

DEFENSE OF LIFE IS NOT A MATTER FOR POLITICAL COMPROMISE
By: Anthony J. Sacco, Sr. © November 2008

PINE BLUFFS - On November 11, 2008, Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, director of the Vatican press office, announced that U.S. President-elect Barack Hussein Obama called Pope Benedict to thank him for his congratulatory telegram. The call responded to a telegram the Holy Father sent to Obama after he won the presidential election November 4.

According to *Zenit*, a news agency specializing in coverage of the Holy Father, in his papal telegram the Bishop of Rome promised Obama his prayers so that God would assist him in his "weighty responsibilities at the service of the nation and the international community." And it expressed Benedict's wish that the Lord's blessings support Obama and the American people, "together with all men and women of good will, [in efforts] to build a world of peace, solidarity and justice."

A congratulatory telegram from the Pope does not mean the Vatican approves the results of the election, which saw the most pro-abortion administration in U.S. history take the reigns of power. Heads of state routinely send congratulatory messages to winners of major elections in other countries. The head of the Vatican City State does, too. Nor does it mean that Pope Benedict XVI and the Church hierarchy will sit idly by while Mr. Obama follows through on his promise to overturn 300 plus pro-life laws and restrictions enacted during the administrations of Presidents Reagan, Bush I, and Bush II, by passing the so-called Freedom of Choice Act.

Just days after Rev. Jay Scot Newman handed a letter to his parishioners at St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, Greenville, SC, telling them that if they voted for Mr. Obama they should refrain from receiving Holy Communion, because the Democrat president-elect supports abortion, and supporting *him* "constitutes material cooperation with intrinsic evil," the Church began mobilizing to deal with this new and alarming situation. 220 Catholic Bishops met in Baltimore and drafted a statement warning the President-elect that passing the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA) would be viewed as a direct attack on religion.

It seems that back in July 2007, Mr. Obama announced to a Planned Parenthood audience that signing FOCA would be his first priority: "Well, the first thing I'd do as President is sign the Freedom of Choice Act . . . On this fundamental issue, I will not yield and Planned Parenthood will not yield." Now, with his Party in full control of Congress, Obama will be pressed to live up to his promise as payback for the abortion community's support. If successful, the newly expanded majority might even overturn the partial-birth abortion ban, which a Republican Congress passed twice, only to see it vetoed by former President Clinton. It was through the efforts of President George Bush that this abhorrent practice was finally ended.

Catholic bishops have offered to work with the incoming Democrat administration on numerous issues. But the defense of life is not one of them. "This is not a matter of political compromise," Bishop Daniel Conlon of Steubenville, Ohio said. "It's a matter of absolutes." Might the church's forceful opposition to FOCA be the excuse some Catholic Democrats in Congress need to vote the legislation down? We'll see.

Several prelates promised to call to account Catholic policy makers on their failures to follow church teaching. Bishop Joseph Martino of Scranton, Pa., singled out Vice President-elect Biden, a Catholic, Scranton native who supports abortion rights. "I cannot have a vice president-elect coming to Scranton to say he's learned his values there when those values are utterly against the teachings of the Catholic Church," Martino said.

Archbishop Joseph Naumann of the Diocese of Kansas City in Kansas said politicians "can't check your principles at the door of the legislature." Naumann has said repeatedly that Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius, a Catholic Democrat who champions abortion rights, should stop taking Holy Communion until she changes her stance. "They cannot call themselves Catholic when they violate such a core belief as the dignity of the unborn," Naumann said.

Also at risk is the Mexico City Policy, a policy originally announced by President Reagan in 1984 at an international population conference in Mexico City. It required that to receive funds under the population control aid program overseen by the Agency for International Development (USAID), private overseas organizations would henceforth have to agree not to perform abortions, except to save the mother's life or in cases of rape or incest, and not to promote abortion as a method of family planning — by campaigning to weaken or repeal the pro-life laws of foreign nations.

When Bill Clinton took office in January 1993, he overturned this policy by Executive Order. But on George Bush's first day as President he delivered on his campaign promise to re-instate Reagan's Mexico City directive. Mr. Obama? His long-standing pro-abortion record, going back to his days in the Illinois State Legislature where he even opposed the Born Alive Infants Protection Act at the state level, and later at the federal level, points to what may be in store for us.

If for no other reason, Congress should take seriously the Bishops' warning because Roman Catholics are powerful players in the U.S. health care system. Catholics run approximately 550 hospitals and over 400 clinics in America. The Church spends billions to help the disadvantaged obtain their needed care. Under FOCA, religious providers would have two options: either comply with the abortion mandate or end their services completely.

Would Mr. Obama and a Democrat Congress be so intent on appeasing Planned Parenthood that they'd close down the entire Catholic hospital system? Would they have the power to do it? With a pro-choice Democrat occupying the White House, and majorities in both Congressional bodies, only a slim 5-4 majority in the Supreme Court and the necessity to raise 60 votes to cut off a Senate filibuster stand in their way.

James Madison, speaking on January 30, 1788, said: "The accumulation of all power, legislative, executive, and judiciary, in the same hands . . . may justly be pronounced as the very definition of tyranny."

Do Roman Catholics really understand? Do they care? The election is over and the voters have spoken. Catholic voters appear to have made a colossal mistake in judgment. An AP article on November 13, 2008 citing national exit polls said: "54% of Catholics chose Obama ..." Don't the statements of Bishops Martino, Naumann, and others apply equally to all Catholics?

Saddened by this situation, Rev. Thomas Euteneuer, Director of Human Life International, wrote in HLI's e-Newsletter on November 14, 2008: "Now that the election is over, we can separate the real Catholics from those who just act the part. Those still reeling from the results of the election can rest assured that they are in good company with the saints. Those who have drawn a line in blood and made a decision to stand with the culture of death need a serious examination of conscience... America has made her 'choice' for maximum leader and it is not pretty. In fact, it's one of the most devastating blows to American civilization that we have ever undergone, and I do not speak in hyperbole. Even such a saintly figure as Mother Theresa said that 'a nation that kills its children has no future;' likewise, an authority like Fr. Benedict Groeschel recently commented that we have entered into 'the beginning of the twilight' of our country - dire words that touch on the reality of electing the most extreme, pro-abortion candidate America has ever had the misfortune of occupying the highest office of our land."

It could've been worse. The voters did not give Mr. Obama such a decisive victory that he can claim a mandate to advance a radical social agenda. What exit polling confirms is that this election was driven by the economy and a loss of confidence in the Republican Party. Despite what some in broadcast and print Media may claim, the country is not lurching leftward socially. Exit polling commissioned by Family Research Council (FRC) asked voters where "moral values" ranked in their list of priorities. In the 2004 election, 22% rated moral issues as their first priority when voting. On November 4, 2008, in the midst of the greatest economic challenge in many years, 20% still cited "moral issues" as their first or second priority.

So while we congratulate Mr. Obama on his victory and pray for his safety, Roman Catholics – those who do NOT just act the part - must be there reminding him daily that values aren't just *among* the issues; they are *the most important issues.*" We cannot sit idly by while a president who does not respect life from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death reverses the hard-fought gains we've made, and advances policies attacking human life.

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