NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

A Nuncio Divided Against Himself

Michael Sean Winters | Nov. 11, 2013 Distinctly Catholic
Fall bishops' meeting 2013

Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano, the Apostolic Nuncio, said he wanted to share his ?reflections? on his time here in the United States. +Vigano has been nuncio for two years.

+Vigano calls attention to Pope Francis? comments about his predecessor, Pope Paul VI, this summer when a group of pilgrims from Montini?s home diocese of Brescia came to Rome. Francis called ?Evangelii Nuntiandi,? a pastoral statement Paul VI issued in 1975, the ?greatest pastoral document? written to date. ?Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers and if it does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses? It is primarily by her conduct and by her life that the Church wukk evangelize the world, in other worlds, by her living witness of fidelity to the Lord Jesus ? the witness of poverty and detachment, of freedom in the face if the powers of this world, in short, the witness of sanctity,? Paul had written. +Vigano added: ?Certainly, my brothers, no one can dispute the clear fact that our present Holy Father himself, as the Supreme Teacher, is giving us by, his won witness, an example of how to live a life attuned to the values of the Gospel.? Hmmm. First, a quote from Pope Paul VI. Then, a recognition of what is obvious to us all, that Pope Francis has captured the world?s imagination by his witness of poverty and humility. The times they are a changin?.

+Vigano recalled his meeting with the Holy Father this past summer. ?The Holy Father wants bishops in tune with their people?he made a special point of saying that he wants ?pastoral? bishops, not bishops who profess or follow a particular ideology.? Of course, how many times in the past 35 years have we heard some of our co-religionists denigrate ?pastoral? bishops, as if it was a cussword. +Vigano sounds like +Jadot, Paul VI?s apostolic delegate to the U.S., and, again, how many times have we heard the phrase ?+Jadot bishops? uttered as a kind of epithet.

Alas, then +Vigano digs up a particularly confrontational quote from Pope John Paul II, delivered when he was still a cardinal, in 1976. Then-cardinal Wojtyla said, ?We are now facing the final confrontation between the Church and the anti-church, between the gospel and the anti-gospel, between Christ and the anti-Christ. The confrontation lies within the plans of Divine Providence. It is, therefore, in God?s Plan, and it must be a trial which the Church must take up, and face courageously?? So, the culture war idioms have not been retired, even if they come after Paul VI?s less apocalyptic vision.

+Vigano, in concluding, said, ?I recently came upon an article on the political situation in America over the past fifty years, and I caught sight of the subtitle which read: ?The era of polarization began as Americans lost confidence in their leaders,? Well said, since the Catholic Church will preserve her unity and strength as long as its people have trust in their bishops.? I was dying to ask: ?Does he not know how many American Catholics have already lost that trust?? +Vigano was just in Newark. Perhaps he needs to go to St. Paul and Kansas City to grasp how and why so many Catholics have lost that trust.

Source URL (retrieved on *04/17/2014 - 06:20*): http://ncronline.org/blogs/distinctly-catholic/nuncio-divided-against-himself