



Association for the Rights of Catholics in the Church

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Dear ARCC subscriber;

You may already be aware, but if not, this will serve to inform you that Bishop Galeone, of the Diocese of Saint Augustine in Florida, has spoken out against the upcoming *North Florida Listening Assembly*.

<http://fratres.wordpress.com/2011/02/04/full-text-florida-bishop-victor-galeone-issues-statement-warning-faithful-on-american-catholic-council/>

These *Listening Assemblies* are the work of the *American Catholic Council* (ACC), a movement bringing together a network of individuals, organizations, and communities to consider the state and future of our Church. Information on the ACC can be found at <http://americancatholiccouncil.org/>.

Bishop Galeone is absolutely right in stating that “this North Florida Listening Assembly is not conducted under the auspices of the *Diocese of St. Augustine*, nor is it sanctioned, approved or endorsed by the diocese or any other entity of the *Roman Catholic Church*.” Such sanction, approval or endorsement is not needed.

Any group of Catholics may gather to discuss the state of the Church and its future directions. Such gatherings enjoy the full protection of canon law. (cf the ARCC listing of the rights of Catholics, No. 3: "All Catholics have the right to engage in any activity which does not infringe on the rights of others, e.g., they have the right to freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of association." (C. 212:2,3, C. 215, C. 223:1) Also No. 7: "All Catholics have the right to form voluntary associations to pursue Catholic aims including the right to worship together; such associations have the right to decide on their own rules of governance." (C. 215, C. 299, C. 300, C. 305, C. 309)) The Bishop indeed has every right to prevent such a gathering, but that right is limited to diocesan property.

Where he is in error is in his further statements of the purpose of the American Catholic Council, namely that the ACC is “largely in opposition to the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and the Holy Spirit, which inspired that Council.” That is not the case. The ACC seeks to summon the Baptized together to demonstrate our re-commitment, and to seek personal conversion to renew our Church to conform to the authentic Gospel message, the teachings of our Church, and our lived context in the United States. The ACC educates; listens; and facilitates discussions and encounters. None of these are in opposition to the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, but rather a worthy expression of those teachings.

We therefore invite you to let any Catholic people you may know in the Diocese of St Augustine about the North Florida Listening Assembly, being held February 19, 2011 from 8:30am to 4pm – University of North Florida, Jacksonville. This is precisely the kind of opportunity they may be looking for so they may come together in discussion, and so help provide input into the future direction of our Church.

Indeed, you may wish to inform Catholic friends and acquaintances everywhere, as Bishop Galeone may be only one among many bishops across the country taking such action in an attempt to prevent Catholics having discussions and debates on the future of their Church.

You may also wish to write to Bishop Galeone, or any other bishop who seeks to curtail the work of the

“To bring about substantive structural change in the Catholic Church, ARCC seeks to institutionalize a collegial understanding of Church in which decision-making is shared and accountability is realized among Catholics of every kind and condition.”

ACC, in an effort to exercise fraternal correction by providing truth in the face of error. To that end, we include below a letter authored by Charles McMahon, a member of the Board of ARCC which your interest and contributions support.

Regards,
Sincerely yours,



Patrick Edgar, DPA, President
Association for the Rights of Catholics in the Church (ARCC)

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Letter to Bishop Galeone by Charles McMahon, Member of the Board of the Association for the Rights of Catholics in the Church (ARCC)

Dear Bishop Galeone,

You might be interested to know that your recent statement about the "North Florida Listening Assembly" has gone viral on the internet and has just reached my desk. The following part of your statement is seriously in error:

"Although the stated purpose of the ACC is to "reclaim the promise of the Holy Spirit manifested in Vatican II," in fact, the goals proposed in their literature, as well as the organizations which make up the ACC, are largely in opposition to the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and the Holy Spirit, which inspired that Council.

I commend and embrace all true efforts at Church renewal, but the ACC's agenda is decidedly not such an effort. Many of the groups which have banded together in the ACC espouse positions which are clearly contrary to Catholic faith and morals, and which engender only alienation and estrangement from the Church."

This presumably comes from misinformation that you have received, rather than from a desire to deceive people and to slander some of your fellow Catholics. The statement needs to be amended for the sake of justice and Christian morality. For accurate information on the American Catholic Council, please see their web site at <http://americancatholiccouncil.org/>.

Best wishes in your ministry,

<insert name here>