

HOT POTATO

Rupnik case closed, everyone's happy except the victims

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After the news of his defrocking from the Society of Jesus, Father Marko Rupnik decided to respond. And he does so by referring to the Aletti Centre and its director, Maria Campatelli.

In the *Letter to the Friends of the Aletti Centre* dated 17 June 2023, the usual defensive strategy is reiterated: the accusations against Rupnik are nothing but defamation. The Jesuit leadership, alleges Campatelli, "repeatedly proved to favour a media campaign based on defamatory and unproven accusations (which exposed the person of Fr Rupnik and the entire Aletti Centre to forms of lynching), as opposed to providing the press with correct information based on acts and documents, in their possession, which demonstrate a different truth from what was published".

This is the line also embraced by others who, in recent months, have contacted *The Daily Compass*, to insinuate that the Rupnik case had been artfully set up by the Jesuits to get rid of the confrere. The insinuation, however, clashes with the total lack of adduction of evidence of the alleged internal feud, and of elements to refute the multiple, precise, and concordant accusations against Rupnik. If the ex-Jesuit was the victim of defamatory slander, why did he not file a complaint? Why did he not produce, perhaps through the Aletti Centre itself, statements to dismantle the accusations point by point?

Among other things, those who claim the defamation against Rupnik omit to mention that there was a canonical trial against the ex-Jesuit, which recognised the defendant's right to defend himself and ended with his excommunication *latae sententiae*, since the accusation of acquittal for the *de sexto* accomplice was considered to be well-founded.

We tried to contact the Aletti Centre, to give them the opportunity to offer "the correct information based on acts and documents", but received no reply. And also to ask for some clarifications on the Letter, which presents some interesting information along with questionable statements.

First of all, according to Campatelli, Rupnik was dismissed from the Order for a single reason: "The dismissal decree is motivated by Fr Rupnik's refusal to observe the vow of obedience regarding a new mission that the Order, in a note dated 9 March 2023, had entrusted to him with a transfer to a Jesuit community in Lombardy". We have already had occasion to **point out** how embarrassing it is that, in the reasons publicly presented for Rupnik's dismissal, there is no mention of the numerous abuses, which, at

the very least, represent repeated behaviour violating the vow of chastity. Then there is the question of poverty, since he is the owner of 90% of the shares in the Rossoroblu company, without the knowledge of his superiors. This was also not taken into account.

The fact remains, however, that Fr Verschueren had spoken of a "stubborn refusal to observe the vow of obedience", and it was no secret that Rupnik had no qualms about disregarding the restrictions imposed on him. Campatelli is essentially arguing that Rupnik was thrown out of the Order solely for refusing to accept a transfer. What about everything else? If she can prove that Rupnik always obeyed the restrictions, she should do so: then we will hold Fr Verschueren to account.

The Letter also reveals that it was Rupnik himself who, on 21 January of this year, presented a request to the Society of Jesus to leave the Order, "observing all the required canonical conditions", because he had now lost "his trust in his superiors". And he adds: "In this context, centred on Fr Rupnik's previous intransgressible request to leave the Order, the illogicality of the new *missio* with transfer committed to him on 9 March appears intuitable, unless one wishes to understand the purely instrumental purpose of preconstituting (as in fact happened) the presupposition for disobedience on which to base the Decree of resignation".

First of all, it is not clear what 'intransgressible request' means: who is it that could not transgress? The indult to leave one's institute by a professed religious in perpetual vows is regulated by canons 691-693 of the CIC. The first canon, §1, orders that the request must be presented 'to the supreme Moderator of the institute', who, for institutes of pontifical right (§2), must forward it 'to the Apostolic See', whose task it is to pronounce. It is a question: nowhere is it written that the answer must be in the affirmative. In any case, until the indult has been obtained, the religious is still subject to his superiors, who can therefore legitimately ask him to transfer to another community, which in this case would have been justified for prudential reasons (if only they had done it earlier!). Therefore, however "illogical", in Campatelli's opinion, Rupnik had to obey, pending the granting of the pardon.

Another curious fact: Canon 693 states that "if the religious is a cleric, the indult is not granted until he has found a bishop who will incardinate him in the diocese or at least receive him on probation". If, therefore, since January Rupnik has been asking for this pardon "observing all the required canonical conditions", it means that there is already a bishop ready to receive him and probably the other Jesuits of the Aletti Centre, who, as revealed in the Letter, "have applied for an indult to leave the Society and are waiting for the relevant procedure to be concluded, so that they can continue the exercise of their

priestly ministry". And perhaps this bishop has something to do with his recent [trip](#) to Bosnia and Croatia.

The ending of the letter is almost ironic: "It is presumable, therefore, that Father Rupnik will remain firm in his already manifested desire to leave the Order, continuing to live this moment in discernment and ecclesial communion". Bypassing discernment and ecclesial communion, it is clear that Rupnik will have uncorked a bottle of bubbly when he received notification of his discharge: he risked having to wait for the indult, so instead he is finally free to do as he pleases. The other Jesuits at the Aletti Centre should also commit a couple of grave disobediences, so as to rejoin their confrere quickly.

And so friends and enemies alike are all happy: Rupnik, having escaped the sanction of dismissal from the clerical state, remains an abusive priest at large; the Jesuits have got rid of the hot potato, which the Pope had dumped on them; the Pope comes out with clean hands and so does the Jesuit leadership, since the dangerous trial that could have opened this Pandora's box will never be held. Adding insult to injury for the victims and justice.