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Vatican's rising African star determined to take risks

by John L. Allen Jr.

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Cardinal Peter Turkson of Ghana was named the new President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace in late October, just as his debut on the global Catholic stage as the *relator*, or general secretary, of the Synod for Africa ended. It was in some ways a baptism by fire for the 61-year-old Ghanaian prelate, introducing him among other things to the press climate in Rome. A few fairly innocent comments from Turkson about condoms, and about the prospect of a black pope, briefly became a cause célèbre in the Italian papers and prompted the Vatican to issue a swift "clarification."

As Turkson now puts it, he was forced to realize that in conversation he may say things with a smile, but in print "the smile never comes across."

Still, Turkson said he doesn't want "circumspection" to get in the way of saying what he thinks. He'd rather speak the truth, he said, and run the risk of being misunderstood.

Read Allen's interview with Turkson here: [Vatican's justice-peace head says what he thinks](#)

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