

In early May of this year (2017), I was browsing the headlines at *OnePeterFive* and came across one that piqued my interest: "[An Interview with George Neumayr, Author of *The Political Pope*](#)" by Dr. Maike Hickson. After I began reading the interview, it didn't take long for me to conclude that I needed to read Mr. Neumayr's book. One statement of his, in particular, which appears about a third of the way down, caught my attention: "Pope Francis is the worst teacher of the Faith in the history of the Catholic Church. One could not trust him to teach an elementary school religion class." Immediately I had come to mind a strikingly similar observation made by our beloved late editor, John Vennari, just a few months into Francis' pontificate:

"I've been following Pope Francis' words and actions, and read the entire book *On Heaven and Earth* that he co-wrote with Rabbi Skorka.

He seems to have a good heart and some good Catholic instincts, but theologically he is a train wreck - remarkably sloppy.

Though this might shock some readers, I must say that *I would never allow Pope Francis to teach religion to my children.*"[\[1\]](#) (Emphasis added)

One of the first things I did after receiving my copy of *The Political Pope* in the mail was review the chapter endnotes to see what kinds of sources were used to document the contents of the book. Upon investigating, I was pleasantly surprised to find several familiar and trusted names listed, including *Catholic Family News*, *The Remnant*, Christopher Ferrara's *Fatima Perspectives* column, *Tradition in Action*, *Rorate Caeli*, *LifeSiteNews*, and *OnePeterFive*. While also drawing from a wide variety of secular sources for relevant information, Neumayr demonstrates a clear and unapologetic support for traditional Catholicism throughout his book, which is wonderful to see.

An Exposé of Pope Francis - In His Own Words

One of the most powerful aspects of *The Political Pope* is that a good amount of material throughout the book consists of direct quotes from Francis himself. In many ways, it is a compilation in one volume of Francis' most scandalous and revealing statements, which tragically exist in abundance. For example, Neumayr begins with a thorough look at the people, ideas, and culture which most shaped Jorge Mario Bergoglio during his formative years. The opening chapter, called "The Pope They Have Been Waiting For",[\[2\]](#) includes a section examining Francis' communist mentor, a woman named Esther Ballestrino de Careaga, for whom he worked at a laboratory in Buenos Aires. Neumayr quotes Francis'

pleasant memories of Ballestrino and describes his enduring association with her:

“She often read Communist Party texts to me and gave them to me to read. So I also got to know that very materialistic conception. I remember that she also gave me the statement of the American Communists in defense of the Rosenberg’s, who had been sentenced to death,” he has said. Learning about communism, he said, “through a courageous and honest person was helpful. I realized a few things, an aspect of the social, which I then found in the social doctrine of the Church.” After entering the priesthood, he took pride in helping her hide the family’s Marxist literature from the authorities who were investigating her. According to the author James Carroll, Bergoglio smuggled her communist books, including Marx’s *Das Kapital*, into a “Jesuit library.”[\[3\]](#)

Francis’ admiration for Communists like Ballestrino remains the same to this day, as evidenced by his profoundly offensive claim (quoted by Neumayr) that “if anything, it is the communists who think like Christians.”[\[4\]](#)

Who is Pope Francis?

This is perhaps the central theme or core thesis of the book: Jorge Mario Bergoglio “is a product of political leftism and theological Modernism,” as Neumayr summed up in his interview with Dr. Hickson. He is the quintessential liberal Jesuit, born and raised in socialist Argentina, who in his young adult years encountered and embraced the Marxist-inspired heresy known as “liberation theology.” Neumayr spends roughly the first four chapters developing his thesis, relating biographical information about Bergoglio’s “progressive” formation under Fr. Pedro Arrupe (the Jesuits’ Superior General from 1965-1983), his single term as Provincial Superior in Argentina (1973-1979), and his tenure as Auxiliary Bishop of Buenos Aires (1992-1998) and later Archbishop of the same (1998-2013). In each successive chapter, Neumayr explores a different facet of Francis’ pontificate in light of the above-mentioned thesis and presents copious supporting evidence.

Interestingly, Neumayr’s description of how the Church ended up with Pope Francis is reminiscent of John Vennari’s assessment as presented in [The Permanent Instruction of the Alta Vendita](#) (published by TAN Books in 1999), more proof positive that Neumayr has done his homework. He opens Chapter Three (“The Left’s Long March to the Papacy”) of *The Political Pope* as follows:

“The election of Jorge Bergoglio marked the culmination of the left’s long march through the Church. For decades, liberals, both inside and outside the Church, had labored for the elevation of a progressive pope who would incorporate the tenets of modern liberalism into Catholicism. That movement has been gathering strength since at least the advent of the modernist heresy in the Church, which Pope [St.] Pius X addressed in his 1907 encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*.

To read that encyclical today, one might think Pope Pius X was writing about the papacy of Francis. Pope Pius X warned that the modernists wish to fashion a faith ‘suited to the times in which we live,’ based not on the immutable doctrines of Catholicism but on the subjectivism of ‘modern philosophy.’ He foresaw a Church that would chase after elite fads, defer to the spurious claims of modern science, bow down to the secularism of the state, treat all religions as equal, cast Jesus Christ as a mere human political activist, reduce priests to social workers, and Protestantize its worship and doctrine.

Despite Pope Pius X’s efforts, modernism continued to spread in the Church throughout the twentieth century, bubbling up most visibly at Vatican II and its aftermath. ... The liberalism of Francis’ pontificate can be traced to that modernist spirit.”[\[5\]](#)

Granted, the errors mentioned above began well before Jorge Bergoglio was elected the 265th successor of St. Peter (they began in earnest during the reign of Pope John XXIII, 1958-1963), but it is equally true that Francis has taken those errors to unprecedented extremes.

The Marxist Pope

To understand Pope Francis and his radical pontificate, we must examine his words and deeds through the lens of his self-professed Marxism. As unbelievable as it is, the current occupant of the Chair of St. Peter is a firm adherent of liberation theology – that is, Communism with a Christian veneer – which was concocted by the Soviet KGB (secret police) and brought into Latin America by KGB agents as a means of subverting the Catholic Church.[\[6\]](#) During his four years as Supreme Pontiff, Francis has personally rehabilitated several previously censured liberation theologians, including Gustavo Gutierrez, Leonardo Boff,[\[7\]](#) and Miguel d’Escoto Brockmann. It is very reminiscent of how Pope John XXIII rehabilitated so many notorious Modernists just prior to Vatican II and invited them to participate as *periti* (theological experts) during the Council.[\[8\]](#) “According to Boff,” writes Neumayr, “Pope Francis will eventually rehabilitate all of the condemned liberation

theologians from Latin America. Boff believes that Pope Francis is waiting until their old critic, Pope Benedict XVI, dies.”[\[9\]](#)

His championing of socialism and admiration for socialists extends into the secular sphere, as well, thus making him “a darling of the global left” and “the ecclesiastical equivalent of Barack Obama,” says Neumayr.[\[10\]](#) Whether it be his lobbying for the dubious “science” of climate change, his support of the United Nations’ radical environmentalism (i.e. population control via abortion and contraception), or his honoring of Alinskyite politicians such as Bernie Sanders with invitations to speak at the Vatican, Francis has proven himself a staunch ally of liberals the world over. And specifically in regard to the United States, Francis fosters what Neumayr calls “The Unholy Alliance” (Chapter Five of *The Political Pope*) between the Catholic left and the Democratic left. Prime examples of this alliance include such “Catholic” Democrats as former vice president Joe Biden, former House speaker Nancy Pelosi, and Senator Tim Kaine (Hillary Clinton’s running mate) – all notorious for their full support of abortion, contraception, homosexual “marriage,” etc. – who have nothing but praise for Pope Francis, a fellow socialist.

It is quite providential that Neumayr’s book has been published during this Fatima Centennial Year – in the month of May, no less – since it demonstrates so thoroughly that the “errors of Russia” about which Our Lady of Fatima came to warn us have indeed infected the Church at the highest levels.[\[11\]](#)

No Tolerance for Tradition

One of the hallmarks of Francis’ pontificate continues to be his overt disdain for Sacred Tradition. It was evident, literally, from the first moments of his papacy when he was presented to the Church and the world on the central loggia of St. Peter’s Basilica. On that most solemn occasion, he declined to wear the traditional papal vestments (red mozzetta and stole)[\[12\]](#) and requested “the prayer of the people asking the blessing for their Bishop” from those gathered in St. Peter’s Square.[\[13\]](#) Only after a moment of silence for this “blessing from the people” did he then impart his Apostolic Blessing as Supreme Pontiff.

This was only the beginning, the proverbial tip of the iceberg, as Neumayr chronicles throughout his book. Pope Francis has publicly ridiculed, scolded, and otherwise defamed devout Catholics (clergy and laity) on multiple occasions simply for their fidelity to the traditional liturgy, doctrine, and discipline of Holy Mother Church. He has referred to traditional Catholics as “rigid,” “pharisaical,” “hardheaded,” and even “heretical” for refusing to accept his heterodox version of the Faith. In his inaugural apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (On the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today’s World), Francis critiqued traditionalists in a very condescending and denigrating manner, as noted by Neumayr:

“He has accused traditional Catholics of ‘self-absorbed promethean neopelagianism,’ without bothering to clarify the insult. Oozing contempt for traditionalist Catholics, he said they consider themselves ‘superior to others because they observe certain rules or remain intransigently faithful to a particular Catholic style from the past’ and that their ‘supposed soundness of doctrine or discipline leads instead to a narcissistic and authoritarian elitism, whereby instead of evangelizing, one analyzes and classifies others, and instead of opening the door to grace, one exhausts his or her energies in inspecting and verifying.’”[\[14\]](#)

Unfortunately, Francis’ fierce opposition to Tradition and those Catholics faithful to it does not end with mere words. As Neumayr notes, “One of Pope Francis’ first moves was to harass a growing traditionalist order in Italy called the Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate, which had enthusiastically embraced *Summorum Pontificum*, Pope Benedict XVI’s order authorizing wider use of the traditional Latin Mass.”[\[15\]](#) Neumayr goes on to quote from the decree issued by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (colloquially known as the Congregation for Religious) concerning the Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate (Protocol 52741/2012, dated 11 July 2013):

“...the Holy Father Francis has directed that every religious of the congregation of the Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate is required to celebrate the liturgy according to the ordinary [i.e. Novus Ordo] rite and that, if the occasion should arise, the use of the extraordinary form (Vetus Ordo) must be explicitly authorized by the competent authorities, for every religious and/or community that makes the request.”[\[16\]](#)

This sort of treatment of traditional Catholics has apparently been par for the course throughout his clerical tenure. As Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Neumayr explains:

“The only group of Catholics whom Archbishop Bergoglio treated severely were conservative Catholics, whose interest in the traditional Latin Mass he blocked. ‘He has persecuted every single priest who made an effort to wear a cassock, preach with firmness, or that was simply interested in *Summorum Pontificum* [Pope Benedict’s authorization for wider use of the traditional Latin Mass],’ Argentine journalist Marcelo González has written. Bergoglio referred to conservative religious orders as ‘restorationist factions’ and decried their ‘rigid

religiosity.”[\[17\]](#)

Cheerleader for the Church’s Historic Enemies

While Pope Francis is unjustly harsh with members of his own flock, he is inexplicably supportive of the Church’s most notorious enemies. Neumayr spotlights Francis’ incessant call for Europeans to allow a virtually unlimited number of Muslim “refugees” into their respective countries, thus referring to Francis as “The Open-Borders Pope” (Chapter Seven). He observes:

“In stark contrast to his predecessors, Pope Francis has shown no interest in reviving a historically Christian Europe against a potentially Eurabian future. Pope Francis subscribes to the left’s suicidally softheaded explanation for the rise of Islamic terrorism in Europe. He blames it not on Islamic radical ideology but on the West’s unwillingness to ‘integrate’ Muslims and open its borders to them.”[\[18\]](#)

In conjunction with his dangerous call for open borders, Francis shamelessly defends Islam against reasonable criticism and promotes the false notion that it is a “religion of peace.” For example, he wrote thus in *Evangelii Gaudium* (portion quoted by Neumayr in *italics*):

“We Christians should embrace with affection and respect Muslim immigrants to our [traditionally Christian] countries in the same way that we hope and ask to be received and respected in countries of Islamic tradition. I ask and I humbly entreat those countries to grant Christians freedom to worship and to practice their faith, in light of the freedom which followers of Islam enjoy in Western countries! Faced with disconcerting episodes of violent fundamentalism, *our respect for true followers of Islam should lead us to avoid hateful generalizations, for authentic Islam and the proper reading of the Koran are opposed to every form of violence.*”[\[19\]](#)

I am reminded of Christopher Ferrara’s intrepid questions in response to this passage: “By what authority does Francis declare who are the ‘true followers of Islam’ and what constitutes ‘authentic Islam and the proper reading of the Koran’? Is this the Vicar of Christ or the Vicar of Mohammad speaking?”[\[20\]](#)

Neumayr's refreshingly accurate treatment of Islam throughout *The Political Pope* also brings to mind the magnificent declaration [*With Burning Concern: We Accuse Pope Francis*](#) penned by Michael Matt, Christopher Ferrara, and John Vennari (issued jointly by *The Remnant* and *Catholic Family News* in Sept. 2016). Addressing the Pope directly, the esteemed authors of *With Burning Concern* confront Francis on a whole host of subjects, including what they correctly identify as his "Absurd Whitewash of Islam" (see Part II of the joint statement).

Pope Francis displays equal enthusiasm and spreads similar disinformation about the heresiarch Martin Luther, as evidenced by his trip last October to Lund, Sweden to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Protestant revolt. Neumayr discusses this most regrettable episode, as well as the virtual "canonization" (or at least exoneration) of Luther by Pope Francis, which occurred in the Vatican a couple of weeks prior to the Lund trip:

"Pope Francis goes out of his way to prop up the Church's historic opponents. Who could have imagined any other pope than this one celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation? In October 2016, Pope Francis traveled to Sweden to participate in a Catholic-Lutheran service that commemorated the beginning of Martin Luther's revolt against Catholicism. According to *L'Osservatore Romano*, the idea for the joint commemoration came from Pope Francis, not from the Lutherans. ...

In anticipation of the trip, Pope Francis praised Luther, describing him as a 'reformer.' He didn't mention Luther's sweeping rejection of Catholic doctrine and sacraments, reserving his criticism not for Luther but for the Church. 'I believe the intentions of Martin Luther were not wrong,' he said. ...

... On October 13, 2016, in an event that played out almost like an *Onion* parody at the Vatican, a group of Lutherans presented a smiling Pope Francis with a copy of Martin Luther's '95 Theses' against the Church.

At that event, a young Catholic girl asked the pope, 'My friends do not go to Church, but they are my friends. Do I have to help them to go to Church or is it enough that they simply remain good friends?' Don't bother, the pope replied: "It is not licit that you convince them of your faith; proselytism is the strongest poison against the ecumenical path.'" [\[21\]](#)

So said the pope who devoted over 200 pages (*Evangelii Gaudium*) to discussing the urgent

need for *evangelization*! What is “evangelization” if not an effort to convince others of our Faith – the one true Faith – and their need to embrace it for salvation?

What Must Be Done?

To conclude his groundbreaking work, Neumayr poses a most pressing question: “Will Paul Correct Peter?” (Chapter Twelve). As he explains, he is referring to the famous episode at Antioch when St. Paul “withstood [St. Peter] to the face, because he was to be blamed” for giving a bad example (see Gal. 2:11-14). Neumayr goes on to quote from Aquinas’ *Summa Theologiae* on the importance of fraternal correction and exhorts his readers about the need to resist Francis, citing Bellarmine:

“‘Just as it is lawful to resist the pope that attacks the body,’ argued St. Robert Bellarmine, the celebrated sixteenth-century Jesuit, ‘it is also lawful to resist the one who attacks souls or who disturbs civil order, or, above all, who attempts to destroy the Church. I say that it is lawful to resist him by not doing what he orders and preventing his will from being executed.’”[\[22\]](#)

Neumayr also discusses examples of the recent “historic pushback,” as John Vennari called it, such as the [theological critique](#) of *Amoris Laetitia* by an international group of 45 scholars and the famous [dubia](#) submitted to Pope Francis by Cardinals Burke, Brandmüller, Meisner, and Caffarra.

Read the Book, Spread the Word

This review has truly just scratched the surface of the contents of George Neumayr’s book. I strongly encourage readers to support his laudable work by purchasing a copy of [The Political Pope](#), reading it in full, and then spreading the truth of its contents far and wide. As Neumayr ultimately concludes, our solemn duty as Catholics during this time of unprecedented crisis is to “defend the faith from a pope who aligns with her enemies.”[\[23\]](#) May we all “contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints” (Jude 3) and persevere in that Faith unto the end.

And may we remember to pray much for the Holy Father, as Our Lady of Fatima and the three little shepherds taught us.

Notes

[1] John Vennari, “Blessed Pius IX, a Model in Our Struggle,” blog post dated June 13, 2013.

[2] Mr. Neumayr graciously made Chapter One of *The Political Pope* available online at the end of his *OnePeterFive* [interview](#).

[3] George Neumayr, *The Political Pope: How Pope Francis is Delighting the Liberal Left and Abandoning Conservatives* (New York: Center Street, 2017), p. 8.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 153; see also Steve Skojec, “[Pope: ‘It is the Communists Who Think Like Christians’](#)”, *OnePeterFive*, Nov. 11, 2016.

[5] Neumayr, *The Political Pope*, pp. 41-42.

[6] Neumayr cites Ion Mihai Pacepa, former head of intelligence for communist Romania, who defected to the United States in 1978 (see *The Political Pope*, p. 2-3). Pacepa offers a detailed account of the Soviet origins of liberation theology in his book *Disinformation: Former Spy Chief Reveals Secret Strategies for Undermining Freedom, Attacking Religion, and Promoting Terrorism* (Washington, DC: WND Books, Inc., 2013), pp. 106-110.

[7] Neumayr cites an article by John Vennari (“Pastoral Discernment and Dead Members ‘Alive’”) as his source for a quote from Boff (see *The Political Pope*, p. 16, note 11).

[8] See Roberto de Mattei, [The Second Vatican Council: An Unwritten Story](#) (Fitzwilliam: Loreto Publications, English Ed. 2012), pp. 188-192.

[9] Neumayr, *The Political Pope*, p. 5.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

[11] See Maike Hickson, “[Have the ‘Errors of Russia’ Now Infected Rome?](#)” *OnePeterFive*, Dec. 13, 2016; Jan Bentz, “[Bishop Schneider likens treatment of four Cardinals to Soviet regime: ‘We live in a climate of threats’](#)”, *LifeSiteNews*, Dec. 6, 2016.

[12] He wore the traditional gold-embroidered red stole only while imparting his first papal blessing, then immediately removed it.

[13] First Greeting and Apostolic Blessing (*Urbi et Orbi*) of Pope Francis given [Mar. 13, 2013](#).

[14] Neumayr, *The Political Pope*, p. 164; see [Evangelii Gaudium](#), n. 94.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 190.

[16] *Ibid.*; see Sandro Magister, "[For the First Time, Francis Contradicts Benedict](#)", *Chiesa*, July 29, 2013.

[17] Neumayr, *The Political Pope*, p. 73.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 126.

[19] *Ibid.*, pp. 147-148; *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 253.

[20] Christopher A. Ferrara, "Vicar of Christ or Vicar of Mohammad?" article published in the Sept. 2016 issue of *Catholic Family News*.

[21] Neumayr, *The Political Pope*, pp. 155-156.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 219.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 221.