This article is featured in the October 2021 Print Edition of *Catholic Family News* (click HERE to subscribe; current subscribers can access the E-Edition HERE).

On the evening of March 13, 2013, Cardinal Jean-Louis Pierre Tauran announced in Latin what the Church and the entire world had been anxiously awaiting: "*Habemus Papam!*" — "We have a Pope!"

Cardinal Tauran went on to reveal the identity of the newly elected Pope according to the prescribed format: "The most eminent and reverend lord, Lord Jorge Mario, Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church, Bergoglio, who takes to himself the name Francis."

The initial signs of the first Jesuit Pope, at least in this writer's opinion, seemed positive (granted, I knew nothing about the man at the time). His chosen name, for example (another first in Church history), bespoke two powerful Saints: Francis of Assisi (1181/1182-1226), to whom Christ said (as recorded by St. Bonaventure), "Francis, go and repair My House, which, as thou seest, is falling utterly into ruin";[1] and Francis Xavier (1506-1552), the renowned Jesuit missionary who personally baptized tens of thousands of converts in India, southeast Asia, and Japan.

The newly elected Pontiff also declared with striking clarity during his first papal sermon (Mar. 14, 2013): "When we do not profess Jesus Christ, the saying of Léon Bloy comes to mind: 'Anyone who does not pray to the Lord prays to the devil.' When we do not profess Jesus Christ, we profess the worldliness of the devil, a demonic worldliness."

Over eight-and-a-half years later, with the benefit of hindsight and a thick catalogue of scandalous words and deeds testifying against him, I can only shake my head and humbly admit that my initial assessment and hopes were terribly mistaken. The truth is that Cardinal Bergoglio, the former Archbishop of Buenos Aires (1998-2013), was elected to implement a very specific and heterodox agenda, one that had been in the making for decades by a group of liberal Cardinals who chose Bergoglio as their candidate.

Such is the subject of a new book entitled, *The St. Gallen Mafia: Exposing the Secret Reformist Group within the Church* (TAN Books, 2021). Following St. Paul's exhortation to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11), author Julia Meloni has spent a total of three years researching and writing about the St. Gallen Mafia, exposing and reproving it as a group of Modernist conspirators — members of what Archbishop Viganò calls "the deep church" — bent on imposing a dark and destructive agenda upon the Church. Drawing from scholarly works, news articles, and

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other compelling sources, Meloni's book provides indispensable information for those seeking to understand the origins of the present ecclesial crisis.

We are thus pleased to present the following interview of Ms. Meloni, throughout which she fields a few questions about her background, her research, and some other topics related to her book and current events in the Church.

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***Catholic Family News* (CFN): Thank you, Julia, for conducting this interview. I'm sure your new book will be of great interest to our readers.**

For starters, perhaps you could share a little about your background and how you became interested in the topic of the St. Gallen Mafia. Was there a particular event or source that piqued your interest and led you to conduct thorough research on the subject?

Julia Meloni (JM): I'm a traditional Catholic who studied at Yale and Harvard and discovered a deep interest in the present pontificate after *Amoris Laetitia*'s release. Feeling the need to research the backstory of this pontificate, I began writing articles for *Crisis* Magazine. When Henry Sire's *The Dictator Pope* was released, I read the first chapter on the St. Gallen Mafia and immediately knew that this group was the key to understanding Pope Francis's major actions.

CFN: Out of curiosity, did you grow up attending the Traditional Latin Mass or did you discover the riches of Tradition after your formative years? Also, would you say that your attachment to traditional Catholic teaching and practice has made you more sensitive to the many disturbing facets of the present pontificate?

JM: I attended my first Traditional Latin Mass as an adult, but my upbringing was always very traditional in terms of valuing orthodoxy, the writings of the canonized saints, Fatima devotions, and so on. That upbringing did propel me to research the happenings of this pontificate, and in the course of that research I have discovered that the Traditional Latin Mass is a powerful bulwark against the revolution that the St. Gallen mafia wanted for the Church.

CFN: Could you provide a brief sketch of "the key members and alumni of the St. Gallen Mafia," as described in your book? When and where did they first assemble, and for what purpose? Was there an official (or perhaps *de facto*) leader of the group?

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JM: Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini (1927-2012) founded the mafia in the mid-1990s, assembling it annually at or near St. Gallen, Switzerland. Other key members included German cardinals Walter Kasper and Karl Lehmann (1936-2018). The group's common goal was to thwart the conservative program of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger.

In the early 2000s, Martini was 'replaced' as leader by the Italian diplomat Cardinal Achille Silvestrini (1923-2019), after Martini grew too ill with Parkinson's. Silvestrini was a tactician who was fixated on the papal succession of John Paul II. A little before Silvestrini joined the group, a British cardinal named Cormac Murphy-O'Connor (1932-2017) joined. He was affable and good at negotiations and would one day be the main 'kingmaker' behind Pope Francis's election.

CFN: Your book is divided into two parts: "War" (Part I) and "Time" (Part II). Could you explain the significance of this division, as well as your choice of words for the two respective parts?

JM: Part I covers Benedict XVI's election and pontificate; it's called "War" to acknowledge the St. Gallen group's multi-pronged war against Benedict.

Part II covers Pope Francis's election and pontificate; it's called "Time" to acknowledge both Francis's philosophical interest in time and the sense that he's working towards some mysterious deadline while the timer of his pontificate ticks.

CFN: A running thread in your book (introduced in Chapter 2, "Silvestrini") involves something called "*Confession d'un Cardinal*, a French memoir by a retired cardinal who identified himself as a good friend of Martini and Kasper." What does this document reveal about the St. Gallen Mafia and the goals of its members?

JM: First, it analyzes the subversive projects of Cardinals Kasper, Danneels, and Martini on everything from the ethics of condoms to the holding of a new council. Second, this "confession" says that the anonymous retired cardinal and his comrades specifically thought of Cardinal Bergoglio as an ideal successor to John Paul II. Third, as I was reading the book I quickly identified the mafia's Cardinal Silvestrini as the man most likely to be the retired anonymous cardinal — and author Nicholas Diat points out, in his book on Benedict XVI, that many others see Silvestrini's hand in the book.

CFN: Aside from doctrinal errors, one of the most scandalous aspects of the Francis pontificate involves the ongoing plague of sexual abuse (mostly homosexual in nature) committed against minors and vulnerable adults by members of the clergy — a plague which obviously predates Francis but one which many argue he has

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enabled rather than effectively worked to eradicate. The most famous testimony to that effect comes from Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, the retired Vatican diplomat/administrator and former Apostolic Nuncio to the United States (2011-2016), whom you mention in your book: "Shortly before the youth synod started [in early Oct. 2018], Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò accused Francis of covering up sexual abuse by then cardinal Theodore McCarrick [initial testimony published Aug. 25, 2018]. Viganò further accused multiple synodal fathers of complicity in the cover-up."

Over the summer of 2020, amidst a steady stream of important statements and interviews, Archbishop Viganò told Italian Vaticanista Marco Tosatti that "these three elements — heresy, sodomy, and corruption — are so recurrent that they are almost a trademark of the *deep state* and of the *deep church*." This comment certainly brings to mind the St. Gallen Mafia, among whose members (all of whom push doctrinal errors) we find at least one accused of sexual abuse (Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor) and another caught on tape essentially pressuring a victim to keep quiet (Cardinal Danneels).

What can you tell us about the presence of "heresy, sodomy, and corruption" within the St. Gallen Mafia?

JM: Let's consider, for instance, the figure of Cardinal Danneels. As you mentioned, Danneels was caught on tape covering up for a protégé bishop who had sexually abused his own nephew since the boy was five years old. The tape transcripts are devastating to read; Danneels shows no mercy for the victim but instead asks him to consider how he, the victim, allegedly needed to beg for forgiveness himself.

Shortly after Pope Francis's election, Danneels went on to say: "I think it's a positive development that states are free to open up civil marriage for gays if they want." Later, Pope Francis invited Danneels to the family synods despite the latter's history of covering up for abuse. It was as if Danneels was free to do as he pleased now that he had been (to borrow one of his own images) resurrected amidst Pope Francis's election.

CFN: Pope Francis seems to greatly esteem Cardinal Carlo Martini, whom you identified earlier as the founder and leader of the St. Gallen Mafia. In his 2019 Christmas Greetings to the Roman Curia, for example, Francis made a point to quote Martini after describing in detail his "reform of the Roman Curia" — a project very much at the heart of his election and pontificate.

"Cardinal Martini," said Francis, "in his last interview [Sept. 1, 2012], a few days

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before his death, said something that should make us think: 'The Church is two hundred years behind the times. Why is she not shaken up? Are we afraid? Fear, instead of courage? Yet faith is the Church's foundation. Faith, confidence, courage… Only love conquers weariness'."

What do you think Cardinal Martini meant when he said, "The Church is two hundred years behind the times"? Why would Pope Francis propose this quote as "something that should make us think," specifically, in reference to curial reform?

JM: I think Martini, as historian Roberto de Mattei points out, was saying the Church is 200 years behind the French Revolution. Therefore, I think this phrase that Francis evokes goes beyond curial reform to speak more generally about how the Church needs its own French Revolution.[2]

CFN: In a recent interview (published Sept. 1, 2021), Pope Francis was asked about his pontificate: "Are you satisfied with the changes undertaken or is there anything pending that you would like to finish off imminently?" After claiming that his election took him "by surprise," he goes on to make an astounding admission: "But I didn't invent anything; what I did from the beginning is to try to put into action what we cardinals said in the pre-conclave meetings for the next Pope: the next Pope has to do this, this, this, this. … I am obeying what was set at the time."

What are your thoughts about Francis's response?

JM: Regarding the issue of "obeying" what was "set" by others, perhaps Pope Francis is thinking of cardinals such as Godfried Danneels (1933-2019), the mafia member who before the conclave raised the need for a kind of council of cardinals and even said the Church needed a new "Francis". Regarding the issue of being surprised, I detail in my book how even Francis's allies have said from the beginning that he was specifically asked beforehand if he would be willing to be a papal candidate.

CFN: This month, the two-year "Synod on Synodality" (Oct. 2021—Oct. 2023), the programme for which was unveiled back in May, formally opened in Rome and in dioceses across the globe. As we have seen throughout the Francis pontificate, synods have been used as subversive tools in the service of a heterodox agenda. You mention an interesting connection between Cardinal Martini and synodality in your book: "Soon after meeting [Cardinal Basil] Hume, in 1981, Martini began speaking of his own dream. He dreamed of a 'synodal' Church where power was transferred away from the papal center and toward the advisory body known as the synod of bishops."

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In what ways have members of the St. Gallen Mafia influenced the controversial synods we have witnessed during the Francis pontificate? Do you seen any signs of St. Gallen influence regarding the current synod?

JM: Danneels and Kasper, longtime supporters of opening up Communion to the divorced and civilly remarried, of course played roles in the family synods (2014 and 2015). I would argue that the spirit of Martini has been present at every synod of this pontificate, because he supported everything from the ordination of married men (cf. the Amazon synod in 2019) to the weaponization of young "prophets" against Church teaching on sexuality (cf. the youth synod in 2018). "Permanent" synodality was Martini's dream, so I do think the upcoming synod on synodality will be haunted by his presence.

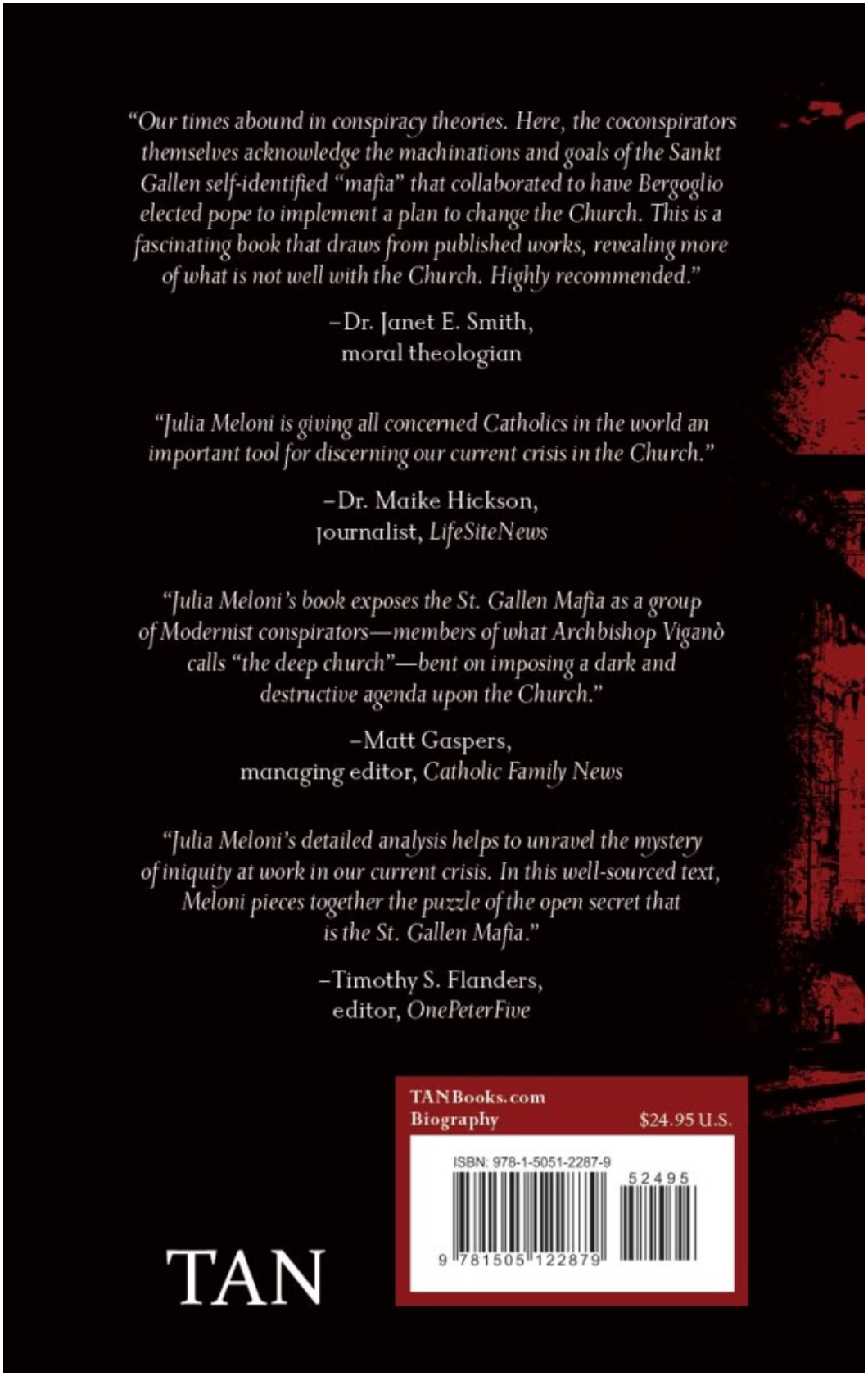
CFN: Over the summer, on the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel (July 16, 2021), Pope Francis released what will no doubt become a defining document of his pontificate. Entitled *Traditionis Custodes*, this Apostolic Letter nullifies several provisions established by Benedict XVI to facilitate wider access to the Traditional Latin Mass (especially those found in *Summorum Pontificum*), all for the purpose of severely restricting said access for clergy and laity alike.

Do you think that those St. Gallen Mafia members who are already deceased (e.g., Cardinals Martini, Silvestrini, Danneels, Murphy-O'Connor, Lehmann) would be pleased with Pope Francis's decision to restrict access to the traditional Roman Rite of Mass?

JM: Absolutely. Shortly after *Summorum Pontificum* was released, Martini made a salvo against it by telling the media why, out of principle, he would never say the Traditional Latin Mass. Murphy-O'Connor, meanwhile, promoted a misinterpretation of *Summorum Pontificum* and then hosted an event that many understood as an attack on Pope Benedict XVI's text. The fact that Murphy-O'Connor went on to be the 'kingmaker' for Pope Francis's election is very significant: the program of *Traditionis Custodes* comes to us by way of St. Gallen.

Julia Meloni's new book on the St. Gallen Mafia is available for purchase from TAN Books here. It has received the endorsement of CFN managing editor Matt Gaspers:

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[1] St. Bonaventure, *The Life of Saint Francis*, Chapter II, sect. 1.

[2] **Editor's Note:** Interestingly, this is precisely how certain 'progressive' (Modernist) figures at Vatican II described the Council. Cardinal Leo Jozef Suenens of Belgium (1904-1996), for example, is quoted by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre (1905-1991), a fellow Council Father, as having stated, "Vatican II is the French Revolution in the Church" (Lefebvre, *Open Letter to Confused Catholics* 8th printing [Kansas City: Angelus Press, 1986], p. 117). Some 20 years after the Council, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (b. 1927), who served as a *peritus* (theological expert) for Cardinal Josef Frings of Cologne (1887-1978), wrote that Vatican II's *Gaudium et Spes* (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World) and *Dignitatis Humanae* (Declaration on Religious Liberty) together constitute "a countersyllabus [referring to Pius IX's Syllabus of Errors] and, as such, represents, on the part of the Church, an attempt at an official reconciliation with the new era inaugurated in 1789" (Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology* [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987], p. 382).

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