

11/19/2023

Dear Board Members of St. Michael's Media,

We, the undersigned St. Michael's Media employees, most especially in light of recent revelations, come before the Board to implore you to take immediate action to remedy fundamental issues that threaten the very existence of this good apostolate. Each of us signatories has dedicated years of toil to the mission of the apostolate, and, far beyond yielding even diligent but detached labor as one does with a secular career, each has, at least in part, tethered his life and honor to the apostolate's mission and flourishing. We have, in other words, paid for our voice with abiding, steadfast, spirit-filled service. We now request to come forward and exercise that voice.

No one man owns or is entitled to headship of St. Michael's Media; likewise no one is entitled to employment thereat. The apostolate is, by decree of law, not the alter ego of any individual. Rather, pursuant to the Michigan Nonprofit Corporation Act, "The business and affairs of a corporation shall be managed by *its board*" (§501. (1); *see also* St. Michael's Media Bylaws, Article II, Section 1: "The board of directors is responsible for the entirety of the business and affairs of the company"). As such, directors owe *the nonprofit* — not its CEO — fiduciary duties of **care** (they must exercise reasonable care in oversight and participate actively in decision-making [MNCA §541. (1)]), **loyalty** (they must not use their position to pursue outside interests [MNCA §209(c)]), and **obedience** (they must ensure the nonprofit is dedicated to its stated mission statement and goals [see *Manhattan Eye, Ear & Throat Hosp. v. Spitzer*, 715 N.Y.S.2d 575, 595 (Sup. Ct. 1999): "Unlike business corporations, whose ultimate objective is to make money, *nonprofit corporations are defined by their specific objectives: perpetuation of particular activities are central to the raison d'etre of the organization*"])). Anyone who believes he owes a duty primarily to one particular man and not to Church Militant itself is unfit to serve on the board, as such a dangerously erroneous opinion contravenes the three duties set forth above.

The Board of Directors is, under Article III, Section 5, of its bylaws, tasked with controlling the activities and tenure of the CEO, ensuring his vision accords with the overall mission statement of the apostolate that "St. Michael's Media is committed to illuminating souls with the light and truth of Jesus Christ through mass communications. . . . SMM combats ignorance of the teachings of the Holy Catholic Church, and defends her against slander and attack." Simply put, the board is, and has been since the formation of the apostolate, the boss of Michael Voris — not vice versa. Nevertheless, Michael Voris has, bluntly speaking, taken us far and wide from our mandated mission (the mission, mind you, that attracted Church Militant's staff in the first place), with virtually no pushback or corralling from those with a *legal duty* to oversee him. Instead of acting as Catholic crusaders committed to evangelizing a depraved West, saving souls, and shielding the Church and Magisterium from reckless calumnies, we've largely degenerated into a religious news station obsessed with secular politics and the sexual sins of wayward clerics. To the extent we now engage in ecclesiastical commentary, it's marred by a hermeneutic of suspicion and a tenor of dissent towards the living Magisterium and the reigning pontiff. We have made ourselves the antagonists of our own bishops and therefore can no longer enjoy favor in the sight of God, for, as St. Ignatius of Antioch proclaimed, "Wherever the bishop appears, there let the people be; even as wheresoever Christ Jesus is, there is the Catholic Church."

Obsession with profit and pandering to donors — which are per se violations of a nonprofit's mission statement and the duty of obedience — have left little room for the apostolate to be faithful to its core identity. True but challenging content is now routinely censored or altogether quashed,

even where it is much needed as the antidote to contemporary errors on both the left and the right, errors no doubt leading many to schism, apostasy and perdition. Little explanation is proffered for gag orders from on high, aside from feeble appeals to the unprincipled and often unhinged complaints of the anonymous Premium subscriber. The polestar has become creating content supporters will find unobjectionable, content that will not challenge the worldview of those in dire need of catechesis. And this devotion to being bland and inoffensive has resulted in an ever-shifting, consequence-based standard for judging the "acceptability" of content, leaving producers in constant fear of discipline, as the judgment of product hinges on the often incoherent and contradictory disposition and feedback of viewers. We are "leading from behind," and the mob is a fickle mistress — hence our ever-waning relevance and loss of market share. And yet, when many, even those in leadership, have requested guidance and teamwork on setting an articulable editorial angle, they have been gaslighted and denied, told that, contra Church Militant's mission statement, they are "reporters" and that they must be "balanced," meaning of course topics must be discussed in a way that will prove inoffensive and not needle the consciences of supporters, in a way that echoes a narrative we ourselves are not creating but are having created for us by lesser pundits who at least have the courage of their errant convictions. We have, in other words, sidelined ourselves on cultural and Church issues, but at the same time, we schizophrenically want to be seen as an industry leader.

Staff morale is at an all-time low. Faithful employees are regularly denounced as unprofessional, and even seasoned veterans, the old guard of the apostolate, many of whom are highly accomplished and credentialed, are belittled and condescended to, told they lack experience and the ability to succeed in the realm of secular corporate America. To boot, staff are sinfully underpaid, deprived of a wage that comports with the Church's teaching on social justice (see Appendix A), that workers are entitled to salaries "adequate for the maintenance of the worker and his family, including a certain amount for savings" (Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*). This sin against justice is aggravated by the fact that when revenues were strong, Church Militant spent profligately on new sets, equipment, and a reckless and needless expansion of staff for the *Evening News* endeavor, which itself represented a digression from Church Militant's core mission.

Those tasked with running the day-to-day affairs of the apostolate in Michael Voris' stead and as his top captains are standoffish, unapproachable, and seemingly lack ambitious goals for the apostolate's future, or a clear, articulable vision for its content (at both the aggregate and individual-show levels). By all appearances, they have been selected for loyalty and not aptitude. Their presence has had a manifest chilling effect on collegiality, camaraderie, and morale in the studio. Beyond this, our primary content watchdogs are also unqualified for the positions they hold, as they must review materials for theological orthodoxy despite lacking theological training. As such, the guardrails against theological error are at times faulty, and this is evident in a non-negligible amount of Church Militant content, which now straddles or crosses the line of sinful dissent. When leaders who report directly to Michael Voris have attempted to schedule meetings to address these issues, Voris has canceled the meetings, indicating that he does not have adequate time to solve the underlying problems. And so the problems have proliferated.

Ironically however, other times, Michael Voris transgresses the boundaries of his CEO role and improperly inserts himself into the minutiae of daily operating affairs, regularly presuming to make content decisions and appropriating for himself the roles of senior executive producer and managing editor, demanding the creation of specific content and even controlling its granular substance — at times even contradicting the directives of those whose proper role is to oversee content. Those who create and approve content that he views as problematic are excoriated, even though, as mentioned above, parameters for acceptable content and a general editorial angle for the apostolate have not

been given. This has created a milieu of fear and hesitation in the studio, and has stifled passion, creativity, and ambition. Staff dread being singled out and chastised for content they could not have predicted would be problematic by any objective metric. So instead of taking questions to immediate superiors, staff go directly to Voris, since he has effectively coopted "final say" in content from senior executive producer and others. This has stultified leaders and left them impotent.

The apostolate has also been brought into disrepute by our constant pyrrhic quarreling with other Catholic media organizations. Church Militant's needlessly belligerent stance with regard to its peers, even those with whom the apostolate agrees on the overwhelming majority of doctrinal issues, has isolated the apostolate, leaving it an ignored outcast in the media industry, shouting into the wind from a marginal platform.

Finally, since Michael Voris is now constantly absent from the studio, these problems are de facto unfixable, under the current deeply flawed regime.

Beyond these performance-based criticisms, we recall to the board's attention the allegations of Michael Voris' moral depravity contained in Christine Niles' 11/16/2023 email, to wit:

- A CM staffer went to Michael's house last fall and apparently witnessed porn (featuring a gay orgy) on his computer. He was too afraid to confront Michael about it. The staffer will confirm, if necessary.
- A source claims Michael was recently seen three times at Adam's Apple, a well-known gay bar in Detroit, with a handsome younger man. Whether it's true or malicious rumor, this is what I was told.
- A screenshot of an explicit text message from Michael's phone was in Dropbox. It read: "I jacked off to your hot pic. At first I didn't see the nipples ..." and the message was cut off. It was from a number I did not recognize. (Simon saw it and has a copy.)
- Dozens of shirtless selfies/muscle pics from Michael's phone were inexplicably on Dropbox. (You can see a couple attached; there were literally dozens like this - Simon has copies.) I've learned Michael has been in the habit of sending shirtless selfies to multiple men inside and outside the apostolate. They reveal an unhealthy obsession with his physique, not to mention the terrible optics - particularly considering his former lifestyle. Some of the male recipients said it was "weird." Another former staffer said it was awkward and inappropriate, as Michael is 60+ years old and his boss. Mike Parrott got hold of one selfie and blasted it all over social media, causing embarrassment to CM. Thank God he didn't get a hold of all the others. If they had leaked, they would've ruined CM's credibility and reputation. We would've lost donors and subscribers. More worrying, all the staff had ready access to these selfies for 2 years via Dropbox. I have no idea if former or current staff have copies.

On top of Niles' allegations, it has come to our attention that Voris texted a potential large donor, New York Jets kicker Greg Zuerlein, shirtless selfies, which directly caused Zuerlein to refrain from making very sizeable donations to the apostolate. Finally, in that the Board has heretofore failed to regularly meet or execute its legal duties to the apostolate, which include setting the salary of the apostolate's CEO (see Article III, Section 7 of bylaws), it appears that Voris has received a series of unauthorized pay raises over the course of several years — all while paying his employees virtual poverty wages — and therefore could be guilty of embezzlement under Michigan Penal Code §750.174(1).

For the foregoing reasons, we the undersigned employees request Michael Voris' immediate removal from his Board director position, from his position as CEO of St. Michael's Media, and from any employment positions that he has with St. Michael's Media or affiliated organizations.

Because the Board has proven chronically undiligent in living up to its legal obligations under the apostolate's bylaws and the Michigan Nonprofit Corporation Act, *we further request that we be consulted about and have the opportunity to give constructive input on the person to be named as Michael Voris' successor as St. Michael's Media CEO, on whom our future and the remedy to the aforementioned problems depends.*

At the outset, we cite Holy Writ to help guide the discussions and the vetting of the future CEO:

Therefore, a bishop must be irreproachable, married only once, temperate, self-controlled, decent, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not aggressive, but gentle, not contentious, not a lover of money. *He must manage his own household well, keeping his children under control with perfect dignity; for if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how can he take care of the church of God?* He should not be a recent convert, so that he may not become conceited and thus incur the devil's punishment. He must also have a good reputation among outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, the devil's trap. Similarly, deacons must be dignified, not deceitful, not addicted to drink, not greedy for sordid gain, holding fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. Moreover, they should be tested first; then, if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. . . . *Deacons may be married only once and must manage their children and their households well.* (1 Timothy 3: 2–12).

As you can see, the living God, who is author of Sacred Scripture, who is wisdom itself, has given us objective criteria by which we can judge the fitness of a man for religious leadership positions. We exhort you not to trust the "wisdom of men" and conventional vetting devices over the voice of Truth itself. We ask that due time for consideration is taken in making any determination of successor leaders of the apostolate and caution that hastiness and rashness (indeed anything other than the most measured and contemplative of approaches) could cost us our very existence as an organization.

We look forward to seeing to, along with members of the Board, the continuing success and growth of St. Michael's Media; we only ask that we are given a more transformative roll in such process. When we link arms and together strive for prudence, discernment, and wisdom, it will redound to the benefit of us all, who are so keen on facilitating the mission of St. Michael's Media. Ave Christus Rex!

APPENDIX A — Catholic Teaching on a Just Wage

Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno*:

71. In the first place, the worker must be paid a wage sufficient to support him and his family.[46] That the rest of the family should also contribute to the common support, according to the capacity of each, is certainly right, as can be observed especially in the families of farmers, but also in the families of many craftsmen and small shopkeepers. But to abuse the years of childhood and the

limited strength of women is grossly wrong. Mothers, concentrating on household duties, should work primarily in the home or in its immediate vicinity. It is an intolerable abuse, and to be abolished at all cost, for mothers on account of the father's low wage to be forced to engage in gainful occupations outside the home to the neglect of their proper cares and duties, especially the training of children. Every effort must therefore be made that fathers of families receive a wage large enough to meet ordinary family needs adequately. But if this cannot always be done under existing circumstances, social justice demands that changes be introduced as soon as possible whereby such a wage will be assured to every adult workingman. It will not be out of place here to render merited praise to all, who with a wise and useful purpose, have tried and tested various ways of adjusting the pay for work to family burdens in such a way that, as these increase, the former may be raised and indeed, if the contingency arises, there may be enough to meet extraordinary needs.

1983 "Charter of the Rights of the Family," The Holy See:

Remuneration for work must be sufficient for establishing and maintaining a family with dignity . . . such that mothers will not be obliged to work outside the home to the detriment of family life and especially of the education of the children.

The work of the mother in the home must be recognized and respected because of its value for the family and for society.

John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*:

Just remuneration for the work of an adult who is responsible for a family means remuneration which will suffice for establishing and properly maintaining a family and for providing security for its future. Such remuneration can be given either through what is called a family wage—that is, a single salary given to the head of the family [i.e. the husband] for his work, sufficient for the needs of the family without the other spouse [i.e. the wife] having to take up gainful employment outside the home—or through other social measures such as family allowances or grants to mothers devoting themselves exclusively to their families. These grants should correspond to the actual needs, that is, to the number of dependents for as long as they are not in a position to assume proper responsibility for their own lives.

Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*:

45. Let the working man and the employer make free agreements, and in particular let them agree freely as to the wages; nevertheless, there underlies a dictate of natural justice more imperious and ancient than any bargain between man and man, namely, that wages ought not to be insufficient to support a frugal and well-behaved wage-earner. If through necessity or fear of a worse evil the workman accept harder conditions because an employer or contractor will afford him no better, he is made the victim of force and injustice. In these and similar questions, however - such as, for example, the hours of labor in different trades, the sanitary precautions to be observed in factories and workshops, etc. - in order to supersede undue interference on the part of the State, especially as circumstances, times, and localities differ so widely, it is advisable that recourse be had to societies or boards such as We shall mention presently, or to some other mode of safeguarding the interests of the wage-earners; the State being appealed to, should circumstances require, for its sanction and protection.

46. If a workman's wages be sufficient to enable him comfortably to support himself, his wife, and his children, he will find it easy, if he be a sensible man, to practice thrift, and he will not fail, by

cutting down expenses, to put by some little savings and thus secure a modest source of income. Nature itself would urge him to this. We have seen that this great labor question cannot be solved save by assuming as a principle that private ownership must be held sacred and inviolable. The law, therefore, should favor ownership, and its policy should be to induce as many as possible of the people to become owners.

John Paul II, The Hundredth Year (*Centesimus Annus*):

Furthermore, society and the State must ensure wage levels adequate for the maintenance of the worker and his family, including a certain amount for savings. This requires a continuous effort to improve workers' training and capability so that their work will be more skilled and productive, as well as careful controls and adequate legislative measures to block shameful forms of exploitation, especially to the disadvantage of the most vulnerable workers, of immigrants and of those on the margins of society. The role of trade unions in negotiating minimum salaries and working conditions is decisive in this area.