

The Coming (Phoney) War between Barack and Benedict

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On November 19, 2008, John-Henry Westen, news editor for the Roman Catholic *Life Site News*, posted an editorial titled “The Coming ‘War’ Between the Obama Administration and the Catholic Church.”¹ Other writers, and conservative pro-family leaders, both Romanists and evangelicals, have spoken and written of a coming struggle pitting Pope Benedict XVI, along with his American bishops, against the extremely pro-abortion President Barack Obama. But both Benedict and Barack know what most evangelicals and many Roman Catholics don’t but should know. If there is going to be a war between the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church and the Obama administration, it will be a phoney war. The always politically expedient pope and his bishops cannot even bring themselves to deny the mass to the likes of Ted Kennedy, Nancy Pelosi, or Vice President-Elect Joe Biden, let alone excommunicate them from the church! When it comes to the pope and his bishops, Mr. Obama has nothing to fear. In fact, Obama can thank the Vatican for helping to elect him to the presidency in the first place! And for all we know, he did just that when he made it a point to call Pope Benedict soon after his electoral victory.²

This is one of those topics which merits a book, but I will do what I can with a lengthy article. The plain truth about Barack Obama, when it comes to Roman Catholic social doctrine and political policy, is that, with just a few exceptions, he is as Romanist as the pope. My biggest problem is not proving what I just stated but sorting through mountains of evidence which easily and fully substantiate the facts. Perhaps a good place to start would be a quote from the web site of “Roman Catholics for Obama”:

We hope you’ll spend time reviewing all of the material housed or linked from here. But if you read just two documents, please make them the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*—which explains why “[t]here may be times when a Catholic who rejects a candidate’s unacceptable position may decide to vote for that candidate for other grave reasons”—and Barack Obama’s *Blueprint for Change*, which outlines all of Senator Obama’s positions and is, we think, reflective of why he is the candidate whose views are most compatible with the Catholic outlook.³

In this past election, 11% percent of Americans identifying themselves as evangelicals voted for Barack Obama. At the same time, in spite of Obama’s commitment to abortion and even infanticide, 56% of Roman Catholics voted for him.⁴ Why would faithful Roman Catholics vote for a man such as Barack Obama? Simply put, because they were acting like faithful Roman Catholics. Of the two candidates for president, Obama was “the candidate whose views are most compatible with the Catholic outlook.”

Bluntly put, Barack Obama was the pope’s man in this last election. Even if the Vatican truly does care about the unborn, the Vatican cares far more for the advance of Roman Catholic social policies which create social conditions most conducive to the expansion of papal power. Further, a priority of the papacy is the establishment of global government along with the demise of our sovereign American Republic. But if we are claiming that Benedict *et al.* share a common vision with Barack, we should document the claim. And for those willing to accept the truth, the rest of this article will do just that.

Every four years, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops issues a lengthy document on “political responsibility.” The latest edition by the USCCB is titled *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility*. The Roman Catholic people are urged to read, study, and obey this instruction from their bishops in order to practice “faithful citizenship.” As previously stated, this past election cycle, this same document was also linked from the “Roman Catholics for Obama” web site. Before we consider just a small, revealing sample of the “*fundamental moral principles that help Catholics form their consciences correctly, to provide guidance on the moral dimensions of public decisions, and to encourage the faithful to carry out their responsibilities in political life,*”⁵ I would like to first offer some excerpts from the **Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church***. That lengthy document is just what its title and introduction announce: “*This document offers a complete overview of the fundamental framework of the doctrinal corpus of Catholic social teaching.*”⁶

Now, I need to stress that the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* details the political outworking of that social doctrine by the civil government. A study of the document shows that Barack Obama is in perfect agreement with long-standing foundational Romanist dogma with regard to not just economic policy but also such things as capital punishment, the war in Iraq, world government, socialized health care, illegal immigration, and denying the right of American citizens to keep and bear arms. But, due to space, I will mostly just provide some excerpts which go to an issue which was very big in the recent campaign—that being Barack Obama’s vision of socialism implemented and enforced by the civil sword. We all remember his comments about wanting to “spread the wealth around” and the need for “redistributive justice.” Here is a representative sample of what the Roman Catholic Church teaches and promotes in that regard. These excerpts, a few key phrases of which I have italicized, are taken from various sections of the massive **Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace** *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*.

The demands of the common good are dependent on the social conditions of each historical period and are strictly connected to respect for and the integral promotion of the person and his fundamental rights. These demands concern above all the commitment to peace, the organization of the State’s powers, a sound juridical system, the protection of the environment, and the provision of essential services to all, some of which are at the same time human rights: food, housing, work, education and access to culture, transportation, basic health care, the freedom of communication and expression, and the protection of religious freedom. . . .

The teaching of Pope Pius XI is still relevant: “the distribution of created goods . . . must be effectively called back to and brought into conformity with the norms of the common good, that is, social justice”.

The responsibility for attaining the common good, besides falling to individual persons, belongs also to the State . . .

The right to the common use of goods is the “first principle of the whole ethical and social order” . . . “*All other rights, whatever they are, including property rights and the right of free trade must be subordinated to this norm [the universal destination of goods]; they must not hinder it, but must rather expedite its application. . . .*”

Christian tradition has never recognized the right to private property as absolute and untouchable: “. . . *the right to private property is subordinated to the right to common use, to the fact that goods are meant for everyone*”. . . .

The Church’s social Magisterium constantly calls for the most classical forms of justice to be respected: *commutative, distributive* and legal justice. . . .

The right to private property is subordinated to the principle of the universal destination of goods . . .

An equitable distribution of income is to be sought on the basis of criteria not merely of *commutative justice* but also of *social justice* . . . Authentic economic well-being is pursued also by means of suitable social policies for *the redistribution of income* . . .

Looking after the common good means making use of the new opportunities for *the redistribution of wealth* . . .

The Church is a companion on the journey towards an authentic international “community”, which has taken a specific direction with the founding of the United Nations Organization in 1945. The United Nations “has made a notable contribution to the promotion of respect for

human dignity, the freedom of peoples and the requirements of development, thus preparing the cultural and institutional soil for the building of peace”. . . .

Concern for an ordered and peaceful coexistence within the human family prompts the Magisterium to insist on the need to establish “some universal public authority acknowledged as such by all and endowed with effective power to safeguard, on the behalf of all, security, regard for justice, and respect for rights”. . . .⁷

There is a simple point I want to make with those relatively few quotes of thousands we could offer from the **Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church***. My point is that the pope and his men, far from viewing Barack Obama as an enemy, cannot help but see him as a friend to the cause of popery. Is Mr. Obama a full-blown socialist? Does he favor the use of the civil sword to rob one class of citizens and redistribute their substance to another, thus ingratiating the latter to himself? Is he a statist? Does he favor world government? On all counts, he is in perfect agreement with his friend in the Vatican.

Now we have seen that Obama and the pope are soul mates when it comes to political and economic policy. It might also be interesting to readers that the Obama political machine and the papal political machine both have a fondness for, and have funneled cash to, the now infamous Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now. ACORN specializes in voter fraud on behalf of the Democratic Party. In 2007 alone, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops donated well over one million dollars to ACORN.⁸

But back to the main topic. We have seen that 56% of American Roman Catholics voted for Barack Obama in spite of his enthusiastic support of abortion. Now we have only to present the evidence that the Vatican did its part to persuade Roman Catholics to vote for Mr. Obama. For that, we proceed to that document from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: ***Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility***. Here are pages and pages which, in sum total, stress that Roman Catholics should vote for the candidate who most holds to the *full range* of Catholic social and political policy, even if that means voting for a pro-abortion politician. In other words, this document from the bishops not only gives license but also gives direction to Roman Catholics to vote for a man such as Barack Obama. With typical Romish sophistry, protection of unborn human beings becomes in reality just one of a wide range of “life issues” and is put on a par with, for instance, socialized health care. Then Catholics are encouraged to vote for the man who is strongest on “all the life issues,” i.e., the full range of Roman Catholic political policy. In this past election, that was Barack Obama.

Due to space considerations, I am going to simply include a few of many revealing quotes we could give from ***Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship***. The reader can certainly connect the dots for himself, but I have also italicized a few key points.

We bishops have the primary responsibility to hand on the Church’s moral and social teaching. Together with priests and deacons, assisted by religious and lay leaders of the Church, we are to teach fundamental moral principles that help Catholics form their consciences correctly, to provide guidance on the moral dimensions of public decisions, and to encourage the faithful to carry out their responsibilities in political life. . . .

The right to life implies and is linked to other human rights—to the basic goods that every human person needs to live and thrive. All the life issues are connected . . . The moral imperative to respond to the needs of our neighbors—basic needs such as food, shelter, health care, education, and meaningful work—is universally binding on our consciences and may be legitimately fulfilled by a variety of means. . . .

Racism and other unjust discrimination, the use of the death penalty, resorting to unjust war, the use of torture, war crimes, the failure to respond to those who are suffering from hunger or a lack of health care, or an unjust immigration policy are all serious moral issues that challenge our consciences and require us to act. These are not optional concerns which can be dismissed. . . .

The Christian faith is an integral unity, and thus *it is incoherent to isolate some particular element to the detriment of the whole of Catholic doctrine*. A political commitment to a single isolated aspect of the Church's social doctrine does not exhaust one's responsibility towards the common good. . . .

Catholics often face difficult choices about how to vote. This is why it is so important to vote according to a well-formed conscience that perceives the proper relationship among moral goods. A Catholic cannot vote for a candidate who takes a position in favor of an intrinsic evil, such as abortion or racism, *if the voter's intent is to support that position*. In such cases a Catholic would be guilty of formal cooperation in grave evil. At the same time, *a voter should not use a candidate's opposition to an intrinsic evil to justify indifference or inattentiveness to other important moral issues involving human life and dignity*.

There may be times when a Catholic who rejects a candidate's unacceptable position may decide to vote for that candidate for other morally grave reasons. . . .

Affordable and accessible health care is an essential safeguard of human life and a fundamental human right. . . . Our Conference also advocates effective, compassionate care that reflects Catholic moral values for those suffering from HIV/AIDS and those coping with addictions. . . .

The USCCB continues to oppose unjust housing discrimination and to support measures to meet the credit needs of low-income and minority communities. . . .

The Gospel mandate to "welcome the stranger" requires Catholics to care for and stand with immigrants, both documented and undocumented, including immigrant children. Comprehensive reform is urgently necessary to fix a broken immigration system and should include a temporary work program with worker protections and a path to permanent residency; family reunification policies; a broad and fair legalization program; access to legal protections, including due process and essential public programs; refuge for those fleeing persecution and exploitation; and policies to address the root causes of migration. . . .

The USCCB strongly supports adequate funding, including scholarships, tax credits, and other means, to educate all persons no matter what their personal condition or what school they attend. . . .

Effective initiatives are required for energy conservation and the development of alternate, renewable, and clean-energy resources. Our Conference offers a distinctive call to seriously address global climate change, focusing on the virtue of prudence, pursuit of the common good, and the impact on the poor, particularly on vulnerable workers and the poorest nations. The United States should lead in contributing to the sustainable development of poorer nations and promoting greater justice in sharing the burden of environmental blight, neglect, and recovery. . . .

The United States should take a leading role in helping to alleviate global poverty through substantially increased development aid for the poorest countries, more equitable trade policies, and continuing efforts to relieve the crushing burdens of debt and disease. . . .

The United States should provide political and financial support for beneficial United Nations programs and reforms, for other international bodies, and for international law . . .⁹

As these excerpts prove out, "Roman Catholics for Obama" were absolutely right when they stated, "[Senator Obama] is the candidate whose views are most compatible with the Catholic outlook."

Those who are looking for a war between President Barack Obama and Pope Benedict XVI will be sorely disappointed. In reality, the current pope, in the best tradition of his predecessor Pope Pius XII, will

not exercise his vast power, whatever minor mild lip service he might offer, on behalf of millions of innocent human beings facing death, in this case by abortion. Rather he, and his bishops, will seize the moment to advance the anti-American, unconstitutional, anti-biblical social and political policies which are essential to expanding papal power and influence. Barack Obama knows he has a firm ally in the pope and his bishops, even if he must put up with some pro-life smoke and fury from a couple of the bishops from time to time. But the pope knows Mr. Obama will take no offense from that. Obama, like the popes, knows how the game is played and has been played for centuries. And he knows those same bishops helped put him in office. The pope and his bishops are as much enemies of life, liberty, biblical principles of government, and this American Republic as is Barack Obama. And they are far more dangerous enemies to the gospel and the church of Jesus Christ.

Pilgrims Covenant Church
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Endnotes

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2. "Obama Calls the Pope," *Zenit*, November 12, 2008, <http://www.zenit.org/article-24232?l=english>.
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4. Barna Group, "How People of Faith Voted in the 2008 Presidential Race," *Barna Update*, November 11, 2008, <http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdateNarrowPreview&BarnaUpdateID=321>.
5. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility from the Catholic Bishops of the United States*, 2007, <http://www.usccb.org/faithfulcitizenship/FCStatement.pdf>.
6. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 2004, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Julia Duin, "Catholics probe aid directed to ACORN," *Washington Times*, November 4, 2008, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2008/nov/04/catholics-probe-aid-directed-to-acorn/>.
9. USCCB, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*.