

# BIDEN AND THE BISHOPS AT EASTER

During the presidential campaign season last year, it was obvious that candidate Joe Biden was not having an easy time with some U.S. bishops. After he won the election, that observation was validated. Now that we are in the Easter season, it is undeniably true that the president's relationship with many bishops is rocky, if not seriously strained.

Last summer, Providence Bishop Thomas J. Tobin issued a tweet that was both sarcastic and pointed. "Biden-Harris. First time in awhile that the Democratic ticket hasn't had a Catholic on it. Sad." The dismissal of Biden's professed Catholic status was lost on no one.

A month before the election, Cardinal Raymond Burke said that Biden should not receive Communion, adding that he was not a Catholic "in good standing."

A few weeks after the election, Archbishop José Gomez, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, opined that President-elect Biden supported policies that "attack some fundamental values we hold dear." Noting that it could be confusing to Catholics to see a Catholic in the White House who rejected the Church's teachings on abortion and other matters, Gomez appointed a Working Group, chaired by Detroit Archbishop Allen Vigneron, to help the bishops "navigate" this "difficult and complex situation."

In December, the recently retired archbishop of Philadelphia, Charles Chaput, said that Biden's support for gay marriage and abortion rights meant that he "should stop defining himself as a devout Catholic." On the day he was inaugurated, Biden's press secretary, Jen Psaki, called the president a "devout

Catholic.”

Archbishop Gomez, speaking for the bishops’ conference, also weighed in on inauguration day. “I must point out that the new President has pledged to pursue certain policies that would advance moral evils and threaten human life and dignity, most seriously in the areas of abortion, contraception, marriage, and gender. Of deep concern is the liberty of the Church and the freedom of believers to live according to their consciences.”

A week later, Archbishop Joseph Naumann, chairman of the bishops’ Pro-Life Committee, teamed up with Bishop David Malloy, the head of the bishops’ International Justice and Peace Committee, to take Biden to task for promoting abortion overseas. “It is grievous that one of President Biden’s first official acts actively promotes the destruction of human lives in developing nations.” They said his executive order “is antithetical to reason, violates human dignity, and is incompatible with Catholic teaching.”

In February, Naumann, the archbishop of Kansas City, Kansas, said that Biden “should stop defining himself as a devout Catholic,” noting that he is “100% pro-choice on abortion.” He accused Biden of “usurping the role of the bishops and confusing people.” What should be done? “The bishops need to correct him, as the president is acting contrary to the Catholic faith.”

Within days of Naumann’s remarks, Bishop Joseph Strickland of Tyler, Texas declared that “Biden is not a real Catholic.” In March, Bishop Richard Stika, who heads the Diocese of Knoxville, tweeted that Biden “likes to brag on his Catholic background when convenient. So very dishonest!”

At the end of March, Bishop Thomas J. Paprocki, who leads the Diocese of Springfield, Illinois, said that Biden “should not present himself” for Communion. He cited Biden’s long history

of supporting abortion rights, saying that if politicians are “living in a way or holding positions that are contrary to church teaching, then the Minister of Communion has to deny them the sacrament.”

Paprocki's comments were followed by Cardinal Burke's. Speaking of Biden, he said that “a person who claims to be Catholic and yet promotes in such an open, obdurate, and aggressive way a crime like procured abortion is in the state, at least, of apostasy.” He concluded that the penalty for the “crime of apostasy” is “excommunication.”

The bishops, as well as millions of practicing Catholics, are not going to have their concerns about Biden allayed by photos of him clinging to his rosary beads. He cannot at once declare himself to be a “devout Catholic” while at the same time supporting abortion-on-demand, gay marriage, sex transitioning for minors, and the war on religious liberty.

It's time for President Biden to stop living a lie.