

Vatican, Chicago Cardinal Push Back On Catholic Bishops' Statement Warning Biden's Agenda Would 'Advance Moral Evils'

Emily Zanotti



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The Vatican and a prominent Chicago Cardinal pushed back on a strongly worded statement from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) warning that despite positioning himself as a devout Catholic, President Joe Biden's agenda would advance "moral evils" because of his "uncompromising positions on abortion, gender, and religious liberty," per [Pillar Catholic](#).

President of the USCCB, Archbishop Jose Gomez, issued the statement Wednesday, ahead of Biden's inauguration, noting that "working with President Biden will be unique ... as he is our first president in 60 years to profess the Catholic faith."

"Mr. Biden's piety and personal story, his moving witness to how his faith has brought him solace in times of darkness and tragedy, his longstanding commitment to the Gospel's priority for the poor — all of this I find hopeful and inspiring," Fr. Gomez wrote, adding that Biden knows "in a deep and personal way" the value of religious institutions.

Fr. Gomez went on, however, to bring up some uncomfortable truths.

"As pastors, the nation's bishops are given the duty of proclaiming the Gospel in all its truth and power, in season and out of season, even when that teaching is inconvenient or when the Gospel's truths run contrary to the directions of the wider society and culture," Fr. Gomez said.

"So, I must point out that our new President has pledged to pursue certain policies that would advance moral evils and threaten human life and dignity, most seriously in the areas of abortion, contraception, marriage, and gender. Of deep concern is the liberty of the Church and the freedom of believers to live according to their consciences."

He later added that while many issues are important to people of the Catholic faith, the Church, and particularly Pope Francis, consider abortion the gravest issue of our time.

“Our commitments on issues of human sexuality and the family, as with our commitments in every other area — such as abolishing the death penalty or seeking a health care system and economy that truly serves the human person — are guided by Christ’s great commandment to love and to stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters, especially the most vulnerable,” Fr. Gomez wrote.

“For the nation’s bishops, the continued injustice of abortion remains the ‘preeminent priority.’ Preeminent does not mean ‘only.’ We have deep concerns about many threats to human life and dignity in our society,” he continued.

“But as Pope Francis teaches, we cannot stay silent when nearly a million unborn lives are being cast aside in our country year after year through abortion.”

The statement made some within the Catholic hierarchy very unhappy, according to Pillar Catholic, which reported Wednesday that “sources in the Vatican Secretariat of State, others close to the U.S. bishops’ conference, and sources among the U.S. bishops have confirmed ... that the statement was spiked after intervention from the Vatican Secretariat of State, hours before it was due to be released.”

“The statement had been debated hotly late into Tuesday evening, but multiple sources say it was the intervention of the Vatican that led to its delay,” the outlet noted.

Chicago Cardinal Blaise Cupich took the opportunity to rebuke his fellow Catholic leaders, ostensibly in support of Biden.

“Today, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops issued an ill-considered statement on the day of President Biden’s inauguration. Aside from the fact that there is seemingly no precedent for doing so, the statement, critical of President Biden came as a surprise to many bishops, who received it just hours before it was released,” Cardinal Cupich wrote.

The statement was crafted without the involvement of the Administrative Committee, a collegial consultation that is [the] normal course for statements that represent and enjoy the considered endorsement of the American bishops. The internal institutional failures involved must be addressed, and I look forward to contributing to all efforts to that end, so that, inspired by the Gospel, we can build up the unity of the Church, and together take up the work of healing our nation in this moment of crisis.”

Fr. Gomez, in a statement made Wednesday night to Pillar Catholic, said he “and his brother bishops would speak directly about abortion in the years to come.”

In response to questions about abortion policy late Wednesday, Biden’s press secretary, Jen Psaki, [would say only that Biden “attends church regularly.”](#)

Thursday morning, Dr. Anthony Fauci, speaking to the WHO on behalf of the Biden administration, told an executive session there that Biden plans to lift the “Mexico City policy” which currently bans NGOs that promote and provide abortions overseas from receiving taxpayer funds. The administration also plans to address the Hyde Amendment, which prohibits taxpayer funds from flowing to domestic abortion providers.

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