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Order 'saddened' by Father Corapi's decision to leave priesthood

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WASHINGTON -- The Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity said it was "saddened" that Father John Corapi, one of the most visible members of its order, has decided to leave the order and the priesthood.

Father Corapi, 64, declared June 17 in a YouTube video and a blog posting on one of his websites, that he was leaving because he could not get a "fair hearing" on misconduct allegations that were lodged against him in March and which included what the priest said were sexual abuse charges.

The order, commonly referred to as SOLT, was in the midst of investigating the allegations when Father Corapi made his announcement. "Although the investigation was in progress, the SOLT had not arrived at any conclusion as to the credibility of the allegations under investigation," said the statement, issued June 20 by Father Gerry Sheehan, the order's regional priest-servant and Father Corapi's superior.

Father Sheehan said the order's last communication with Father Corapi took the form of a June 3 letter from him "indicating that, because of the physical, emotional and spiritual distress he has endured over the past few years, he could no longer continue to function as a priest or a member of the SOLT." When Father Corapi made his public announcement he was definitely leaving the priesthood, "we heard it just like everyone else did, from YouTube," Father Sheehan told Catholic News Service June 20 before the order released his statement. "We're as surprised as everyone else is."

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