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The Church Militant

PC is the Dogma

By [Frank Borzellieri](#)

The Church Militant Roger Mahony, the former Archbishop of Los Angeles, wearing a Mexican-themed cassock

Conservatives, whether Catholic or not, tend to have a sympathy for the Catholic Church for two basic reasons. First, left-wingers despise the Church because of its public stance on abortion. If liberals hate the Church that much, conservatives reason, it can't be all that bad. Second, the Catholic Church seemingly takes generally conservative positions on some "social issues" such as "gay marriage" and euthanasia.

But what I can assert for certain, as a lifelong devout conservative Catholic, and what both Catholics and non-Catholics have got to understand, is that the Catholic Church is obsessed with three things.

It is extremely paranoid about its public image, which is why it protected pedophile priests for decades instead of doing the only morally correct thing—turn those child predators in to the authorities. The official Church is also obsessed with money, which is why it sells out on virtually every issue, the better to attract liberal donors. The third obsession is actually related to the first two. The Catholic Church is maniacally obsessed with sucking up to the politically correct liberal establishment. Church leaders undoubtedly stay awake at night strategizing as to how they can further endear themselves to the politically correct *Zeitgeist* and left-wing opinion leaders. It is an absolute mystery why liberals hate the Church—for liberals are the Church's master!

Indeed, the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, from the Pope down to individual parish priests, when it addresses areas outside the realm of Catholic doctrine and veers into economic and political issues, tends to wander into left field. Far left field.

Whether the issue is welfare, the **redistribution of wealth**, socialist unionism, or the death penalty, America's bishops and cardinals serendipitously arrive at the most liberal position on all these matters. Even Pope John Paul II, who played a symbolic and integral role in the destruction of communism, issued some very peculiar economic statements, which can charitably be described as socialist.

The exception to this distressingly pronounced liberalism is assumed to be on the issue of abortion.

But even there the bishops have come under criticism from conservatives. At a conference of America's 250 Catholic bishops within the past decade, the clergy refused to threaten excommunication to Catholic politicians who support abortion. Moreover, there hasn't been a memorable sermon from the pulpit on sin, hell, or damnation in years.

The Church, on the various "social issues," has for decades wallowed in a swamp of hopeless liberalism. An inordinate number of the Church hierarchy—from the Pope to the bishops to the parish priests—have sought to impart the bizarre notion that in order to be a Catholic in good standing, one must adhere to the liberal drivel that emanates from the bowels of the Church's oversensitized social compass.

Indeed, the Church's pronouncements on the obligatory welfare state and the **righteousness of the transfer of wealth**, as well as its open-borders stance on immigration have given it the well-deserved image as a bastion of rabid and implacable leftism. It is distressing that both John Paul II and the deceased Cardinal John O'Connor of the Archdiocese of New York—the Church's most influential spokesmen of the past half-century—were jealous guardians of these views.

But what are individual Catholics to make of this liberal morass? What are Catholic obligations of obedience to these pronouncements? What is doctrine? What is dogma? What are merely opinions and suggestions? And finally, what is the "infallibility" of Church statements?

While most people believe that the Catholic Church is vociferously opposed to capital punishment, the fact remains that opposition to the death penalty is not official doctrine. Both John Paul and O'Connor criticized its imposition as adding to the "culture of death." In recent decades, the Catholic Bishops have also issued public statements in opposition to the death penalty. They have not claimed that such opposition is official teaching, nor have they denied the compatibility of the death penalty with the Catholic faith. Nevertheless, confusion among Catholics stems from the tortured line between Church statements and Church doctrine. For all practical purposes, these liberal stances are what the public views as Church teaching.

In 1980, the Catholic bishops issued a **statement** which said in part, "Allowing for the fact that Catholic teaching has accepted the principle that the state has the right to take the life of a person guilty of an extremely serious crime, and that the state may take appropriate measures to protect itself and its citizens from grave harm, nevertheless, the question for judgment and decision today is whether capital punishment is justifiable under present circumstances."

It is painfully obvious that plain, worn-out liberalism was the crucial factor in the conclusion the bishops reached. The "present circumstances" of 1980 just happened to be the time when the death penalty was never more justified, given the explosion in the American national murder rate, a trend which has since stabilized but which is still enormously high by historical standards.

In 1952, Pope Pius XII said, "Even when it is a question of the execution of a man condemned to death, the state does not dispose of the individual's right to live. Rather, it is reserved to the public authority to deprive the criminal of the benefit of life, when already, by his crime, he has deprived himself of the right to live."

The Fifth Commandment, "Thou Shall Not Kill," is often cited by death penalty opponents as the definitive source of Christian thinking on capital punishment. However, the Catechism of the Council of Trent stated, "Another kind of slaying is permitted, which belongs to those magistrates to whom is

given the power of condemning to death, by legal and judicial use of which [power] they punish the guilty and protect the innocent (Rom. 13:4) . . . as the proposed end of this law [The Fifth Commandment] is to provide for the life and safety of men, to the same end also tend the punishments [executions] inflicted by the magistrates, who are the legitimate avengers of crimes, giving security to life by punishing and thus repressing audacity and outrage.”

It would be practically impossible, given today’s political climate, for current Church cowards to issue such a forthright statement in defense of capital punishment. But whatever side one is on, it is obvious that the proponents of the death penalty were guided more by Scripture than personal opinion, and that today’s opponents are more guided by political correctness and droopy liberalism.

Today’s Catholic opposition to capital punishment does not fall into the category of doctrine, dogma or the more extreme “infallible” statement, which can deal only with matters of revelation and salvation and can be expressed only “*ex cathedra*”—official teaching. (Only two infallible statements have been made in the past two centuries: the immaculate conception of Mary in 1854—that she was conceived without original sin; and the bodily assumption of Mary into heaven, in 1950.) According to “Catholicism Today: A Survey of Catholic Belief and Practice,” Church statements on the death penalty should be received with “respect and docility” by the faithful, but are not binding.

Pathetically, the Church would have you believe that in order to be a good Catholic you have to worship at the altar of political correctness. The Catholic Church today may as well take its orders from Al Sharpton, for it is the likes of Sharpton that the Church is most worried about offending.

Tragically, however, it is on immigration that Catholic leadership is most confused and most convoluted. It was Cardinal John O’Connor who proposed that illegal aliens from Central America be permitted to make a “round-trip” visit to their families in their hurricane-ravaged homelands. He said, “Would it be absurd to suggest that there be some kind of validation of their status, that they be permitted to go down and visit their suffering families in the Central American countries so badly hit by the hurricane?”

Yes, it would.

Here is a churchman advocating that people who have broken American laws be rewarded instead of deported. Furthermore, O’Connor wanted a “validation” of status. In other words, break the law, take a leave to attend to personal business, and then the government will accommodate in an official manner your continuance of breaking the law.

O’Connor continued, “They [illegal aliens] do the most menial work, but much of the money that they make goes to those who are even more impoverished in Central America.” Again, this is a statement of support for illegal activities, with the added twist that—lamentably, in O’Connor’s view—the poor law-breakers are not benefiting enough from their law-breaking.

New York’s current Archbishop, Timothy Dolan, if possible, is even worse than O’Connor. Today’s Catholic Church views the influx of Hispanics as paying customers who can attend and pay tuition in Catholic schools. The Church, therefore, will advocate and defend law-breaking if that’s what it takes to keep immigrant Hispanic money coming in.

Liberalism has always defined compassion in the most odd manner—usually as taking other people’s money through force and coercion to use for the benefit of those who did not earn it. Thus, the

Church's outlandish support of every government-sponsored social program which taxpayers are forced to subsidize whether they like it or not. True compassion, of course, is voluntary.

On immigration, the open borders sentiment of the Church is at odds with the law and the democratic will of the American people. But the Church does not merely advocate the changing of the law, they support those who break the law.

John Paul II frequently instructed Western nations that they have a moral obligation to take in all immigrants who want to enter. The West must share the wealth with those who haven't the capacity to create it themselves. Such admonitions are silly and misguided. Again, if these clerics had their way, American citizens would be forced to give their earnings — and their country — away through coercion.

These nonsensical views are not solely the province of the Catholic Church. Other Christian denominations have joined in the chorus. Pat Robertson supports more immigration from south of the border, **claiming** these people support "family values" and are "our kind of voters." Has he lost his grip on reality? The most profound result of these newcomers has been a dilution of American culture and the gradual formation of what Hispanic activists call "Aztlán" (Bronze Continent) which would displace the United States. Ralph Reed and Billy Graham have also expressed support for more non-White immigration. Rev. Graham says Americans must take aliens into our hearts, homes, and "into our marriages." And these are so-called "conservative" Christians!

What possesses these men to spout such blather? Interestingly, self-identified Christians have been identified in **poll after poll** as being strongly opposed to current mass immigration. The clergy, on the other hand, are probably affected by certain scripture passages. Leviticus 19:33-34 states, "If a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself."

Because of Matthew 25:31-46, when Jesus states, "I was a stranger and ye took me not in..." clergy often suggest that anyone prevented from entering the United States might be, well, Jesus. Peter Brimelow writes, "The problem, however, is this: there are rather a lot of Jesuses out there. No conceivable U.S. immigration policy can 'minister' to all of them."

The Catholic Church's unprincipled cowardice is not limited to capital punishment and immigration. Not even remotely. But the Church's pathetic desire to suck up to the politically correct intelligentsia accurately demonstrates how it has abandoned its original mission of justice and truth.

Article Info

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