

MISSION OF DIVINE MERCY

Out of Obedience:

A Response to the Archbishop's Statement and Decrees of March 15, 2024

Introduction

On March 15, 2024, the Archbishop of San Antonio announced a series of actions that he was taking against the Mission of Divine Mercy (MDM) and its members, led for many years by the Fr. John Mary Foster. The members of the Mission do not want to increase the polemics with the Archdiocese in this situation which is painful for us all. However, there are some clarifications that we believe are needed to dispel some inaccuracies, especially since the Archbishop's communications were disseminated so widely.

This statement is an effort to clarify those inaccuracies.

The core of this response was written within weeks of the Archbishop's letter, as we wanted to provide a timely response. But various circumstances, including new communications from the Archbishop and the Vatican's promulgation of new norms for evaluating purported supernatural phenomena, have delayed its issuance until now.

Despite the delay, we believe this statement will help anyone reading it in good faith to have a better understanding of our situation.

In publishing this statement, we ask that the Holy Spirit guide us all with charity, humility, and patience.

While there are several points in the Archbishop's letter that we fear could lead to confusion and misunderstanding without some clarification, **it is the Archbishop's discernment and evaluation of the Messages that we believe has been most inaccurately conveyed in his letter and has the greatest potential to distort most unfairly the public's understanding.** Consequently, that issue will be given priority in this statement, including the providing of a timeline in the appendix for further clarity.¹

¹ The other major issues of concern are:

- Mischaracterizing a key interaction between the Archbishop and Father John Mary;
- Wrongly dating the beginnings of the Mission of Divine Mercy's ministry in the Archdiocese;
- Misunderstanding the size and growth of the Mission of Divine Mercy.

These issues are dealt with later in this response.

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1. Discernment and Evaluation of the Messages by the Archbishop

Mischaracterization

In his announcement, the Archbishop stated:

The only stipulation I have ever requested of the MDM -- in order to prevent any misunderstandings and possible scandal -- was to refrain from publishing any alleged prophetic message until they were reviewed to ensure they were not harmful to the people of God. This stipulation was intended to protect the faithful since the alleged prophetic writings include many scandalous claims and false teachings. Until just recently, the members of the Mission of Divine Mercy have been obedient to my request.

From this statement, a reasonable person would likely conclude that the Archbishop had carefully evaluated a number of the Messages early on and, finding “many scandalous claims and false teachings,” requested that the Mission of Divine Mercy refrain from publishing them.

However, that conclusion is inaccurate for the following three reasons:

1. The Mission of Divine Mercy made a prompt and detailed report on the prophetic charism and Messages that some of its members were experiencing.
2. The Archdiocese never made a serious and timely discernment of the Messages received. To date, it has never conducted a formal sworn interview of Sister Amapola.
3. The Archdiocese never even mentioned or alluded to “many [or any] scandalous claims and false teachings” in the Messages prior to their publication this year.

Let us look at each of these points in greater detail.²

Prompt and Detailed Disclosure by the Mission of Divine Mercy

- Within months of the first Messages having been received by Sister Amapola, the Mission of Divine Mercy informed the Archbishop of them, took part in a meeting to discuss them (April 7, 2017), and provided numerous examples of them at that meeting.

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² The fullest understanding of these points can be gained by reading the detailed timeline of the interactions between the Archdiocese and the Mission of Divine Mercy regarding the Messages found in an appendix to this statement. We believe the timeline is very helpful in getting a clearer picture of this process, but placed it in the appendix to avoid making this statement too long. The statement itself summarizes the main findings of the timeline.

³ This meeting also included sharing some Messages received by Brother Mikael. Several years prior to Sister Amapola’s first experience of receiving Messages, Brother Mikael had his own experience of sensing the Lord was speaking to him—mostly simple Messages of encouragement during difficult times—but that experience had seemed to go away, and he did not pursue it. Not long after Sister Amapola’s experience began, Brother Mikael again sensed the Lord speaking to him, but now receiving Messages meant not only for him, but often to be shared. As with Sister Amapola, some of the Messages are meant to be shared with an individual only, some with a particular group, e.g., the Community, or the Amici Christi, and some with all of God’s people. For the last several years, Brother Mikael has stopped receiving Messages, even as Sister Amapola continues to receive them. The Community believes that many of the Messages he has received are meant to be shared at some point during the Reconquest, but that the Lord will indicate when. Because his Messages have not been made public and have not been part of the current controversy, our response focuses on the Messages received by Sister Amapola.

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- Most of the time for the meeting was allocated by the Archbishop to discuss other topics. When the Messages were brought up, he politely received the copies prepared for him but expressed no interest in receiving more. He stated that the Messages should not be published and left it at that.
- In 2018, the Mission of Divine Mercy received the Visitation questionnaire of the Archdiocese, covering a wide array of topics from formation to finances.⁴ In response to one section of questions, we presented a history of the prophetic charism's importance to the Mission, and many more examples of the Messages, totaling over 280 pages in the Visitation report alone. Along with some 28 pages of additional information on other occasions.

Lack of a Discernment Process by the Bishops

If God is speaking prophetically through someone, it is surely important to discern that and listen to what God is saying. Likewise, if someone is falsely claiming to receive prophetic messages, it is important to discern that as well. When the purported messages are being received within an established apostolate of the Archdiocese, whose superior is a priest of some experience in these matters and who has tentatively discerned that the messages appear to be authentic, was it not incumbent upon the Archdiocese and the local Ordinary to begin a serious discernment and evaluation of the messages and the messenger? Unfortunately, this did not happen—and has not happened at all.

- Archbishop Garcia-Siller: Never in the subsequent seven years has the Archbishop requested a meeting with Father John Mary, or any member of the Mission of Divine Mercy Community, to have a significant and discerning discussion with him about the Messages, despite their central importance to the Community's life and apostolate. This importance was made clear by the Mission of Divine Mercy in the Visitation report.
- Auxiliary Bishops Michael Boulette and Gary Janak: Father John Mary raised the issue of the Messages on several occasions with Auxiliary Bishop Boulette and once with Auxiliary Bishop Janak. Neither of the Bishops offered to engage with Father John Mary in a serious discernment of the significance and authenticity of the Messages. Auxiliary Bishop Boulette stated that he saw “nothing” in the Messages contrary to faith and morals but neither did they seem to him supernatural in origin. He reiterated this point recently in a February 1, 2024 meeting between the members of the Mission of Divine Mercy and the three Bishops. He never provided any detailed verbal or written explanation of his conclusions. Auxiliary Bishop Janak merely said any discussion of the Messages was a matter to be taken up with the Archbishop.
- No interviews with Sister Amapola or her associates: In seven years and to date, there has been no attempt to interview Sister Amapola concerning the Messages she has received, or anyone who knew her well, such as family, friends or Community members who could provide insight to her character.
- A disconcerting disinterest: Bishops are busy men, pressed with many weighty matters and concerns. It is understandable that they can't simply drop all those concerns anytime a person approaches them claiming to have received a private revelation. But

⁴ Visitation is the term for the right and duty every ecclesiastical superior has to formally visit and examine persons and institutions within his jurisdiction, as he deems fit, for the purpose of ensuring their well-functioning and faithful service to the Church.

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in this instance regarding the Messages, as noted above, the request came from one of the Archbishop's own priests, a priest with decades of experience, and concerned members of an apostolate that had served in the Archdiocese faithfully for many years. Would it not make sense to give such a request more weight and careful consideration? **At the February 1, 2024, meeting, the Archbishop and his Auxiliaries were asked if they had ever assigned someone to carefully evaluate the Messages. They admitted that despite the passage of seven years, they had not.**

No Problematic Content

Any impression that the Mission of Divine Mercy was aware of or had been given any clear communication in the seven years prior to the current situation that the Archbishop believed these Messages contained any “scandalous claims or false teachings” is simply wrong and not borne out by the facts. We believe that it was inaccurate and most unhelpful for the Archbishop's letter to suggest otherwise.

- February 29, 2024: Archbishop Garcia-Siller summoned Father John Mary to a meeting that took place a day after publication of the first Message. This is the first time the Archbishop referenced “scandalous material” in the Messages.
- To repeat: In the nearly seven years since Archbishop Gustavo had become aware of the Messages and prior to the February 29, 2024 meeting of the Archbishop with Father John Mary, **there were no verbal, and above all, no written statements stating that the Messages contained any “scandalous messages or false teachings.”**
- As referenced above, Auxiliary Bishop Boulette said several times, and as recently as the February 1, 2024 meeting between the members of the Mission of Divine Mercy and the three Bishops, that he saw nothing in the Messages contrary to faith and morals.
- Over those seven years, the only significant direction given by the Archbishop regarding the Messages was, without reference on his part to any norm in the matter, not to publish them.
- This highlights an apparent paradox: on a number of occasions, the three Bishops have expressed support and admiration for the apostolic work of the Mission of Divine Mercy, particularly its *Encounter With Jesus* retreats, and also have encouraged the Mission to become a public association of the faithful, which would significantly raise the profile and prominence of the Mission within the Archdiocese.
- It is difficult to see how the above actions square with the Bishops supposedly being deeply concerned about “scandalous messages and false teachings” of the Messages during these past seven years. If that concern had been present, one would assume they would have taken one or all of the following steps long before the March 15, 2024 decrees were issued: 1. Launched a thorough investigation of the Messages and the persons receiving them; 2. Paused efforts to have the Mission of Divine Mercy become a public association of the faithful until such an investigation and its conclusions were completed; 3. Publicly warned the faithful about attending apostolic activities at the Mission due to concerns objectively found to be contained within the Messages.

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- The fact that nothing resembling any of these steps has happened prior to the recent decrees points to an absence of concern from the Bishops over these past seven years that stands in contrast to the statements made in the Archbishop's letter.

So again, we promptly presented the Messages to the Bishops. They did not adequately discern them. They did not warn us of *any* false and scandalous material to be found in them prior to the current situation.

We Must Obey God

Despite the lack of pastoral engagement and discernment by the Archbishop regarding the Messages, the Mission of Divine Mercy refrained throughout seven years from publishing them.⁵

The decision to finally publish the Messages and present them clearly as having divine origin, beginning with the first Message on February 28, was made NOT because Community members had grown weary of acceding to the Archbishop's request, but because in good conscience they believed *God was now asking them to do so, and that obedience to God must come first.*

2. Mischaracterizing a Key Interaction Between the Archbishop and Father John Mary

The Archbishop's letter erred on the date of a key meeting between Father John Mary and him, placing it one day before the publication of the second Message rather than five days before. Unfortunately, this error could easily leave the impression that Father John Mary acted abruptly and disrespectfully in publishing the second Message immediately after that meeting and without any further communication with the Archbishop.

The Archbishop's letter states:

On February 28, 2024, Reverend Foster published an alleged prophetic message from a member of the MDM community. I contacted Reverend Foster the same day and requested that he remove the post on the website. On March 5, 2024, I met with Reverend Foster for more than an hour, praying together and discussing the false teachings contained in the post and Reverend Foster's oath of fidelity to the Church and duty of obedience to me, which oath and duty he has reaffirmed each year during the Chrism Mass since his incardination in 2009. The next day, Reverend Foster posted a second alleged prophetic message.

Here is a clearer account of that process:

- On February 28, the Archbishop summoned Father John Mary to a meeting **the following day, February 29.**
- At the meeting, after listening to the Archbishop's invitations, Father John Mary told him he would need to pray about it and discuss it with his Community.

⁵ In conversations Father John Mary had with Auxiliary Bishop Boulette on February 14 and 15, 2018 through email and telephone, Bishop Boulette accepted his proposal to excerpt a non-controversial passage from a message and edit it so that it was not presented as a prophetic message but as a simple spiritual teaching or meditation from the Mission of Divine Mercy. This then is the policy we followed in some of our newsletters and Friday email meditations.

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- In the following days, the Archbishop and Father **had several communications by text, phone, and email.**
- Finally, because the Archbishop had requested a clear response by Monday, March 4, **Father John Mary sent him the following email on that day:**

Dear Archbishop,

Since we met last Thursday, I have not had the opportunity to consult adequately with our canonist, because of his travels, the weekend, etc. But you have asked for a reply today, so I want to comply.

Again, I thank you for your effort to fraternally reach out to me and pray with me during our one-on-one meeting last week. I could sense your intense pain in that meeting. This whole process has been excruciating for me also.

After prayerful discernment with our little community, we believe we are called to continue publishing the messages we believe God is giving us for the good of His Children.

We deeply regret the pain that this will cause you, and how it will be perceived. We are doing it out of a desire to obey God and serve His Church.

Whatever your response is to this decision, I continue to believe that you have a very special part in God's plan for our little mission. And I want you to know that you are always welcome here.

Despite this issue that we see so differently, we know you love our Lord and His Mother, as do we. And we pray that the Holy Spirit will resolve this in God's time and His way.

*In His Mercy,
Father John Mary*

"Jesus, we trust in You."

- **There was no meeting on March 5.**
- On March 6, the second Message was published, not hastily or out of disrespect, but, as Father's email stated, because the Mission of Divine Mercy believed the Lord was asking this of them.

A fair reading of the actual events and communications occurring during this time paints a different picture from the account in the Archbishop's letter. Again, it's not just a matter of getting key dates wrong or leaving out key communications, significant as such errors and omissions are, but the wrong impression created of Father John Mary being heedless and disrespectful toward the Archbishop. As the timeline makes clear, there was a considerable interval of prayer and further communication between the February 29 meeting and the March 6 publication. And as Father's email makes clear, necessary as he believed the Mission of Divine Mercy's actions were, he greatly regretted any pain this situation caused the Archbishop and reiterated his respect and admiration for him.

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Interestingly, in the Archbishop's April 9, 2024 decree denying the Mission of Divine Mercy's request to have the original March 15 decrees revoked, a more accurate account is given of these events, notably the correct date of the key meeting, February 29, is provided. So, at some point the error was realized. But this decree, as best we can determine, has not been made public as of this writing. Nor has there been any public (or private) expression of apology or regret for these errors and the wrong impressions created in a letter which was widely communicated to the public.

For the majority of the public, no doubt, these errors and impressions remain their dominant understanding of the situation, and that is regrettable. Ultimately, healing and reconciliation will be served by greater clarity, not less.

3. Beginnings of the Mission of Divine Mercy's Ministry in the Archdiocese

The Archbishop's letter states, "Since 2009, the Mission of Divine Mercy has offered retreats, sacramental ministry, and a peaceful setting for the faithful of God."

This neglects the fact that the members of the Mission of Divine Mercy arrived in the Archdiocese in 2001 and, with the approval of then Archbishop Flores and under the guidance of Monsignor O'Callaghan at St. Peter and Paul's parish in New Braunfels, almost immediately began doing apostolic work, including saying a regular Mass at the parish, giving retreats, leading Holy Hours, giving spiritual talks, and developing both young adult and youth ministries. Once the Mission property was acquired, the focus of the apostolic work began to shift to that location, especially with weekend Masses and the holding of the *Encounter with Jesus* retreats. The work continued under and with the approval of Archbishop Gomez who began his tenure in 2004.

In fairness to Archbishop Garcia-Siller, he is perhaps using 2009 as his date because that is when Archbishop Gomez approved the statutes of the Mission of Divine Mercy and erected it as a *private association with juridical personality* as opposed to its previous status of simply being a *private association*.

Nevertheless, the fact is that the Mission of Divine Mercy has been offering retreats and sacramental ministry with the approval of successive Archbishops since 2001.

4. Size and Growth of the Mission of Divine Mercy

In the Archbishop's listing of the members of the Mission of Divine Mercy's consecrated Community, he omitted mentioning two of the members, Susannah Smith, living as a consecrated laywoman and with the Community since 2019, and Raymundo, an associate member since 2018.

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He also did not note that the Mission of Divine Mercy's lay branch, the *Amici Christi*, has grown to over 100 members since its beginning. Their formation process is nearly four years long. This lay branch is especially important because when the Mission was originally forming and being advised by Bishop Joseph Galante, an expert on religious communities, he told the Community that it had more the character of a *movement* of the Church rather than a traditional religious community. Movements in the Church's understanding tend to be built around a lay-dominated membership with a core group of religious members. The Mission has continued to follow this sense of being a movement, and the *Amici Christi* has been very important to its identity and a significant fruit of its apostolate.

The Bethany Association adds further context to this understanding of the Mission of Divine Mercy as a movement. Members of the Bethany Association are those persons who express their desire to be friends of the Mission and contact us to become part of the association. There are Bethany members living across the nation and in other countries. Current membership is over 3400 and growing significantly.

Still, the Archbishop is correct to note that the core religious community has not had the growth that might have been expected and hoped for. But it is important to know that the Lord has long indicated to the Community that during the "hidden phase" of its life its growth would remain small, and only in this new "public phase" with the release of the Messages would more vocations begin to come. This has always made sense to the Community because prior to them being able to be open about the full character of the Mission of Divine Mercy, most especially the crucial role that the prophetic charism plays, it was very difficult for would-be candidates to truly understand the Mission's charism and vocation.

This fact also sheds light on the current prominence of family members in the Mission of Divine Mercy Community that the Archbishop called attention to in his letter. In 1993 in Monterrey, Mexico, when Father John Mary was first approached by the two women who began sharing with him the locutions they were receiving, among the people he discussed this with were his family members. Hence, they were among the few people during the hidden phase to have a much fuller understanding of the Mission's charism and vocation, and to know, for example, about the Messages and the Reconquest they were announcing. Thus, belief in the Mission and the willingness to make the sacrifices it required often came more readily to them. As Father John Mary has said, "Thank God for my family members. Few others in these hidden years could have accepted this demanding path."

Conclusion

It has never been our intention to be polemical with the Archbishop or his Auxiliary Bishops.

However, we believe that everyone agrees that having the clearest and most accurate understanding of this challenging situation serves all of us in seeking to follow God's will and finding a just and charitable resolution.

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This response, and the timeline that accompanies it in the appendix, is an effort to provide greater understanding to the faithful at large. Toward that end, more clarifying documentation will be released in the future.

May our Blessed Mother help us grow in trust in Our Lord Jesus, the only One who can guide His Church through these stormy waters.

APPENDIX

Timeline of Relevant Events, Interactions and Communications Between the Mission of Divine Mercy and the Archdiocese Regarding the Messages

To provide the public with a better understanding of the history and context concerning the Messages and the Archbishop's response to them, here is a timeline of when the Messages first began occurring and the subsequent events relevant to the Mission of Divine Mercy's interactions with the Archbishop and his two Auxiliaries, Bishop Michael Boulette and Bishop Gary Janak in this regard. We have done our best to be accurate and fair in this presentation. Should the Archbishop or Bishops have concerns about any of the history presented below, we would welcome their input.

2016

December 12, 2016 – First Message Received by Sister Amapola.

- Sister Amapola receives a Message from Our Lady concerning a personal prayer intention.
- Within weeks of that Message, she receives another, and then begins to receive them frequently, not only from Our Lady, but from Our Lord as well.
- She reports all this to Father John Mary, who comes to discern that the Messages are authentic.

2017

February 12 – Brother Mikael Receives a Message

- Brother Mikael receives a Message from Our Lady while helping with an *Encounter With Jesus* retreat. It is the first of many such Messages he begins to receive in the following months. In discerning them, Father John Mary comes to believe they are authentic.

April 7, 2017 – First Meeting with the Archbishop.

- Meeting is requested by Father John Mary expressly to discuss the Messages.
- Most of the meeting consists of the Archbishop discussing other topics regarding the Mission of Divine Mercy, e.g., its canonical status and the possibility of it becoming a public association of the faithful.
- When Father John Mary brings up the Messages and presents a very loving Message from Our Lady to the Archbishop, as well as a sampling of other Messages, the Archbishop receives them politely, but expresses no interest in receiving more Messages and states that the Messages should not be shared publicly.

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- For nearly a year, there are no further communications from the Archbishop regarding the Messages, and significantly, **no statement that the Messages contain any “scandalous claims or false teachings.”**

2018

February 12 – Visitation Process Initiated by Auxiliary Bishop Michael Boulette

- Auxiliary Bishop Boulette informs Father John Mary at a meeting that the Archbishop wants a Visitation conducted with the Mission of Divine Mercy.
- Among the topics discussed, Auxiliary Bishop Boulette, who always seems to speak frankly, notes he had read through the sampling of Messages provided to the Archbishop by the Mission of Divine Mercy. Concerning one Message in which the Lord is discussing the construction of the Teocalli, the outdoor sanctuary on Tepeyac Hill, Auxiliary Bishop Boulette seems amused and skeptical of Our Lord going into such detail, **but otherwise seems neither concerned about the Messages being contrary to faith and morals nor particularly convinced of their being of divine origin.**
- Subsequent letter from Auxiliary Bishop Boulette notes Visitation would include a comprehensive and thorough evaluation of the Mission of Divine Mercy, everything from its governing statutes and formation practices to its finances.
- Letter also specifically addresses the Messages, requesting to see more examples of them, raising the question of their role in guiding the Mission of Divine Mercy, noting much more discernment about them was needed, and specifically stating that, “The Archbishop clearly, and as of now, forbids any publication of such messages or any indications that such messages are directly received and are to be communicated by your group, as such.” This initial letter is the one time when the Archdiocese requests more information about the Messages, as part of a comprehensive list of questions about the Mission.

April 5 - First Volume of Visitation Response Submitted

- The Mission of Divine Mercy’s response to Auxiliary Bishop Boulette’s Visitation questions, consists of two volumes. The first, some 380 pages in length (most of that being appended documents), addresses questions primarily regarding the Mission’s statutes, governance, history, and legal and financial matters. The Messages and the importance of the prophetic charism are not substantively discussed in this volume. Auxiliary Bishop Boulette would later express his appreciation for how thorough and well done this and the second volume were.

April 12 – Auxiliary Bishop Boulette Visits the Mission

- Auxiliary Bishop Boulette celebrates a weekday Mass at the Mission open to the public.
- The visit, by all accounts cordial, includes an extended private conversation with Father John Mary, and lunch with the Community.

September 21 - Second Volume of the Visitation Response Submitted

- Second volume (461 pages) gives, among other things, a detailed history of how the prophetic charism had been central to Father John Mary’s priestly ministry beginning in the early nineties, and subsequently to the Community of the Mission of Divine Mercy as a whole.

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- The report also includes a sampling of a number of the Messages received by Sister Amapola, Brother Mikael, and Father John Mary.⁶
- Father John Mary hopes this account will mark a new phase in the Archbishop's discernment and understanding of the prophetic charism's role for the Mission of Divine Mercy, and willingness to consider the Messages more carefully, including being open to the possibility of their authenticity.

2019

- The year comes and goes without any comment from the Bishops about the Visitation report on the Messages or any further discernment by the Bishops regarding the Messages. Significantly, there is **no statement that the Messages contain any "scandalous claims or false teachings."**

2020

February 13 – Meeting With Auxiliary Bishop Boulette, Lori Peery, Father John Mary and Peter Roderique

- A follow-up to the Visitation, this meeting, called by Auxiliary Bishop Boulette and with Lori Peery present as the new archdiocesan vice chancellor, focuses primarily on the Archdiocesan proposal that the Mission of Divine Mercy might change its status as a private association of the faithful to a public association of the faithful.
- At one point, Father John Mary brings up the issue of the prophetic charism and the Messages. Auxiliary Bishop Boulette says that he has read most of the additional Messages provided in the Visitation report. **He doesn't seem to see any problems with them, but also doesn't think they added anything new or noteworthy or were necessarily from God.**

March 5th – Visit from Lori Peery, New Archdiocesan Vice Chancellor

- Ms. Peery attends Mass, tours the Mission, and has lunch with the Community.
- During a friendly lunch discussion, the Mission of Divine Mercy's prophetic charism and the locution experiences of some of the Community members are brought up. Ms. Peery does not express any issues of concern regarding the locutions.

2020-2023: A Long and Quiet Interval

- After the March 5 visit from Lori Peery, and with the onset of the Covid situation, we have no significant contact from the Bishops or Archdiocese regarding the Messages for more than three years. We were waiting for some response to our lengthy reports that they had requested and that we had devoted much time to.

2023

May 17 – Father John Mary Encounters Auxiliary Bishop Boulette at Clergy Conference

- During an impromptu encounter with Father John Mary, Auxiliary Bishop Boulette notes that the Archdiocese has not received the current financial report from the Mission of Divine Mercy, and also that the Mission has not taken the necessary steps to further its path toward becoming a religious

⁶ Some years before Sister Amapola and Brother Mikael began receiving Messages, Father John Mary also received some Messages from Our Lord. By his own account, the Messages tended to be short, directed toward him rather than the faithful at large (often simple words of encouragement for Father during difficult times), and occurring over a relatively limited period.

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congregation. Father John Mary is taken aback, as he had believed that the Mission had done its part and was waiting for the Archdiocese to respond. It turns out that Auxiliary Bishop Boulette was in error regarding the financial report; the Mission had submitted it in timely fashion, but the appropriate archdiocesan office had not communicated it to him.

- The larger significance of the encounter is that it jumpstarts renewed contact between the Mission of Divine Mercy and the Archdiocese, most notably a subsequent visit from Auxiliary Bishop Gary Janak.

June 29 – First Visit to the Mission from New Auxiliary Bishop, Gary Janak

- Auxiliary Bishop Janak schedules visit to “get to know” the Mission of Divine Mercy, accompanied by Lori Peery. They cover a range of topics during the visit and speak of hearing many good things about the *Encounter With Jesus* retreats. The tone of the visit is very friendly and positive.
- When Father John Mary brings up the subject of the Messages, Auxiliary Bishop Janak declines to discuss them, saying that is a topic for the Archbishop.

December 1 – Auxiliary Bishop Janak Requests Meeting Between the Mission of Divine Mercy and the Three Bishops

- Agenda to include various topics, including the Mission of Divine Mercy’s governance and statutes, its mission and membership, and the status of its assets.
- The Bishop’s email praises the impact of the Mission of Divine Mercy in the Archdiocese: “I recognize the positive impact this apostolate has in the Archdiocese and we need time to review it.”
- Informed that the Archdiocese will be represented by two canon lawyers and a civil lawyer, the Mission of Divine Mercy retains a canon lawyer to help them prepare for, and receive assistance at, this important meeting.

2024

February 1 - Meeting with the Three Bishops

- Present for the meeting from the Archdiocese are Archbishop Garcia-Siller, Auxiliary Bishop Boulette, and Auxiliary Bishop Janak, as well as Vice Chancellor Lori Peery and Isaac Huron, archdiocesan legal counsel. Father John Mary, Mother Magdalene, Brother Mikael, Sister Amapola, and Peter Roderique represent the Mission, accompanied by their canonist and civil attorney.
- The meeting covers a wide range of topics, but the chief concerns expressed by the Bishops are: questions about the Mission of Divine Mercy’s present and future canonical status, the lack of growth in vocations, the outsized number of family members, and what seemed to some participants to be the most important of topics to be covered in the eyes of the Archbishop and his Auxiliaries: the disposition of the Mission’s assets should that be necessary. It was even asserted that that the Mission “had no need” for the adjoining property that a dear friend and Amici Christi member had recently donated.
- Little discussion is given to the Messages, but such that it is, **there is no statement that the Messages contain any “scandalous claims or false teachings.”**
- At meeting’s end, Father John Mary gives each of the Bishops a copy of a Message from the Lord specifically addressed to the three of them that Sister Amapola had just received the previous night, and then the Community members leave. In the Message, among many other statements from the Lord, are these words, “*Wolves, dressed in sheep’s clothing, are sitting on the thrones of My Apostles—even on the chair of My Peter.*”

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February 2 – Email from Auxiliary Bishop Janak

- In the first communication from the Bishops after the February 1 meeting, Auxiliary Bishop Janak emails Father John Mary a message concerning efforts to achieve clarity regarding the Mission of Divine Mercy’s canonical status.
- Strikingly, there is no reference at all to the Message given to the Bishops or any expression of concern regarding it.

February 9 – Email from Auxiliary Bishop Janak

- The email encourages Father John Mary in the Mission of Divine Mercy’s efforts at the announced February 10 public meeting after Mass to dispel any rumors about potential hostile actions by the Archdiocese against the Mission.
- The email also offers praise for the Mission of Divine Mercy and a desire to strengthen its role in the Archdiocese.
- Again—and now more than one week since the meeting with the Bishops—there is no reference to the Message given to the three Bishops or expression of concern regarding it.

February 11 - Meeting with the Public After Mass

- In addition to reporting on the Bishops’ meeting, Father John Mary speaks publicly for the first time about Sister Amapola receiving Messages from Our Lord and the Blessed Mother, a decision made after a lengthy period of discernment and much prayer.

February 28 - First Message Published

- A Message entitled, “A Call to All the Children of God,” becomes the first Message to be publicly released. It is simultaneously released on the Mission of Divine Mercy website and on Lifesite News along with an interview of Father John Mary by John-Henry Westen of Lifesite News. Father also emails the three Bishops that morning, alerting them to all this.
- Archbishop calls and requests Father John Mary come to a meeting the next day.

February 29 – Father John Mary Meets with Archbishop at the Chancery

- Archbishop requests that the Mission of Divine Mercy take down the Lifesite interview and the Message by Monday, and cease any further publication of Messages.
- Archbishop, seemingly referring to the “*Wolves, dressed in sheep’s clothing...*” statement in the February 1 Message to the three Bishops, says that the Messages have false and scandalous content and should not be published.
- **Note that this is the first time in seven years that the Archbishop has expressed any specific objection about the content of the Messages. We still, however, have not received any written explanation of what is purportedly “false” and “scandalous.”**

March 1 – March 14: Ongoing Exchanges

- Throughout this period a series of communications are exchanged between the Archbishop and Father John Mary, often in the form of brief texts or phone calls. (This period is also discussed above in the section, “Mischaracterizing a Key Interaction Between the Archbishop and Father John Mary.”) The Archbishop continues to request that the Mission of Divine Mercy take down from its website all published Messages and cease to publish anymore Messages and warns of canonical sanctions if his requests go unheeded. Father John Mary expresses his appreciation for these paternal efforts at

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resolving the matter. But after prayer and consultation with his Community, Father John Mary informs the Archbishop that he and his Community believe the Lord is asking them to continue publishing the Messages, which they proceed to do.

- It is during this period also, on March 12, that the Mission publishes its statement, “We Must Obey God,” an extended effort to explain the reasons and circumstances that led to its decision to publish the Messages, including highlighting the unprecedented crisis the Church was undergoing.

March 15 - Archbishop’s Decrees Delivered by Father John Mefridge

- Archbishop issues a series of decrees that revoke Father John Mary’s faculties for saying Mass and preaching at the Mission or celebrating other sacraments e.g., Confession, and dissolve the status of the Mission of Divine Mercy as a private association and as a Catholic apostolate of the Archdiocese.
- Along with the decrees, the Archbishop issues a public statement explaining why he is taking this action, which includes quoting passages from the Mission’s “We Must Obey God” statement that reference one of the Messages referring to the “usurper.”
- In a series of statements and actions, the Mission of Divine Mercy makes clear that, given the extraordinary situation in the Church, it believes in obedience to God it must:
 1. Continue to celebrate Mass at the Mission;
 2. Continue to publish the Messages;
 3. Continue to welcome visitors to the Mission.

March 25 – The Mission of Divine Mercy Requests Revocation of Archbishop’s Decrees

- The Mission of Divine Mercy makes the formal canonical requests that the Archbishop revoke his March 15 decrees, stating our canonical grounds for believing them to be unjust.

April 9 – Archbishop Denies Revocation⁷

- Archbishop Garcia-Siller issues three decrees denying all requests by the Mission of Divine Mercy for revocation of the March 15 decrees.

⁷ Subsequent to this date, there have been additional interactions and communications between the Archdiocese and the Mission of Divine Mercy. However, since this statement is specifically in response to the Archbishop’s March 15 letter, those matters are not treated here.