

His Holiness Pope Francis
Casa Santa Marta 00120
Vatican City

August 2024

Your Holiness:

Priests dressed in cassocks are torturing bulls in the name of the Church, and the killing of bulls is used to “celebrate” saints’ days! These abominations have to end, and only you can end them. Please, please do.

I was raised in a Roman Catholic family and brought up in the Church, but any person who believes in compassion could be writing this to you: please add my voice to People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals’ (PETA) call for you to condemn the sinful spectacle of bullfighting. You chose the name of St Francis – patron saint of animals and the environment – because you wish to make nature protection your legacy, but the torture, torment, and killing of bulls for sport flies in the face of his teachings and yours. **You can never be a protector of animals while bullfighting and Catholicism are bedfellows.**

Despite the papacy recognising bullfighting as a “spectacle of the devil” as far back as 1567 and consistently holding that “it is contrary to human dignity to cause animals to suffer or die needlessly” – the Catholic Church’s hands (and blessings!) are still *all over* the archaic and cruel practise of bull torture.

In Spain alone, some 16,000 religious festivals feature the abuse of bulls and other animals; many bullrings have chapels where the bullfighters pray before the corridas start and Catholic priests who officiate ceremonies in the bullrings and attend corridas. Some, like Father Víctor Carrasco, even fight baby bulls themselves *while dressed in cassocks*. The Church declares that “Animals are God’s creatures. ... Thus men owe them kindness,” and yet the deeds overcome the words.

As compassionate people have realised that bulls suffer almost beyond imagination when stabbed and tortured in the ring, bullfighting’s popularity has plummeted. Bullrings are closing all over Mexico and elsewhere; this year, Colombia banned bullfighting. In Spain, 93% of 16- to 24-year-olds say they reject bullfighting. Pamplona is an orgy of rape and violence fuelled by the drinking that accompanies the bull runs. If the Church won’t condemn this atrocity, it won’t only be bulls slowly haemorrhaging but also Catholicism’s relevance among young people.

As I once sang, *we all want the bull to survive*. And so it is. Please show mercy and kindness to these animals and condemn bullfighting.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Morrissey', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Morrissey