"The Lord God is my helper, therefore am I not confounded: therefore have I set my face as a most hard rock, and I know that I shall not be confounded." ~ Isaias 50:7

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During my recent trip to Rome, I reported on Cardinal Marc Ouellet's open letter to Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò concerning the latter's testimony (released Aug. 25) and the explosive revelations contained therein. In his statement, published on the morning of Oct. 7, Ouellet referred to Viganò's accusations as an "unjust and unjustified attack" against Pope Francis, a "scandalous rebellion that inflicts a very painful wound to the Bride of Christ," one which causes "further division and confusion among the People of God."

Earlier today, Archbishop Viganò published his formal reply to Cardinal Ouellet (reprinted below), reasserting the veracity of his original testimony and pointing out that Ouellet's open letter contains not only several irrelevant tangents but also some crucial admissions that bolster Viganò's case:

> "I invoked God as my witness to the truth of my claims, and none has been shown false. Cardinal Ouellet has written to rebuke me for my temerity in breaking silence and leveling such grave accusations against my brothers and superiors, but in truth his remonstrance confirms me in my decision and, even more, serves to vindicate my claims, severally and as a whole."

And once again, Archbishop Viganò zeros in on the root problem of the abuse crisis, "namely, the corrupting influence of homosexuality in the priesthood and in the hierarchy." He goes on:

> "This is a crisis due to the scourge of homosexuality, in its agents, in its motives, in its resistance to reform. It is no exaggeration to say that homosexuality has become a plague in the clergy, and it can only be eradicated with spiritual weapons. It is an enormous hypocrisy to condemn the abuse, claim to weep for the victims, and yet refuse to denounce the root cause of so much sexual abuse: homosexuality. It is hypocrisy to refuse to acknowledge that this scourge is due to a serious crisis in the spiritual life of the clergy and to fail to take the steps necessary to remedy it. …
>
> It is well established that homosexual predators exploit clerical privilege to their advantage. But to claim the crisis itself to be clericalism is pure sophistry. It is

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to pretend that a means, an instrument, is in fact the main motive."

How refreshing it is to hear the ridiculous claim that "clericalism" is the root of the crisis denounced with such clarity and conviction. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt. 13:9).

Before providing the full text of Archbishop Viganò latest testimony, it is interesting to note that today (Oct. 19) on the traditional Roman calendar is the feast of St. Peter of Alcantara (d. 1562), a Franciscan priest who greatly assisted St. Teresa of Avila in her reform of the Carmelites. Thus, it seems quite fitting that Archbishop Viganò, whose sincere motive is the reform of a horribly corrupt hierarchy, to have published his text today. May Our Lord and Our Lady continue to sustain his efforts to speak the truth.

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On the Feast of the North American Martyrs

To bear witness to corruption in the hierarchy of the Catholic Church was a painful decision for me, and remains so. But I am an old man, one who knows he must soon give an accounting to the Judge for his actions and omissions, one who fears Him who can cast body and soul into hell. A Judge Who, even in His infinite mercy, will render to every person salvation or damnation according to what he has deserved. Anticipating the dreadful question from that Judge — "How could you, who had knowledge of the truth, keep silent in the midst of falsehood and depravity?" — what answer could I give?

I testified fully aware that my testimony would bring alarm and dismay to many eminent persons: churchmen, fellow bishops, colleagues with whom I had worked and prayed. I knew many would feel wounded and betrayed. I expected that some would in their turn assail me and my motives. Most painful of all, I knew that many of the innocent faithful would be confused and disconcerted by the spectacle of a bishop's charging colleagues and superiors with malfeasance, sexual sin, and grave neglect of duty. Yet I believe that my continued silence would put many souls at risk, and would certainly damn my own. Having reported multiple times to my superiors, and even to the Pope, the aberrant behavior of Theodore McCarrick, I could have publicly denounced the truths of which I was aware earlier. If I have some responsibility in this delay, I repent for that. This delay was due to the gravity of the decision I was going to take, and to the long travail of my conscience.

I have been accused of creating confusion and division in the Church through my testimony. To those who believe such confusion and division were negligible prior to August 2018,

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perhaps such a claim is plausible. Most impartial observers, however, will have been aware of a longstanding excess of both, as is inevitable when the successor of Peter is negligent in exercising his principal mission, which is to confirm the brothers in the faith and in sound moral doctrine. When he then exacerbates the crisis by contradictory or perplexing statements about these doctrines, the confusion is worsened.

Therefore I spoke. For it is the conspiracy of silence that has wrought and continues to wreak great harm in the Church — harm to so many innocent souls, to young priestly vocations, to the faithful at large. With regard to my decision, which I have taken in conscience before God, I willingly accept every fraternal correction, advice, recommendation, and invitation to progress in my life of faith and love for Christ, the Church and the Pope.

Let me restate the key points of my testimony.

- In November 2000 the U.S. nuncio Archbishop Montalvo informed the Holy See of Cardinal McCarrick's homosexual behavior with seminarians and priests.

- In December 2006 the new U.S. nuncio, Archbishop Pietro Sambi, informed the Holy See of Cardinal McCarrick's homosexual behavior with yet another priest.

- In December of 2006 I myself wrote a memo to the Secretary of State Cardinal Bertone, and personally delivered it to the Substitute for General Affairs, Archbishop Leonardo Sandri, calling for the pope to bring extraordinary disciplinary measures against McCarrick to forestall future crimes and scandal. This memo received no response.

- In April 2008 an open letter to Pope Benedict by Richard Sipe was relayed by the Prefect of the CDF, Cardinal Levada, to the Secretary of State, Cardinal Bertone, containing further accusations of McCarrick's sleeping with seminarians and priests. I received this a month later, and in May 2008 I myself delivered a second memo to the then Substitute for General Affairs, Archbishop Fernando Filoni, reporting the claims against McCarrick and calling for sanctions against him. This second memo also received no response.

- In 2009 or 2010 I learned from Cardinal Re, prefect of the Congregation of Bishops,

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that Pope Benedict had ordered McCarrick to cease public ministry and begin a life of prayer and penance. The nuncio Sambi communicated the Pope's orders to McCarrick in a voice heard down the corridor of the nunciature.

- In November 2011 Cardinal Ouellet, the new Prefect of Bishops, repeated to me, the new nuncio to the U.S., the Pope's restrictions on McCarrick, and I myself communicated them to McCarrick face-to-face.

- On June 21, 2013, toward the end of an official assembly of nuncios at the Vatican, Pope Francis spoke cryptic words to me criticizing the U.S. episcopacy.

- On June 23, 2013, I met Pope Francis face-to-face in his apartment to ask for clarification, and the Pope asked me, "*il cardinale McCarrick, com'è* (Cardinal McCarrick — what do you make of him)?"– which I can only interpret as a feigning of curiosity in order to discover whether or not I was an ally of McCarrick. I told him that McCarrick had sexually corrupted generations of priests and seminarians, and had been ordered by Pope Benedict to confine himself to a life of prayer and penance.

- Instead, McCarrick continued to enjoy the special regard of Pope Francis and was given new responsibilities and missions by him.

- McCarrick was part of a network of bishops promoting homosexuality who, exploiting their favor with Pope Francis, manipulated episcopal appointments so as to protect themselves from justice and to strengthen the homosexual network in the hierarchy and in the Church at large.

- Pope Francis himself has either colluded in this corruption, or, knowing what he does, is gravely negligent in failing to oppose it and uproot it.

I invoked God as my witness to the truth of my claims, and none has been shown false. Cardinal Ouellet has written to rebuke me for my temerity in breaking silence and leveling such grave accusations against my brothers and superiors, but in truth his remonstrance confirms me in my decision and, even more, serves to vindicate my claims, severally and as a whole.

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- Cardinal Ouellet concedes that he spoke with me about McCarrick's situation prior to my leaving for Washington to begin my post as nuncio.

- Cardinal Ouellet concedes that he communicated to me in writing the conditions and restrictions imposed on McCarrick by Pope Benedict.

- Cardinal Ouellet concedes that these restrictions forbade McCarrick to travel or to make public appearances.

- Cardinal Ouellet concedes that the Congregation of Bishops, in writing, first through the nuncio Sambi and then once again through me, required McCarrick to lead a life of prayer and penance.

What does Cardinal Ouellet dispute?

- Cardinal Ouellet disputes the possibility that Pope Francis could have taken in important information about McCarrick on a day when he met scores of nuncios and gave each only a few moments of conversation. But this was not my testimony. My testimony is that at a second, private meeting, I informed the Pope, answering his own question about Theodore McCarrick, then Cardinal archbishop emeritus of Washington, prominent figure of the Church in the US, telling the Pope that McCarrick had sexually corrupted his own seminarians and priests. No Pope could forget that.

- Cardinal Ouellet disputes the existence in his archives of letters signed by Pope Benedict or Pope Francis regarding sanctions on McCarrick. But this was not my testimony. My testimony was that he has in his archives key documents – irrespective of provenance — incriminating McCarrick and documenting the measures taken in his regard, and other proofs on the cover-up regarding his situation. And I confirm this again.

- Cardinal Ouellet disputes the existence in the files of his predecessor, Cardinal Re, of "audience memos" imposing on McCarrick the restrictions already mentioned. But this was not my testimony. My testimony is that there are other documents: for instance, a note from Card Re not *ex-Audientia SS.mi*, signed by either the Secretary

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of State or by the Substitute.

- Cardinal Ouellet disputes that it is false to present the measures taken against McCarrick as "sanctions" decreed by Pope Benedict and canceled by Pope Francis. True. They were not technically "sanctions" but provisions, "conditions and restrictions." To quibble whether they were sanctions or provisions or something else is pure legalism. From a pastoral point of view they are exactly the same thing.

In brief, Cardinal Ouellet concedes the important claims that I did and do make, and disputes claims I don't make and never made.

There is one point on which I must absolutely refute what Cardinal Ouellet wrote. The Cardinal states that the Holy See was only aware of "rumors," which were not enough to justify disciplinary measures against McCarrick. I affirm to the contrary that the Holy See was aware of a variety of concrete facts, and is in possession of documentary proof, and that the responsible persons nevertheless chose not to intervene or were prevented from doing so. Compensation by the Archdiocese of Newark and the Diocese of Metuchen to the victims of McCarrick's sexual abuse, the letters of Fr. Ramsey, of the nuncios Montalvo in 2000 and Sambi in 2006, of Dr. Sipe in 2008, my two notes to the superiors of the Secretariat of State who described in detail the concrete allegations against McCarrick; are all these just rumors? They are official correspondence, not gossip from the sacristy. The crimes reported were very serious, including those of attempting to give sacramental absolution to accomplices in perverse acts, with subsequent sacrilegious celebration of Mass. These documents specify the identity of the perpetrators and their protectors, and the chronological sequence of the facts. They are kept in the appropriate archives; no extraordinary investigation is needed to recover them.

In the public remonstrances directed at me I have noted two omissions, two dramatic silences. The first silence regards the plight of the victims. The second regards the underlying reason why there are so many victims, namely, the corrupting influence of homosexuality in the priesthood and in the hierarchy. As to the first, it is dismaying that, amid all the scandals and indignation, so little thought should be given to those damaged by the sexual predations of those commissioned as ministers of the Gospel. This is not a matter of settling scores or sulking over the vicissitudes of ecclesiastical careers. It is not a matter of politics. It is not a matter of how Church historians may evaluate this or that papacy. This is about souls. Many souls have been and are even now imperiled of their eternal salvation.

As to the second silence, this very grave crisis cannot be properly addressed and resolved

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unless and until we call things by their true names. This is a crisis due to the scourge of homosexuality, in its agents, in its motives, in its resistance to reform. It is no exaggeration to say that homosexuality has become a plague in the clergy, and it can only be eradicated with spiritual weapons. It is an enormous hypocrisy to condemn the abuse, claim to weep for the victims, and yet refuse to denounce the root cause of so much sexual abuse: homosexuality. It is hypocrisy to refuse to acknowledge that this scourge is due to a serious crisis in the spiritual life of the clergy and to fail to take the steps necessary to remedy it.

Unquestionably there exist philandering clergy, and unquestionably they too damage their own souls, the souls of those whom they corrupt, and the Church at large. But these violations of priestly celibacy are usually confined to the individuals immediately involved. Philandering clergy usually do not recruit other philanderers, nor work to promote them, nor cover-up their misdeeds — whereas the evidence for homosexual collusion, with its deep roots that are so difficult to eradicate, is overwhelming.

It is well established that homosexual predators exploit clerical privilege to their advantage. But to claim the crisis itself to be clericalism is pure sophistry. It is to pretend that a means, an instrument, is in fact the main motive.

Denouncing homosexual corruption and the moral cowardice that allows it to flourish does not meet with congratulation in our times, not even in the highest spheres of the Church. I am not surprised that in calling attention to these plagues I am charged with disloyalty to the Holy Father and with fomenting *an open and scandalous rebellion.* Yet rebellion would entail urging others to topple the papacy. I am urging no such thing. I pray every day for Pope Francis — more than I have ever done for the other popes. I am asking, indeed earnestly begging, the Holy Father to face up to the commitments he himself made in assuming his office as successor of Peter. He took upon himself the mission of confirming his brothers and guiding all souls in following Christ, in the spiritual combat, along the way of the cross. Let him admit his errors, repent, show his willingness to follow the mandate given to Peter and, once converted, let him confirm his brothers (Lk 22:32).

In closing, I wish to repeat my appeal to my brother bishops and priests who know that my statements are true and who can so testify, or who have access to documents that can put the matter beyond doubt. You too are faced with a choice. You can choose to withdraw from the battle, to prop up the conspiracy of silence and avert your eyes from the spreading of corruption. You can make excuses, compromises and justification that put off the day of reckoning. You can console yourselves with the falsehood and the delusion that it will be easier to tell the truth tomorrow, and then the following day, and so on.

On the other hand, you can choose to speak. You can trust Him who told us, “the truth will

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set you free." I do not say it will be easy to decide between silence and speaking. I urge you to consider which choice — on your deathbed, and then before the just Judge — you will not regret having made.

+ Carlo Maria Viganò
Arcivescovo tit. di Ulpiana
Nunzio Apostolico

19 Ottobre 2018
Feast of the North American Martyrs [*Novus Ordo* calendar]

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