



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on July 11, 2024

Archbishop Viganò's Excommunication — Pope Francis and His Synodal 'Church of Accompaniment'

On July 5, the Holy See Press Office issued a [press release](#) from the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith (DDF) concerning the case of Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, whom the DDF accused of “the crime of schism.” As expected, the press release announced that the DDF had concluded its “extrajudicial penal process” and had declared the archbishop to be excommunicated from the Catholic Church.

The DDF, the Church's supreme doctrinal office, had summoned Archbishop Viganò to Rome in a [decree](#) emailed to the prelate on June 11. He was directed to appear in person for judgement on June 20, or to submit a defense in writing by June 28. As we [reported on June 26](#), the archbishop announced that he had not honored the summons for the 20th and would not be submitting a written defense on the 28th. “I have not delivered any statement or document in my defense to the Dicastery, whose authority I do not recognize, nor do I recognize the authority of its Prefect, nor do I recognize the authority of the one who appointed him,” Viganò said, referring to radical Cardinal Victor Emmanuel Fernández (the “kissing cardinal”) and Pope Francis.



AP Images
Carlo Maria Viganò

The July 5 DDF press release states:

On 4 July 2024, the Congress of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith met to conclude the extrajudicial penal process referred to in canon 1720 *CIC* against the Most Reverend Carlo Maria Viganò, titular Archbishop of Ulpiana, accused of the reserved delict of schism (canons 751 and 1364 *CIC*; art. 2 *SST*).

His public statements manifesting his refusal to recognize and submit to the Supreme Pontiff, his rejection of communion with the members of the Church subject to him, and of the legitimacy and magisterial authority of the Second Vatican Council are well known.

The Vatican announcement continues:



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At the conclusion of the penal process, the Most Reverend Carlo Maria Viganò was found guilty of the reserved delict of schism.

The Dicastery declared the *latae sententiae* [i.e., automatic] excommunication in accordance with canon 1364 § 1 *CIC*.

The “Listening,” “Accompanying” Church?

The Vatican press release announcing the excommunication of Archbishop Viganò came just four days before the same office issued the Vatican’s official working document, called an [Instrumentum Laboris](#), for Pope Francis’s ongoing “Synod on Synodality,” the controversial, multi-year process intended to change radically the doctrine, discipline, governance, and liturgical worship of the Church. Begun in 2021, the First Session of the Synod concluded in Rome in October 2023 with the issuance of a [“Synthesis Report,”](#) which critics derided as a “Sin Thesis Report,” since it pointed toward continued efforts at promoting sin by overturning Catholic teaching on divorce, polygamy, LGBTQ issues, female deacons, married priests, church governance, and more. Cardinal Gerhard Ludwig Müller, the former doctrinal chief of the Church, [charged](#) that the globalist agenda of Pope Francis and the Synod on Synodality amounted to “a hostile takeover of the Church of Jesus Christ.”

This “Synod of Bishops,” many critics pointed out, defied the very definition of a synod by appointing many non-bishops as voting participants, including lay men and women and college students. Mere weeks after the conclusion of the Synod, the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith launched a global brouhaha by issuing [Fiducia Supplicans](#) on the blessing of same-sex couples. Released on December 18, only a week before the celebration of the Nativity of the Christ Child, the papal document authored by Cardinal Fernández was welcomed with howls of glee from the LGBTQ chorus, but was roundly condemned as “heretical,” “blasphemous,” “scandalous,” and “diabolical” by orthodox Catholic priests, bishops, cardinals, and bishops’ conferences worldwide. (See [here](#) and [here](#).)

The scandal was magnified by revelations that Fernández, an Argentine protégé of Pope Francis, was elevated by the pope to the DDF post previously held by Cardinal Müller, [despite being the author of two erotic/pornographic books](#).

And having a checkered past as priest and bishop.

According to Cardinal Müller, Pope Francis and the DDF are aware of a massive file on Fernández that should have nixed placing him in that top Vatican slot for doctrine and discipline. Organizations representing victims of clerical sex abuse were quick to denounce the Fernández appointment and accuse him of a long history of protecting predatory homosexual priests and ignoring their victims. (See [here](#) and [here](#).)

Thus, it was especially galling to many of the faithful to see Pope Francis, Cardinal Fernández, and the DDF exercise the relatively rare act of excommunication for “schism” in the case of Archbishop Viganò [while turning a blind eye](#) to the schism, heresy, apostasy, blasphemy, sacrilege, and criminal sex abuse of the clerical acolytes of “Francis the Merciful.”

The notorious cases of sex abuse covered over by Pope Francis, such as those of ex-Cardinal Theodore McCarrick and Father Marko Rupnik, are but the tip of the iceberg. There is also the scandalous failure by the Vatican to discipline or excommunicate the rebellious bishops and priests of Germany, Belgium, the United States, and elsewhere who announced that they would bless same-sex couples in blatant defiance of Biblical injunctions, the perennial teaching of the Catholic Church, and ruling by the DDF.



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(See [here](#) and [here](#).) Rather than holding fast to eternal truths, Team Francis/Fernández catered to the militant LGBTQ lobby by promulgating the abominable *Fiducia Supplicans* declaration to OK blessing “same-sex couples.”

There seems to be no excess on the Left that can arouse Pope Francis’ ire or concern. Pride Masses and rainbow vestments? Fine! Pagan liturgies? Marvelous! Pachamama idol worship? Wonderful! Communist CCP bishops? No problem!

No, [it is “rigid” traditional Catholics](#), particularly those drawn to the Traditional Latin Mass, whom the pope sees as a threat to his “progressive” vision of Church unity. So, while promoting heterodox and heretical clerics and even appointing lay atheists and pro-abortion activists to prestigious Vatican posts, he has all but shut down the Traditional Latin Mass that his predecessor Pope Benedict encouraged, and is persecuting orthodox clergy (Bishop Joseph Strickland, Father Frank Pavone, Cardinal Raymond Burke, to name the most prominent).

This double standard and this intense hostility toward tradition flies in the face of Pope Francis’ boilerplate appeals to “diversity” and his “Church of accompaniment.” His new [Instrumentum Laboris](#) for the upcoming session of the Synod on Synodality is replete with hundreds of references to “accompaniment,” “listening,” “dialogue,” “diversity,” “welcoming,” “journeying together,” and other synodal buzzwords. However, there seems to be little, if any, inclination by Pope Francis to offer the same accompanying, welcoming, dialoguing, journeying spirit to traditional Catholics that he so readily extends to Muslims, Hindus, atheists, Buddhists, LGBTQ activists, and communists.

J’Accuse: Viganò’s Defense

In a lengthy defense entitled “[J’Accuse](#)” posted on June 28 on his own website, Archbishop Viganò argues that it is not he who is in schism with the Church, since he adheres wholeheartedly to the Deposit of Faith and “all the true Councils of the Church, which I fully recognize and accept, just as I fully recognize and accept all the magisterial acts of the Roman Pontiffs.” Rather, he charges it is Jorge Mario Bergoglio (Pope Francis) and his minions who are in schism by embracing “a faith different from that constantly taught for two thousand years by the Catholic Church.”

“I face this trial with the determination that comes from knowing that I have no reason to consider myself separate from communion with the Holy Church and with the Papacy, which I have always served with filial devotion and fidelity,” Viganò avers. “I could not conceive of a single moment of my life outside this one Ark of salvation, which Providence has constituted as the Mystical Body of Christ, in submission to its Divine Head and to His Vicar on earth.”

Viganò calls Bergoglio a usurper, not a true pope. He cites the Papal Bull *Cum ex apostolatus officio* of Pope Paul IV, which he notes “established in perpetuity the nullity of the nomination or election of any Prelate — including the Pope — who had fallen into heresy before his promotion to Cardinal or elevation to Roman Pontiff.” “It defines,” says Viganò, “the promotion or elevation as *nulla, irrita et inanis* — void, invalid, and without any value.”

Traditional Catholics: Divided Response

As a high-level Vatican whistleblower, the archbishop over the past six years has become a hero to traditional and conservative Catholics for exposing sexual and financial corruption in the Church and openly criticizing Pope Francis’s scandalous words and deeds. His admirers include many priests, bishops, and cardinals as well as lay faithful. However, not all of his current or erstwhile supporters are on the same page with him in challenging Pope Francis’s Petrine legitimacy.



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Sedevacantism, which Archbishop Viganò now embraces, holds that the Chair of Peter is vacant (*sede vacante*), hence there is no legitimate pope at present. Currently, many of Viganò's supporters stop short of that position, holding that Pope Francis may be a *bad* pope, but that he is still pope nevertheless. One of the most prominent critics of Pope Francis who falls into this camp is the Auxiliary Bishop Athanasius Schneider of Astana, Kazakhstan. In an [interview with Religious News Service](#) (RNS) that appeared on June 24, Bishop Schneider argued on behalf of Viganò, warning that excommunicating him would only lead to more division, something Pope Francis claims to deplore.

"I think the pope would be wise and prudent if he were to not excommunicate Archbishop Viganò," Schneider told RNS, adding that, "with this act, the Holy See will increase divisions even more." Bishop Schneider lamented the "disrespectful language" toward the pope and other Church prelates that has come to typify Viganò's statements, saying that "it's not edifying or helpful to anyone." Schneider, who grew up under communist persecution in the old Soviet Union, is a staunch traditionalist.

"The Holy See is becoming an instrument of the global elites," Bishop Schneider said. "It is sad that this global new ideology managed to succeed to a great extent in taking the Catholic Church hostage and turning the Holy See and the episcopates into its collaborators." However, he says, Archbishop Viganò "is in error" in claiming that the election of Pope Francis is illegitimate.

The traditionalist Society of Saint Pius X (SSPX) has also backed away from Viganò, even though Viganò aligns himself with the late Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, founder of the SSPX. In a June 24 statement, Father Davide Pagliarani, the SSPX Superior General, issued a statement that there is one point that "significantly differentiates" Viganò from Lefebvre. That difference is that "Archbishop Viganò makes a clear declaration of *sedevacantism* in his text. In other words, according to him, Pope Francis is not pope."

However, said Pagliarani, "Archbishop Lefebvre and the Society he founded have not ventured down that perilous road."

Other Catholic traditionalists have been cautious about either endorsing or criticizing Archbishop Viganò's *sedevacantism* or taking a position on his excommunication. That includes popular publications, commentators, and podcasters such as Catholic Family News, Dr. Taylor Marshall, *The Remnant* newspaper, Michael Matt, LifeSite News, Matt Gaspers, Dr. Anthony Stine, Kennedy Hall, OnePeterFive, and many others.

However, Catholic actor, producer, and director Mel Gibson, also a *sedevacantist*, has offered a [full-throated endorsement](#) of Viganò. "To me and many others you are a most courageous hero," he said in a letter to the archbishop.

He continued:

"You are a modern day Athanasius! I have all respect for the way you defend Christ and His Church. I agree with you 100%....

So rejoice! I am with you and I hope Bergoglio excommunicates me from his false church also.

Bergoglio and his cohorts have the clothes and the buildings, but you have the faith.

God bless and keep you. If you need anything just ask, I will try my best to help.

With admiration and undying respect.



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Mel Gibson

Gibson's colleague and fellow actor Jim Caviezel has been more measured in his support, posting a rare comment on X asking for prayers for the embattled archbishop. "Please pray for Archbishop @CarloMVigano, a crusader for the truth, during this troubling time," he [posted on June 21](#).

While many orthodox Catholics are on the fence and grappling with all the prudential, moral, and theological issues involved in the "Affair Viganò/Bergoglio," it is unlikely that the excommunication will have the effect desired by the Pope Francis and Fernández cabal at the restructured DDF. Their new *Instrumentum Laboris* for their much-ballyhooed Synod on Synodality makes hypocritical calls for "transparency" and "accountability" 34 times ... while at the same time they persecute the man who has most courageously exposed their corruption, crimes, and coverups. His excommunication notwithstanding, the Viganò saga is far from over.

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