

Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (<https://www.ncronline.org>)

June 20, 2011 at 10:47am

Father Corapi: You can't make this stuff up

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NCR Today

Three months ago, I wrote on this blog about the allegations of misconduct against Father John Corapi and the troubling reaction by what I termed his "fans." It looks like he lost a few of those fans this weekend with his announcement, via a YouTube video, that he is leaving the priesthood and establishing himself as the "Black Sheep Dog" where he can continue and broaden his ministry and outreach.

A favorite of traditionalist Catholics and EWTN watchers, Corapi and his almost unbelievable story of conversion from a fast life of money and drugs to the Catholic priesthood is taking some even stranger turns.

The announcement is odd, not only because of the dark logo that accompanies his new "brand," but because he seems to imply he had no choice, given the investigative process. Yet the superior of his religious community, the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity (SOLT), says it was Corapi who was making the investigation of the allegations of the former employee difficult, because Corapi had required the employee to sign a non-disclosure statement and is now suing her for breach of contract.

Again, the reaction of his fans and followers is interesting, to say the least. Some have finally had it, concluding that the announcement reveals an ego and lack of commitment to the one true church. Others are fed up with his blatant commercialism: He pitches his forthcoming autobiography in the video and advertises a sale on his media--ironically for the 20th anniversary of his ordination!--just below the announcement on his website.

Surprisingly, a good number still defend him, citing the moral laxness of the bishops, problems with the Dallas Charter (which doesn't apply here, because the former employee is an adult) and various other complaints about the current church as justifying his decision. (Read the comments to these blog posts for a taste of his supporters.)

It's unclear if Corapi is leaving Catholicism or not. But a number of his "sheep" are clearly going to be following him.

Last month, another priest threatened to leave the priesthood to continue his ministry, but he was lambasted by conservative Catholics. The difference: that priest was Father Michael Pflieger, who has since made peace with his bishop.

So which one is more "traditional"?

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