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Card. Schonborn Calls For Debate on Celibacy

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Distinctly Catholic

The Cardinal-Archbishop of Vienna, Christoph Schonborn, has again caused a bit of a stir by calling for the Church to engage in a debate on celibacy.

Schonborn got spanked last year after he criticized Cardinal Sodano for the latter's mishandling of the sex abuse crisis when he served as Secretary of State under Pope John Paul II. Schonborn was right to raise questions then and he is right to ask questions now.

Will it make a difference? The Church moves slowly, and fifty years ago, the idea that a cardinal would raise such thorny issues and criticize a former high Vatican official would have been unthinkable. Still, no one should expect any change in the rules on celibacy anytime soon. Last year, after Schonborn criticized Sodano, a high-ranking Vatican official told me the question in the curia was whether or not Schonborn had gone off his meds? That dismissive attitude to the cardinal's questions does not suggest that the curia is prepared to face reality any time soon.

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