



C34.
Communication
CW(2) – June 18, 2024
Item No. 23

Mayor Steven Del Duca
City of Vaughan
Sent via e-mail

12 June 2024

Dear Mayor Del Duca,

Be assured of my ongoing prayers for you and all members of Vaughan City Council as you discern the most prudent path forward for your constituents. I am most grateful for all those who serve in elected office and recognize the many sacrifices and challenges for those called to this vocation.

I would like to express my gratitude to you and members of council for unanimously endorsing the “Protecting Vaughan’s Social Infrastructure” resolution. Places of worship, that are essential to so many community members, must continue to be havens of peace, prayer and fellowship. In a similar way, schools, childcare facilities, congregate care facilities and hospitals serve to strengthen and support the entire community. Collectively these spaces should never be subject to gatherings that incite hatred or violence.

Thankfully, in our democracy, we have the right to peaceful protest which unfolds throughout our country in different ways with an appropriate approach to issues of concern. Sadly though, in recent months, we have seen an increase in aggressive, hate-filled and violent protests in close proximity to places of worship and other aforementioned spaces.

Faith communities need to know that they are valued members of society and important constituents of the greater community. Persons of faith have the right to worship without the fear of being intimidated and become objects of scorn and violence in its many dehumanizing and destructive forms. Religious freedom is foundational to a person's identity and to the free exercise of all of one's freedoms; it is a fundamental human right and one that speaks to the respectful practice of one’s faith without interference, to welcoming its unique role in the public square, without privatizing any faith.



I am hopeful that council will pass a bylaw prohibiting such demonstrations. Let us do all that we can to work collectively to nurture respectful dialogue, peace and mutual respect for all. Be assured of my commitment to assist in any way to achieve this goal, drawing on the diverse gifts and talents of our Catholic community so that all worshipers of all religions may gather publicly to pray and practice their faith in peace and harmony with others.

Once again, thank you to you and your colleagues for your leadership in fostering a safe environment to help ensure spaces meant to lift up and strengthen the community may be free from intimidation, violence or hate.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Francis Leo". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Most Rev. Francis Leo
Metropolitan Archbishop of Toronto