

DURBIN SPINS COMMUNION DENIAL DECISION

Illinois Sen. Dick Durbin, who identifies as a Catholic, has yet to find an abortion he couldn't justify. That is why his bishop, Thomas J. Paprocki of Springfield, recently said he will be denied Holy Communion in his diocese. Durbin was incensed.

He complained that "Other Catholics may share my point of view [on abortion]—statistics suggest they probably do—but they show up to Communion every week without any questions asked." He added that "with very few exceptions, Communion is offered to anybody if the person believes that they [sic] are worthy of it."

Durbin is right about the latter comment. Very few Catholics are denied Communion, but what he failed to say is that he is one of them. In 2004 he was denied Communion by Monsignor (now a bishop) Kevin Vann of Blessed Sacrament Church in Springfield.

So yes, Durbin is unique. Where he is wrong is in his assertion that he is just like those Catholics who voted for him and go to Communion without this being an issue.

Here is what the U.S. bishops have said about this matter. "A Catholic cannot vote for a candidate who favors a policy promoting an intrinsically evil act, such as abortion...if the voter's intent is to support that position."

In other words, Catholics who vote for a pro-abortion politician because they like his pro-union record, or his position on other issues, are not "guilty of formal cooperation in grave evil."

Durbin is wrong to conflate his status as a senator—someone

who votes on pro-abortion bills—with those Catholics who vote for him for reasons other than his support for abortion rights. In fact, the Catholic Church is very specific about the difference.

On November 24, 2002, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued a “Doctrinal Note on Some Questions Regarding The Participation of Catholics in Political Life.” Part II, Sec. 4, reads, “John Paul II...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 (*italics in the original*).”

Congress is a lawmaking body and Durbin is a member of it. He is not analogous to a blue-collar guy who votes for him despite his lust for abortion. Therefore, he merits disparate treatment.