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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CATHOLICS WILL APPEAL EXCOMMUNICATION

Today, the Catholic bishop of Lincoln, Nebraska released a letter from the Vatican stating that his excommunication threat against members of Call To Action(CTA)/Nebraska from ten years ago has been upheld. The threat of excommunication originated when a local group of Catholics formed a CTA/Nebraska chapter in 1996. This chapter, who will appeal the recent letter from the Vatican, has advocated for such topics as women's equality in the church, opportunities for altar girls and protection of children in the sexual abuse crisis.

“Bishop Bruskewitz continues to further alienate himself from the mainstream Catholic Church by trying to suppress the members of his own diocese from talking about matters of justice,” says Patty Hawk, a local member of CTA/Nebraska and national board co-president of CTA/USA.

“Approximately two-thirds of US Catholics want women's ordination and the pope and every single bishop in the United States has permitted altar girls, except Bishop Bruskewitz. It is clear that he is out of step with the rest of the Catholic Church.”

“How sad that the bishop will not stand up for justice when it comes to women and children in our church,” says Rachel Pokora, President of CTA/Nebraska. “It is additionally disheartening that the bishop felt the need to use a medieval tactic, such as this excommunication threat, instead of just talking with us.”

“For me, the current excommunication process conjures up the Inquisition,” says Rachel. It is disappointing that the Catholic hierarchy continues to use this method when history tells us that it is a discriminatory and unjust process. Our own experience tells us the unjust nature of the excommunication process hasn't changed. During the ten years of our appeal, we did not hear anything from the Vatican, we did not have due process, we were not assigned a court advocate for our defense, we were not asked to submit testimony. Bishop Bruskewitz tried to silence us.”

“But we will not be silent! This excommunication letter has no effect upon our work for justice in the diocese of Lincoln. We will continue to attend mass. We will continue to live our lives as faithful Catholics. And, most importantly, we will continue to act for justice, just as Christ called us to do.”

Call To Action/USA supports the CTA/Nebraska chapter. “As Catholics, we look to Jesus' example during these times,” says Nicole Sotelo, Acting Co-Director for Call To Action. “Jesus always sided with justice, even when it meant disagreeing with the unjust structures of the religious hierarchy. As a result, we will continue to follow Jesus' model and stand up for women's equality in our faith, stand up for our children and families, stand up for the values modeled by Christ.”

Catholic lay people, religious and clergy working together to foster peace, justice and love in our world, our church and ourselves in the spirit of Vatican II and the U.S. Catholic Bishops' Call To Action.

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