This morning, I was shocked and deeply saddened to see this tweet:

> Please pray for our friend @george_neumayr. We just received word that he died of Malaria last night in the Ivory Coast.
>
> — Lepanto Institute (@LepantoInst) January 20, 2023

Michael Hichborn, founder and president of the Lepanto Institute, posted a similar notice on his Facebook page, and a few hours later his organization provided the following update on Twitter:

> Regarding the death of @george_neumayr, here is what we know from CONFIRMED sources:
>
> 1) George was sick seven days ago.
> 2) George steadfastly refused to go to the hospital.
> 3) The US Consulate tested his body and confirmed that he tested positive for malaria.
>
> — Lepanto Institute (@LepantoInst) January 20, 2023

I contacted Hichborn, a friend and colleague of Neumayr (as well as of this author), who provided the following statement as a tribute to our mutual friend and brother in Christ:

> "George was a one-of-a-kind investigative journalist and a dear friend. His moxie in the face of deeply entrenched and depraved prelates was unmatched by anyone, and his absence is a great blow to us all. He had an eye for truth and a nose to unearth it. He will be sorely missed and I hope to see him again in the Kingdom of Heaven."

Most recently (mid-December 2022), Neumayr confronted Bishop Barry Knestout of Richmond, Virginia at the bishop's residence (for more background on Knestout, see here):

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> I went to Bishop Knestout's rectory at Richmond's Cathedral of the Sacred Heart and asked about his scandal of appointing a public sex offender, Fr. Wayne Ball, to a pastorship without informing parishioners of his guilty plea for the crime in a park with a man in a parked car. pic.twitter.com/WTxLuAwIEB
>
> — George Neumayr (@george_neumayr) December 17, 2022

The above footage testifies to the truth of Hichborn's words: "George was a one-of-a-kind investigative journalist" and will indeed be "sorely missed".

This afternoon *The American Spectator*, for whom Neumayr worked as a senior editor and columnist, published the following statement from his family:

> "It is with great sadness that the family of George Neumayr announces his untimely passing on January 19, 2023. He was abroad in Côte d'Ivoire, Africa, living out his passion for defending the Catholic Faith and the Church's mission to save souls. He passed away after contracting malaria. The family is devastated by this sudden loss and requests prayers for the happy repose of his soul and the consolation of his family."

In addition to writing and editing for *The American Spectator*, Neumayr also authored books, including the 2017 blockbuster *The Political Pope* (see here for my review), and contributed to various other outlets, including *Catholic Family News* (see here for one of my favorite articles of his for CFN; and here for a video interview conducted in January 2021).

Regarding his trip to Africa, Neumayr himself said he was "going for several reasons, but one is to start work on a project examining the condition of Christianity in Africa."

> I have made it to Africa, no doubt to Bishop Knestout's relief. I am in Burka Fassino at the moment but will soon depart for the Ivory Coast. I am going for several reasons, but one is to start work on a project examining the condition of Christianity in Africa. Please support it pic.twitter.com/cGxhAjWVNn
>
> — George Neumayr (@george_neumayr) December 26, 2022

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He further explained during Episode 2 of his recently launched podcast, *INFILTRATED with George Neumayr* (Dec. 30, 2022):

> "I have come to Africa to pursue a project — a book project, hopefully — in which I will examine the spread and the condition of Catholicism and Christianity on the continent of Africa. I'm going to go to countries where Catholicism and Christianity are flourishing, but I'm also going to go to countries where it's not flourishing and where it's failing, and Côte d'Ivoire [the Ivory Coast] is one of those countries."

The first episode of *INFILTRATED with George Neumayr* focused on "the Bishop Knestout scandal" (again, see here for background), and I was honored that George gave me a shout-out during the show.

> Thanks, Matt! https://t.co/jDs94zOqg0
>
> — George Neumayr (@george_neumayr) December 23, 2022

George was ardently committed to exposing the rot of corruption within the Church — doctrinal, moral, financial, and otherwise — and intended to use his new podcast to that end, as he explained at the beginning of Episode 1 (Dec. 21, 2022):

> "We're going to use this show, first of all, to draw attention to the infiltration of the Catholic Church by heretics, by leftists, by communists, by apostates, by charlatans, by creeps. This has, of course, been going on for quite some time in the Catholic Church, but very few people talk about it directly and openly, and we're going to do that on this show. We are going to use this program, this podcast, as an instrument of change within the Catholic Church. We are going to use this program to drive out of the Church all of these charlatans and frauds and degenerates and heretics who have ruined the Catholic Church, who have marred the Church of Jesus Christ, who have treated the Church like their personal fiefdom. We will not tolerate that!"

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Today's meditation in *Divine Intimacy* harkens back to George's words (above) and the powerful witness he gave, both professionally and personally:

> "In calling us to imitate the holiness of His heavenly Father, Jesus summons us to an unrelenting war against sin, which is in direct opposition to God's infinite perfection and is the greatest offense against Him. In all His teachings He tried to inculcate in us a deep hatred of sin, especially of pride, hypocrisy, and obstinate willful malice, all of which constitutes a state of complete opposition to God. Jesus, Who shows such great mercy toward sinners, has scathing words for the Pharisees: 'Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites: because you are like to whited sepulchers. … You serpents, generation of vipers, how will you flee from the judgment of hell?' (Matt. 23: 27, 33)." (Meditation #54, What Jesus' Teaching Exacts)

George courageously called out the "serpents" and "vipers" of our day, employing appropriately "scathing" language at times (see here for several examples). He was keenly aware that his work could potentially be dangerous, as he acknowledged a few days before arriving in Africa:

> But as self-dramatizing as it may sound, I don't give a damn at this point. I don't care what happens to me. I will not sit on my hands as these wicked charlatans defile Jesus Christ's Church. It belongs to Him, not them.
>
> — George Neumayr (@george_neumayr) December 23, 2022

Yet he remained completely undeterred: "I don't care what happens to me. I will not sit on my hands as these wicked charlatans defile Jesus Christ's Church. It belongs to Him, not them."

On the day George died (January 19), the Church celebrated (on the pre-Vatican II Roman calendar) the feast of Sts. Marius, Martha, Audifax, and Abachum — a family of first-century martyrs. The Epistle and Gospel for the Mass (Heb. 10:32-38 and Matt. 24:3-13) contain some providential verses:

> "Do not therefore lose your confidence which hath a great reward. For patience

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> is necessary for you; that, doing the will of God, you may receive the promise. For yet a little and a very little while, and he that is to come, will come, and will not delay." (Heb. 10:35-37)
>
> "But he that shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved." (Matt. 24:13)

Only God knows the state of one's soul at the moment of death, of course, but we have every reason to believe — based on the witness of his life — that George Neumayr did indeed "persevere to the end" in faith, hope, and charity. Let us pray for the repose of his soul, that he will soon "receive the promise" of eternal glory in Heaven. *Requiescat in pace.*

Below is the final photo of himself that George Neumayr tweeted from his hotel in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire (four days before his death):

> The Hotel Sofitel has become my refuge from the madness in Abidjan. pic.twitter.com/B6NXnstbRy
>
> — George Neumayr (@george_neumayr) January 15, 2023

UPDATE (Jan. 21, 2023): In addition to praying for the repose of George's soul and consolation for his family, let us also pray that Our Lord will console George's fiancé (they had just recently gotten engaged).

> I had confirmed with a mutual friend of @george_neumayr (RIP) that he had recently gotten engaged, but I wasn't aware of George's public comment (below) until a reader pointed it out.
>
> Let us pray for the repose of George's soul and consolation for his fiancé □ □ pic.twitter.com/5aWdBI1mSH
>
> — Matt Gaspers (@MattGaspers) January 21, 2023

> At Notre Dame's Basilica in the city of Yamoussoukro, the political capital of Cote d'Ivoire. This was around ten on the feast of Epiphany. We had the place, which

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can hold 18,000, almost to ourselves. The guide said there is one mass a day and it attracts around 70 people. pic.twitter.com/NbzQa9UwHu

— George Neumayr (@george_neumayr) January 6, 2023

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