

Should the Pope resign? Ever since Archbishop Vigano called for Pope Francis to resign in the wake of several high profile sex-abuse cover-ups, that has been a burning question for Catholics.

The chief objection to resignation is that it would create a dangerous precedent. Following closely on the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI, it would create an expectation that all future popes would at some point have to resign. Writing in *The Weekly Standard*, [Jonathan Last](#) suggest that “two abdications in a row would have the practical effect of breaking the modern papacy.” It would turn the papacy, he says, “into an expressly political office.”

Nevertheless, Pope Francis should resign. And he should [heed Vigano’s call](#) to accept the resignation of “cardinals and bishops who covered up McCarrick’s abuses.”

Why? Because the gravity of the scandals—in the U.S., Chile, Honduras, Germany, England, Ireland, Australia, and elsewhere—must be matched with an equally serious response. And it’s hard to imagine anything short of resignation that would show a firm purpose of amendment on the part of the Pope.

Vigano’s accusations are of a radical nature, and, if they are accurate, then the response to them must also be radical. Vigano doesn’t merely criticize the Pope, he accuses him of colluding with evil. He refers to the “grave, disconcerting and sinful conduct of Pope Francis.” He charges Francis with “multiplying exponentially with his supreme authority the evil done by McCarrick.” He adds: “And how many other evil pastors is Francis still continuing to prop up in their active destruction of the Church!” If Vigano’s charges are true, then, of course, the Pope should resign.

But how about the objection that two resignations in a row would turn the Church into a contentious two-party system? That’s possible, but it’s not inevitable. Moreover, that possibility has to be weighed against the reality that Pope Francis has already politicized the Church to an extent that few could have anticipated at the beginning of his papacy. As detailed by George Neumayr in [The Political Pope](#), the pope’s political agenda is decidedly left of center, and he seems to have few qualms about imposing his brand of radical politics on the Church even at the expense of doctrine. Now that he is under fire, he might be tempted to accelerate the process of modernizing Catholic morals and teaching. As [Peter Kwasniewski](#) writes in *LifeSite News*, “One wonders if Pope Francis is worried about how many years he’s got left, and wants to make sure he changes as much as he can, as quickly as possible.”

In that light, Pope Benedict’s resignation should be looked upon not as a bad precedent, but as a providential one. For the good of the Church, Francis ought to resign, but without

Benedict's precedent, few would dare to broach the possibility.

More to the point, Francis himself would probably not consider resigning without that precedent as a goad. Although he cultivates an image of openness and flexibility, he is, as I have observed [elsewhere](#), decidedly stubborn on many matters. He may be humble in certain respects, but he seems to have no intellectual humility. Rather, he is quite sure that he is right about the environment, global warming, capitalism, capital punishment, the benefits of Muslim migration, and a host of other issues. Moreover this stubbornness extends to his appointments. Francis is not taking any chances with the success of his radical agenda. As a result, his top appointments are men who are made in his mold. And once appointed, he defends them, as Archbishop Vigano puts it, "to the bitter end."

Take for example two extremely significant global gatherings: The World Meeting of Families (WMOF) which was held in Dublin in late August, and the Youth Synod which is being held in Vatican City between October 3-28.

The WMOF included a number of talks which focused on sensitivity to the needs of LGBT individuals and their families. One of the featured speaker was Fr. James Martin, S.J., a controversial pro-LGBT priest who wants Catholics to "[see how normal it is to be LGBT](#)."

Other speakers included Cardinal Blasé Cupich, who is mentioned in the Vigano statement as being "blinded by his pro-gay ideology." Vigano writes that "the appointments of Blasé Cupich to Chicago and Joseph W. Tobin to Newark were orchestrated by McCarrick, Maradiaga and Wuerl, united by a wicked pact of abuses by the first, and at least of cover-up of abuses by the other two." Archbishop Tobin who was also a prominent participant, claims not to have known about McCarrick's abuses, even though as Archbishop of Newark he should have known about the settlements that the Newark diocese had paid to two of McCarrick's victims.

Cardinal Wuerl who is mentioned several times in the Vigano statement was also scheduled to participate in the WMOF, but was unable to attend due to the controversy generated by the Pennsylvania Grand Jury Report which implicated Wuerl for having covered-up several abuse cases. The organizer of the WMOF conference was Cardinal Kevin Farrell who is also mentioned in the Vigano statement. Farrell shared a house with Cardinal McCarrick for six years but claims he had no idea of the abuses committed by McCarrick.

Another prominent participant in the conference was Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez Maradiaga of Tegucigalpa who, according to Vigano, "had become the *kingmaker* for appointments in the Curia and United States." Perhaps the Pope's closest advisor, Maradiaga currently stands accused of covering-up widespread sexual abuse in Honduras' largest

seminary. Maradiaga's talk at the World Meeting of Families was entitled "Pope Francis on the Revolution of Tenderness."

When I read that, I couldn't help but think of one of Frank Sinatra's standards, "The Tender Trap." If you're not careful, warns Sinatra, you'll find that: "you're hooked, you're cooked, you're caught in the tender trap." In many ways, the WMOF was an attempt to trap Catholics into believing that all forms of families are equally pleasing in the eyes of God.

Not coincidentally, another "tender trap" has been laid in Vatican City for the youth of the world. Most of the participants for the Youth Synod are chosen by conferences of bishops. But thirty-nine special delegates are appointed by Pope Francis. His choices include Cardinal Reinhard Marx who wants ritual blessings for same-sex unions, and—once again—Cardinals Cupich and Tobin (although [Tobin has bowed out](#) "as a result of the [sex-abuse] crisis that continues to unfold" in his diocese). Cardinal Farrell will also be present by virtue of his office.

If you're beginning to see a pattern here, so are others. Several prominent Catholics have called for the Synod to be cancelled. They include Archbishop Charles Chaput of Philadelphia, Bishop Joseph Strickland of Tyler, Texas, and Dutch bishop Robert Mutsaerts who has pulled out of the Synod because "[the whole thing will lack credibility](#)." Others, such as [George Weigel](#), have criticized the *Instrumentum Laboris* (working document) for the Synod, calling it a "bloated tedious doorstop full of sociologese but woefully lacking in spiritual or theological insight."

More on that later, but first a little more on the delegates. Skipping over the [German bishop](#) who is accused both of covering up abuse cases and allowing teen LGBT love stories to circulate in his diocese, let's focus on another of the special delegates personally chosen by Pope Francis to enlighten World Youth.

His name is Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia. He's known in Italy for having commissioned a billboard-size [homoerotic mural](#) in his cathedral church.

Not content to merely commission the mural, Paglia had himself included in it, wearing his skull cap but not much else, and embracing a nude man whose private parts are covered by a floating ribbon.

To say the least, Bishop Paglia displayed poor judgement—but nowhere near the poor judgement exhibited by two pontiffs. The aging and often poorly-advised Benedict XVI appointed him as President of the Pontifical Council for the Family in 2012. Under Paglia's direction, the Council produced a sex-education program which, according to the [Cardinal](#)

[Newman Society:](#)

“Makes frequent use of sexually explicit and morally objectionable images, fails to clearly identify and explain Catholic doctrine... and compromises the innocence and integrity of young people...”

Apparently pleased with his efforts, Pope Francis then shifted Paglia to the presidency of both the Pontifical Academy for Life and the renamed and re-booted Pope John Paul II Pontifical Theological Institute for Marriage and Family Sciences. Of related interest is that Paglia was replaced at the Pontifical Council for the Family (renamed as the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life) by the ubiquitous Bishop Farrell—the one-time housemate of Cardinal McCarrick who, like Paglia, was elevated by Pope Francis to high office despite his well-known proclivities.

You don't have to study homoerotic murals to get the picture. Francis has surrounded himself with highly suspect people who, for the good of the Church, can no longer be given the benefit of the doubt. Yet instead of demoting or dismissing them, the Pope keeps placing them in central roles. Why? Because their progressive agenda is his also.

One major part of that agenda is to make peace with the sexual revolution. When the Paglia-orchestrated sex-education program was released, *LifeSiteNews* headlined the event as “[Vatican sex-ed ‘surrenders’ to sexual revolution](#).” Significantly, that's the way the *Instrumentum Laboris* for the Youth Synod is being characterized by its critics. [George Weigel](#) upbraids the authors of the IL for being “embarrassed by Catholic teaching” and for failing to challenge the world's “fanatical commitment to the sexual revolution in all its expressions.” Likewise, an [open letter](#) addressed to members of the Synod by eight young Catholic priests contends that the working document “concedes too much to the sexual revolution, which has caused such great harm to young people.”

Should the Pope resign? His willingness to pack the WMOF and the Youth Synod with the men who are most deeply implicated in the sex-abuse cover-ups, suggests that he doesn't take the scandals seriously. Either that, or he considers the success of his progressive agenda to be more important than the damage being done to the Church. In the face of all the destructive forces that have been unleashed against the Church from within and without, Francis seems determined to conduct business as usual—full speed ahead and damn the consequences.

Toward the end of his statement, [Archbishop Vigano](#) has this to say:

“Francis is abdicating the mandate which Christ gave to Peter to confirm the brethren. Indeed, by his action he has divided them, led them into error, and encouraged the wolves to continue to tear apart the sheep of Christ’s flock.”

The man who led the sheep to the wolves is not the man to lead the Church. He should step down.

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