

APPOINTMENT

Relativism triumphs with Fernandez leading Doctrine Dicastery

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The appointment of the Archbishop of La Plata, Msgr Víctor Manuel Fernández, as Prefect of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith is disheartening, but not surprising.

The very privileged relationship between "Tucho" and Bergoglio has long been known

: his appointment as Rector of Argentina's Pontifical Catholic University in 2009 was the work of the then Cardinal Archbishop of Buenos Aires who, it seems, had to travel to Rome to unblock his nomination, as the Congregation for Catholic Education had objected on the grounds of the candidate's questionable orthodoxy. Then, as soon as he ascended the throne of Peter, Pope Francis appointed him archbishop and, in 2018, placed him at the head of the diocese of La Plata.

Curious that in the appointment communiqué there is no precise date of the beginning of the appointment, but the simple statement that "He will take office in mid-September 2023". Give or take a day, as if this had been decided in a hurry. An "as if" that becomes "very probably" if we read some passages of Fernández's own **letter**, published on his Facebook page in response to the appointment, in which he reveals that Pope Francis had already asked him a first time to accept the appointment; "however, when he was in hospital, he asked me the same thing again. You can imagine that it was impossible to say no".

So, less than a month ago, the pope decided on one of the most important appointments from his hospital bed, during his convalescence, with a phone call. In typical Bergoglio style: pulling out one of the numbers in his diary, informing (perhaps) only his closest friends - who knows if the friend from Pescara was still among them, the one he had called during his previous hospitalisation at the Gemelli Hospital - and then giving orders to clear Cardinal Ladaria's desk, since "Tucho" was about to arrive. Perfect timing to avoid the hassle of bumping into some furious cardinals, as when the **rumour** spread about the possible appointment of Msgr Heiner Wilmer, Bishop of Hildesheim, as Ladaria's successor.

Bergoglio's revenge therefore came from the hospital, the ideal place for those who want the Church to be a field hospital; a project that will be fully achieved with this appointment, with deaths and injuries on all sides. Because after all, we already know Fernández: he is none other than Francis. And Francis is Fernández, until death do them part; or they are parted by one of those uncertain times during which the pontiff had already several times thrown out of the window those "friends" he had let in through the door.

But today it is almost a symbiosis: and not only because they are both Argentiniens. In fact, it is well known that behind the drafting of the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* was the hand of Fernández, who even left his signature in the citation to § 263 (footnote 207), as if he were a Father of the Church. And what was so ingenious in the speech for the opening of the *I Congreso Nacional de Doctrina Social de la Iglesia*

, in 2011, to quote it in a pontifical document? Nothing. A simple exhortation not to consider our times more difficult than others. But it was a "Tucho" quote.

It is well known that even *Amoris Laetitia* (AL) was largely the result of the work of the former rector, with centones from his writings reported in the text of the post-synodal Exhortation, as [Sandro Magister](#) pointed out in 2016. The Argentine archbishop was also one of the main authors of the confidential letter that the bishops of the pastoral region of Buenos Aires sent to Pope Francis on 5 September 2016, with directives for the interpretation and application of AL; this letter argued that, in some concrete cases, AL opens the door to the possibility of validly receiving absolution and Communion for those faithful who continue to live *more uxorio*. To this letter, the pope replied the same day, confirming that interpretation. Four cardinals put forward questions on the controversial exhortation, but none of them were dignified with an answer. "Tucho" instead received the answer in record time.

One of our sources, who is familiar with Argentine Catholicism and Fernández's writings, has more than a suspicion that even the pope's letter of appointment itself is his own work: "it is his style of writing: short, precise, with practical orders, trying to make a good impression on everyone, useless and repetitive notes. In that letter one finds his objectives.... "In the name of a God to whom no limits can be placed" – an expression he loves to repeat – "he damages the revealed Catholic faith".

The polemical reference, whose *raison d'être* is merely ignorance of history and faith, to the "immoral methods" that the Holy Office and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith allegedly used "in other times (...), times in which, rather than promoting theological knowledge, any doctrinal errors were persecuted"; it is also a theme not alien to Fernández's utterances. Suffice it to recall the [homily](#) of 5 March last (we had spoken about it [here](#)), in which the archbishop of La Plata pointed his finger at the Church, which, "for many centuries (...) without realising it, has woven together a whole philosophy and morality full of classifications, to classify people, to assign labels: this one is this way and this other one is that way, this one can receive Communion and this other one cannot, this one can be forgiven and this other one cannot". It is a curious coincidence that the letter of appointment makes explicit reference precisely to not being '*enemies who point the finger and condemn*'.

This homily reveals another important overlap between the two Argentinians: the condemnation of those who dare, according to Canon Law, refuse Communion to certain categories of the faithful, and the fixation on pursuing the heterodox idea that the priest must always absolve, without requiring the three essential conditions for the

validity of the sacrament - contrition, confession, and satisfaction. And heretical was also Fernández's delusional thesis that the Pope can reside in the Maldives and place the Dicasteries around the world ([here](#) cardinal Müller's harsh condemnation).

It is clear that the person of Fernández and the specific mission entrusted to him by the letter of appointment are tailor-made for the plenary assembly of the Synod that will begin in the autumn: anyone who dares to object to the "openings" that are being proposed will immediately be accused of being one of those who used "immoral methods" and will be able to taste the dialoguing and mild methods of the Argentine duo. A strategic appointment, but also a signal that the pope evidently feels that the sand in the hourglass of his own strength is leaving the upper bulb.

But Fernández is also the right person to clear, smoothly at last, the line that Msgr Paglia has adopted for the Pontifical Academy for Life and the John Paul II Institute. He is a fanatic of discernment *supra todos*, of case by case, of the non-existence of intrinsically disordered acts. In short, he is the clone not only of Francis, but also of Paglia. Yet "Tucho" could also bring something exquisitely original: a compulsory course at the JPII Institute on the *arte de besar* [the art of kissing], or even a proposal for a change to Cardinal Roche on the liturgical sign of peace, which could be changed to a lovely Russian-style kiss. This would expand the best-known [book](#) by "Tucho", which unfortunately the Vatican Press Office has forgotten to mention among the numerous publications of this new genius of theology.