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Being "Uncomfortable" in the Lord

Michael Sean Winters | Apr. 29, 2013 Distinctly Catholic

This short item at the Tablet [1]discusses a recent talk by Cardinal Marc Ouellet, Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops, to the hierarchy of England and Wales. He urged bishops not to avoid topics that make them uncomfortable, as Pope Francis "also makes us feel uncomfortable." Of course, all reports indicate that the members of the curia are indeed feeling a but uncomfortable these days as they wait to see what reforms Papa Francesco will enact. But, me thinks that Cardinal Ouellet is on to something deeper here, and it is the thing I have been trying to call attention to in my posts about Pope Francis: I wonder if we Catholics in the pews really are willing to let ourselves be made uncomfortable in our assumptions, our ideological positions, even our lifestyles. The Gospel should be unsettling to people who are wealthy, whether they are intellectually wealthy or materially wealthy or spiritually wealthy. But, I wonder in this age of culture wars, if we are not first committed to self-justification.

This short item also put me in mind of a comment by Peter Gay in the introduction to his book "The Enlightenment: The Rise of Modern Paganism." He quotes Walpole who observed, "the philosophes, except Buffon, are solemn, arrogant, dictatorial coxcombs - I need not say superlatively disagreeable." Gay comments on the Walpole quote: "No doubt Walpole, the fastidious spectator of life, saw the philosophes clearly, but what he did not see is that this intensity and self-assurance (which often makes men disagreeable) are occupational hazards which reformers find hard to avoid." Food for thought.

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[1] http://www.thetablet.co.uk/latest-news/5237