

Emeritus, Munus, Ministerium

Editor’s note:

Catholic Family News is happy to publish this new text from Archbishop Viganò. Although we may not agree with every detail contained in it, we think it raises important questions that have a right to be asked and makes an important point that the novelty of the Francis pontificate does not originate in the last 10 years, but is a continuation of the problems and errors of the Second Vatican Council through John Paul II and Benedict XVI. We also wish to emphasize that disagreement with statements of Archbishop Viganò does not make those statements heretical and worthy of excommunication. The alleged infliction of this penalty on him over the summer is invalid and illegal. This is true, even if one disagrees with certain of his conclusions. -Brian McCall



H.E. Msgr. Carlo Maria Viganò, Archbishop

The never-ending saga of the Resignation of Benedict XVI continues to fuel an increasingly bold and surreal narrative of the events we have witnessed in the last decade. Inconsistent theories not supported by any evidence have taken hold of many of the faithful and even some priests, increasing confusion and disorientation. But if this has been possible, it is also largely due to those who, knowing the truth, nonetheless are afraid to speak about it because of the consequences that the truth, once revealed, could have. In fact, there are those who believe it is preferable to shore up a castle of lies and deceit, rather than having to face questions about a past of connivance, silence, and complicity.

The Exchange of Letters

During a meeting at the Renaissance Mediterraneo Hotel in Naples with Catholics from the local *Cœtus Fidelium* held this past November 22 [2024], Msgr. Nicola Bux mentioned an exchange of letters with “Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI,” dating back to the summer of 2014, which supposedly constitute the definitive denial of the various theories that are out there about the invalidity of Benedict’s Renunciation. The content of these letters - the first, written by Msgr. Bux on July 19, 2014 (three pages), and the second, by Benedict XVI, on

August 21, 2014 (two pages) - was not released ten years ago, as would have been more than desirable. Instead, only today has their existence been barely mentioned. It so happens that I am aware of both this exchange of letters as well as their content.

Why did Msgr. Bux decide not to promptly disclose Benedict XVI’s response when Benedict was still alive and able to confirm and corroborate it, and instead to reveal only its existence, without disclosing its content, almost two years after his death? Why would he hide this authoritative and very important declaration from the Church and the world?

The Permanent Revolution

To answer these legitimate questions, we must put aside the fiction given us by the media. We must first understand that the antithetical vision of a “santo subito” [*immediate saint*] Ratzinger and an “ugly and bad” Bergoglio is convenient for many. This simplistic, artificial, and false approach avoids addressing the heart of the problem, that is, the perfect coherence of action of the “conciliar popes” from John XXIII and Paul VI to the self-styled Francis, including John Paul II and Benedict XVI. The goals are the same, even if pursued with different methods and language. The image of an elderly, elegant, and refined theologian, in a Roman chasuble and red shoes, who granted citizenship to the Tridentine Rite, contrasted with an intemperate globalist heresiarch who does not celebrate Mass and has nullified *Summorum Pontificum*, while promulgating the Mayan liturgy with thurifying females, is part of that operation of *forced polarization* that we have also seen adopted in the civil sphere, where a similar subversive project has been carried out by favoring ultra-progressive forces on the one hand and keeping the voices of dissent quiet on the other.

In reality, Ratzinger and Bergoglio - and this is precisely what *conservatives* do not want to recognize - constitute two moments of a *revolutionary process* that contemplates alternating phases that are only apparently opposed to one another, following the Hegelian dialectic of *thesis*, *antithesis*, and *synthesis*. A process that did not begin with Ratzinger and will not end with Bergoglio, but rather that goes back to Roncalli and seems destined to continue as long as the *deep church* continues to replace the Catholic Hierarchy by usurping its authority.

In the Ratzingerian vision, the *thesis* of the *Vetus Ordo* and the *antithesis* of the *Novus Ordo* are combined in the *synthesis* of *Summorum Pontificum*, thanks to the subterfuge of “*a single rite in two forms*.” But this “peaceful coexistence” is the product of German idealism; and it is false because it is based on the denial of the incompatibility between two ways of conceiving the Church, one corresponding to two thousand years of Catholicism, the other imposed by the Second Vatican Council thanks to the work of heretics who until then had been condemned by the Roman Pontiffs.

The “redefinition” of the Papacy

We find the same *modus operandi* in the intention expressed first by Paul VI, then by John Paul II, and finally by Benedict XVI to “redefine” the Papacy in a collegial and ecumenical way, *ad mentem Concilii*, where the divine institution of the Church and the Papacy (*thesis*) and the heretical demands of the neo-modernists and the non-Catholic sects (*antithesis*) are combined in the *synthesis* of a redefinition of the Papacy in an ecumenical way, proposed by the encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* promulgated by John Paul II in 1995 and more recently formulated in the *Study Document* of the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity issued this past June 13 [2024]: *The Bishop of Rome. Primacy and Synodality in Ecumenical Dialogues and in the Responses to the Encyclical ‘Ut Unum Sint’*. It will not be surprising to learn - as Cardinal Walter Brandmüller confided to me in January 2020 in response to a specific question of mine - that Professor Joseph Ratzinger was developing the theory of the Pope Emeritus and a collegial [shared] Papacy with his colleague Karl Rahner in the 1970s when they were both “young theologians.”

During a telephone conversation I had in 2020, a very trusted assistant of Benedict XVI confirmed to me Pope Benedict’s intention - which he reiterated several times to her - to retire to private life in his Bavarian residence, without maintaining either his apostolic name or his papal vestments. But this eventuality was considered inopportune for those who would lose their power in the Vatican, especially those *conservatives* who had Benedict XVI as their point of reference and had mythologized his figure.

We do not know for sure whether the solution theorized with Rahner by the young Ratzinger was still contemplated by the elderly Pontiff, nor whether the Papacy Emeritus was “resurrected” by those who wanted to keep Benedict in the Vatican, also by making use of external pressure on the Holy See that had materialized with the suspension of the Vatican from the SWIFT system, which, significantly, was restored immediately after the announcement of the Resignation. In fact, the Resignation has created immense confusion in the ecclesial body and has handed over the See of Peter to its destroyer, which in any case is something Joseph Ratzinger has been a part of.

Benedict thus resorted to the invention of the “Papacy Emeritus,” trying, in violation of canonical practice, to keep alive the image of the “fine theologian” and the *defensor Traditionis* that his entourage had constructed. Moreover, an analysis of the events that concern the epilogue of his Pontificate is extremely complex, both because of the peculiarities of Ratzinger’s intellect and character, and because of the opaqueness of the action both of his collaborators and of the Curia, and finally because of the absolute ἀπαξ of his Renunciation, as carried out by Benedict XVI, a completely new modality never seen before in the history of the Papacy.

On the other hand, this parenthesis of mozzettas and camauros was supposed to have been eclipsed with the handover to the already-selected Archbishop of Buenos Aires, who was nominated by the Saint Gallen Mafia to take Benedict’s place ever since the Conclave of 2005. The role of Benedict XVI as Emeritus had the function of supporting a sort of *conservative Papacy (munus)* that would keep watch over the *progressive Papacy* of Bergoglio (*ministerium*), so as to keep together the moderately conservative Ratzingerian component and the violently progressive Bergoglian component, thereby favoring the public perception of a supposed continuity between the “pope emeritus” and the “reigning pope.”

In essence, a way was found to keep Benedict in the Vatican, so that his presence within the Leonine Walls would appear as a form of approval of Bergoglio and the aberrations of his “pontificate.” For his part, the Argentine saw in this canonical *monstrum* - because this is what the “Papacy Emeritus” is - an instrument for the destructuring of the Papacy in a conciliar, synodal, and ecumenical way; which, as we know, was a desire shared by Benedict XVI himself.

The Canonical “monstrum” of the Pope Emeritus

It must be said that the institution of the Episcopate emeritus is also acanonical *monstrum*, because with it the diocesan Bishop sees his jurisdiction “frozen” on the basis of age (upon reaching the age of 75), contrary to the centuries-old practice of the Church. The institution of the category of *emeritus*, by making the Bishops lose their awareness of being Successors of the Apostles, has also had as an immediate consequence a total de-responsibility, relegating them to the role of mere officials and bureaucrats. The institutionalization of the Episcopal Conferences as organs of government that interfere with and hinder the exercise of the power (*potestas*) of individual Bishops has certainly constituted an attack on the divine constitution of the Catholic Church and its Apostolicity.





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The Episcopate Emeritus, introduced just after the Council in 1966 with the *Motu Proprio Ecclesiae Sanctae* and then adopted by the Code of Canon Law of 1983 (can. 402, § 1), reveals a significant consistency with *Ingravescentem Aetatem* of 1970, which deprives seventy-five-year-old Cardinals of their Curia functions and eighty-year-old Cardinals of the right to elect the Pope in Conclave. Beyond the juridical formulation of these ecclesiastical laws, their *mens* [purpose] can only be understood in a perspective of deliberate exclusion of Bishops and senior Cardinals from the life of the Church, aimed at favoring the “generational change” - a real *reset* of the Catholic Hierarchy - with Prelates ideologically closer to the new requests promoted by Vatican II. This artificial purge of the most senior members of the Episcopate and of the College of Cardinals - and therefore presumably less inclined to innovation - has ended up distorting the internal balance of the Hierarchy, according to a worldly and secular approach already widely adopted in the civil sphere. And when, under the pontificate of John Paul II, the so-called “Montini widows” - that is, the

cardinals who had reached the age limit in the 1980s – asked for the revocation of *Ingravescentem ætatem* so as not to be excluded from the Conclave, it became evident that the progressives of the 1970s were also destined in turn to fall victim to the norm they had invoked for others: *Et incidit in foveam quam fecit* (Ps 7:16) [he is fallen into the hole he made].

It will not escape notice that, in a perspective of “redefinition” of the Papacy in a synodal key, where the Bishop of Rome is considered *primus inter pares* [the first among equals], the institution of the Episcopate emeritus and the norms that limit the exercise of the Episcopate and the Cardinalate to the attainment of a certain age, constitute the premise for the institutionalization of the Papacy emeritus and the jubilation of the elderly Pope.

The False Problem of *munus* and *ministerium*

From the *thesis* of the Papacy (*I am Pope*) in conflict with the *antithesis* of Renunciation (*I am no longer Pope*) there emerges a concept in continuous evolution – just as *becoming* is the absolute for Hegel – that is, the *synthesis* of the Papacy emeritus (*I am still Pope but I do not act as Pope*). This philosophical aspect of Joseph Ratzinger’s thought, which is principal and recurrent to him, should not be overlooked: *the synthesis is in itself provisional*, in view of its mutation into a thesis which will be opposed by a new antithesis that will give rise to a further synthesis, in turn provisional. This *incessant becoming* is the ideological, philosophical, and doctrinal basis of the *permanent revolution* inaugurated by the Second Vatican Council on the ecclesial front and by the global Left on the political front.

We have therefore witnessed a sort of artificial separation of the Papacy: on the one hand the Pope renounced the Papacy and on the other the *persona Papæ*, Joseph Ratzinger, tried to maintain some aspects of it that would guarantee him protection and prestige. Since the removal from the Apostolic See could appear as a form of disapproval of the line of governance of the Church imposed by the Bergoglian *deep church*, both the Personal Secretary and the Secretary of State put strong pressure on Ratzinger to remain “part-time” so to speak, playing on the fictitious separation between *munus* and *ministerium* – which moreover was vigorously denied in the Emeritus’ response to Mons. Bux.

Prof. Enrico Maria Radaelli has highlighted in his in-depth studies that this arbitrary bipartition of the Petrine mandate between *munus* and *ministerium* renders the Renunciation invalid. Since the Petrine Primacy cannot be broken down into *munus* and *ministerium*, since it is a *potestas* that Christ the King and High Priest confers on the one who has been elected to be Bishop of Rome and Successor of Peter, Ratzinger’s denial (in the cited letter) stating that he did not want to separate *munus* and *ministerium* is in contradiction with Benedict’s own admission that he has based the Papacy emeritus on the

model of the Episcopate emeritus, which is precisely based on this artificial and impossible split between *being* and *doing* the Pope, between *being* and *doing* the Bishop. The *absurdum* of this division is evident: if it were possible to possess the *munus* without exercising the *ministerium*, it would also be possible to exercise the *ministerium* without possessing the *munus*, that is, to carry out the functions of Pope without being one: which is an aberration such as to radically invalidate the consent to the assumption of the Papacy itself. And in a certain sense we saw this surreal dichotomy between *munus* and *ministerium* realized, when the Emeritus *was* Pope but did not exercise the Papacy, while Bergoglio *acted* as Pope without being Pope.

The Desacralization of the Papacy

On the other hand, the process of *desacralization* of the Papacy that began with Paul VI (think of the scenic deposition of the tiara) continued without interruption even under the pontificate of Benedict XVI (who also removed the tiara from the papal coat of arms). This is to be attributed principally to the new heretical ecclesiology of Vatican II, which made its own the demands of secularized and “democratic” society by welcoming into the bosom of the Church concepts such as collegiality and synodality that are ontologically alien to her, thus distorting the monarchical nature of the Church willed by her divine Founder. It certainly leaves one bewildered and immensely saddened to see how zealously the Conciliar and Synodal Hierarchy has promoted subversion within the Catholic Church. A sequence of reforms, norms, and pastoral practices for over sixty years have systematically demolished what until before Vatican II was considered intangible and unreformable.

It should also be remembered that Benedict XVI’s Resignation was not followed by a normal Conclave, in which the Electors serenely chose the candidate to succeed the Throne of Peter; but by a real coup d’état carried out *ex professo* by the Saint Gallen Mafia – that is, by the subversive component that has infiltrated the Church during the preceding decades – through the tampering with and violation of the regular elective process and the recourse to blackmail and pressure on the College of Cardinals. Let us not forget that an eminent Prelate confided to acquaintances that what he had personally witnessed in the Conclave could jeopardize the validity of the election of Jorge Mario Bergoglio. Also in this case, incomprehensibly, the good of the Church and the salvation of souls have been set aside, in the name of a pharisaical observance of the pontifical secret, perhaps not entirely free from blackmail and threats.

There is an obvious contradiction between the *goal* Benedict set for himself (i.e., to renounce the Papacy) and the *means* he chose to do so (based on the invention of the Papacy Emeritus). This contradiction, in which Benedict *subjectively* resigned but *objectively* produced a canonical *monstrum*, constitutes an act so subversive as to render

the Renunciation null and void. In due time, this contradiction will have to be remedied by an authoritative pronouncement, but the inescapable fact remains that the form in which the Renunciation was placed does not remove the subsequent irregularities that led Bergoglio to usurp the Throne of Peter with the complicity of the *deep church* and the *deep state*. Nor is it possible to think that the Renunciation should not be read in the light of the subversive plan that aimed to oust Benedict XVI and replace him with an emissary of the globalist élite.

The castle of lies in which lay people, priests, and prelates cooperate, even in good faith, remains a cage in which they have imprisoned themselves. In the media *dramatization*, the actors Ratzinger and Bergoglio have been presented to us as bearers of antithetical theologies, when in reality they represent two successive stages of the same revolutionary process. But appearance, the *simulacrum* on which mass communication is based, cannot replace the substance of Truth to which the Catholic Church is indefectibly bound by divine mandate.

Conclusion

To the many scandalized faithful, to the many confused and indignant priests and religious, to the few – at least for now – who raise their voices to denounce the coup perpetrated against the Holy Church by Her own Ministers, I address my encouragement to persevere in fidelity to Our Lord, the Eternal High Priest, the Head of the Mystical Body. *Resist strong in faith*, the Prince of the Apostles admonishes us (1 Peter 5:9), *knowing that your brothers scattered throughout the world are undergoing the same sufferings as you*. The sleep in which the Savior seems to ignore us while the Barque of Peter is tossed by the storm, must be for us a spur to invoke His help all the more, because only when we turn to Him, leaving aside human respect, inconsistent theories, and political calculations, will we see Him awaken and command the winds and the sea to calm down. *Resisting in faith* calls for the struggle to remain faithful to what the Lord has taught and commanded, precisely at the moment in which many, especially at the top of the Hierarchy, abandon Him, deny Him and betray Him. *Resisting in faith* implies not fainting in the moment of trial, knowing how to draw from Him the strength to overcome it victoriously. *Resisting in faith* ultimately means knowing how to look straight into the face of the reality of the *passio Ecclesiae* and the *mysterium iniquitatis*, without trying to conceal the deception behind which the enemies of Christ hide. This is the meaning of the words of the Savior: *You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free* (Jn 8:32).

+ Carlo Maria Viganò, *Archbishop*

November 30, 2024

S. Andreæ Apostoli