

The Legion of Christ and the Vatican meltdown

Jason Berry | Jun. 21, 2012



Fr. Marcial Maciel Degollado, founder of the Legionaries of Christ, is pictured in an undated handout image provided by the order in 2009. (CNS photo)

A string of Vatican investigations and the arrest of the papal butler for allegedly leaking secret documents to the Italian press grabbed the big headlines out of Rome in May and June. The tales of palace intrigue, backbiting cardinals and new mysteries of the Vatican Bank overshadowed the latest jolts in the deepening saga of the Legionaries of Christ, the once high-flying order founded by Marcial Maciel Degollado.

A new disclosure in a just-published book based on leaked Vatican documents, *Sua Santità: Le Carte Segrete di Benedetto XVI* ("His Holiness: The Secret Papers of Benedict XVI") by Italian journalist Gianluigi Nuzzi, reports that the Legion priest who was closest to Maciel for many years met with Pope John Paul II in 2003, attempting to brief him on Maciel, but was shown the door.

Moreover, a priest who in 2009 met with Cardinal Franc Rodé, then the Vatican official in charge of religious orders, told *NCR* that Rodé discussed a videotape he had seen of Maciel with one of his children in 2004, yet made no move to punish the Legion founder. Rodé, who has since retired, championed the Legion and its lay wing, Regnum Christi, with glowing speeches to the groups for several years after Maciel was banished from active ministry.

The most startling revelation of recent weeks was the admission to *NCR* senior correspondent John L. Allen Jr. by Fr. Thomas Williams, a Legion commentator for NBC and CBS, that he had fathered a child "a number of years ago." That news followed a report by Nicole Winfield of The Associated Press on sex abuse accusations involving seven Legion priests. Finally, Legion general director Fr. Álvaro Corcuera issued an apology, saying he had known about Williams' child since 2005.

Cardinal Velasio de Paolis, the canon lawyer delegated by Benedict as the Legion overseer, told Reuters that he had known about Williams since January. "There is a need to be careful in cases like this," he said. "It concerns a private life. These things happen these days, unfortunately."

Williams was the face of the Legion for millions who followed his comments on NBC during the 2005 papal conclave. Introduced by Katie Couric as "a top theologian," he enjoyed subsequent attention with Couric on CBS as a Catholic expert, promoting such books as *Spiritual Progress: Becoming the Christian You Want to Be* and *Knowing Right From Wrong: A Christian Guide to Conscience*.

The news about Williams' child may seem tame compared to the breathtaking deceptions of the Legion founder, Maciel, a long-accused pedophile who enjoyed the support of John Paul despite pending allegations at a Vatican tribunal from 1998 until the pope's death in 2005. Williams, as the public face of the Legion, defended the Legion founder of the charges that eventually led Benedict to dismiss Maciel from ministry in 2006.

In 2009, a year after Maciel's death, the Legion admitted that their founder had fathered children by two women from Mexico. Only then did Williams apologize for his defense of Maciel.

Benedict called Maciel a "twisted, wasted life" in a 2010 interview book, *Light of the World: The Pope, the Church, and the Signs of the Times*, adding: "Only around 2000 did we have any concrete clues."

A picture is emerging of Maciel's deceptions and the order's disinformation campaign in defending him as enmeshed with key figures in the Roman Curia, as well as the past and present popes. The Legion has been in a revolving door of investigations under the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith since 2004, when then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger ordered an investigation by canon lawyer Msgr. Charles Scicluna. Scicluna traveled to America and Mexico, taking dozens of testimonies by Maciel's sexual victims for the report he delivered after Ratzinger became pope. Since 2010, the Vatican has held the Legion in a receivership, with a continuing inquiry of the Legion's lay wing, Regnum Christi. But Vatican oversight has been timid, yielding cosmetic changes amid a swamp of Legion scandals rooted in the tactics of psychological coercion put in place by Maciel to shield his secret life, money for his morphine addiction, and to support four out-of-wedlock children by two women.

Trying to brief John Paul

Among the documents reproduced in Nuzzi's book is a handwritten note by the papal secretary, Msgr. Georg Gänswein, dated Oct. 19, 2011, on his meeting with Legion Fr. Rafael Moreno. Moreno, 55, "was for 18 years private secretary of MM," Gänswein noted. "Had destroyed proof (incriminating material)." The note does not specify what information Moreno destroyed, but if any priest had the goods on Maciel, it was Moreno, who traveled with Maciel for years as a valet and all-purpose assistant.

As Maciel's assistant, "he handled the practical things, from tending his bed to making sure that his clothes were in order, and everything else," ex-Legion priest Patricio Cerda explained in an email interview from Spain. "Surely, he knew for many years of Maciel's double life, of the false identities in accompanying him on trips all over the world."

A Chilean by birth, Cerda is the source of recent information to *NCR* on Williams and to the AP on the seven accused priests. When Cerda left the Legion, he carted away documents that were used in exposés of the Legion in the Spanish press. José Martínez de Velasco, a Madrid journalist, used Cerda's documents to publish in October 2004 *Los Documentos Secretos de los Legionarios de Cristo*, which cited startling examples of Legion seminarians spying on other seminaries and on cardinals who visited the Legion complex.

"At least Rafael Moreno had the courage to say something, although belatedly," Cerda told *NCR*. "But his testimony is very important. It demonstrates the degree of brainwashing suffered by all who were close to Maciel" -- referring to what it took for Moreno to seek out John Paul. This is referenced in a note by Gänswein, the papal secretary, on his meeting with Moreno: "In 2003, insisted on informing PP II" -- clearly meaning John Paul II -- "but the latter would not stand to listen to him and did not believe him." John Paul rebuffed a priest haunted by Maciel's secrets a full year before Ratzinger broke from the pope in ordering an investigation.

Moreno "wanted to inform Cardinal [Angelo] Sodano [then Vatican secretary of state] but he did not grant him an audience," Gänswein wrote. Sodano, as previously reported in *NCR*, was Maciel's staunchest supporter, a recipient of \$15,000 in cash gifts and feted with his large family at the Legion complex. His nephew Andrea, a building engineer, was given a lucrative contract for work on a Legion university.

De Paolis, the Legion overseer, refused to meet with Moreno, according to the document.

Cerda is one in a constellation of researchers and former Legion supporters in Europe, Latin America and the U.S. whose Web postings and interviews focus on the order's entrenched culture of deception. Cerda went to the press in exasperation at Vatican inertia on a huge store of information on the Legion gathered in a 2005 Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith investigation.

In America, the Legion faces lawsuits over allegations of incest against the late Maciel, and alleged financial duplicity by the order. In Connecticut, where the Legion has its U.S. headquarters, a grown son of Maciel sued the order, alleging that officials facilitated Maciel's double life. In Rhode Island, a woman sued the Legion to recover part of a fortune her late aunt, a member of Regnum Christi, bequeathed the order in Maciel's later years.

Money and charism

From 1998, when a group of ex-Legionaries filed a canonical process with Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger's tribunal, seeking Maciel's ouster for abusing them in seminary, until 2006, when Ratzinger-as-Benedict dismissed him from ministry, Maciel was a gilded force, raising millions of dollars, thanks to the support of John Paul and the video images of the pope and Maciel that the Legion gave to donors. By 2004 the Legion had a \$650 million budget, and fewer than 650 priests.

At its U.S. headquarters in Cheshire, Conn., the Legion had 30 employees in a fundraising office that lured wealthy Catholics to the myth of Maciel as a crusader for orthodoxy, saving the church from within. In 2005, the year that dozens of victims gave secret testimony against Maciel to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, a Legion internal study assessed major donors with gifts of \$10,000 and up. It concluded that contact with a Legion priest resulted in generous responses and it paraphrased a religious fundraising dictum -- "Money follows ministry."

"In our case," the document said, "money follows charism."

Legion donors, according to the internal document, "respond to that which makes the Legion different from Opus Dei, the Red Cross, or Notre Dame: the apostolic mission and spiritual formation of priests and lay men and women established by Father Maciel."

The "charism" of Maciel -- a gift of grace, conferred for the benefit of others -- was spelled out in his spiritual guidebook, widely read in Legion and Regnum Christi circles, *The Psalter of My Days*. The book heavily plagiarized *The Psalter of My Hours* by Luis Lucia, a Christian Democrat imprisoned in Spain in the 1930s.

Maciel's "gift" was not charism, but a genius for raising money. As he brainwashed boys to adulate him as a

future saint, the drive for institutional wealth fueled a perpetual quest for money.

At the outset, he targeted youths of wealthy families in a Mexico City Legion prep school, cultivating future Legionaries or lay leaders in the 1970s.

"My quota was 100 pesos, a lot of money," an early Regnum Christi member, requesting anonymity, told *NCR*. Maciel insisted that the youth group keep its existence secret. "We were going into the world, to make ourselves known, but we had to be very careful -- *reserve* [discretion] was his warning." Indoctrinating the boys in secret meetings, Maciel coached them to draw their parents to greater giving before disclosing existence of the youth group. "My parents started at 5,000 pesos a month."

"It worked so well because orthodox Catholicism was a beautiful cover," he continued. "They convince you RC is the work of God and God has put you in this situation. Legionaries and RC members do not consider themselves a cult because they are orthodox Catholics. What makes them a cult is the manipulation, the methodology of mind control. ... It took me years to break away."

Dr. Michael Langone, executive director of the International Cultic Studies Association sees classic signs of a cult at work in the Legion. A counseling psychologist and scholar with a long background in the field, he told *NCR* about his visit to Legion headquarters in Cheshire in 2003. He wanted a representative to appear at a conference for an open forum with critics of the order. "Fr. Owen Kearns [former U.S. spokesman for the order] told me that Maciel had a charisma. I said, 'Well, suppose these allegations are true. That would not necessarily negate the good the Legion has done, or make all these young priests bad people.' His response was, 'It would mean I have been following a false charisma.' Later I recalled C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters*, seeing that position as one of spiritual pride. We see this in cult environments all the time: elitism, a prison of status," Langone said.

"I don't think the people I met were lying," he continued. "They were convinced that Maciel was being persecuted. The question arises, how do they make the change into what would amount to a new organization -- after Pope Benedict's [2006] decision on Maciel -- even if it has the same name? I don't see organizationally how you can do that. The Vatican has to clean house at top and get down into the whole management structure and clean it out. I would also advise them to do retraining of the Legion priests. My impression of a lot of people in religion, including Protestant clergy, is they tend to conceptualize these problems in theological terms. A theological framework can be of some use, but unless you get into the psychology of self-deception they're not going to get at the heart of a cultic dynamic and unravel the network of rationalizations that help to sustain a lie."

The Principles and Norms of the Legion of Christ and a collection of Maciel letters that seminarians read daily molded a mindset while dividing followers from their family members. The norms advised them to never allow families to know if they were sad or nostalgic. Family members should never know of depression or emotional states "so as not to trouble family members with problems that are related exclusively to their relationship with God and with the Legion."

The norms even specified how to hold cutlery at table "without stretching the index along the back of the knife or on the fork's prongs. Do not cock the little finger when using cutlery, the glass, or the cup. Refinement must always be accompanied by simplicity."

Radio, TV and Internet were banned in the rooms of Legion and Regnum Christi lay celibates who lived in consecrated communities. Superiors read their mail, had to approve newspapers and books, and restricted their access to websites.

The cult of personality that shielded Maciel's pathological sex life had another agenda: raising money. The

Legion was Maciel's company. Prep school tuitions of \$15,000 to \$35,000, depending on the country and location, generated profit to support operations in Rome. Regnum Christi members kept school costs down by working without pay, while appealing to parents to give and give again.

Raised in a well-to-do Mexico City family, Legion general director Corcuera advanced through an early Regnum Christi youth group. Fr. Luis Garza, the Legion vicar general -- in effect, the chief financial officer -- graduated from a Legion prep school in Monterrey, Mexico, one of eight siblings in the family of one Mexico's wealthiest industrialists.

Garza oversees Integer, an internal mechanism Maciel created to keep certain assets off the Legion books, according to sources familiar with the finances. As Maciel siphoned off Legion funds -- which had been donated to a religious charity -- for support of his two women and four children, Integer was a means to control and shield accountability from church authorities. The former Regnum Christi insider explains: "If someone sues the Legion, they have no assets. If the pope says, 'Show me your assets,' well, we have no money."

Whether by coincidence or design, the Integer strategy permeates a defense motion in the Connecticut lawsuit (*Jose Raul Gonzalez Lara v. Legionaries of Christ*). The Legion's defense argues that discovery should be subject to Italian law because the Legion, as "Rome Defendant," is based there. Discovery laws in America and countries with a base in English common law give plaintiffs much deeper access to information. There is no indication of a role by Vatican authorities in the defense strategy of the Legion lawsuit.

The inertia of reform

De Paolis, the papal overseer, formed a committee with Legionaries to rewrite the bylaws, eliminating the coercive tactics. However, he took a passive approach to the warped thinking that permeated the order and Regnum Christi in the years in which they kept promoting Maciel as a victim of injustice. When the 2006 Vatican order banished Maciel to "a life of prayer and penitence," the Legion sprang to his defense, announcing that Maciel had never been tried and, like Jesus, chose not to defend himself.

Maciel left Rome that May and flew to Cotija de la Paz, his hometown in southwest Mexico, where he was reunited with his former paramour, Norma Hilda Baños and their 23-year old daughter, Normita. Their photographs were later published in *Quien*, a gossip magazine.

When Maciel died in 2008, the Legion revved up the publicity campaign, announcing that he had gone to heaven. A year later, after Corcuera revealed the news of Maciel's children, Garza spoke to Regnum Christi followers in Monterrey. A transcript appears in a book by CNN Mexico journalist Carmen Aristegui, *Marcial Maciel: Historia de un Criminal*. "We had the responsibility to assure that Our Father [Maciel] was in a house in a Legionary community because this is what the Holy See asked," Garza said. The Vatican wanted Maciel handled in a certain way. "This took us a good part of October, November, December of 2006; it wasn't until January or February of 2007 that we were in a position of power to start to think about what we were going to do."

Garza, 54, earned an engineering degree from Stanford University before joining the Legion. He has a canon law doctorate from the Gregorian in Rome, where de Paolis was among his professors. Garza was Maciel's financial alter ego, "responsible for key areas of logistical governance," according to a Regnum Christi profile, "involving constant analysis of numbers and personnel structures and organizations, risks and opportunities."

In the speech in Monterrey, Garza recalls the burden he and Corcuera felt knowing about Maciel's children when the middle and lower echelon Legionaries had no idea. "This is not working, we have to do something," Garza quoted Corcuera. "It has to be communicated."

Benedict dismissed Maciel based on testimony that he abused "more than 20 but less than 100" Legionaries, as a Vatican official told *NCR* in 2006. The Legion never acknowledged in his lifetime that Maciel abused anyone. So strong was his psychological grip on the order that from 2006 through mid-2009, a year and a half after his death, Legion seminarians in Rome were being told that Maciel was falsely accused, a future saint, while in several countries, priests were leaving the order in protest.

Why did the Vatican allow a religious movement to mock a papal order, insisting on the sanctity of a pedophile ordered to a life of penance? Benedict undoubtedly wanted to salvage the vocations of priests who had no role in managing the order. A second rationale had its own steel force. The Vatican wanted control of the Legion's assets before deciding how to reorganize it under the same name, or to move the priests and seminarians into a newly-constituted religious order. Either way, the Vatican needed Garza. He was gatekeeper to the money.

'Everyone collaborated'

After Maciel's death, Garza and Corcuera wanted to remove his photographs in Legion halls and the many prep schools. Again, Garza: "And we thought we had to say something, communicate something." By early 2009, Corcuera had known about the children of Maciel and Fr. Thomas Williams for several years. Garza's language reflects a tortured rationalization that gripped him and Corcuera:

We never had the intention of hiding anything or not being transparent or to not share things but to care for a set of principles that we should not forget. One is the principle to preserve the fame, the privacy of a person [Maciel]; therefore, although I had known many things about someone, I have no reason to announce it. And the second principle is to avoid that bad be caused. ... But everyone collaborated. Why? Because this would not have happened, that is to say, had we known earlier, had there been evidence of this behavior earlier ... the Legionaries, all of us, we would not have idealized this figure and this person [who] was considered beyond good and evil.

Benedict told Bishop Ricardo Watty of Mexico, who conducted part of the Vatican investigation of the Legion, that the order should pay reparations to victims. Garza in his speech acknowledged that the victims "feel doubly abused" -- first as children, then after being accused of lying. Citing a civil standard for crimes that are beyond the statute of limitations, he said: "The truth is that pecuniary responsibilities practically do not exist. Except for psychological care ... there is no reparation." So much for papal charity to victims.

Preserving the myth of Maciel was pivotal to Legion finances after 2006. The entire apparatus, from targeting the wealthy donors to the Legion schools generating profits for the overall budget, turned on "the principle to preserve the fame" -- *Nuestro Padre's* image. Only after the news of his children broke in 2009 did the Legion apologize to the men Maciel had abused in seminaries decades ago. And with that, more priests began leaving the order. Garza has reportedly spent more time in America, where the Legion is selling property and closing schools. Among its losses is the new University of Sacramento, which had Mary Ann Glendon, the Harvard law professor and former U.S. ambassador to the Holy See, as a consultant.

The February 2009 news coverage in which Corcuera revealed to Legion groups that Maciel had a grown daughter in Spain (news of three sons in Mexico would follow) jolted many officials in the Roman Curia. Rodé, prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, was not surprised. A priest who met with Rodé that week in his apartment in the Palace of the Holy Office told *NCR*, on condition of anonymity, that the cardinal, who had long praised the Legion and Regnum Christi, startled him by saying

that he had seen videotapes of Maciel with his child and the mother. Taken aback, the priest asked when. "He said it was before the Legion general chapter [meeting] in 2004," the priest told *NCR*. "Rodé tried to convince Maciel to step down because of the videos."

Rodé apparently succeeded: Maciel allowed Corcuera to take his place in the 2004 chapter -- just as the doctrinal congregation's investigation was gearing up. This was one year after Moreno, Maciel's longtime personal attendant, tried to brief John Paul, only to be shown the door.

Find the money, keep the money

"The economic situation [of the Legion], while not severe, is serious and difficult," de Paolis wrote in a letter to the pope, quoted in Nuzzi's book *Sua Santità*, based on leaked documents. De Paolis's financial memo to Benedict drew on the assistance of Cardinal Domenico Calcagno, a financial authority in the Vatican, and president of the Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See. Clearly, de Paolis wanted a second set of eyes on the financial machinery Garza tended.

"The debt situation is relevant, attributable to the global financial and economic crisis, and the problems the Legion has had to face," de Paolis wrote the pope. "There are no situations of illegality or abuse," he continues, omitting allegations of illegality and abuse in the two U.S. lawsuits. Perhaps he thought them unworthy of the pope's time. But if the Legion loses either case, it stands to lose millions of dollars. The order is selling off American properties at reduced value in a soft market.

Of Integer, the Legion financial arm, de Paolis writes: "The role of this group should certainly be downsized. But it's necessary to proceed with caution, particularly at this crucial time. The problem is not only economic. It also concerns the organization of religious life within."

The last line is a subtle allusion to the latest investigation, this one of the lay arm *Regnum Christi*, as apart from the Legion itself. De Paolis echoes Garza in taking a hard line on compensation for victims outside the scope of civil litigation. "The agreement with some [victims] was not difficult," he writes of Legion settlements. Benedict's order that the Legion pay reparations was not an admission of wrongdoing by the Vatican. Rather, the Vatican assumed a role like a judge overseeing a legal settlement in a civil case. But in a perverse twist, de Paolis assumes the stance of a defense lawyer reporting to a bishop: "To yield in this field, besides being unjust, could result in a cascade of demands being equally unsustainable" -- meaning, some victims want too much, we must ensure justice by bargaining down the claims.

De Paolis may be relying on Garza to provide the Legion balance sheets, or de Paolis and Calcagno may be trying to get control of Integer and figure out the Legion's true base of assets. Some, of course, are tied up in educational institutions like Anahuac University in Mexico City. What is not clear from the document Nuzzi cites is whether de Paolis and Calcagno have a true picture of the assets and whether, in fact, they control them. Garza remains in place as the Vatican cardinals' link to Integer backers, particularly in Mexico.

Garza's own family in Mexico registers the impact of Maciel's pathological life.

"Our family is split," says Roberta Garza, the Legion priest's youngest sibling. An editor in Mexico City, she has written columns for *Milenio* denouncing Maciel and the Legion. The eight siblings grew up in Monterrey, the industrial capital of Mexico. The four older siblings are bedrock Legion supporters, Roberta Garza told *NCR*. One sister is a consecrated *Regnum Christi* member in Rome. Another sister is deceased. Her mother is infirm. Her late father was a multimillion-dollar benefactor to the Legion.

"The Legion takes away the power to reason in exchange for a weird sense of belonging, an allegiance to the group that stands for righteousness," she told *NCR* by telephone. Garza cites the example of an older sister

"whose only son is a Legion priest. Three of her five daughters are consecrated women [lay celibates] in Regnum Christi. One of the two married daughters in that family is married to the son of a man who was CEO of Integer. These people will never say they were wrong, that the Legion of Christ is crooked. The two siblings above me hardly share that view."

Another sibling among the younger four is utterly indifferent, preferring to avoid conflict.

She continues: "What is hard for me is that we were taught, growing up, to behave like partners, to be civil, understanding and aware of any differences. When my father died he left us equal parts of his estate. We had to sell properties and resolve community issues -- no problem. We were never a conflicted family as such. We dealt with one another perfectly fine. But dealing with the Legion, the fanaticism of the older ones became something that the younger siblings navigate by not confronting. The Legion is totally a cult. ... That is how they interact with the world, as people who think the movement is right and if you doubt that, you are wrong. The Legion cannot be reformed."

Benedict took a different view in his 2010 interview book *Light of the World*. After telling journalist Peter Seewald that Maciel had a "twisted, wasted life," the pope states:

On the other hand, we see the dynamism and strength with which he built up the congregation of the Legionaries.

Meanwhile, we have had an apostolic visitation carried out and appointed a delegate [de Paolis] who together with a group of collaborators is preparing the necessary reforms. Naturally corrections must be made, but by and large the congregation is sound. In it are many young men who enthusiastically want to serve the faith. This enthusiasm must not be destroyed.

What are the "necessary reforms" of a religious order that is deeply torn by what de Paolis, in his report to the pope, calls a "small, but gallant" group of reformers against the large majority?

De Paolis is silent on Garza, but uses a verbal dagger on Corcuera in telling the pope: "The current superior general, which some consider too tied to the founder, is also esteemed by almost everyone for his kindness and patience, but has no capacity to govern and guide the congregation. His decisions are uncertain and prone to compromise."

The Vatican has a storehouse on the Legion's inner workings from Scicluna, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith canon lawyer dispatched by Ratzinger in 2004 to investigate the pedophilia accusations that trailed Maciel for decades. Benedict inherited the scandal from John Paul, who made a ceremonious display of his support for Maciel and the Legion, despite the 1998 canon law case filed in Ratzinger's tribunal by ex-Legionaries accusing the founder of sexually abusing them as teenage seminarians. In April 2005, Scicluna took testimonies from 30 ex-Legionaries between New York and Mexico City. He returned to Rome with a suitcase of news articles; letters from victims and canon lawyers to John Paul and Ratzinger; documentaries; and books by journalists and scholars in Spanish and English. The dossier expanded with testimony in Rome by ex-Legion priests and laypeople who gave detailed information after secretary of state Sodano's office issued a statement saying that the doctrinal congregation's investigation was over, that there would be no trial. In fact the investigation continued, foiling Sodano's attempted power play.

Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, a powerful canon lawyer in the congregation when the 1998 case was active, ended up helping the defendant, Maciel. Bertone left the doctrinal congregation to become archbishop of Genoa, Italy, and while there, in 2003, he wrote a glowing preface to the Italian edition of *Christ Is My Life*, Maciel's spin-control memoir, a last-ditch effort to keep himself from being punished. "The key to [his] success," Bertone wrote, "is, without doubt, the attractive force of the love of Christ."

When Sodano retired after 16 years in office in 2006, Benedict appointed Bertone to take his place. Now, in one of the darker twists of the unfolding Vatican scandal, Bertone is the target of backbiting cardinals in the Curia, leaking information to discredit him, while Sodano stands silently by.

Editor's note: An earlier version of this story said Fr. Luis Garza donated \$3 million of his inheritance to the order, citing his sister Roberta Garza as the source. Ms. Garza in an email says she cannot verify the amount of any donation. Jason Berry regrets the error.

[Jason Berry is author of *Render Unto Rome: The Secret Life of Money in the Catholic Church*, which won the 2011 Investigative Reporters and Editors Book Award. The Investigative Fund of The Nation Institute provided research assistance for this report.]

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