

Vatican Removes Radical Priest Who Turned Church Into Migrant Camp for 200 Illegals

After years of housing up to 200 illegal migrants inside church grounds, transforming a historic Tuscan parish into what health inspectors called an unsanitary fire hazard, Father Massimo Biancalani has finally been stripped of his pastoral duties by the Holy See.

The Vatican confirmed Thursday that it rejected both appeals filed by the controversial priest, effectively ending his decade-long tenure at Santa Maria Maggiore a Vicofaro and San Niccolò a Ramini in Pistoia, Italy. The decision comes after local parishioners fled the church in droves and authorities were forced to conduct police evictions of migrants from the property.

Italian Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini, a longtime critic of Biancalani's radical pro-migrant activism, celebrated the news on social media. "The priest of the illegal migrants leaves Vicofaro. Time is a gentleman," Salvini wrote.

The removal marks the end of a bitter saga that saw a once-functioning parish reduced to what local health authorities described as a public health crisis. A rigorous inspection last year found the Vicofaro facilities plagued by extremely unsanitary conditions, multiple fire hazards, and a high risk of infectious disease spreading among the migrants Biancalani had packed into the church rectory and grounds.

Pistoia Mayor Alessandro Tomasi requested police eviction of the 176 migrants housed at Vicofaro in June 2025. Not all complied willingly. Bishop Fausto Tardelli was forced to request additional police intervention, and the remaining

migrants were finally removed in July 2025.



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The bishop also revoked Biancalani's legal representation of the parish, citing the priest's obstruction of eviction efforts. Tardelli attempted to transfer Biancalani to another location as a compromise. The priest refused and instead filed appeals with the Vatican. Both appeals failed this week.

Biancalani now has sixty days to file yet another appeal, though his track record suggests the Holy See has lost patience with his defiance of church authority.

Speaking to reporters Wednesday, the priest expressed disappointment but admitted he'd known about the decision for roughly two weeks. "I would have liked it to have been handled differently, but in the end it leaked out," Biancalani said. "We had expected, and had been led to believe a different outcome regarding the parish of Ramini."

Perhaps most telling was the priest's own admission that his migrant operation had devastated the spiritual life of his parish. Biancalani acknowledged to reporters that Vicofaro suffered from a sharp decline in attendance and sacraments as a direct result of his housing illegal migrants.

"This has been known for some time because, unfortunately, welcoming migrants triggers fears," he said.

The priest also took aim at Italian politics, claiming both the right and center-left have failed to reform immigration policy. "In Italy it's becoming increasingly difficult to provide shelter," he said. "The right is fine with this system, but the center-left has also had many opportunities to reform it, yet it hasn't done so because they fear losing public support."

Biancalani remained defiant about his actions despite the consequences for his parish and his priesthood.

“What we’ve done is a wonderful thing, but it’s not well understood even within the Church itself,” he said.

Local residents and faithful parishioners who watched their church transformed into a makeshift migrant shelter, only to be driven away by the conditions that followed, might disagree with his assessment. For them, the Vatican’s decision represents a restoration of order after years of chaos that prioritized political activism over pastoral care.

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