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Pope Bergoglio's interview with the Vaticanist Valentina Alazraki of Mexico, his umpteenth over the past seven years, appears to be his first encounter with a journalist who made some effort to ask tough questions and press for direct answers. On at least one point, the results were devastating—for Bergoglio.



Longtime Vatican journalist Valentina Alazraki interviewing Pope Francis for the Mexican news outlet *Televisa* (full Italian transcript published May 28, 2019).

It is impossible to cover here all the subjects touched upon in the sprawling 12,000-word text of the interview in Italian (translations mine). A few of the critical questions and answers suffice to demonstrate why, as Philip Lawler has observed, "the current Pope's leadership has become a danger to the faith…" We are confronted with a dangerous mixture of arrogance, ignorance, shallowness, hypocrisy and a lack of candor unlike anything seen in the living memory of the papacy.

For the sake of space limitations, with the exception of the most critical exchanges I have

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given only the substance of Alazraki's wordy questions rather than setting them forth verbatim.

On the Question of Border Walls

We have already seen in abundance that Bergoglio, whose city-state is surrounded by high walls and gates that bar admission to all but a very select few, is obsessed with denouncing the efforts of other states to defend their borders with walls or fences. For Bergoglio, all border walls except his are evil. Thus, in response to the subject of the proposed expanded wall between the United States and Mexico, Bergoglio responded to Alazraki as follows:

> Yes. I don't know what happens when this new culture enters defending territories by building walls. We already knew one, the one in Berlin, which brought us so many headaches and so much suffering. But it seems that what man does is what animals do not do. Man is the only animal that falls twice into the same hole. Let's do the same things again. Raising walls, as if this were the defense. When defense is dialogue, growth, acceptance and education, integration, or the healthy limit of "we cannot do more", but human … With this I am not referring only to the limit of Mexico, but I'm talking about *all the barriers* that exist.

So, according to Bergoglio, who thinks himself competent to dictate the world's immigration policies, all border walls must come down and be replaced by the post-Vatican II substitute for rational thought: "dialogue." Not even the animals, says Bergoglio, defend themselves with walls. Of course, animals instinctively construct burrows and other defensive places or else tear each other to pieces in defending their territories. But then Bergoglio is not one to ponder what lies beneath the surface of his shallow observations. Meanwhile, the Vatican walls will remain standing as reason prevails respecting the Vatican's own immigration policy, no matter what Bergoglio says.

Notice that, in order to appear reasonable, Bergoglio allows for other states to declare "we cannot do more" in terms of accepting immigrants. Yet he irrationally denounces the only means by which states can enforce that limitation: a physical barrier like the one that surrounds him and the rest of Vatican City with its ultra-strict immigration laws, easily the most restrictive in western Europe.

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Tourists in Rome line the sidewalks around the massive wall which encloses some of Vatican City, itself a sovereign state. Built in the 9th century under Pope St. Leo IV, the wall stands some 39 feet in height.

Can Bergoglio really not see the distinction between the Berlin Wall, built to keep the prisoners of communism from escaping, and the walls of, say, Vatican City State, built to keep invaders from overrunning its territory? Of course, he does see the difference, but like any demagogue he speaks for effect, not for the sake of reason and truth.

As if it were not already obvious that Bergoglio is meddling in Trump's immigration policy—which is utterly lax compared to the Vatican's—Alazraki asked Bergoglio, "What would you say to Trump if you were not in front of cameras?" He replied by denouncing Trump for attempting to do what the Vatican has always done to prevent illegal immigration:

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> The same. The same, because I say this publicly. I have said it publicly. I have also said publicly that *whoever builds walls ends up a prisoner of the walls he builds*; instead, those who build fraternal bridges, shake hands, even if one remains on the other side, there is dialogue. And the territory can be perfectly defended with a bridge, not necessarily with a wall. I'm talking about political bridges, cultural bridges, is that clear? Of course, we will not build a bridge across all borders. It's impossible.

Is Bergoglio a prisoner of the walls that protect him and the citizens of the Vatican? Does the Vatican rely on a metaphorical "bridge" of "dialogue" to prevent illegal immigration? Can mere palaver between political leaders prevent massive illegal immigration across borders that lack any physical barrier to entry? The questions answer themselves, and Bergoglio knows the answers, as would any child who has attained the age of reason. But here too the Petrine office is abused, its credibility squandered, by the shallow demagoguery of a Pope who seems intent on being a political spokesman for the globalist Left.

On the Leftist 'Rich vs. Poor' Binary

The crudity of Bergoglio's leftist demagoguery is nowhere more apparent than in his reply to Alazraki's question concerning the crisis at the Mexican border:

> … The economic abuse … There are always less rich, how nice! Less rich with most of the world's wealth. And always more poor with less than the minimum to live. In other words, all wealth is concentrated in rather small groups compared to others. And the poor are more. So, clear: the poor are looking for frontiers, they are looking for ways out, new horizons…. But it is a worldwide problem. Look at Africa. Look at Asia. That is, it is a worldwide problem this imbalance that I have already indicated…. Relatively few rich, with all the money, and many poor, without the necessities of life.

For Bergoglio, it is all very simple: because the rich have too much, the poor have too little, as if poverty were simply the result of a governmental failure to take enough from the rich to give to the poor. Bergoglio refuses to recognize that while there are indeed abuses and unconscionable exploitation of the poor in the name of capitalism, by far the greater number of the world's poor labor under the yoke of socialist or communist dictatorships in Africa, Asia and Latin America, which deprive the poor of any opportunity to acquire the means of

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production and constitute a middle class.

Consider, for example, the radical economic distinction between North Korea, where more than half the population lives below the poverty line, and South Korea, where per capita income is around $26,000—more than 200% of the world's average. Or consider the condition of the poor in socialist Venezuela, where people are rummaging through the garbage for food, and Bergoglio's Argentina, which has nearly triple the per capita GDP—the prime measure of wealth-sharing in the nations of the world. Yet Bergoglio calls for endless "dialogue" that keeps Venezuela's socialist dictator Maduro in power, while he evinces open hostility to Argentina's conservative president Macri. Indeed, Bergoglio has never met a communist or socialist dictator he doesn't like—Castro and Xi Xinping, included—nor a conservative leader he does not loathe, including Trump and Italy's own Matteo Salvini.

Bergoglio the Feminist

Queried on "hatred" of women leading to "femicide," Francis hewed to the politically required feminist narrative:

> I would not know how to give a sociological explanation today. But I dare say that woman is still in the background… If perhaps the woman gets an important place, of great influence, then we come to know the cases of brilliant women. But in the collective imagination it says: "Look, a woman has succeeded! She managed to get a Nobel Prize! Incredible." Look at the literary genius as expressed in these things. And the woman is in second place.…
>
> I have just read Nadia Murad's book, "The Last Girl"; when she came here she gave it to me in Italian. If you haven't read it, I recommend it. Everything that the world thinks of women is concentrated there, even if it is in a particular culture. The world does not work without women, *not because it is the woman who makes children, we put procreation aside*. A house without a woman does not work. There is a word that is about to get out of the vocabulary, because it scares everyone: tenderness. It is a woman's heritage. Now, from here to femicide, to slavery, the step is short.…

Nadia Murad was a slave of the Islamic State, a fact that Bergoglio hides by referring to her situation in "a particular culture"—as if the Western world, living off what remains of its Christian capital, including Catholic teaching on the equal dignity of man and woman, were

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no better than the Islamic world in its brutal mistreatment of women according to the Koran. Or as if the exploitation of women were not precisely, in the West, the result of its abandonment of the Christian revelation on the relation between man and woman, thus reducing women to dutifully contracepted members of the workforce who, for the convenience of men who will not father children, surrender their reproductive capacity to the Pill or the abortionist, only to be riddled with regret when they find themselves childless in middle age.

And notice how Bergoglio implicitly validates the feminist view of woman when he says "we put procreation aside"—as if childbearing, the bringing of immortal souls into the world to fill up the number of the elect, did not pertain to the very essence of womanhood in the divine plan for the sexes. Such dismal banality from a Pope has no precedent in the history of the papacy.

On the Financial and Sexual Corruption of Friends and Associates

The very coordinator of Bergoglio's corruption-ridden "Council of Cardinals," Cardinal Óscar Andrés Rodríguez Maradiaga, is mired in sexual and financial corruption—including rampant homosexuality in his archdiocesan seminary, which he has assiduously denied and covered up. The evidence of Maradiaga's corruption would fill a book, but it's all lies says Francis, with a wave of his hand:

> They say everything, but nothing certain, no. He is honest and I have taken care to examine things well. These are slanders.… Because nobody could prove anything. He may have been wrong about something, he may have made some mistakes, but not at level they want to pin on him. This is the important thing, therefore I defend him.

And so Maradiaga remains in power, as do almost all the corrupt friends of Francis, including Archbishop Gustavo Zanchetta.

Questioned about the Zanchetta affair, including the financial improprieties, allegations of homosexual activity, the presence of homosexual pornography on his cell phone, and the creation of a special Vatican position for him at APSA (Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See) following his forced resignation, Francis offered the following ludicrous defense:

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> Yes, but in the end he defended himself by saying that they had hacked him [his cell phone], and he defended himself well. Then the doubt remains before the evidence and a good defense, but in dubio pro reo…. Certainly, he had a way of treating people, according to some, despotic, authoritarian, an economic management of things not entirely clear, it seems, but this has not been demonstrated. There is no doubt that the clergy did not feel well treated by him. They complained, and then they made a complaint to the Nunciature as a clergy….
>
> I sent him to Spain to take a psychiatric test. Some media have said: "The Pope gave him a holiday in Spain." But he was there to take a psychiatric test, the test result was normal, they recommended therapy once a month. He had to go to Madrid and do two days of therapy every month, so he didn't have to go back to Argentina. *I kept him here* [in APSA] *because the test said he had management diagnostic, consulting skills*. Some have interpreted it here in Italy as a "parking lot."

So, according to Francis, he put in charge of Vatican patrimony a prelate already mired in financial and sexual scandal and reputed to be an abusive and authoritarian manager, merely because the psychiatrist who examined him and recommended therapy—while also finding him "normal"!—determined that he had good management consulting skills. It had nothing to do with protecting his friend.

And if we would believe that, we would believe anything.

Bergoglio on McCarrick: An Unrecoverable Loss of Credibility

The subject of Bergoglio's corrupt cronies naturally led to Alazraki's questions about his refusal to comment on the famous *j'accuse* of Carlo Maria Viganò concerning his rehabilitation of ex-Cardinal McCarrick, despite Viganò having told him of McCarrick's long history of sexual predation of seminarians, the dossier on these crimes in the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and the sanctions imposed on McCarrick during the reign of Benedict XVI.

Here Alazraki's questions are worth quoting verbatim, along with Bergoglio's self-incriminating replies:

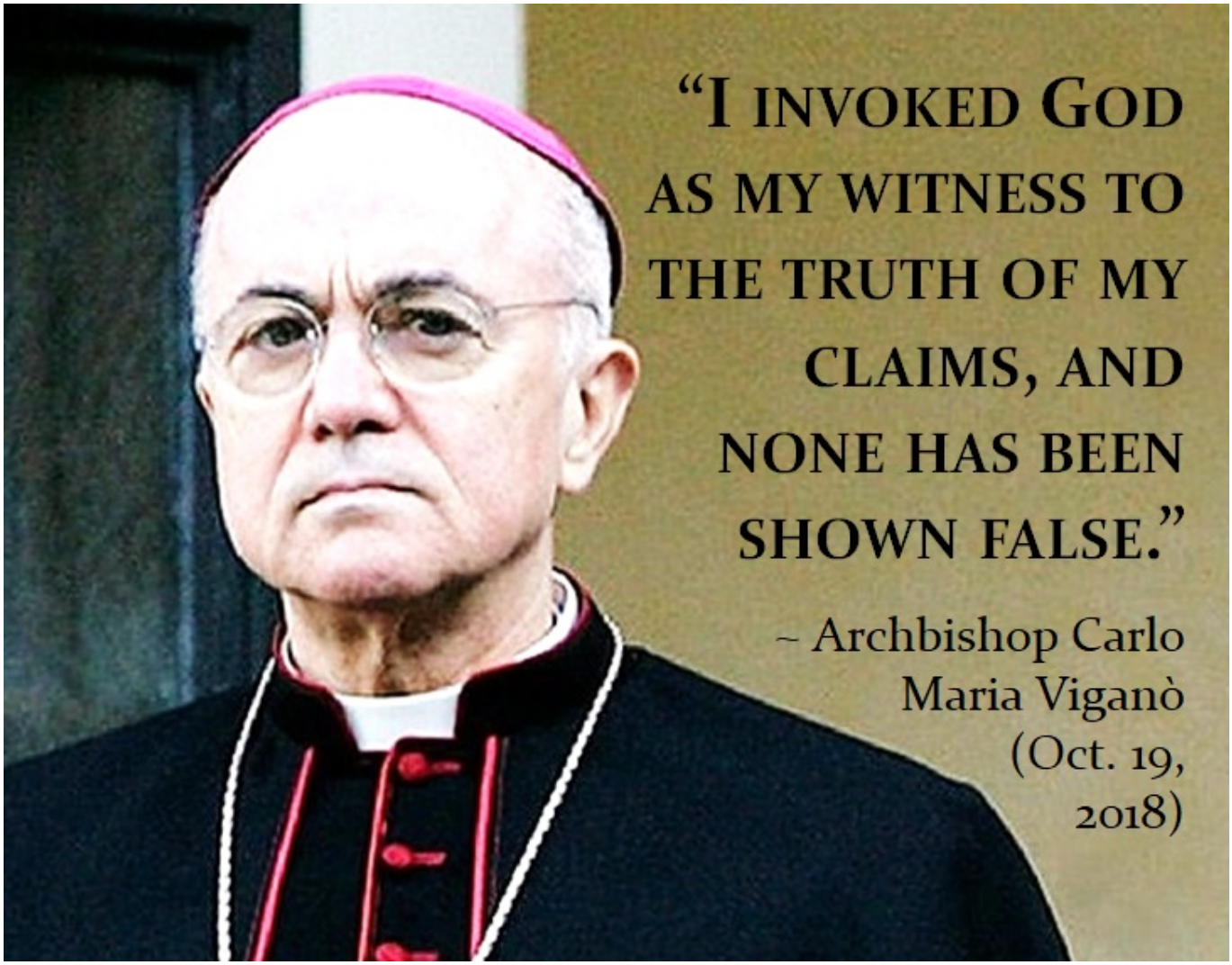
> **Q.** The McCarrick issue brings me to another issue that I wanted to address with

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> you. You advised me on one of your last trips to read "Letters of Tribulation": I read them, I did my homework. I very often met the word silence and the explanation of how sometimes silence is necessary. According to you, it's almost like a moment of grace. But telling a journalist that silence is necessary …
>
> *Do not laugh Pope Francis, it is so*. I remember when they told you, eight months ago: there is a statement by former nuncio Carlo Maria Viganò who says he himself told you at an audience at the beginning of your pontificate who McCarrick was, and you did nothing, you just said: "I will not answer, you judge, I will answer in due time." That silence has weighed a lot, because for the press and for many people, when one is silent, it is like between husband and wife, isn't it? Your husband pecks you on the cheek and doesn't answer you, and you say: "Something is wrong here." So why the silence? *The time has come to answer that question that we asked you on the plane, more than eight months have passed, Pope Francis.*
>
> **A.** Yes, those who made Roman law say that silence is a way of speaking. This case of Viganò, I had not read the whole letter, I saw it a little … and I already know what it is, and I made a decision: I trust in the honesty of journalists. And I said to you: "Look, you have everything here, study and draw conclusions". And this you did, because you did the work, *and in this case it was fantastic*. I took great care not to say things that weren't there but then he said them, three or four months later, *a judge in Milan when he sentenced him* [Viganò].

There we have it, after nearly a year of silence: Bergoglio remained silent in the face of Viganò's accusation and left the matter to journalists, not to find the truth of the matter, but rather *to dig up dirt on Viganò* in the hope that his claims would be discredited by way of an *argumentum ad hominem*.

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That is, Bergoglio was hoping journalists would throw mud at his accuser by publishing stories about a property dispute with his brother, Fr. Lorenzo Viganò, concerning an inheritance that was resolved by way of settlement, involved no criminal act by Viganò, and had nothing whatsoever to do with the truth of his claims regarding Bergoglio. Bergoglio practically admitted that he was expecting journalists to do his mudslinging for him:

> **Q.** The question of his family [inheritance], do you mean?
>
> **A.** Sure. I kept silent *because I would have been throwing mud.* Let journalists find out. [That is, let the journalists throw mud!] And you discovered it, you found out that whole world. It was a silence based on trust in you. Not only that, but I also told you: "Hold on, study it, that's all." And the result was good, better than if I had started to explain, to defend myself. You judged the evidence at hand.

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The result was *good*, says Bergoglio. Indeed, "it was *fantastic*." He actually delights publicly in what he thinks was a successful smear campaign against his accuser, an esteemed prelate who was no less than Papal Nuncio to the United States.

False Identification with Our Persecuted Lord

This embarrassing self-revelation of his own cunning nature was followed by a sanctimonious reference to the example of Christ before Pilate, combined with more cunning: a further calumnious suggestion that Viganò might have been paid to make false accusations against him:

> There is another thing that has always struck me: the silences of Jesus. Jesus always responded, even to enemies, when they provoked Him—"you can do this, that"—to see if He succumbed to provocation. And He answered in that case. But when it came to the fury of Good Friday, the fury of the people, He fell silent. To the point that Pilate himself said: "Why don't you answer me?" That is, in the face of a climate of fury one cannot respond.
>
> And that [Viganò's] letter was fury, as you yourself have realized from the results. Some of you even wrote that it was paid for, I don't know, I don't know though.

Archbishop Viganò's response to Bergoglio's clumsy attempt at character assassination was immediate:

> What Pope Francis said regarding the Milan ruling and my family has nothing to do with anything, because it has been completely clarified. It was only a division of property between brothers. I accepted it to make peace. Neither me nor my brother appealed the ruling, so the story ended there. And it has nothing to do with McCarrick. It is one of the many stories that they raised to destroy my credibility.

Moreover, *LifeSiteNews* demolished Bergoglio's devious suggestion of wrongdoing by his accuser in a report detailing how the dispute over the inheritance was settled when Viganò's brother was awarded only €1.8 million despite his initial demand of €40 million, and that neither brother appealed the award, bringing the matter to an end. Lorenzo "received essentially what he would have received had he accepted the settlement proposals

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made by his brother, *pro bono pacis*, in the course of the proceedings."

Sandro Magister skewered Bergoglio's claim that he "had always kept quiet" about the property dispute between the Viganòs "so as not to 'sling mud' at the ex-nuncio," only to bring it up publicly himself along with the unfounded "suspicion of a secret pay-off"—thereby "badly, completely contradicting himself" regarding his patently disingenuous expression of concern for Viganò's reputation.

This, then, was the Big Bertha that Bergoglio hoped journalists would use to destroy the credibility of his accuser, but it turned out to be not even a popgun. And by the end of Alazraki's questioning on this matter, it is Bergoglio's credibility that is destroyed:

> **Q.** There are some who keep thinking that it is true and that they keep asking themselves, if he knew or did not know about McCarrick. In the press there is of course a bit of everything.
>
> **A.** *Of McCarrick I knew nothing, of course, nothing. I said it several times, I didn't know anything, I had no idea*. And when he [Viganò] says he spoke to me that day, that he came … *and I don't remember if he told me about this, if it's true or not*. I have no idea! You know that I didn't know anything about McCarrick, otherwise I would not have remained silent. The reason for my silence was first of all that the proofs were there, I told you: "Judge for yourself." It was really an act of trust. And then, because of what I told you about Jesus, that in moments of fury one cannot speak, because it is worse. Everything goes against it. The Lord has shown us this path and I follow Him.

So, after more than eight months of silence in the face of Viganò's damning accusation, which he had hoped the press would discredit by attacking Viganò's character, Bergoglio now suddenly claims he knew nothing about McCarrick's crimes when he rehabilitated him and sent him on important missions, lifting the sanctions imposed on him by Benedict, which have since been confirmed in correspondence leaked by an ex-aide to McCarrick and published by Crux. Worse, he claims that he had already stated "several times" that he knew nothing about McCarrick, when in fact he had not stated it even once before being pressed on the matter by Alazraki, who finally extracted his self-wounding replies.

Now, if Bergoglio knew nothing about McCarrick's history at the time, why did he not simply say so when first asked by Alazraki and other journalists about what he knew and when he knew it? As we have learned from the Alazraki interview, he was hoping the press

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would destroy Viganò's good name and that no reply would ever be necessary.

But the newly announced "I knew nothing" defense is undermined by the "I don't remember" defense concerning what Viganò told him during their meeting in 2013. Recognizing this blunder, the Vatican omitted the "I don't remember" from its publication of the interview. The trick failed, and even the liberal journal Crux was constrained to comment on the brazenness of the deception in a story from the Associated Press by Nicole Winfield headlined, "Vatican omitted part of pope's crucial quote about McCarrick."

The result of the Alazraki interview, as Winfield notes, is devastating to what remains of Bergoglio's credibility: "…Francis's claim not to remember if Vigano told him about McCarrick now amounts to his defense against such criticism." That is, his *only* defense is a professed memory lapse. And as Magister observes: "In a man with an uncommon memory like Jorge Mario Bergoglio, this lapse appears anomalous."

Conclusion

Much more could be written about this important interview, which contains other disturbing indications of the mentality of the current occupant of the Chair of Peter. Among these are Bergoglio's explanation of his obsession over immigration as opposed to fundamental questions of morality such as the right to life, which he justifies because immigration "is a priority in the world these days."

Another item of interest is Bergoglio's response to the question of what he thought of the concern expressed by groups of the faithful that he was guilty of errors against the Faith and even outright heresy:

> **Q.** On being a heretic, how do you take that?
>
> **A.** With a sense of humor, my daughter.
>
> **Q.** You don't give it much weight…
>
> **A.** No, no. Besides I pray for them because they are wrong and, poor people, some of them are manipulated. And here there are those who signed [the recent letter accusing him of the canonical delict of heresy]. No, really, a sense of humor and I would say tenderness, paternal tenderness….

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When asked how he reacted to the accusation of heresy leveled against him via the famous Open Letter, Pope Francis replied, “With a sense of humor, my daughter.” In other words, he laughed it off.

“Paternal tenderness” hardly characterizes the endless barrage of demagogic mockery and crude invective Bergoglio has hurled at faithful Catholics who object to his innumerable heterodox utterances, including those of the Airplane Magisterium, and his blatant

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contradictions of the Church's constant teaching and practice on such matters as the moral impermissibility of the intrinsic evil of contraception as a means of disease prevention, the moral liceity of the death penalty for capital crimes, the impossibility of granting absolution and administering Holy Communion to public adulterers who claim to be "remarried" following divorce and intend to continue their adulterous sexual relations, and the exceptionless character of the negative precepts of the natural law, which Bergoglio has purported to demote from divine commandments to a mere "objective ideal," a move that "threatens the moral foundation of the Church."

Francis is not in the least concerned about the merits of the criticisms of his errant notions. It would never enter his mind that anything could be amiss with his hubristic "dream of a…missionary impulse capable of *transforming everything*, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today's world rather than for her self-preservation." He is unshakably certain that his will is the Magisterium merely because he wills it. He is unmoved by the pleas of serious and in some cases renowned members of the faithful, driven in their desperation to the point of making a public defense of the Faith against him. He finds all these "poor people"… *amusing*.

Suffice it to say that the interview confirms that we have a Pope whose priorities are not those of the divine commission, but indeed those of "the world these days"—and, of course, promoting his own opinions and defending himself and his friends against all opposition, even if it requires descending to character assassination on the level of a cheap politician.

While the Church is thus afflicted, we can only do what Archbishop Viganò has done, according to our stations: defend truth, oppose falsehood, and pray that God will raise up a holy and courageous Roman Pontiff to end the ecclesial crisis of the past half-century which, during this unparalleled pontificate, has reached its height.

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