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Is Joe Biden a “Good Catholic?”

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One of the most bizarre and troubling episodes in the history of the Catholic Church occurred Friday, October 29, 2021—and considering that the Church has endured heresies on the Person of Christ, the era of the anti-popes, and the Protestant Reformation, that’s saying something.

I am referring to the pastoral consequences of President Biden’s visit with Pope Francis. After their seventy-five-minute meeting, oddly closed to the press, Biden paused for a photo-op with Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi. Asked by a reporter: “Did the issue of abortion come up at all?” Biden responded: “No, it

didn't. It came up—we just talked about the fact that he was happy I was a good Catholic, and keep receiving Communion.”

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If indeed Pope Francis actually said those very words to Biden, we have to face the disastrous result—that *to be* Catholic ultimately has no meaning. We need to confront the situation objectively. Biden's support for legalized abortion, contrary to the faith he professes, is not a mere “disagreement” over a Church doctrine, as was characterized by Cardinal Wilton Gregory. Moreover, Biden's abortion advocacy isn't simply a failure to support laws in defense of the unborn, as according to Bishop Robert McElroy of San Diego.

Both Gregory and McElroy oppose denying Biden reception of Holy Communion. Biden is responsible for gravely evil actions. He not only supports and advocates legalized abortion; he is an actual *facilitator* of laws and policies that cause the murder of the unborn to take place—and this at the rate of over two-thousand per day. We may also add Biden's promotion of “same-sex marriage” and transgenderism—all contrary to Catholic moral teaching.

If what I have said above is an accurate description of Biden's complicity in mass murder, and despite that complicity he may be considered a “good Catholic and keep receiving Communion,” then my above conclusion is not hyperbole. To be Catholic doesn't mean anything. After baptism, only purely subjective criteria need be applied: that one *claims* to be Catholic, one *feels* that they are Catholic, one *holds* Catholic sentiments and perhaps *participates* in certain Catholic rites and practices. Perhaps it may be fairer to say that Biden is a Catholic, but his facilitation of the murder of the innocent makes him a “bad Catholic.”

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Supposedly, however, the Pope called him a “good Catholic.” And thus, this is the pastoral fallout by which the People of God—and perhaps we can even say, the entire world—is confronted. Someone who commits gravely evil acts and defends the commission of those acts may be called “a good Catholic.”

Thus, we are expected to accept a kind of madness, expected to accept a grotesque absurdity. Pastorally speaking, there is no difference between those Catholics who cause the murder of the unborn and those Catholics who work hard to prevent their murder—as we can assume that both may stand side-by-side in the Communion line with equal access to the Body and Blood of Christ. Notice, however, that I said “if” the Pope actually told Biden he is a “good Catholic.” There are many who believe Francis never said any such thing, that Biden is simply a liar. Notable among the doubters is Bill Donahue, head of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights.

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In an [article](#) posted on the League website, Donahue pointed out the odd, nearly last-minute decision of the Vatican to deny media coverage of Biden’s papal visit—a decision that irked major media. Biden’s press secretary, Jen Psaki, chided the Vatican, saying: “We believe in the value of a free press.” Many interpreted the Vatican’s abrupt decision as a sign that indeed Francis intended to say some hard words to Biden regarding his promotion of legal abortion.

Donohue [states](#):

If it is reasonable to conclude that the Vatican did not want the appearance of being played by the White House—sending the message that this pro-abortion Catholic president is a model Catholic—then it appears contradictory to laud his Catholic credentials. More important, why would the pope inject himself into the controversy between U.S. bishops and the president, knowing that by doing so he would undercut the USCCB (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)?

Donohue provides a detailed list of the many ways Biden has lied throughout his political career, including scandalously plagiarizing a speech, lying about his academic credentials, and lying about his involvement in the civil rights movement. Even the Biden-friendly *Washington Post* listed seventy-eight false or misleading statements in the first one hundred days of the Biden presidency.

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The conclusion to all this: when something is in Biden's best interests, he is not above dishonesty. And certainly it is in his best interests when, from day one of his presidency, Biden has been dogged by the issue of Eucharistic incoherency, with many of the laity, a good number of priests, and even some bishops actually advocating that Catholic politicians like him be denied Communion.

Perhaps we may conclude that the Pope never told Biden that he “was a good Catholic, and keep receiving Communion” from the mere fact that the statement itself is weird. Biden's words bear close examination. Biden most likely would not have made the remark had not a reporter asked him if the issue of abortion came up during his visit with Francis. At first, Biden said, “No, it didn't.” Then he immediately did an about-face and said, “It came up.” This was followed with Biden stating the pope “was happy I was a good Catholic and keep receiving Communion.”

It is curious that Biden initially said he and the Pope did not talk about abortion, but suddenly the “No” became a “Yes.” Biden's first response to the reporter most likely reflects the truth. He and the Pope did not discuss abortion. But the reporter's question had to do with the issue of abortion, and Biden is fully aware that his Catholic credibility is called into question specifically in regard to the issue of abortion. Thus, Biden, by turning that “No” into a “Yes,” cleverly managed to seize the moment to create a papal vindication where he is most spiritually vulnerable—that despite his record on abortion, he is a “good Catholic” and should receive Communion.

Biden saw the opportunity to put words into the mouth of Pope Francis; and thus, Biden effectively fended off his critics—and smashed the threat that he will ever be denied Holy Communion through any form of ecclesial discipline. With the pontiff's own stamp of approval, the pro-abortion Catholic president is home free. The pastoral implications are enormous.

If Francis did tell Biden he was “a good Catholic and keep receiving Communion,” this would be the epitome of Eucharistic incoherency. And this may be another

reason why it is unlikely that Francis made the statement. Francis has repeatedly condemned abortion as “homicide”—the hiring of a “hit-man to solve a problem”—and decried the “throw-away” culture abortion represents.

As recently as September 15th, Francis, during an in-flight press conference on his return to Rome from Slovakia, stated that if the Church were to accept abortion “it would be like accepting daily murder.” When Biden visited Francis, Francis indeed met with someone who, while claiming to be Catholic, not only “accepts daily murder” but actually causes these murders to occur.

We would have to conclude that, should Francis have told such a person he is “a good Catholic” and sees no problem for a facilitator of homicide to receive the Body of Christ, we have a Pope disconnected from reality. Even this writer, well aware of the misstatements, ambiguous remarks, and sometimes bad theology of Pope Francis, finds it hard to believe that the Holy Father is that disconnected.

However, when one considers the foundational dynamic of the Francis papacy, it is not completely outside the realm of possibility that Francis did assure Biden he is “a good Catholic.” The Pope’s thinking rests on a separation between official Church teaching, in this case that abortion is murder, and the pastoral application of ecclesial doctrines. The Church has her abstract doctrinal principles, her laws and rules which cannot be denied—but there is the law of mercy, according to Francis, that takes precedence over the abstract doctrinal principles.

Those who insist that the teachings of the Church be followed have been accused by Francis of Pharisaism—the strict application of the Law without regard to mercy and a person’s personal circumstances. In a September 18th speech he delivered on the upcoming two-year universal Church synod he stated, “Rigidity [in the church] is a sin against the patience of God.”

During the same in-flight press conference from Slovakia, the Pope, while calling abortion “homicide,” admonished bishops not to act “in an unpastoral manner” when it comes to dealing with Catholics like Biden. He said, “when the Church

defends a principle in an unpastoral manner it acts on a political level.... Be a pastor and don't go around condemning...please let's not make more excommunications." Now, true, it's one thing not to excommunicate a facilitator of abortion such as Biden—and quite another thing to affirm to his face that he is a “good Catholic and keep receiving Communion.”

However, the impulse for Francis is to be as inclusive as possible with a Eucharistic pastoral philosophy proclaimed in *Evangelii Gaudium* that Holy Communion “is not a prize for the perfect, but a generous medicine and food for the weak”—often quoted by those who would not deny Communion to Biden. Such was the defense offered by Fr. Steven Petroff of St. Patrick's in Rome after Biden received Communion there the day after he met with Francis.

Thus far, neither the Vatican Press Office much less Pope Francis himself have offered a denial, explanation, or retraction of Biden's statement; and no such clarification is likely to be forthcoming. Indeed, while many interpreted the Vatican's closing the press off from Biden's meeting with the Pope as “stiffing” the President—the lack of coverage may actually be in Biden's favor.

Biden knows how unlikely it is the Pope will correct him, and with scant media access to their meeting, the pro-abortion Catholic is free to say what he wishes with small to no risk of being contradicted. Even if the Pope never told Biden he is “a good Catholic,” without a Vatican statement to the contrary, it's virtually as good as if Francis actually did.

The secular media has made much of the bishops' vote to issue a document on Eucharistic coherency—a document many inside and outside the Church believed would address the problem of pro-abortion Catholic politicians' reception of Communion. A [draft](#) of that document was supposedly “leaked” to the media, first published November 2nd in *The Pillar*. The draft doesn't live up to the media hype. It does live up to the USCCB clarification posted on its website last June 21st.

It stated that the bishops did not vote on or debate banning politicians from receiving Communion. Moreover, “there will be no national policy on withholding Communion from politicians. The intent is to present a clear understanding of the Church’s teachings to bring heightened awareness among the faithful of how the Eucharist can transform our lives and bring us closer to our creator and the life he wants for us.” Thus, the draft contains no direct admonishments to Catholic politicians who support abortion to refrain from Holy Communion.

Nonetheless, the draft clearly spells out what is required for worthy reception of Communion, noting: “There are some sins, however, that do rupture the Communion we share with God and the Church.” Worthy reception of Holy Communion requires that one have care for the vulnerable, including the unborn. The draft teaches: “To receive the Body and Blood of Christ while in a state of mortal sin represents a contradiction. The person who by his or her own action, has broken communion with Christ and His Church but receives the Blessed Sacrament, acts incoherently, both claiming and rejecting communion at the same time.”

Indeed, the draft provides a general admonishment when it quotes the bishops’ own [2006 document](#) on worthy reception of the Eucharist: “If a Catholic in his or her own personal or professional life were knowingly and obstinately to reject the defined doctrines of the Church, or knowingly and obstinately repudiate her definitive teachings on moral issues...reception of Holy Communion in such a situation would not accord with the nature of the Eucharistic celebration, so that he or she should refrain.” And the draft actually explicitly refers to much-ignored Canon 915: “those who persist in manifest grave sin are not to be admitted to Holy Communion.”

None of this, however, is new. The bishops have always had the authority to discipline politicians like Biden and, with very few exceptions, they have not. Yes, the difference now is that with the election of a Catholic president committed to

protecting and expanding legalized abortion, the bishops are forced to no longer ignore the scandal. Should the bishops adopt this draft document at their upcoming Fall Assembly, the general admonishments certainly could be applied to Biden; but such application is most unlikely.

Biden has covered himself with the mantle of Francis' approval. Thus, no matter what principles the USCCB articulates, it will be nearly pastorally impossible for the bishops—as a body, or any individual bishop—to admonish the President and deny him Holy Communion. If there ever was any hope that the bishops would require Eucharistic coherency in the reception of the Lord's Body and Blood, that hope is now nearly extinguished.

It is unlikely the bishops have the will to overcome the enormous pastoral barricade erected around Biden. Should the bishops, or an individual bishop or priest, admonish the President or go so far as to withhold Communion from him, they will certainly be accused of daring to oppose the Successor of Peter himself. You can just imagine the headlines! But frankly, this is exactly what needs to be done, and there are elements in the bishops' document by which it can be done.

Ten days prior to October 29th, this pro-life leader mailed a letter to Francis. I begged him to admonish Biden to cease his advocacy of legal abortion and defend life. I asked the Holy Father to tell Biden he cannot claim to be a “devout Catholic” and cause the death of the innocent. I asked the Pope to tell him that should he continue to deny the unborn their God-given right to life, he should at least not present himself for Holy Communion—that such admonishment is an act of mercy, as the Pope would show care for his soul.

A few other pro-lifers wrote similar letters. Even a few bishops sent word to Francis. Among them was Bishop Thomas Tobin of the Diocese of Providence. Two days before the meeting, he tweeted: “Dear Pope Francis, You have boldly stated that abortion is ‘murder.’ Please challenge President Biden on this critical issue. His persistent support of abortion is an embarrassment for the Church and

a scandal to the world. Thank you. Very respectfully, Your brother +Thomas.” When Biden’s meeting with Francis concluded, Bishop Tobin tweeted this lament: “I fear that the Church has lost its prophetic voice. Where are the John the Baptists who will confront the Herods of our day?”

Needless to say, Biden’s meeting with Francis yielded the very opposite of what we had asked. The pastoral effects are a disaster. Those who love the Church and those struggling daily to fight the injustice of abortion are sorely disedified and demoralized that a promoter of murder has been permitted by the Church to claim her highest Authority’s approval for his reception of the Body and Blood of Christ.

Let’s get one thing clear. If Francis did tell Biden, “You are a good Catholic and keep receiving Communion,” the Pope’s saying so doesn’t make it so! Objective reality is at stake here. One simply cannot desecrate the bodies of the unborn and receive the Body of Christ. The incongruity is staggering. The Pope needs to say so; the bishops need to say so; all people of good will need to say so! If we do not, we will have allowed the Bidens to define what it means to be Catholic, and thus what it means to be Catholic will have no meaning.

[Photo Credit: Vatican Media]



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