



Dear friends and supporters,

We wish to share an important update with you in a spirit of transparency, faith, and unity.

In order to avoid further conflict with the Diocese, we have changed our name. We were formally denied the use of the words “Catholic” and “Diocese of Las Cruces” in our name, despite the fact that we are baptized Catholics and faithful members of the Church in Las Cruces. Going forward, we will continue our mission under the name ***Voice of the Laity***.

Additionally, we wish to clarify that we have never sought ecclesiastical recognition or approval in order to speak, gather, or raise concerns. From the beginning, ***Voice of the Laity*** has been an informal group of lay faithful exercising our responsibility to speak about matters affecting liturgy, catechesis, and diocesan life. Our purpose has never been to act as an official ecclesial body, but to raise awareness in good faith—especially where secrecy or a lack of transparency has caused confusion among the faithful.

Because of accusations made against us, including claims that we have caused scandal, we want to state clearly that we have not done so. Our meetings and communications have always been respectful, prayerful, and peaceful. We have never claimed to represent ecclesiastical authority. On the contrary, we have consistently promoted charity, discernment, and fidelity to the Church.

Unfortunately, members of ***Voice of the Laity*** received a Penal Precept threatening the removal of parish ministries for two years, or until certain demands are met. Due to the gravity of this action, we were compelled to retain a Canon Lawyer to defend our rights as lay Catholics. Many of us serve our parishes out of love for Christ and His Church, and the possibility of losing these ministries has caused genuine pain to individuals and parish communities alike.

At the same time, diocesan authorities contacted our website provider, alleging misuse of the term “Catholic,” which led to our website being taken down. Our YouTube channel was also removed after a petition from the Diocese. These actions occurred before the issuance of the Penal Precept and prior to any meaningful dialogue, further restricting our ability to communicate with the faithful.

We are currently in the process of rebuilding our website and updating all printed and digital materials to reflect our new name, logo, and identity as ***Voice of the Laity***. This includes flyers, booklets, and any previously distributed materials. While this process takes time, we remain committed to moving forward with clarity, accuracy, and integrity.

All that we do as ***Voice of the Laity*** is for the glory of God and the good of His Church. There are no personal agendas and no desire for recognition or power. Our actions are guided by prayer, conscience, and a sincere love for Christ, His sacraments, and His people.

We firmly believe that our Diocese cannot be shaped by any single movement. We are **One Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church**, rooted in Sacred Tradition and faithfully lived for centuries. Our faith is founded on Jesus Christ Himself—not on Kiko Argüello, nor on any movement that functions as a parallel church structure.

Recently, during a homily at Holy Cross Catholic Church in Las Cruces, Bishop Peter Baldacchino employed urgent and directive language that framed alignment with the Neocatechumenal Way as essential to the Diocese's survival, stating:

"I need you to come on board. Otherwise, we're going to sink."

He defended the establishment of two parallel seminaries in Las Cruces—St. Joseph's and Redemptoris Mater—describing this model as necessary and "comparable to other dioceses". He further argued that the coexistence of different "realities" within the Diocese, including distinct spiritual paths and formations, does not threaten unity. He also relied heavily on personal experience in the Neocatechumenal Way, stating that "experience comes before documents," implying that those who question the model lack understanding or participation.

This message stands in stark contrast to the recent address of Pope Leo XIV to the leaders of the Neocatechumenal Way in Rome. While affirming their missionary zeal, the Holy Father offered clear pastoral guidance and necessary limits, reminding them:

"Your mission is particular, but not exclusive."

Pope Leo emphasized ***humility, obedience, and full communion with diocesan and parish life. He warned explicitly against the creation of parallel ecclesial structures and against any sense of superiority within the Church, affirming that every charism must remain at the service of unity.***

We are encouraged by the Holy Father's words and believe they call all of us—clergy and laity alike—to renewed discernment, fidelity, and communion.

At the same time, ***Voice of the Laity*** continues to pray for our diocesan seminarians, particularly those currently being formed under the guidance of Neocatechumenal priests. These young men deserve formation that is transparent, universally Catholic, and rooted in well-established, fully accredited institutions. We will continue to raise our voice so their formation serves the good of the entire Diocese.

We kindly ask you to continue praying for our Diocese, for Bishop Peter Baldacchino, and for our Vicar General, Father Kevin Waymel. May the Lord grant wisdom to our leaders, healing to our local Church, and strength to all who seek to remain faithful in difficult times.

We are also preparing to soon resume informative meetings and petition-signing events throughout the Diocese, so that the faithful may remain informed, engaged, and prayerfully involved in these important matters.

Meanwhile, our weekly Rosary Rally meets every Wednesday at 5:00 PM on the sidewalk adjacent to St. Albert's parking lot. We hope to see you there.

Thank you for your continued prayers, courage, and support.

In faith and hope,
Voice of the Laity

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"The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still"

Exodus 14:14

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