



Most Rev. Salvatore J. Cordileone
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Archbishop Cordileone's Response to Speaker Pelosi's Comments About Pro-Life Voters

On Monday, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi criticized prolife voters who voted for Donald Trump on the abortion issue, saying their votes cause her “great grief as a Catholic” and accusing them of “being willing to sell the whole democracy down the river for that one issue.”

Most Reverend Salvatore J. Cordileone, Archbishop of San Francisco, issued the following statement in response:

“To begin with the obvious: Nancy Pelosi does not speak for the Catholic Church. She speaks as a high-level important government leader, and as a private citizen. And on the question of the equal dignity of human life in the womb, she also speaks in direct contradiction to a fundamental human right that Catholic teaching has consistently championed for 2,000 years.

“Christians have always understood that the commandment, ‘Thou shall not kill,’ applies to all life, including life in the womb. Around the end of the first century the *Letter of Barnabas* states: “You shall not slay the child by procuring abortion; nor, again, shall you destroy it after it is born’ (#19). One thousand, eight hundred and sixty-five years later, the Second Vatican Council affirmed: ‘Life must be protected with the utmost care from the moment of conception: abortion and infanticide are abominable crimes’ (*Gaudium et spes*, n. 51).

“Pope Francis continues this unbroken teaching. Addressing participants in the conference, ‘Yes to Life! - Taking Care of the Precious Gift of Life in Its Frailty’ on May 25, 2019, he condemned abortion in the strongest possible terms: ‘is it licit to eliminate a human life to solve a problem? ... It is not licit. Never, never eliminate a human life ... to solve a problem. Abortion is never the answer that women and families are looking for.’ And just yesterday (January 20, 2021) Archbishop Gomez, President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, reiterated the declaration of the U.S. bishops that abortion is for Catholics the ‘preeminent priority.’ In doing so, he acted rightly and collaboratively in his role as USCCB President, and I am grateful to him for doing so.

“Preeminent does not mean ‘only,’ of course. There are certainly many evils we must confront and many goods we must pursue. In his inaugural speech yesterday, President Biden gave a moving call to unity and healing. He offered what I would call a ‘Litany of Compassion’ – bringing before the eyes of the nation the suffering of people across a wide spectrum of issues. In my experience, advocates for unborn children also work diligently to be of service in many of these causes as well. Speaker Pelosi has chosen this week to impugn the motives of millions of Catholics and others for choosing to make voting on the issue of abortion their priority and accuses them of ‘selling out democracy.’ This is not the language of unity and healing. She owes these voters an apology.

“I myself will not presume to know what was in the minds of Catholic voters when they voted for the Presidential candidate of their choice, no matter who their preferred candidate was. There are many



issues of very grave moral consequence that Catholics must weigh in good conscience when they vote. But one thing is clear: No Catholic in good conscience can favor abortion. ‘Right to choose’ is a smokescreen for perpetuating an entire industry that profits from one of the most heinous evils imaginable. Our land is soaked with the blood of the innocent, and it must stop.

“That is why, as Catholics, we will continue to speak out on behalf of those who have no voice to speak for themselves and reach out to, comfort and support those who are suffering the scars of the abortion experience. We will do so, until our land is finally rid of this despicable evil.”

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