News



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Just three weeks after Pope Francis named him to be an auxiliary bishop of Santiago, Fr. Carlos Irarrazaval Errazuriz declined the position in the wake of concern over comments he made about the sex abuse crisis, women and Jewish tradition.

The Archdiocese of Santiago announced June 13 that Francis had accepted Irarrazaval's resignation from the "ecclesiastical office for which he had been elected."

His ordination as a bishop had been scheduled for July 16.

"The decision was the fruit of dialogue and joint discernment, in which Pope Francis valued the spirit of faith and humility of the priest, in favor of the unity and good of the church," the archdiocese's announcement said.

While not going forward with his ordination as a bishop, it said, Irarrazaval will continue as pastor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus parish, also known as the parish community of "El Bosque." Francis expelled the previous pastor, Fernando Karadima, from the priesthood after multiple accusations of sexual abuse.

Irarrazaval caused a storm in the media and on social media with comments he made to the newspaper El Mercurio and later to CNN Chile.

He told the newspaper that when it came to the abuse crisis it was useless "to stir overheated rice."

Asked what he meant, he told CNN that he meant that it was not helpful "to stay with the same thing that we already know, there is nothing new."

While the church must care for survivors and is grateful to them for "lifting the lid from the pot," he said, the church must look at how the situation was able to occur, and "we have to draw lessons from what we have learned to move forward."

In the same CNN interview, he praised women for their involvement in the church, but said they should not try to be men and, he said, "at the Last Supper there was no woman sitting at the table and we have to respect that."

He offended some members of the Jewish community when he explained that Jesus did not accept all of the restrictions of his Jewish community when it came to his relationship with women.

"Jewish culture is a macho culture to this day," he said. "If you see a Jew walking down the street, the woman goes 10 steps behind."

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