



The Vatican's top bioethics official on Monday dismissed calls for his resignation following an uproar over his defense of doctors who aborted the twin fetuses of a 9-year-old child who was raped by her stepfather.

Monsignor Renato Fisichella told The Associated Press he refused to respond to five members of the Vatican's Pontifical Academy for Life who questioned his suitability to lead the institution.

Fisichella wrote an article in the Vatican's newspaper in March saying the Brazilian doctors didn't deserve excommunication as mandated by church law because they were saving the girl's life. The call for mercy sparked heated criticism from some academy members who said it implied the Vatican was opening up to so-called "therapeutic abortion" to save the mother's life.

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