News



Pope Francis attends his weekly general audience in the Paul VI Hall, at the Vatican Feb. 28, 2024. (AP/Andrew Medichini)

by Associated Press

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Madrid — February 29, 2024

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A Spanish bishop rebuked comments made by some priests on a weekly internet program about praying for Pope Francis to die as soon as possible. The priests later

apologized.

Archbishop Francisco Cerro Chaves of Toledo posted a statement on the archdiocese website Wednesday saying it rejected the comments and warned that it may take "corrective measures," without elaborating.

The statement followed an episode of a program on YouTube called "The Sacristy of the Vendée. A counter-revolutionary priestly gathering" earlier this month. In it, a Toledo priest makes an introductory salute saying, "I also pray a lot for the Pope, so that he can go to heaven as soon as possible."

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Another priest expresses his support for this while the conversation group, which involved six Spanish-speaking priests from different countries, laughed over the comments.

The group then went on to discuss different religious, social and political issues, mostly from a conservative point of view.

In his statement, Chavez says he expresses his "profound rejection of any manifestation of disaffection towards the person and ministry of the Holy Father," adding that it has told the priests they should seek forgiveness.

The statement says the archbishopric is not responsible for or represented by the statements made by the priests in the internet program.

In messages Feb. 28 posted on its X platform account, The Sacristy of the Vendée group apologized. "We are sorry for the unfortunate comment, said in a humorous tone, about 'praying for the Pope to go to Heaven as soon as possible,'" it said.

"It is a comment in bad taste and, although it does not express wishes for the death of the Pope, as some media have maliciously spread, ... we understand that it can be understood that way," the group said.

It said they reiterate their adherence to Pope Francis and the unity of the Catholic Church.