

# 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.