

POPE-BIDEN MEETING STILL UNRESOLVED

Catholic League president Bill Donohue reexamines the meeting last week between the pope and the president:

Many Catholics were dismayed, if not furious, with news reports indicating that Pope Francis told President Biden on October 29 that he was “a good Catholic” and “should keep receiving Communion.” The Vatican has neither confirmed nor denied this account. [As I said when the news broke](#), we have good reasons to be skeptical of Biden’s rendition.

After taking another look at this issue, examining the exact words used by Biden—not relying on media interpretations of what he said—my skepticism is growing. The president was asked about this matter at two press conferences: one on October 29, and the other on October 31.

On October 29, Biden was asked, “Mr. President, did the issue of abortion come up at all?” The first words out of his mouth were, “No, it didn’t.” Then he contradicted himself saying, “It came up.” So which account is true?

After Biden said, “It came up,” he then said what the media widely reported. “We just talked about the fact that he was happy I was a good Catholic and I should keep receiving Communion.”

If the first version is right—abortion never came up for discussion—then it seems peculiar, to say the least, for the pope to tell him he should “keep receiving Communion.” What would be the context for such a statement, if not abortion? After all, the entire controversy is about Biden’s pro-abortion record, so it is hard to imagine the pope imploring him to “keep receiving Communion” absent any discussion of abortion. Are we to believe he said this out of the blue?

If abortion did come up, what did the pope say to him about it? Just recently Pope Francis said that “abortion is murder. Those who carry out abortions kill.” Such an unequivocal remark suggests it is unlikely that the pope would discuss abortion without talking about it in such graphic terms. That would surely have made Biden uneasy, yet he did not appear to be that way when he spoke.

At the same press conference, Biden was asked, “Did you discuss the U.S. Conference of Bishops?” He answered, “That’s a private conversation.” This begs the question: Why would a discussion of the bishops’ conference be considered a private matter but not one that affects him personally, namely his suitability to receive Communion?

It is entirely possible that Biden is lying.

After admitting that abortion never came up, he quickly pivoted. Why? Because he saw an opening, an opportunity to report to the press the most important thing he wanted from the pope—a chance to undercut those U.S. bishops who are deeply troubled about his pro-abortion record (they will be meeting in less than two weeks to discuss this subject). Having been denied the photo-op the White House desperately wanted, he had to come away with something that served his interest. The Communion issue had to be in the forefront of his mind.

At the October 31st press conference, Biden was asked, “For these Catholics back home, what did it mean for you to hear Pope Francis, in the wake of this—in the middle of this debate, call you a good Catholic? And what did he tell you—should that put this debate to rest?”

“Look, I’m—I’m not going to—a lot of this is just personal,” Biden said.

But it wasn’t personal just two day earlier. In fact, he showed no hesitancy in getting the word out that the pope

regarded him as such a good Catholic that he allegedly encouraged him to “keep receiving Communion.” What changed? Could it be that the Vatican contacted the Biden team and asked them to quash this issue, knowing that Biden’s account was not accurate?

Our incurious media are not asking these questions. That’s because they want to protect the pope and the president, both of whom they like.

There are too many unanswered questions to put this matter to rest. The unwillingness of the Vatican to confirm or deny Biden’s account, and Biden’s inconsistent and implausible responses—only adds to the problem. This doesn’t make either side look good.