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A priest who ignited a firestorm on social media this week with a tweet that asked women to dress modestly at Mass to "help the priest to protect the purity of men" has announced that he is leaving Twitter.

Fr. Kevin M. Cusick, a priest of the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C., said his account disappeared Wednesday, June 5, because Twitter had limited his account for 12 hours. He said he was not compelled to close his account but chose to as "the high road as Catholic Christian and a priest."

"Deactivating my account eliminated what had become the fulcrum for the demonic waves of rage targeting the faith," Cusick [wrote in the Wanderer](#), a conservative Catholic newspaper where he has been a columnist for 17 years. "The good of the Church and the needs of the faithful must always come first, in particular for a priest. In the final analysis Twitter ain't all that."

In the column, titled "When the Twitter mob came after me," Cusick described the backlash he faced after tweeting on Monday that a priest he knew "was forced on Sunday to ask a woman at Mass to cover her shoulders."

"Twitter has a dark, demonic side, raging against God and the Church," Cusick wrote. "That brood of vipers and braying, bloodthirsty hounds lurking in readiness was visited upon me with nearly unrelenting fury and incredible magnitude last week. Wave after wave of calumnious, blasphemous, and obscene memes, gifs, and messages were posted with comments, likes, and retweets ranging up to the tens of thousands."

Among those responding was Australian novelist Jane Caro, who [tweeted](#): "A woman's shoulders are not provocative. Women's bodies are not grenades, liable to explode at any moment. Men's sexual/emotional/paranoid reactions to other people are entirely their own responsibility."

Despite the reaction, Cusick defended his original tweet on Monday. "By the way: I'm not backing down from this. I've thought about it, I've prayed about it and i'm not to going to engage in the endless Vatican II style debate that goes back-and-forth constantly and ends up nowhere," he tweeted later that day.

But in his Wanderer column, Cusick said he did not mean to imply that he was blaming women for men who cannot control themselves, or even that he was telling women how to dress, insisting that "the unfortunate turn of phrase" was "written with the best of intentions."

He elaborated about the specific case in the original tweet, implying that it was at his parish where the traditional Latin Mass is celebrated, and where the women themselves have created a dress code that includes covering their shoulders, as at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

Cusick, who today celebrates the 27th anniversary of his ordination, is pastor of St. Francis de Sales Parish in Benedict, Maryland, which is described on its [website](#) as "a traditional Catholic parish which celebrates both the Tridentine Rite and Mass in English."

A former lieutenant commander in the U.S. Navy chaplain corps, Cusick served in Iraq, in Italy and on board the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower in Florida and North Carolina, according to a [biography](#) at the conservative OnePeterFive blog, where he was a contributor.

He has been a critic of Pope Francis, writing in a column titled, "[Why I accuse the pope](#)" that "Pope Francis is continuing his course of destruction by disastrous episcopal appointments to Newark, Chicago, and San Diego with prelates in his image who mock our intelligence with their nonsensical prattle and pro-homosexualist ideology."

In defending his decision to leave Twitter, Cusick warned that social media can be dangerous. "We always have much more effective means at our disposal for disseminating the faith, converting and saving souls, than an Internet platform controlled by declared enemies of Christ," he wrote.

A Google search for "Kevin M. Cusick" on Thursday, however, revealed a [newly created Twitter handle "Nova bella elegit Dominus"](#) — taken from the Hebrew Scriptures' Book of Judges 5:8 —which means "God chose new leaders."

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