

## Abp. Viganò: When We Can Criticize Pope Francis, Can We Not Also Criticize Vatican II?

In a public letter to Fr. Thomas Weinandy, O.F.M. Cap., Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò responds to the theologian's statements that he is "uncomfortable" with the thought that the Second Vatican Council could be the "direct source and cause" of today's ecclesial crisis. The Italian prelate quotes another, [earlier article of Weinandy](#) where he had spoken of Pope Francis as presiding over two churches - one schismatic, the other orthodox - and concludes that this, then, is also possible to say about the Second Vatican Council.

On July 27, Weinandy had published his own [commentary](#) on the current Vatican II debate. Yesterday, on August 10, Viganò responded in the form of a letter to Weinandy (see full statement below).

First, the Italian prelate quotes Weinandy as saying: "I sympathize with many of the concerns expressed and acknowledge some of the stated problematic theological and doctrinal issues enumerated. I am, however, uncomfortable with the conclusion that Vatican II is, in some way, the direct source and cause of the present disheartening state of the Church."

Viganò then proceeds to quote an earlier [October 8, 2019 essay](#) of Fr. Weinandy, in which he dealt in a critical manner with the current situation under a Pope who allows erroneous teachings to be spread. In light of [Amoris Laetitia](#), the German situation, the [Abu Dhabi statement](#), and the [Amazon Synod](#), Weinandy wrote, "What the Church will end up with, then, is a pope who is the pope of the Catholic Church and, simultaneously, the de facto leader, for all practical purposes, of a schismatic church. Because he is the head of both, the appearance of one church remains, while in fact there are two."

It is here that Archbishop Viganò sees a parallel between Weinandy's criticism of Francis' pontificate and his own criticism of the Second Vatican Council.

Asks the prelate:

"I ask then: if you admit, dear Father Thomas - as a painful trial to which Providence is subjecting the Church in order to punish her for the faults of her most unworthy members and especially of her leaders - that the Pope himself is in a state of schism with the Church, to the point of being able to speak of an *"internal papal schism"*, why can you not accept that the same has happened for a solemn act like a Council, and that Vatican II was a case of *"internal Magisterial schism"*? If it is possible for *this* Pope to be *"for all practical purposes schismatic"* - and I would say also heretical - why could not *that* Council also have been so, despite the fact that both one and the other were instituted by Our

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Lord to confirm the brethren in Faith and Morals? I ask you, what prevents the Acts of Vatican II from deviating from the path of Tradition, when the Supreme Pastor himself can deny the teaching of his Predecessors? And if the *persona Papae* is in schism with the papacy, why could a council that wanted to be *pastoral* and abstained from promulgating dogmas not be able to contradict the other canonical councils, entering into a *de facto* schism with the Catholic Magisterium?"

This new statement comes after several other statements by the Italian prelate and former papal nuncio of Washington, D.C., who responded to two different statements by Bishop Athanasius Schneider in June of this year.

Bishop Schneider [responded](#) to a lengthy interpretative essay by Cardinal Gerhard Müller trying to read the controversial February 4, 2019 [Abu Dhabi document](#) in an orthodox light, and thereby also positively referring back to some Council documents. Schneider [stated](#) on June 1 that the Abu Dhabi document is wrong in declaring that the "diversity of religions" is "willed by God." In his [second article](#), the Kazakh prelate of German origin also disagreed with the claim that Catholics and Muslims believe in the same God, a claim which is an underlying assumption of the Abu Dhabi document.

Archbishop Viganò gratefully and approvingly responded to this debate about Vatican II in a [June 9 intervention](#), adding a [June 15 statement](#) about some of the problematic propositions that can be found in Vatican II documents. In this text, he also stated that it would be better if this Council were to be "forgotten." He then [answered](#) interview questions from the Catholic commentator and author Phil Lawler concerning the history and background of the turbulent Second Vatican Council and the signs that it had been manipulated by a small group of modernists, on June 26.

In a [response](#) to *LifeSiteNews* editor-in-chief John-Henry Westen, Archbishop Viganò clarified his earlier words that he thinks this Council should better be forgotten, by saying that he considers this Council to be valid, but manipulated.

Finally, on July 6, this Italian prelate [responded](#) to a critique by the Italian journalist Sandro Magister who claimed he is on the "brink of schism." "I have no desire to separate myself from Mother Church," Viganò wrote in reply.

As to Weinandy himself, a well-respected theologian and former member of the International Theological Commission (2014-2019), he responded to these June/July statements by Viganò and [argued](#) at the end of July that one cannot make the Council

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responsible for the corruption that followed it, saying:

“It is naïve to think that so many priests, prior to the Council, were men of deep faith, and then, overnight, after the Council, were corrupted by the Council or the spirit of the Council, and so jettisoned their faith and left the priesthood.”

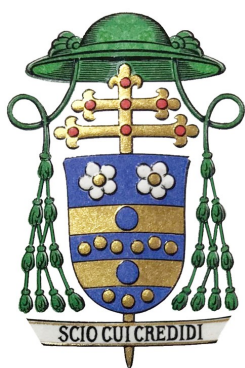
Weinandy then argued that there was a corruption taking place prior to the Council on which the further corruption could be based.

He himself thinks that the Council was in a sense an eye-opener, a “severe-grace” that is revealing to us how weak the Faith of most Catholics has become, until today.

“While the Council is not their cause [i.e., the cause of difficulties within the Church], the false, so-called spirit of the Council did allow the Spirit of truth to reveal to the Church, and to the world, just how feeble in faith, how anemic in life, the Church really was and had been. This severe-grace continues to be at work and is intensifying.”

It is to be hoped that this continuous debate - some of which is taking place over at *Inside the Vatican's* [website](#) - will bear good fruit for the Church in her crisis, for the sake of a renewing of her Faith.

***Please see below for Archbishop Viganò's full statement to Fr. Weinandy:***



August 10, 2020

*Saint Laurence, Martyr*

Reverend Father Thomas,

## Abp. Viganò: When We Can Criticize Pope Francis, Can We Not Also Criticize Vatican II?

I read attentively your essay *Vatican II and the Work of the Spirit* which was published at *Inside the Vatican* on July 27, 2020 ([here](#)). It seems to me that your thoughts may be summarized in these two sentences:

“I sympathize with many of the concerns expressed and acknowledge some of the stated problematic theological and doctrinal issues enumerated. I am, however, uncomfortable with the conclusion that Vatican II is, in some way, the direct source and cause of the present disheartening state of the Church.”

Permit me, Reverend Father, to respond to you by using as an *auctoritas* one of your interesting writings, *Pope Francis and Schism*, published at *The Catholic Thing* on October 8, 2019 ([here](#)). Your observations allow me to highlight an analogy that I hope may contribute to clarifying my thought and demonstrate to our readers that certain apparent differences may find resolution thanks to a profitable *disputatio* that has as its primary purpose the glory of God, the honor of the Church, and the salvation of souls.

In your essay *Pope Francis and Schism*, you observe, very appropriately and with the acumen that distinguishes your interventions, that there is a sort of *dissociation* between the *persona Papae* and Jorge Mario Bergoglio, a *dichotomy* in which the Vicar of Christ is silent and lets things drop, while the exuberant Argentine man who today lives at Santa Marta speaks and acts. Referring to the very grave situation of the Church in Germany, you write:

“First, many within the German hierarchy know that by becoming schismatic they would lose their Catholic voice and identity. This they cannot afford. They need to be in fellowship with Pope Francis, for he is the very one who has fostered a notion of synodality that they are now attempting to implement. He, therefore, is their ultimate protector.

Second, while Pope Francis may stop them from doing something egregiously contrary to the Church’s teaching, he will allow them to do things that are ambiguously contrary, for such ambiguous teaching and pastoral practice would be in accord with Francis’ own. It is in this that the Church finds herself in a situation that she never expected.”

You continue:

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“It’s important to bear in mind that the German situation must be viewed within a broader context: the theological ambiguity within *Amoris Laetitia*; the not so subtle advancing of the homosexual agenda; the ‘re-foundation’ of the (Roman) John Paul II Institute on Marriage and Family, i.e., the undermining of the Church’s consistent teaching on moral and sacramental absolutes, especially with regard to the indissolubility of marriage, homosexuality, contraception, and abortion.

Similarly, there is the Abu Dhabi statement, which directly contradicts the will of the Father and so undermines the primacy of Jesus Christ his Son as the definitive Lord and universal Savior.

Moreover, the present Amazon Synod is teeming with participants sympathetic to and supportive of all of the above. One must likewise take into account the many theologically dubious cardinals, bishops, priests, and theologians whom Francis supports and promotes to high ecclesial positions.”

And you conclude:

“With all of this in mind, we perceive a situation, ever-growing in intensity, in which on the one hand, a majority of the world’s faithful – clergy and laity alike – are loyal and faithful to the pope, for he is their pontiff, while critical of his pontificate, and, on the other hand, a large contingent of the world’s faithful – clergy and laity alike – enthusiastically support Francis precisely because he allows and fosters their ambiguous teaching and ecclesial practice.

What the Church will end up with, then, is a pope who is the pope of the Catholic Church and, simultaneously, the de facto leader, for all practical purposes, of a schismatic church. Because he is the head of both, the appearance of one church remains, while in fact there are two.”

Let’s try to replace the Pope with the Council, and Bergoglio with Vatican II: I think that you will find the almost literal parallel, the results of which are quite interesting. In fact, Catholics nourish veneration and respect for both the papacy and for an ecumenical council that the Church asks of them: on the one hand towards the Vicar of Christ, and on the other hand towards an act of the Magisterium in which the voice of Our Lord speaks through the Roman Pontiff and the bishops united to him. If we think of Saint Pius V and the Council of

Trent, or of Pius IX and Vatican I, it will not be difficult to see the perfect correspondence between *those popes* and the papacy, and between *those councils* and the infallible Magisterium of the Church. Indeed, even thinking of a possible *dichotomy* would rightly fall under canonical sanctions and offend the pious ears of the faithful.

And yet, as you yourself point out, with Jorge Mario Bergoglio wearing the surreal garments of the Successor of the Prince of the Apostles, *"The only phrase that I can find to describe this situation is 'internal papal schism,' for the pope, even as pope, will effectively be the leader of a segment of the Church that through its doctrine, moral teaching, and ecclesial structure, is for all practical purposes schismatic."*

I ask then: if you admit, dear Father Thomas – as a painful trial to which Providence is subjecting the Church in order to punish her for the faults of her most unworthy members and especially of her leaders – that the Pope himself is in a state of schism with the Church, to the point of being able to speak of an *"internal papal schism"*, why can you not accept that the same has happened for a solemn act like a Council, and that Vatican II was a case of *"internal Magisterial schism"*? If it is possible for *this* Pope to be *"for all practical purposes schismatic"* – and I would say also heretical – why could not *that* Council also have been so, despite the fact that both one and the other were instituted by Our Lord to confirm the brethren in Faith and Morals? I ask you, what prevents the Acts of Vatican II from deviating from the path of Tradition, when the Supreme Pastor himself can deny the teaching of his Predecessors? And if the *persona Papae* is in schism with the papacy, why could a council that wanted to be *pastoral* and abstained from promulgating dogmas not be able to contradict the other canonical councils, entering into a *de facto* schism with the Catholic Magisterium?

It's true that this situation is a *hapax*, a case that in itself has never been seen in the history of the Church; but if this applies to the papacy – in a crescendo from Roncalli to Bergoglio – I do not see why it could not apply for Vatican II, which precisely thanks to the recent popes has set itself as an event in itself, and as such has been used by its proponents.

To use your words, *"What the Church will end up with"* is a Council that is a Council of the Catholic Church and, simultaneously, the *de facto* first council, for all practical purposes, of a schismatic church, or the *"conciliar church"* that considers itself to have been born at Vatican II. Since Vatican II is both an ecumenical council and a *"devil council"* [*conciliabolo*], it retains the appearance of being a single Council, when in reality there are two. And I would add: one council was legitimate and orthodox and was aborted from birth with the subversion of the preparatory schemes, and one council was illegitimate and heretical (or at least *favens haeresim*) and is the one to which all of the Innovators refer, including Bergoglio, in order to legitimize their doctrinal, moral and liturgical deviations.



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Exactly as “*many theologically dubious cardinals, bishops, priests, and theologians whom Francis supports and promotes to high ecclesial positions*” maintain that the authority of the Vicar of Christ should be recognized in the acts of governance and magisterium performed by Jorge Mario, right at the moment in which with those acts he demonstrates himself “*for all practical purposes schismatic.*”

And if on the one hand it is very true that “*while Pope Francis may stop them from doing something egregiously contrary to the Church’s teaching, he will allow them to do things that are ambiguously contrary, for such ambiguous teaching and pastoral practice would be in accord with Francis’ own,*” it is equally true – paraphrasing your words – that “*while John XXIII and Paul VI may have stopped the modernists from doing things egregiously contrary to the Church’s teaching, they allowed them to do things that were ambiguously contrary, for such ambiguous teaching and pastoral practice were in accord with that of Roncalli and Montini.*”

So it seems to me, Reverend Father, that you may find confirmation of what I affirmed in my essay at the origin of the *disputatio* on the Council, namely that the “container-council” was used to give apparent authority to a deliberately subversive event, exactly as today, right before our eyes, the Vicar of Christ is used to give apparent authoritativeness to a deliberately subversive operation. In both cases, the innate sense of respect towards the Church of Christ on the part of the faithful and the clergy is being used as an infernal stratagem – a *Trojan horse* introduced into the Sacred Citadel – in order to dissuade every form of dutiful dissent, every criticism, every legitimate denunciation.

It is painful to observe that this observation, far from rehabilitating Vatican II, confirms a profound crisis of the entire ecclesiastical institution, effected by the work of renegades who have abused their own authority against the Authority itself, of papal power against the papacy itself, and of the authority of the Conciliar Fathers against the Church herself. A devious and cowardly betrayal operated from within the Church herself, as Saint Pius X had already predicted and condemned in the *Pascendi* encyclical, indicating the modernists as *the most harmful enemies of the Church*.

Let’s not forget that Dante places the fraudulent in the Ninth Circle of Hell.

Receive, Reverend and dear Father Thomas, my blessing.

+ Carlo Maria Viganò, Archbishop

Official translation by [Giuseppe Pellegrino](#)