

Last year, *anno Domini* 2017, was truly historic in many ways. Although it did not meet the expectations of some in regard to apocalyptic signs, the Fatima Centenary featured a host of significant happenings in the Church and the world, in general. Dubbed “[a year of disaster](#)” by CNBC, 2017 witnessed a variety of devastating natural disasters across the globe: flooding, hurricanes, earthquakes, mudslides, and wildfires, to name a few. For the Church, it could appropriately be styled the “year of resistance” – that is, of resisting Pope Francis “to the face” (Gal. 2:11).

The first notable example that comes to mind is the publication of George Neumayr’s *The Political Pope* (May 2017), a penetrating exposé of Jorge Mario Bergoglio based largely on direct quotes from the man himself, as noted in my [review](#) of the book. A few months later (Sept. 24, 2017), the famous [Correctio filialis](#) (“filial correction”) was made public, a respectful but firm indictment “on account of the propagation of heresies effected by the apostolic exhortation *Amoris laetitia* and by other words, deeds and omissions” of Pope Francis. This was followed, in turn, by a similar initiative (Dec. 12, 2017): “[Pledge of Fidelity: Faithful to True Doctrine, Not to Erring Pastors](#)”.

Perhaps the most intriguing manifestation of resistance, however, appeared in between the *Correctio filialis* and Pledge of Fidelity in the form of an e-book entitled *The Dictator Pope* (Nov. 2017). The mysterious author, writing under the pen name “Marcantonio Colonna” (after the famous Italian admiral who led the papal fleet in the Battle of Lepanto), revealed precious few personal details. Initially, he disclosed only that he is “a graduate of Oxford University and has extensive experience of historical and other research. He has been living in Rome since the beginning of Pope Francis’s pontificate, and his book is the fruit of close contacts with many of those working in the Vatican, including the leading Cardinals and other figures mentioned in the narrative.”

On March 19 of this year (the anniversary of Francis’s installation as Pope), in preparation for the release of the second edition, the mystery man revealed his true identity:

“Marcantonio Colonna is the pen name of Henry Sire (H. J. A. Sire), an author and historian. Sire was born in 1949 in Barcelona to a family of French ancestry. He was educated in England at the Jesuits’ centuries-old Stonyhurst College and at Exeter College, Oxford, where he gained an honors degree in Modern History. He is the author of six books on Catholic history and biography, including one on the famous English Jesuit, writer, and philosopher Father Martin D’Arcy, SJ. *The Dictator Pope* is the fruit of Henry Sire’s four-year residence in Rome from 2013 to 2017. During that time, he became personally acquainted with many figures in the Vatican, including Cardinals and Curial officials, together with journalists

specializing in Vatican affairs.” ([Hardcover edition](#), book jacket)

I recently asked Mr. Sire for an interview to discuss his explosive book, which has grabbed the attention of the Church and the world, alike. While much of the book’s contents are not pleasant to read, the terrible truth about Pope Francis must be told and widely disseminated so that, in the author’s words, “the cardinals might never again place a dictator pope in the See of St. Peter.”

Catholic Family News (CFN): First of all, thank you, Mr. Sire, for granting this interview and for your work in writing *The Dictator Pope*. I can imagine it was not necessarily a pleasant task, but an important one, nonetheless.

Henry Sire (HS): You are exactly right. This was not a congenial subject for me to choose; but after four years in Rome, with all the knowledge I had about what was going on, I felt I would be failing in my duty if I didn’t reveal what I knew.

CFN: Before we discuss your book and the grave crisis it details, perhaps you could share with our readers a little about your academic field of expertise and career. What first sparked your interest in studying and writing about Church history?

HS: When I was at school in the 1960s, in spite of all the very bad influences of the time I had the advantage of having access to a library which had all the classic Catholic books of the past fifty or sixty years. I became a strong devotee especially of Belloc and Chesterton. In 2015, I published [Phoenix from the Ashes](#) (Angelico Press), which was really the materialization of an idea which I had had from the age of seventeen. My previous books on subjects of Catholic history were rather frivolous sideshows, although they did include a biography of the famous English Jesuit, Father Martin D’Arcy, which was a more worthwhile project.

CFN: According to the book jacket of the newly released hardcover edition, “*The Dictator Pope* is the fruit of Henry Sire’s four-year residence in Rome from 2013-2017.” What originally brought you to Rome? Did you arrive in time to witness the election of Pope Francis on March 13, 2013 and his introduction to the world that evening?

HS: No, I arrived in Rome exactly a month later. I was called there by the Grand Master of the Knights of Malta, Fra Matthew Festing, to work as historian of the Order.

CFN: What was your first impression of Pope Francis? Did you know anything about

him prior to his election?

HS: I watched the election on television, and I must say that I felt rather depressed by his hangdog face and manner when he appeared on the balcony. However, I was suspending my judgment on him for the first couple of years. I knew absolutely nothing about Bergoglio beforehand. He was not mentioned as a *papabile* in any of the newspaper articles I read at the time of the Conclave.

CFN: What were some of the first indicators to you that there was something terribly wrong with Pope Francis and his pontificate?

HS: There were obvious indicators right from the start, for example, his famous “Who am I to judge?” remark. On the other hand, Francis was being very ambivalent, and it was not possible to judge which side he would come down on. Living in Rome, I got blow-by-blow accounts of the two Synods on the Family, but I was receiving Cardinal Pell’s accounts mainly, and he did not point to Pope Francis as the man to blame.

CFN: Was there anything in particular that convinced you of the need to write *The Dictator Pope*?

HS: It was more an accumulation of causes. In December 2015, I wrote an article for Angelico Press, “[Pope Francis’s Papacy – Where is the reformer behind the media idol?](#)” which was *The Dictator Pope* in embryo. A year later, I was telling friends that it was necessary that a book exposing the Francis papacy should be written, but at that time I was fully employed as historian of the Order of Malta. The dismissal of Grand Master Festing in January 2017, however, left me free to devote myself to the work.

CFN: As you may know, CFN contributor Christopher Ferrara wrote a [review](#) of the first (electronic) edition of *The Dictator Pope*, giving your research high marks and summarizing the book’s major topics - for example, the St. Gallen Mafia, the homosexual lobby in the Vatican, the infamous Synods on the Family and their predetermined result (i.e. *Amoris Laetitia*), and the destruction of the Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate. For those who have read the first edition of your book (released in late 2017), what differences will they notice in the “Completely Revised and Updated” hardcover edition?

HS: The book has been copy-edited for an American readership, and I have also added sections on the papal scandals that have emerged since the e-book was published. The most important of these is the case of Cardinal Rodriguez Maradiaga, who is Pope Francis’s right-hand man and the president of the C9, the council of cardinals who are supposed to be

planning the reform of the Church. It is now becoming clear that Cardinal Rodriguez Maradiaga is one of the most corrupt prelates in the world-wide Church. The Pope sent a Visitor to Honduras last May to investigate serious allegations, and he discovered shocking evidence of deep financial and sexual corruption; yet for the last twelve months, Pope Francis has been personally covering up these facts, in keeping with the blatant cronyism which is central to this pontificate.

CFN: In your recent [video interview](#) with the *National Catholic Register* (recorded March 26, 2018), you were asked, “As a historian, how does this pontificate [of Francis] compare with previous ones?” to which you responded (in part), “Well, there are two aspects of that. There’s a doctrinal one and, yes, the only parallel in that respect is the pontificate of Paul VI.” Similarly, towards the beginning of *The Dictator Pope* you mention “the radical consequences of the Second Vatican Council”[1] playing out during the reign of Paul VI. What, in your view, is the connection between Vatican II, Paul VI’s pontificate, and the decades-long crisis in the Church that has now reached unprecedented levels under Pope Francis?

HS: The connection is a direct one. It is only in the climate created by the Church revolution of the last fifty-five years that a man of Jorge Bergoglio’s character could have been elected pope. But this papacy is going to force Catholics to re-examine the events of the 1960s, which are closely parallel to those of the present reign. In 1963, as in 2013, there was a secret meeting of liberal cardinals on the eve of the Conclave to get their man elected, in direct contravention of canon law. Paul VI’s rigging of the Second Vatican Council to push it in a liberal direction was just like Francis’s rigging of the Synods. Catholics have been refusing to look at these events, but the *omertà* (“code of silence”) will have to break down quite soon.

CFN: Although many readers are aware of the St. Gallen Mafia’s scheming in the 2013 Conclave, the “secret meeting of liberal cardinals” prior to the 1963 Conclave is probably less familiar. Would you elaborate a bit on the details of that affair and recommend a good source from which to learn more?

HS: This was organized by Cardinal Lercaro, and the meeting was held on the night before the Conclave opened, in the house of Umberto Ortolani, a banker and prominent Freemason who was Lercaro’s right-hand man (Ortolani was later imprisoned for financial fraud). The meeting was attended by nearly all the leading liberal cardinals of the time, and they agreed to try to get Cardinal Lercaro elected, or, failing him, Montini. Paul VI presumably was not aware of the meeting, but the participating cardinals were precisely the ones he promptly appointed to direct the Council and the Church, when they ought to have been excommunicated for their violation of canon law. You will find the story, with references, in

my *Phoenix from the Ashes*.

CFN: Professor Roberto de Mattei, a fellow Catholic historian, recently stated during an [interview](#) with CFN concerning the crisis in the Church, “Pope Francis is not its cause, but rather the product of a process of auto-demolition which has its roots in modernism, in the *Nouvelle théologie*, in the Second Vatican Council, and in the post-conciliar era. Only a serious analysis of the nature of this crisis will allow us to find the right solution, without forgetting that the situation is so grave that only an extraordinary intervention of grace can resolve it.” Do you agree with Professor de Mattei’s assessment?

HS: Professor de Mattei is absolutely right in placing the present crisis within the context of Modernism, which wasn’t properly defeated in the early twentieth century because there was a deficient intellectual grasp of it among the clergy as a whole. Then the Second Vatican Council opted for an uncritical acceptance of the *Nouvelle théologie*, in line with its ill-considered rage for modernity. It would be a very shallow judgment indeed to think Pope Francis solely responsible for the present crisis.

CFN: Do you believe the Church was in “good condition” during the reigns of John Paul II and Benedict XVI?

HS: Absolutely not. When I was writing *Phoenix from the Ashes*, under Benedict XVI’s papacy, I wrote: “For those who have eyes to see, the official modern Church is an empty shell, and it will not be many years before its collapse is impossible to ignore.” I also wrote of John Paul II: “His restoration was a shallow one, founded not on rock but on the sand of the Second Vatican Council.”

CFN: Perhaps due in part to a lack of action from the hierarchy, some Catholics have decided for themselves that Francis is not the true Pope, whether because they believe that Benedict XVI’s resignation was invalid, or Francis’s election null and void (due to the political scheming), or that Francis has lost his office due to heresy. What would you say to those who have chosen to go this route?

HS: I look at this matter as a Church historian, and the principle has always been that the pope is whoever the Church of Rome (i.e. the Roman clergy and laity) recognizes in practice as its bishop. If you applied the criteria of regularity of election, you would have to rewrite a large part of papal history. Similarly, there have been popes who have been condemned posthumously as heretics, but they are still regarded as valid popes. The Church has not yet arrived at a recognized method of deposing a pope for heresy, and attempts in the past to do anything of the sort have always resulted in schism.

CFN: One of the themes that runs throughout *The Dictator Pope* is Jorge Mario Bergoglio’s skill in manipulating both individuals and the general public. In light of this, what are your thoughts about the new film [Pope Francis: A Man of His Word](#), which premieres in theaters across North America on May 18? What do you believe Francis is hoping to achieve by producing such a film?

HS: If you look at the trailer for this film, it begins: “No matter what divides us, his words unite us.” This, about the most divisive pope the Church has seen for centuries. It is typical of the whole tenor of liberal propaganda, which depends on standing the truth on its head. The producer, Wim Wenders, is the classic left-wing liberal of the 1960s. He is a lapsed Catholic who has run through about five wives, I believe, in his lifetime. This is the audience Pope Francis has been playing to ever since he was elected, and it has served him very well. He just keeps pressing the right buttons and the liberal media salivate like Pavlovian dogs. In fact, if there were a film-maker prepared to do his homework, a good subject for a film would be Bergoglio’s career in Argentina in the forty years prior to his papal election. It could be titled: “Jorge Bergoglio: Don’t Trust Him An Inch.”

CFN: One final thought and question: It strikes me as quite providential that *The Dictator Pope*, as well as George Neumayr’s *The Political Pope*, first appeared during the Fatima Centenary (2017), considering that Sister Lucia (1907-2005), the oldest of the three seers, warned about a “diabolical disorientation invading the world and misleading souls!” Pope Francis, despite his many defects, seems to have sincere devotion to Our Lady, and particularly, to Our Lady of Fatima. Do you believe Our Lady will play a role - perhaps even a decisive role - in resolving the current crisis and restoring Holy Mother Church to her proper condition?

HS: If you look at the Church’s history, I think you must recognize that God has always sent special revelations, including many apparitions of Our Lady, to warn the Church in moments of danger. But what you don’t find is interventions overcoming the hordes of satan by force. That is not God’s way. He offers us the graces we need, but it is up to us to listen to what He tells us. If churchmen had listened to Our Lady’s warnings, at Fatima and elsewhere, the whole course of the Church in the last sixty years would have been avoided; but they despised those warnings. We have been under the rule of leaders too sophisticated to take apparitions seriously, or to take simple devotions seriously, and that is why the Church is the wasteland that it is. If Pope Francis has a sincere devotion to Our Lady, we could pray that he listens to the messages She has given us in Her apparitions, and then a miracle could indeed take place.

[1] Marcantonio Colonna (aka Henry Sire), *The Dictator Pope: The Inside Story of the Francis Papacy* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2018), p. 8.