

# HYPING LAY CATHOLIC DIVISIONS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a story by the Associated Press about the way lay Catholics allegedly responded to Archbishop Gomez's statement on Joe Biden:

Most of the news stories on the alleged widespread division in the ranks of the Catholic laity are bogus. How do I know? Because most writers, and many pollsters, fail to disaggregate on the basis of religiosity. To be exact, those who do not make a distinction between practicing Catholics and non-practicing Catholics are intellectually dishonest. Lumping them together yields a distorted profile of the Catholic community.

Virtually all polls that disaggregate on the metric of religiosity have long found that most non-practicing Catholics reject Church teachings on life, ordination, marriage, the family, and sexuality. To what extent can they be called Catholic? If their views are practically indistinguishable from non-observant Americans, why are they not classified as secularists?

This is not a new phenomenon, but it is already clear that if Joe Biden is elected president next month by the Electoral College, this issue is going to escalate in the media.

A clear case in point is the November 18 AP story by David Crary, "Catholics Divided as Bishops Examine Biden's Abortion Stance." While Crary properly notes that Catholics split the vote on Trump-Biden (50% to 49%, respectively), he makes the point that there is an alleged Catholic divide over comments recently made by Archbishop José Gomez, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

Gomez told his fellow bishops that Biden's record on many policy positions, such as abortion, is problematic: it posed a "difficult and complex situation" for the Church. According to

Crary, Catholics are “sharply divided” over Gomez’s remarks.

Crary cites no evidence, save for a few comments made by so-called progressive Catholics. He provides no survey data. That is because most Catholics—you can take it to the bank—have no idea what Gomez said, and this includes *real* Catholics (i.e., those who are practicing). So why the need to make up a controversy when there isn’t any?

Here’s what’s going on. Catholics who reject Church teachings on the aforementioned issues are all ginned up these days, hoping to press the bishops to fall in line with Biden (or at least not to challenge him.) That’s what this is all about. Just consider the comments made by left-wing Catholics.

David Gibson of Fordham’s Center on Religion and Culture says, “The USCCB leadership simply can’t embrace the idea of engagement and goodwill that Pope Francis has asked of them.” It apparently does not occur to Gibson that it is Biden, not the bishops, who can’t embrace many central teachings of the Catholic Church, and it is that—not episcopal recalcitrance—that is driving this issue. If only Biden would obey.

Natalia Imperatori-Lee, who teaches religious studies at Manhattan College, also blames the bishops. She says, “they’d like to start an antagonistic relationship” with Biden. The truth is that Biden is at war with the Catholic Church: He opposes teachings on abortion, marriage, sexuality (he is a big transgender fan) and religious liberty. That’s the cause of the antagonism. Her attempt to portray Biden as the victim is risible.

Thomas Groome of Boston College blames Gomez for his “dreadfully unfortunate” address. Spoken like a true dissident. Crary also quotes Jamie Manson, another dissident—she is now the head of an anti-Catholic and pro-abortion letterhead (Catholics for Choice)—lashing out at

Gomez for his “condescending remarks.” Practicing Catholics would be more inclined to see his statement as unpretentious, even humble, like the man himself.

Left-wing Catholics cited by the media are not representative of Catholics found in the pews. Indeed, they are more closely aligned with secularists. This is a shell game, designed to shape public opinion with a false narrative. Biden is the problem, not the bishops.

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