appointment you make for the Archdiocese of Chicago will send a message of hope to the entire People of God throughout the country and the world. A pastoral archbishop would help to continue the work of the Second Vatican Council here in Chicago, in the Province of Illinois, and be a model for other dioceses in the USA.

Our prayers are with Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, as he advises you in the selection of a new Archbishop for Chicago. Our prayers are also with you, our Holy Father, for your continued good health and for your powerful, pastoral example that inspires us.

Yours in Christ,



Rev. Dennis A. Ziomek,  
Chair of the Association of Chicago Priests

### **Mission Statement of the Association of Chicago Priests**

- † To cooperate with the Archbishop in the Pastoral Care of the Local Church.
- † To foster dialogue and support among priests locally, nationally and abroad.
- † To nourish collaboration of priests with others serving in ministry.
- † To promote locally, ecumenism among the Christian Churches, and to cooperate with and promote interfaith dialogue with other faiths.
- † To seek cooperative action that promotes peace and justice through the entire metropolitan community, particularly noticing and attending to the needs of the poor and the alienated.
- † To strive for equality of women and men of all races and cultures.