

President Biden and Public Scandal

Fr. Gerald E. Murray MONDAY, MAY 17, 2021

Should President Joseph Biden be admitted to Holy Communion when he attends Mass? The simple answer is, “No,” owing to his public and unwavering support for legalized abortion. Canon 915 of the *Code of Canon Law* states: “Those. . .obstinately persevering in manifest grave sin are not to be admitted to holy communion.” Abortion, the killing of innocent unborn children, is a grave sin, as is the legalization and promotion of this heinous practice. It’s a criminal violation of an unborn person’s right to life.

In the 2002 *Doctrinal Note on some questions regarding the Participation of Catholics in Political Life*, Cardinal Ratzinger, then Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), stated: “John Paul II, continuing the constant teaching of the Church, has reiterated many times that those who are directly involved in lawmaking bodies have a ‘grave and clear obligation to oppose’ any law that attacks human life. For them, as for every Catholic, **it is impossible to promote such laws or to vote for them.**” (*Emphasis added*)

In the 2004 *Worthiness to Receive Holy Communion: General Principles* Ratzinger specifically instructed the U.S. bishops that a Catholic politician engages in formal cooperation with the sin of abortion when he consistently campaigns and votes for permissive abortion laws. President Biden obviously promotes the abortion license and has directed that taxpayers’ dollars pay for abortions. He’s an unapologetic and determined promoter of this immoral attack on human life. This is an indisputable fact. Just ask his supporters at Planned Parenthood and NARAL.

Ratzinger told the U.S. bishops that, dealing with such a politician, “his Pastor should meet with him, instructing him about the Church’s teaching, informing him that he is not to present himself for

Holy Communion until he brings to an end the objective situation of sin, and warning him that he will otherwise be denied the Eucharist.” He also cited a 2002 *Declaration* from the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts: “When ‘these precautionary measures have not had their effect or in which they were not possible,’ and the person in question, with obstinate persistence, still presents himself to receive the Holy Eucharist, ‘the minister of Holy Communion **must refuse to distribute it.**” (*Emphasis added*)

The *Declaration* explains: “The decision, properly speaking, is not a sanction or a penalty. Nor is the minister of Holy Communion passing judgment on the person’s subjective guilt, but rather is reacting to the person’s public unworthiness to receive Holy Communion due to an objective situation of sin.”



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An objective situation of sin is scandalous in this case because such a Catholic politician who consistently promotes abortion *by that very conduct* actively encourages others to fall into the same sin. In Biden’s case, his well-known campaign promises to keep abortion legal and federally funded is clear evidence of his rejection of Catholic

moral teaching. He plainly intended to convince other Catholics to join him in gravely sinful behavior. Such conduct renders him publicly unworthy to receive Holy Communion.

The facts, and the applicability of canon 915 to those facts, are indisputable.

For this reason, the recent [Letter](#) of the CDF Prefect, Cardinal Ladaria, to the American bishops is disappointing, even confounding. Remarkably, he never mentions canon 915. He calls for dialogue among the bishops “so that they could agree as a Conference that support of pro-choice legislation is not compatible with Catholic teaching.” But the matter is already beyond question. Any bishop who does not agree “that support of pro-choice legislation is not compatible with Catholic teaching” should change his mind or his job.

Ladaria then calls for dialogue with Catholic politicians “who adopt a pro-choice position. . .as a means of understanding their positions and their comprehension of Catholic teaching.” Really? After almost 50 years of legalized abortion, the “pro-choice” position needs no further study. Let alone “dialogue.” It is hard to imagine that President Biden and other Catholic advocates of legalized abortion are unaware of what the Church teaches about the sanctity of human life. They just don’t follow it.

Ladaria calls for further dialogue among the bishops, with other episcopal conferences, and further consultation with his office. How long would this process take? It’s a needless delay in tackling a major scandal.

The Church has a duty to teach God’s law and to sanction members who egregiously and continuously exempt themselves from obedience to that law – and encourage others to do the same. Depriving them of Holy Communion, we may hope, will jar them into reforming their conduct and their opposition to God’s binding law for all mankind.

Public defiance of God’s prohibition of unjust killing is an attack upon the faith and unity of the Church. The Church has a responsibility before God to lead the flock away from diabolical disobedience and into grace-filled obedience.

A Catholic who falls into immoral behavior, knowing that the Church has condemned it, should be presumed by his pastor to be imperiling his soul and the souls of those he is influencing. He needs

to be told that his objectively sinful behavior constitutes a culpable offense for which he needs to seek pardon after repenting.

The American bishops should act as a group, and individually in their dioceses, to end the scandal of the continued administration of Our Lord's Most Holy Body and Blood to the highest public official in our land. To fail to do so amounts to a refusal to uphold the Church's canon law, to the grave harms of souls. It would be a negligent passivity, a failure to defend the sanctity of the Christ's greatest gift to his Church.

And it would communicate to all the message that God may be mocked without consequence when an important Catholic public figure decides to support, not God's law, but rather the gruesome linchpin of the sexual revolution, unfettered legal abortion.

***Image:** During the 2020 presidential campaign, Joe Biden poses at the Bethel AME Church in Wilmington, Delaware [CNS photo/Jim Bourg, Reuters]

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Dear Friends: Today we have a hard-hitting column by our TCT colleague and my Papal Posse co-conspirator Fr. Gerald Murray on something that's going to occupy all of us for at least the next four years: the scandal of an ardent pro-abortion and pro-LGBT president – nominally a Catholic – who seems hell-bent (I used the term advisedly) on using the power of the federal government not only to advance that radical social agenda but to force institutions like Catholic hospitals, schools, universities, adoption agencies, and many more to accept it. We also bring you a new podcast (click under TCT video) in which I discuss with Brad Miner the new edition of his book "The Compleat Gentleman." I've known Brad many years but reading those pages gave me even greater appreciation for his wisdom, wit, and good sense. Do yourself a favor: buy it and read it for pleasure but also inspiration. Many of you are also enrolled in

our current online course on Dante's Purgatorio. We've got other course offerings like that one lined up for later in this year – the sheer size of the response to the first offerings told us that many of our readers are eager to connect more deeply with our Catholic tradition. We're determined to help with that. But this brings me to my reason for writing: we cannot do any of these things without you. In a few weeks, we'll celebrate thirteen years of publishing The Catholic Thing. That means we've survived the housing bubble bursting, various other ups and downs, COVID and the lockdowns, and much more. And the reason for our longevity is that we have such loyal and generous readers – such as yourself. We only come to you twice a year, once around now and then again towards the end of the year. We can do that because my confidence in our readership has never proved false in all that time. So let me just say simply: you know why you come here every day, and you know the many battles in which we are engaged. My sense is we'll have to be able to do even more for the rest of 2021 – and that includes returning to our analysis of things going on in Rome as those start up again. No one in the usual institutions is going to carry out his work; that puts the responsibility directly on all of us. So please – just click the Donate button below. Follow the simple steps. Do your part in keeping this Catholic Thing of ours alive and kicking in 2021 and for many years to come. – Robert Royal

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