The following text is a composite response from Professor Brian McCall and Dr. Maike Hickson, both of whom are involved in book projects with collections of Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò's writings of the last years. We thought that, by virtue of our work and close collaboration with His Grace, we might be competent to speak for and defend him. We do so in two consecutive texts, written individually. We are both honored to add our *Apologiae pro Viganò* to those already published by Dr. Taylor Marshall (here) and Dr. Robert Moynihan (here).

The Real Archbishop Viganò

Brian McCall

Sadly, Professor Roberto de Mattei decided to publish a calumnious attack on Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò.[1] Before addressing this surprising and disappointing attack, I wish to state that I have had great respect for Professor de Mattei. I have highly recommended his book, *The Second Vatican Council: An Unwritten Story*. I was very much taken by surprise when he came out so forcefully in favor of totalitarian government measures and mandatory vaccines this past year. Yet, I gave him the benefit of the doubt. Living in Europe, and especially Italy, this past year must have been devastating. Yet, when I saw this scandalous attack on Archbishop Viganò, I was left speechless. Finally, a bishop of the Church responds to the crisis in the Church the way Traditionalists have urged the hierarchy to respond. Finally, a bishop has his eyes opened to the revolution that de Mattei meticulously documents in his book. Yet, Professor de Mattei hurls insults rather than opening his arms in acceptance to someone who is clearly indebted to his very work.

De Mattei levels three main accusations at the Archbishop: (1) the Archbishop's public statements from 2020–2021 exhibit "discrepancies" from his statements from 2018–2019 and are essentially not in continuity; (2) the Archbishop's more recent statements are "pompous" and "sarcastic"; and (3) the Archbishop is not the real author of the statements attributed to him recently and there is some secret alter ego author publishing them under his signature.

As to the first criticism, from someone who has studied the Archbishop's writings extensively — both for publication through *Catholic Family News* and for editing and explanation in the book, *A Voice in the Wilderness* — I find absolutely no discrepancies between the identified time periods. I see a perfectly logical and coherent development of understanding running through the four-year period. As I explain at length in *A Voice in the Wilderness*, that logical progress goes from seeing a serious problem with corruption (and in particular sodomy and its harboring) in the highest levels of the hierarchy to tracing the root causes of that moral corruption to Vatican II and the New Mass. This is frankly the

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consistent and logical course of development that Traditionalists have been urging and praying for the priests and bishops of the world to follow. Archbishop Viganò avoids falling into the pit we have been criticizing "conservatives" for landing in for years: seeing the moral corruption as an isolated problem not connected to liturgy or doctrine. Rather than denouncing the Archbishop for discrepancies or being inconsistent, we should be congratulating and encouraging him for following the evidence wherever it led, even when it led to denouncing the conservative position and the "hermeneutic of continuity" he had accepted during his Vatican career.

As to the second charge concerning the tone and manner of his more recent interventions, I am surprised to see them called "pompous." As I explain in *A Voice in the Wilderness*, his message these past years has been incredibly humble. His Grace has done what so few clerics are willing to do and which takes humility: admit he was wrong. Even when his critics have blamed him for "criticizing" Pope Benedict XVI or claiming that Benedict "deceived" the whole Church, the Archbishop has been quick to respond and make clear that we were all deceived. He has disputed the ability of the "hermeneutic of continuity" to save us from the crisis, but he has made clear that he believes Pope Benedict offered it with good motives and with a love for the Church. He has many times admitted his own fault in not seeing the problems with the Council earlier. Rather than pompously telling others "I told you so," he has merely decried our mutual suffering at the hands of the great deception.

Yes, some of his expressions and criticisms have been strongly worded. Yes, he has called the Vatican of Pope Francis the New Sanhedrin. Yes, he alleged that there are those in the Vatican, including Francis, who are wittingly or unwittingly advancing the agenda of the "invisible enemy." A grave crisis calls for strong words. The first step to healing is to admit one has a serious problem. Tiptoeing around a problem with euphemisms when the one suffering refuses to admit there is a crisis is not helpful. I remind readers that the late Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre was often criticized for using strong language to denounce the infiltration and betrayal of the Church. In his famous November declaration, he referred to Paul VI's Vatican as "Neo-Protestant and Neo-Modernist Rome." In his famous sermon at Lille, he referred to the new rites as "bastard sacraments." When we are living in self-denial, we sometimes need to be shocked out of it. I admit that some of Archbishop Viganò's interventions include some sarcasm. Rather than a fault, I see these instances as strengthening his texts. Some of the things we have witnessed — the veneration of the Pachamama, for example — are so outrageous that they deserve sarcasm. Yes, his language has been sometimes powerful, graphic, and sarcastic (although justified) but never pompous.

I also must note that in my regular personal, direct communication with Archbishop Viganò,

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I have found him to be kind, gentle, and very understanding. Much like Archbishop Lefebvre, I have noted his strong public statements when necessary are in tandem with his very gentle and supportive personal communication. I find this combination not disconcerting but saintly. I am also aware that Archbishop Viganò has provided caring and paternal spiritual guidance and assistance to many lost souls in this time of crisis. He has shown real compassion to help those who reach out for help.

As to the final and in my opinion most outrageous accusation, I find it extremely disappointing that such an accomplished historian would level such an accusation with no evidence or proof. I have already noted that I believe his public interventions are perfectly consistent with a mind open to the truth and reality who sifts the mountains of evidence of the past five decades that lead one to the Council and its New Mass. Certainly, many of the Archbishop's interventions have been composed in Italian and translated by different translators over the past few years. I do not dispute that one might be able to point to some minor semantic differences in the English translations, but there is nothing of substance that I find inconsistent with a developing understanding of the reality of the past five decades. I find it most bizarre that Professor de Mattei specifically attacks in this criticism the "philosophy of history" in the Archbishop's writings. In these texts, I discover a philosophy of history that is clearly indebted to Professor de Mattei. Rather than seeing the Second Vatican Council as a collection of abstract texts, His Grace has come to see the Council as an entire historical event, and one that is part of a larger revolution. This is the same philosophy that I read in *The Second Vatican Council: An Unwritten Story*. Is Professor de Mattei disturbed that Archbishop Viganò has become his pupil of history?

As to this absurd and unfounded accusation that there is some secret behind-the-scenes author, how does Professor de Mattei explain the fact that many of the interventions of the past year are transcripts of conferences given by Archbishop Viganò personally and recorded in video or audio form (until YouTube deletes them). For example, his text from the Catholic Identity Conference was delivered via video. His speech at the Jericho March in Washington was also preserved in video, as was his speech to the Venice Philosophy Festival. Does Professor de Mattei think that there is some Archbishop Viganò impersonator who gave these recorded lectures? The Archbishop himself publicly denied this scurrilous accusation (although I guess de Mattei might claim that was merely his double speaking).

After his first article, Professor de Mattei issued a second missive that purported to present linguistic evidence that there is a double who wrote the recent texts. He argues that since the Archbishop's texts use the following expressions, which are also used by a blogger writing for *Opportune Importune* under the pseudonym Baronio, this Baronio must have authored the texts attributed to Viganò: "counter-church," "conciliar sect," "innovators,"

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and "idol" in reference to the Council. De Mattei claims further proof exists in that both Baronio and Viganò claim an equivalence between Vatican II and the New Mass and both claim that the New Mass was composed by progressives and those suspected of Freemasonry. He also adds that both refer to the New Mass as the "reformed rite" or "Montinian Rite." This flimsy evidence is unworthy of such an eminent historian. The listed phrases are found all throughout Traditionalist literature and conferences for decades. Does de Mattei claim this Baronio is the secret author behind Michael Davies, Chris Ferrara, and even Archbishop Lefebvre, all of whom have used some or all of these expressions? I have repeatedly claimed a deep equivalence between the Council and the New Mass and have written and spoken on the Freemasonic and Progressives who forged the New Mass. Am I next to be accused as a puppet of this Baronio?

Further, de Mattei claims that this Baronio is an Italian named Pietro Siffi, someone whom I do not know but who apparently is a controversial figure in Italian traditional circles. His main fingering of Siffi as Baronio/ Viganò II is a defense of Siffi on Baronio's blog. Then, to add insult to injury, after using the flimsy vocabulary claims to link Viganò to Baronio and then just asserting that Baronio is Siffi, he intimates that Siffi is a practicing homosexual or at least sympathetic towards such a lifestyle. This last intimation defies reason. Archbishop Viganò has been one of the few prelates of our time to unambiguously condemn sodomy and the attempt to temper Catholic doctrine on the intrinsic evil. We are now to believe that the power behind the miter is a homosexual! We are to believe all this on the basis of an anonymous blogger also uses terms like "conciliar sect."

Sadly, this attack on Archbishop Viganò is another example of a criticism often unjustly lobbed at Traditionalists. Too often, some in the Traditionalist movement do not embrace with open arms those who find the truth late. They are often pushed away or mocked. We should rejoice for any Catholic, lay or cleric, who is willing to follow the evidence to its root. We should be tolerant of any rash or overly zealous language they may employ in discussing their newly found knowledge (not that I am claiming the Archbishop has been overly rash or imprudently zealous). Too often, we attack rather than welcome brave souls like Viganò.

I for one stand behind Archbishop Viganò. I welcome his contributions to the debate over the crisis in the Church. I read in all his texts, even his strongly worded ones, a true love for the Church and for lost souls. I admire his courage and his humility. To anyone scandalized by the recent attack, I would urge them to put these accusations aside and read the texts authored by Archbishop Viganò. Decide for yourself if he speaks consistent truth or not. I assure you that I find nothing in his public addresses or his personal correspondence with me that is inconsistent or contradictory. Finally, pray for Archbishop Viganò. His brave stand against the New Mass and the Council will bring persecution, even from unlikely

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corners. Pray that he receives the grace to persevere to the end.

In Defense of Archbishop Viganò

Dr. Maike Hickson

It has been one of the greatest honors and joys of my work as a journalist and author to have gotten to know Archbishop Viganò personally and through his work. I am also currently working with him on a book dealing with his writings on the Second Vatican Council and the message of Fatima. It is a very rewarding work to collaborate with him in every aspect. Most of all, it is a spiritual endeavor that touches the heart of one's Faith, because one sees a man of the Church who gives his all and his best to Christ's Bride, willing to die for her. Day and night — I sometimes wonder when His Grace ever sleeps — Archbishop Viganò is at the service of mankind. People of all steps of life — from simple to high-ranking — have his attention and prompt assistance.

I can testify for this, since I am honored to have been the channel of many communications from priests and laymen who reach out to me, asking me to pass on a message to Archbishop Viganò. I have seen close up how quickly he responds, whenever he is able to. *Promptus ad bonum*, prompt unto the good, at every moment of his life. With fatherly kindness and gentleness, he responds to desperate souls, to priests who are under pressure from their superiors, to faithful who seek his advice.

I remember one case where I had asked Archbishop Viganò to pray for someone who was in a difficult situation; for weeks he kept him in his prayers. When finally he was able to reach out to that person, he wrote with such kindness that the person was touched to tears.

Who is this archbishop who acts like a servant, a true shepherd, and a father?

It is Archbishop Viganò.

Also in our little family, we have been touched so many times by his kindness. When our daughter was sick for a longer time last summer, His Grace sent her sweet pictures and photos with angels and saints. He sometimes gets back to me, asking how someone in my family is now doing, and I had forgotten I had even mentioned it to him.

But also intellectually, Archbishop Viganò is such a blessing. He names things as they are. It seems that God used the McCarrick case to remove His Grace from the Church's hierarchy and structure so that he would be fully free to speak in Catholic language. And He seems to bless him abundantly for his willingness to suffer for the Church and under her. So it makes

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sense that Viganò is growing deeper and deeper in his understanding of the crisis in the Church and in the world, as well.

My husband, who has followed the Church crisis for 40 years and with much agony, so often rejoices about Archbishop Viganò's writings. "This is definitely his best text so far," is what he has now said already several times, not knowing that something even better was to come! It is a great consolation to Robert to see that an archbishop of the Church finally speaks those criticisms that he has uttered for many years now and for which he himself had much to suffer. Viganò's kindness toward him means so much.

In our many communications, I have seen how His Grace takes in new information, learns from others, and deepens his thought and takes counsel. I would say that it is his deep humility that makes this intellectual honesty possible.

At the same time — and here I respond directly to the claim of Professor de Mattei that there are two Viganòs — I can testify that what His Grace writes is authentically coming from him. There is no split between his own thoughts as he expresses them in private and his writings for the public. He might take counsel with others — as I have seen it myself — but this is what every responsible churchman should do.

As to what His Grace is writing about, I can see much farsightedness. I still marvel at how clearly he saw the corona situation, more than a year ago, at a time when my family was still trying to figure out what was going on. Many of his statements have come to be proven right. Just the other day, a family member who works in the medical field told us how many patients she now has that have grave side effects from the corona vaccines. So much suffering, and we have a shepherd who tried to warn us, at a time when the Supreme temporal Shepherd appears to have largely abandoned us.

And truly, he leads us on the path of truth, repentance, reform, trust in God, and love of Mary.

And this is why so many priests and faithful love Archbishop Viganò. Whether they agree with everything he says or with most of it, they know that he truly loves them and truly cares for them. He acts like a father to us. As one Catholic told me: "the sheep follow when they hear their shepherd's voice." Or as a priest told me who witnessed a telephone conversation between His Grace and a nun: "she took to him like a duck to water," meaning they had an immediate, trustful rapport.

I have seen Archbishop Viganò calling in to give counsel, taking time to listen and to help.

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This is the churchman my family and I so cherish.

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[1] https://www.corrispondenzaromana.it/the-vigano-case-the-archbishop-and-his-double/.

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