

**PO Box 4053,  
Manuka. ACT. 2603.  
Australia.**

17 February 2016.

Cardinal Gerhard Ludwig Müller,  
Congregatio pro Doctrina Fidei,  
Piazza del S. Uffizio, 11,  
00193 Roma.

Dear Cardinal Müller,

We are writing on behalf of fifteen women and men, religious, priests and laity, who have been subjected to examination by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) over the last two decades. We have been inspired by Pope Francis' proclamation of the Year of Mercy and by his genuinely Christ-like and pastoral approach to problems in the church, including doctrinal issues. We have formulated for discussion a new set of principles for doctrinal examination by the CDF, which we consider to be not only to be more effective in arriving at genuine church teaching, but also more in accord with Jesus' attitudes and more just toward the person under examination.

The truth is that all of us experienced the CDF's processes as abusive. The main reason for this is that the procedures of the Congregation represent completely outdated legal principles and attitudes. More importantly they don't reflect the gospel values of justice, truth, integrity and mercy that the church professes to uphold. They are also out of keeping with concepts of human rights, accountability and transparency that the world expects from the Christian community, and which the Catholic Church demands from secular organizations.

The CDF's doctrinal approach is fixed and static, in contrast to Pope Francis comment that 'Christian doctrine is not a closed system incapable of generating questions, concerns, investigation, but it is alive, knows how to disturb, knows how to animate. It does not have a rigid face. It has a body that moves and develops.'

The list of those who have signed this document includes two highly respected and pastorally effective bishops, several distinguished theologians from the English and Spanish-speaking worlds and a number of effective communicators of Catholic faith and belief in contemporary electronic and print media. Their broad pastoral experience and long-term ministry in the church gives the signatories a particularly well-informed perspective that we trust the CDF will take seriously.

Our purpose in writing to you is to engage with you in genuine dialogue, so that the processes of your Congregation might better reflect the expectations that Catholics have that their church be more Christ-like and reflect the values of justice and equity.

We will be sending a copy of the document to Pope Francis, to Archbishops Ladaría and Di Noia, and to several members of the Congregation.

We would very much appreciate a response to our document within a reasonable time-frame,

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Paul Collins,  
PO Box 4053,  
Manuka. 2603. Australia.

Rev. Tony Flannery CSsR,  
St. Patrick's, Esker, Athenry,  
Co. Galway, Ireland.