

# SALUTE TO ST. PATRICK

Bill Donohue

*[Note: We run this article each year on March 17]*

The heroics of St. Patrick are not appreciated as much as they should be. He is the first person in history to publicly condemn slavery, and one of the first leaders to champion the cause of equal rights.

There is much to celebrate on March 17. Fortunately, his writings, though slim, are eye-opening accounts of his life: *Letter to the Soldiers of Coroticus* and *Confession* reveal much about the man. Along with other sources, they paint a picture of his saintliness.

Patrick was born in Britain in the 4th century to wealthy parents. It is likely that he was baptized, though growing up he did not share his family's faith. He was an atheist.

When he was 15, he committed what he said was a grave sin, never saying exactly what it was; it appears it was a sexual encounter with a young girl. No matter, it would haunt him throughout his life.

At age 15 or 16 (the accounts vary), Patrick was kidnapped and enslaved by Irish barbarians. They had come to plunder his family's estate, and took him away in chains to Ireland. While a slave, he converted to Christianity, praying incessantly at all hours of the day. After six years, he escaped, and made his way back home.

His family thought he was dead, and with good reason: no one taken by Irish raiders had managed to escape and return. St. Patrick biographer Philip Freeman describes how his family received him, stating "it was as if a ghost had returned from the dead."

After he returned home, he had a vision while sleeping. He felt called to return to Ireland. This seemed bizarre: this is where he was brutalized as a slave. But he knew what Jesus had commanded us to do, "Love thy enemy." He was convinced that God was calling him to become a missionary to Ireland. So he acted on it, despite the reservations of family and friends.

Patrick became a priest, practiced celibacy, and was eventually named a bishop. Contrary to what many believe, he did not introduce Christianity to Ireland, nor was he Ireland's first bishop. But he did more to bring the Gospel to Ireland than anyone, converting legions of pagans, especially in the northern parts of the island.

His missionary work in Ireland has been duly noted, but his strong defense of human rights has not been given its due.

No public person before him had denounced slavery, widespread though it was. Jesus was silent on the subject, Aristotle thought it was a natural way of life, and neither master nor slave saw anything fundamentally wrong with it. Patrick did.

Though he did not invoke natural law specifically, he was instinctively drawn to it. He taught that all men were created equal in the eyes of God, and that the inherent dignity of everyone must be respected.

Patrick did more than preach—he lashed out at the British dictator, Coroticus, harshly rebuking him for his mistreatment of the Irish. In fact, Patrick found his Irish converts to be more civilized than Coroticus and his band of thugs.

Patrick was way ahead of his time in the pursuit of human rights. Not only were men of every social status entitled to equal rights, so were women. In his *Letter to the Soldiers of Coroticus*, he scolds "the tyrant Coroticus—a man who has no respect for God or his priests." More important, he made a startling plea: "They must also free Christian women and captives." His reasoning showed the power of his faith when he

said, "Remember, Christ died and was crucified for these people."

He did not mince words. "So, Coroticus, you and your wicked servants, where do you think you will end up? You have treated baptized Christian women like prizes to be handed out, all for the sake of the here and now—this brief, fleeting world."

What makes this all the more dramatic is the way the pagan world thought about women: the idea that women were equal to men was totally foreign to them. But the women understood what Patrick was saying, and gravitated to him in large numbers. The Christian tenet that all humans possess equal dignity had taken root.

Did the Irish save civilization, as Thomas Cahill maintains? Freeman thinks not—"it had never been lost." But everyone agrees that had it not been for St. Patrick, and the monasteries that followed, much of what we know about the ancient world would not exist.

Indeed, it is difficult to fathom how classical Greek and Roman literature would have survived had it not been for the Irish monks who attracted students from many parts of Europe. They are responsible for preserving the great works of antiquity. And all of them are indebted to St. Patrick.

It is believed that he died on March 17, sometime during the second half of the fifth century. That is his feast day, the source of many celebrations in his honor. His impact extends beyond the Irish and the Catholic Church—human rights are a global issue—making him a very special person in world history.

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# VATICAN STANCE ON GAY UNIONS ANGERS CRITICS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on reaction to the Vatican document on gay unions:

The Catholic Church's chief doctrinal office, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, issued a statement on March 15 making it clear that the Church does not approve of gay unions or gay marriage. This was done with the approval of Pope Francis.

This has not set well with those Catholics who have been at war with the Church's teachings on sexuality. The German bishops, in particular, are not happy with the document. They have steadily been moving toward a Protestant church for some time, and this may force them to decide whether they really belong in the Catholic Church.

On March 16, a group of dissident priests in Austria, the Parish Priest Initiative, pledged to bless gay unions—in open defiance of the Vatican—beckoning a showdown with Rome. In the U.S., so-called progressive Catholics are also angry with the Vatican's position, but then again they have been for decades.

It is important to remember that there is nothing fundamentally new about this statement: it reaffirms the Catholic Church's teaching on marriage. Nonetheless, it is being received in some quarters as very controversial, owing in large part to the welcoming approach that Pope Francis has exhibited to homosexuals. In fairness to the pope, it is not his fault that some interpret his friendly stance as signifying an interest in changing Church doctrine. That's their problem.

To put it differently, it is one thing to say all persons possess equal dignity in the eyes of God; it is quite another

to say that whatever they do is acceptable to God. Human status and human behavior are not identical.

Also, this document applies equally to heterosexuals. According to Catholic sexual ethics, cohabiting men and women are involved in an illicit relationship, and this statement is very clear about their status. Yet the media have missed this point, so absorbed are they with gay rights.

Many news stories on this Vatican statement are citing surveys that say a majority of Catholics approve of gay marriage. That may be true, especially of non-practicing Catholics, but it is nonetheless deceiving.

There is a difference between a preference and a demand. How many of those Catholics who are okay with gay marriage are incensed that the Church has not changed its teaching? Practically none.

What if the subject were corporal punishment in the schools? If a majority of Catholics favored it, should the bishops ratify their choice?

This begs the question: Should the Catholic Church align its teachings to mirror survey results, or should it align its teachings to mirror Scripture? In other words, should the Church make it a priority to follow what the public desires, or should it follow God's law?

The Vatican statement reaffirming the Church's opposition to gay unions and gay marriage concludes by noting, "the Church does not have, and cannot have, the power to bless unions of persons of the same sex."

To put it differently, the Church cannot change Scripture, and indeed has no interest in trying to do so. Its allegiance is to the pursuit of truth, not public opinion.

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# VATICAN SLAMS THE DOOR ON GAY UNIONS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a Vatican statement issued March 15 that is sure to be controversial:

There will be no recognition of homosexual unions or marriage by the Catholic Church. It is non-negotiable. End of story.

Pope Francis has been under considerable pressure by gay activists, in and out of the Church, to give the green light to gay marriage. The statement released by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to queries on this issue is the most decisive rejection of those efforts ever written.

The Church's top doctrinal office said, "it is not licit to impart a blessing on relationships, partnerships, even stable, that involve sexual activity outside of marriage (i.e, outside the indissoluble union of a man and a woman open in itself to the transmission of life), as is the case of the unions between persons of the same sex." It further noted that "since blessings on persons are in relationship with the sacraments, the blessing of homosexual unions cannot be considered licit."

The statement made it clear that this "does not preclude the blessings given to individual persons with homosexual inclinations, who manifest the will to live in fidelity to the revealed plans of God as proposed by Church teaching." It is homosexual unions that are the problem, not homosexuals.

Speaking of homosexuality, Vatican officials said it cannot "approve and encourage a choice and a way of life" that is "objectively disordered." God, they declared, "does not and cannot bless sin." In short, "the Church does not have, and

cannot have, the power to bless unions of persons of the same sex.”

The Vatican left nothing on the table. The door has been slammed shut on the gay agenda.

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## **CUOMO HAD A DIFFERENT STANDARD FOR PRIESTS**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s duplicity:

Now that Gov. Cuomo has been accused of being a serial predator, he is insisting that his due process rights be respected. Yet when it came to accused priests, Cuomo sang a different tune.

Cuomo has a different standard for himself. When asked this week about the charges against him, he said, “You can allege something, might be true, might not be true. You may have misperceived, there may be other facts.”

If this is his best defense, the man is in trouble. Nevertheless, what he said was accurate. Not all allegations are true. Misperceptions are not uncommon. There may be other facts that have yet to surface. That’s why the accused, including him, are entitled to due process.

However, when it came to allegations against priests—for offenses alleged to have happened decades earlier—Cuomo showed no respect for their due process rights. He was happy to sign legislation that gave rapacious lawyers out to sunder the Catholic Church all the leeway they wanted.

Just as important, Cuomo knew these lawyers would focus on the Church and not pursue claims against public school teachers. Given the generosity of the teachers' unions at election time, he was not about to demand that their sordid record of child rape be prosecuted.

When Cuomo signed the bill aimed at the Catholic Church in 2019, he called out the Church for fighting the legislation. What he said was as ignorant as it was cruel.

Cuomo accused Catholic Church officials of "threatening" those who were not supportive of their opposition to the bill. He said, "I believe it was the conservatives in the Senate who were threatened by the Catholic Church. And this went on for years."

When teachers' unions oppose a bill it is called lobbying. When bishops oppose a bill it is called a threat. Cuomo's double standard, and his animus against the Catholic Church, could not be more plain.

What he failed to note is that for over a decade, bills targeting the sexual abuse of minors did not apply to the public sector. It took the bishops, and the Catholic League, to demand that the bill be made inclusive of all entities. We didn't threaten anyone.

Our major concern was the due process rights of accused priests. Most of the allegations took place a very long time ago, making it difficult to determine innocence or guilt. We know that memories fade and witnesses die, which is why we have statutes of limitations in the first place. There is nothing "threatening" about opposing bills that gut this fundamental due process provision.

If I had said about accused priests, "You can allege something, might be true, might not be true. You may have misperceived, there may be other facts," would Cuomo have agreed with me? Not a chance.



In fact, on the day he signed the bill that the Church opposed, he blithely assumed that all of the accused priests were guilty. “I want to start by applauding these victims/advocates who went through a horrendous violation in life and an aggravated defilement because it was a person in authority, a person who was supposed to be respected.”

So there we have it. The accusers are to be believed and the accused is guilty. If Cuomo’s standard for priests were applied to himself, then his accusers are telling the truth and he is guilty. And if that is the case, why is he still in office, especially now that he is accused of sexual assault?

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## **BISHOPS AFFIRM ABORTION AS TOP ISSUE**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the bishops’ opposition to the “Covid Relief Bill”:

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has formally opposed the American Rescue Plan Act, more commonly known as the “Stimulus Bill” or the “Covid Relief Bill.”

Thanks to CNSNews, we learned that USCCB president José Gomez wrote a letter on March 6 to all U.S. Senators urging them to vote against the bill; several USCCB committee chairmen co-signed the letter.

This came the day after the USCCB released a letter by Gomez (and the committee chairmen) stating they could not support the bill unless it prohibited funding for abortions. The

sponsors of the bill refused to accede to the bishops' request.

The bishops were unequivocal in their opposition to the bill. "This grievous result gives us heavy hearts because it leaves us with no choice but to urge you to oppose final passage of the American Rescue Plan Act."

The big story here is the decision of the bishops to make good on their promise that abortion is their "preeminent issue." For those Catholics who prioritize social justice issues, this is a stunning loss. After all, this was their dream bill, packed with money for all their favorite programs.

There are many elements of the bill that are very appealing to the bishops, and to Catholics in general. But to ask Catholics to support legislation that helps the needy while denying the unborn the right to life is offensive. The most basic human right is the right to life, not income assistance.

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## **CUOMO COOKED HIS OWN GOOSE**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the trials and tribulations of Gov. Andrew Cuomo:

Gov. Cuomo is finished, and everyone knows it. The investigative reports on the nursing home scandal, along with a probe of accusations of sexual harassment, will detail his deadly decisions and his sexual misconduct. If he were prudent, he would resign. But his unrelenting arrogance will not allow him to do so.

Regarding the latter charges, it is now clear that Cuomo's campaign for a new law on sexual harassment in the workplace

backfired. Indeed, he cooked his own goose.

Cuomo started 2019 bragging how New York will enact legislation on sexual harassment that will be the strongest in the nation. In mid-February, when the first public hearings were held, he said, "I am very proud that New York is the most aggressive state in the country on women's rights. Anything I can do on sexual harassment we will do."

One month later, after championing what he said was the gold standard on sexual harassment legislation, Cuomo was asked by Karen DeWitt, a reporter for NPR, about a recent high-ranking official in his administration who had to resign amid a sexual harassment probe. That set Cuomo off.

According to one news story, "Cuomo got extremely testy." Another report said he "scolded" DeWitt. Her crime? She asked what he was going to do different about this problem in his state government. "When you say it's state government," the governor said, "you do a disservice to women, with all due respect, even though you are a woman. It's not government; it's society."

In June, state lawmakers passed the new law. Cuomo was delighted that the bar was set very low. "We will make it easier for claims to be brought forward and send a strong message that when it comes to sexual harassment in the workplace, time is up." The New York Times weighed in, saying, "The legislation eliminates the state's 'severe or pervasive' standard for proving harassment, which advocates said had allowed judges to dismiss claims of inappropriate comments or even groping as insufficiently hostile."

Cuomo signed the legislation in August. When it went into effect in October, he said something that came back to haunt him. "The ongoing culture of sexual harassment in the workplace is unacceptable and has held employees back for far too long. This critical measure finally ends the absurd legal

standard for victims to prove sexual harassment in the workplace and makes it easier for those who have been subjected to this disgusting behavior to bring claims forward."

As it turns out, five women have accused Cuomo of sexual harassment, and one of them, Lindsey Boylan, specifically accused him of creating "a culture within his own administration where sexual harassment and bullying is so pervasive that it is not only condoned but expected." Isn't that what Cuomo explicitly said was "unacceptable"?

Cuomo said at a press conference on March 3rd, "I never touched anyone inappropriately. I never touched anyone inappropriately."

This is contradicted by four of his accusers. Boylan says Cuomo kissed her on the lips without her consent and touched her lower back, arms and legs. Anna Ruch (unlike the others she did not work for Cuomo) said he put his hands on her lower back and cheeks and asked to kiss her. Karen Hinton said that after he embraced her, she tried to pull away, but he pulled her back. Ana Liss says he touched her lower back and kissed her hand, calling her "sweetheart."

Only Charlotte Bennett has not accused Cuomo of "inappropriate touching." However, she said he asked her about her sex life, and whether she ever slept with older men, making her feel uncomfortable. "I thought he was trying to sleep with me," Bennett told Norah O'Donnell in a CBS interview. As the New York Times noted about Cuomo's new law, offenses include "inappropriate comments."

Now it can be argued that some of these offenses are more infractions than they are serious cases of sexual misconduct. However, when he was giving the green light to lawyers wanting to pursue old cases of alleged clergy sexual abuse, Cuomo knew that many of the accusations involved "inappropriate

touching.” So why should we give him a break now?

No one is saying Cuomo is guilty of doing what President Bill Clinton did with Monica Lewinsky. But according to his own relaxed standard of what constitutes sexual harassment in the workplace, he is guilty as sin.

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## **CUOMO ISN'T THE ONLY “PRO-WOMEN” PHONY**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on “pro-women” politicians with sordid records of sexual allegations:

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo is accused by three young women of sexual misconduct. He is also a rabid supporter of abortion-on-demand, including partial-birth abortions.

At the end of his press conference on March 3rd, after defending himself against these charges, he touted his “pro-women” record. “We have more senior women in this administration than probably any administration in history.” His top aide, Melissa DeRosa, agreed, saying, he is a big proponent of “reproductive health.”

Cuomo is not alone among Democrats who have been accused of sexual misconduct, yet brag how “pro-women” they are. Here is a sample.

### **Joe Biden – President**

- Accused of sexually assaulting a staff assistant in 1993
- “The Biden-Harris Administration is committed to

codifying Roe v. Wade and appointing judges that respect foundational precedents like Roe.”

### **Bill Clinton – President**

- Accused of sexual assault and misconduct by four women: One woman accused Mr. Clinton of raping her in 1978; another accused him of sexually assaulting her in 1980; a third woman accused Clinton of exposing himself to her in 1991 and sexually harassing her; and a fourth accused Clinton of groping her without her consent in 1993.
- “The Government simply has no right to interfere with decisions that must be made by women of America to make the right choice.”

### **Eric Schneiderman – Former Attorney General of New York**

- Accused of sexually and physically abusing four women and forced to resign from office
- “No state law can restrict a woman’s constitutional right to make her own reproductive health choices. This opinion makes crystal clear that all women have a constitutional right to an abortion, irrespective of inconsistent state law.”

### **Anthony Weiner – Former Congressman (D-NY)**

- Accused of sending sexually suggestive images to several women over his career and forced to resign from office
- In response to the Supreme Court ruling on partial birth abortions, Weiner asked for “a hearing so that we can move to overturn the underlying ban on a certain type of late-term abortion.” He called the ruling “an affront to women across the country.”

### **Al Franken – Former Senator (D-MN)**

- Accused of groping or forcibly kissing more than 10 women and forced to resign from office
- In a speech to NARAL, Franken said, “a woman’s right to

choose is never fully won. It must be won anew every day, every year, every Congress, and every generation.”

### **John Conyers – Former Congressman (D-MI)**

- Accused of sexually harassing staffers and firing those women who complained and forced to resign from office
- Conyers voted against a ban on partial birth abortions and for federal funding of abortions

### **Eliot Spitzer – Former Governor of New York**

- Accused of soliciting sex from an escort service and forced to resign from office
- “I want to make it clear from the start that if the new Supreme Court turns its back on women’s privacy and limits or overturns Roe vs. Wade, I will do everything in my power to preserve that right here in New York.”

### **Bobby Scott – Congressman (D-VA)**

- Accused of sexual misconduct by a former staffer who claims he dismissed her after she refused his advances
- In a 2020 letter to Nancy Pelosi, Scott joined other legislators in saying, “As proud members of the first pro-choice majority in the House of Representatives, we unequivocally oppose efforts to roll back access to reproductive health services, including abortion....”

These men all have a clear conscience. They are convinced they are champions of women’s rights, thus making moot their sexual misconduct. As long as they have a pro-abortion record, they can treat women any way they want. The sad thing is how many voters, including women, agree with this assessment.

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# THE POLITICS OF BRANDING BIDEN A CATHOLIC

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on Biden's Catholic standing:

Everyone knew that Sen. Joe Lieberman was proudly Jewish, so there was no need to persuade the public of his religious status. Similarly, it is widely recognized that Sen. Mitt Romney is a practicing Mormon, therefore making moot attempts to prove he is. President Biden is different. Not a day goes by without some commentators, usually left-wing Catholics, trying to convince the public that he is a model Catholic.

This is disingenuous. If Biden were a model Catholic, there would be no need to assure us that he is. Even his fans know he isn't, otherwise they wouldn't waste so much energy on this issue. What galvanizes them is their war with the bishops.

Los Angeles Archbishop José Gomez is president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). When Biden was elected, he congratulated him. However, when Biden was inaugurated, Gomez expressed concerns about the president's positions on various issues, explicitly wondering whether he "will advance moral evils."

Most bishops agreed with Gomez, but a few did not. Among the laity, those on the left were furious. Immediately, a campaign against the USCCB was launched by the National Catholic Reporter, a rogue Catholic publication.

On January 28, the Reporter asked the Vatican to investigate the USCCB for its alleged "staunch Republican support." On February 5, Faithful America, a George Soros creation, started a petition online in support of the Reporter's efforts. It will have no effect—the Vatican won't even acknowledge their game—but their intent matters greatly.



What's driving the campaign against the bishops?

Those on the Catholic left have an ideological interest in selling Biden to the public as a loyal son of the Church. Their goal is to undermine the authority of the bishops by promoting the false idea that the bishops do not have the last word on what constitutes a Catholic in good standing. They seek to persuade the public, especially Catholics, that it is perfectly acceptable to reject the Church's teachings on life, marriage, and religious liberty—the way Biden does—and still be a model Catholic.

One of their favorite tactics is to contend that Biden is more similar to Pope Francis than are the bishops. David Gibson, who directs an institute at Fordham University, claims that Biden is “more in line with the pope than the American bishops.” That would surely come as news to priests who have denied Biden Communion.

Paul Elie, a Georgetown professor, says the pope and Biden have much in common. “Their informality, the fact that they were elected late in life, the fact that they seem to take issues as they come, listening, discerning and then acting.” He fails to note that the pope and Biden have nothing in common when it comes to their fidelity to the Church's moral teachings. But that evidently matters less than their “informality.”

Elie is more accurate when he gets to the heart of why it is necessary for Catholics like him to rescue Biden from his critics. “The hope is that the Biden Administration will invigorate American Catholicism, and vice versa.” Translated this means that Catholic dissidents want the Biden brand of Catholicism to prove triumphant.

It angers Catholic malcontents that some criticize Biden's Catholic credentials. Julia Maloney, who works at the University of Michigan, gets incensed when she hears someone

say that Biden is “Catholic in name only.” Mark Silk, who is not Catholic, wants us Catholics to know that the president’s pro-abortion record “doesn’t necessarily make Biden a bad Catholic.”

Sister Simone Campbell, the Democrats’ favorite nun, is bolder than Silk. The star of “nuns on the bus” tries to bail out Biden by saying his views on abortion are “very developed.” By that she means “he will not force his religious beliefs on the whole nation.” Not exactly reassuring considering his desire to force his anti-Catholic beliefs on the Little Sisters of the Poor (as well as everyone else).

Joe Sweeney of the University of California at Davis says it is “incredibly offensive and absurd” to call into question Biden’s Catholicity simply because he has a “moderate approach to issues like abortion and same-sex marriage.” One wonders what positions Biden must take for Sweeney to label him an extremist. After all, Biden supports infanticide—babies killed in partial-birth abortions are 80% born—and he has officiated at gay weddings.

Jamie Manson, who heads an anti-Catholic organization, Catholics for Choice, says the majority of American Catholics agree with Biden on abortion. They do not. Practicing Catholics, as a recent survey disclosed, are pro-life by a 2-1 margin, and even non-practicing Catholics do not support late-term abortions.

The Catholic left has an uphill battle. Most people know that someone who identifies as Catholic yet rejects the Church’s teachings on abortion, gay marriage and the First Amendment cannot realistically be regarded as a loyal Catholic. The fact that these dissidents are working overtime to convince us that Biden is a Catholic in good standing is proof that he isn’t.

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# OBSESSING OVER BIDEN'S RELIGION

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the intense focus on President Biden's religion:

The obsession with President Biden's religion is everywhere apparent, especially among Democrats, liberal pundits, reporters and activists. They are working overtime to convince the public that he is a good Catholic.

On Biden's first day in office, White House press secretary Jen Psaki addressed his religion at a press conference. "I will just take the opportunity to remind all of you that he is a devout Catholic, and somebody who attends church regularly." "Devout Catholic." A lexis-nexis search reveals that this descriptive term has been used by the press hundreds of times in the last three months.

The day after Biden was inaugurated, the New York Times gushed that he is "perhaps the most religiously observant commander in chief in half a century." Usually, this newspaper is apprehensive, if not alarmed, about "religiously observant" public officials (especially Catholic ones), yet for some reason they made an exception for Biden.

Sister Carol Keehan is the former head of the Catholic Health Association. She says Biden is a "man who clearly loves his faith." To get an idea of what she considers to be a model Catholic, she recently showered Xavier Becerra with praise when he was being grilled by a Senate committee over his nomination to be Secretary of Health and Human Services. It does not bother her one iota that Becerra supports partial-birth abortions and is known for his never-ending crusades

against the Little Sisters of the Poor.

Another Biden admirer is John Carr, co-director of a Catholic project at Georgetown University; he is a reliable liberal Catholic voice. He is impressed by the difference between Biden and his predecessor. "We're going from one of the least overtly religious presidents in modern times to one of the most overtly religious presidents in recent times."

If there is one thing that makes Biden "overtly religious," it is his habit of carrying a rosary. That puts a smile on the face of liberal Catholics like Father Tom Reese, a prominent Jesuit writer. "This is a guy who carries a rosary around in his pocket and talks about his faith." The media also love this story. This explains why there is so much chatter about Biden's rosary beads.

Let's concede that Biden is a rosary-carrying "devout Catholic." What does that have to do with his public policy decisions that are of interest to the Catholic Church?

Biden's lust for abortion rights, and his steadfast opposition to religious liberty legislation—as exemplified in his defense of the Equality Act—are uncontestable. In other words, if a "devout" Catholic doesn't connect the dots between his faith and his public policy decisions, how excited should Catholics be about him? And does this not explain why secularists adore this kind of Catholic?

At the individual level, Biden is the embodiment of what the privatization of religion means. In this view, religion is solely an interior exercise, having no public role to play. It must be said that there is nothing Catholic about such a position. Indeed, every pope in recent times, including Pope Francis, has spoken against this insular view. Catholicism, they contend, must have a robust presence in the public square.

Biden's privatized conception of religion is not a stunt—it is

who he is. The first time he publicly mentioned his rosary beads was in 1995, twenty-two years after he became U.S. Senator from Delaware. What he said at a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on religious freedom was classic Biden.

“I am one of those guys who’s never talked about my religion. I carry a thing called a rosary bead with me all the time—I say it all the time, I say it on the train—to me, it’s a comforting thing. I don’t suggest it to anybody else.”

He did not explain why, if the rosary beads meant so much to him, he did not want to “suggest it to anybody else.” Perhaps in his mind such a suggestion could be read as an imposition. But that wouldn’t explain his support for forcing nuns to pay for abortion-inducing drugs in their healthcare plans. That was not a suggestion—it was a mandate. It was also one that violated Catholic moral teachings.

It seems a little strange for a “devout Catholic” to keep private his religion. After all, Biden is not a monk—he has been a public office holder for 47 years. This accounts, however, for the fact that when he was running for president, the majority of the public had no idea he was Catholic. In September 2020, Newsweek released a poll showing that 56% were unaware that Biden was Catholic.

Biden’s long-time secretive Catholic status is a secret no more. Indeed his fans are now touting his “devout Catholic” status whenever they can. Given the president’s strong opposition to the life issues and religious liberty, they have little choice. It is precisely this kind of Catholic that the New York Times loves.