

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

October 14, 2011 at 3:40pm

Pavone a no-show at meeting and reason why

by Tom Gallagher

NCR Today

Reporter Karen Smith Welch of the Amarillo Globe-News:

Embattled activist priest Frank Pavone did not respond to Bishop Patrick J. Zurek's public invitation for a private meeting Thursday, the bishop said.

Zurek included the invitation in an Oct. 6 statement he issued regarding his demand for greater financial transparency from three anti-abortion charities led by Pavone, the largest of which has drawn donations of \$7 million to more than \$10 million annually since 2004, according to its tax returns.

The statement said Zurek made the invitation to discuss Pavone's "spiritual progress during this time of prayer and reflection."

Zurek's statement garnered coverage from media and bloggers nationwide due to the prominent role Pavone's Priests for Life plays in pro-life circles. Pavone, the nonprofit's international director, makes wide use of television, radio and social media to further his groups' collective mission, and has apparently continued to do so while restricted to Amarillo.

But by 5 p.m. Thursday — closing time at the diocese offices — Pavone had yet to appear.

And an update from reporter Karen Smith Welch of the Amarillo Globe-News:

Priests for Life Chief Canonist David Deibel released a statement at 12:20 p.m., Friday, regarding the reason the organization's international director, the Rev. Frank Pavone, did not meet Thursday with Amarillo Roman Catholic Bishop Patrick J. Zurek.

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Deibel, a priest who is the charity's canon lawyer, said he advised Pavone not to attend a private meeting with Zurek until a process of mediation is under way. Deibel contends Zurek has not responded to requests for mediation.

"The details and history of the present situation are such that moving forward to a resolution is no longer simply a matter of getting together and talking," Deibel said, adding that Pavone is "eager to restore with Bishop Zurek the trust and communication that should exist between any priest and his bishop."

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