

Jentezen Franklin: Why Is It 'Unusual' to Be a Charismatic Catholic?

I've recently heard and read several stories of Judge Amy Coney Barrett's charismatic Catholic faith. On many occasions, her faith has been explained as though it's unusual or exotic to be a charismatic Christian.

On some occasions, unfortunately, it's discussed with blatant bigotry.

In a recent monologue, comedian Bill Maher called Barrett "a [expletive] nut."

He then described her as "Catholic, I mean like really, really Catholic"—as if that were supposed to be unacceptable or on the fringes of society in his narrow-minded worldview.

His audience got a good laugh. But I don't find it funny. Thousands at my church wouldn't find it funny, and neither would millions of Americans.

What I've seen and heard over the last two weeks reflects how out of touch many Americans are with the shifting religious landscape in America. What might've been considered out of the mainstream 50 years ago—the charismatic movement, Pentecostals and other vibrant denominations of the Christian faith—is far more mainstream today than they are aware.

Charismatics believe what Jesus commanded about worship, prayer and miracles; and we take Him literally. If the press did their homework, they would discover that millions of Americans nationwide have wholeheartedly embraced the principles of a charismatic faith. Barrett's faith is one that is expanding across the country, and even around the world. A

Pew Research study has shown that more than a quarter of the world's 2 billion Christians identify with charismatic Christianity.

Some of the more reasonable voices in the Democratic party have spoken up and condemned the personal attacks on Barrett, her family and her faith. But it's clear that many who are out of touch with the faith community just can't help themselves when they take to the airwaves.

So, before this goes any further, and anyone else considers taking a jab at someone's charismatic faith—or any faith for that matter—may I suggest taking the time to understand it, and getting to know us first.

Critics have quickly dismissed Barrett without truly knowing her. Yet it seems those who know her well—those who attended law school with her, her students at Notre Dame and her colleagues—none of them come remotely close to referring to her in the extreme and bigoted way she's been attacked in the press. Many of those that know her well do not share the same faith as Barrett; and many of them do not share the same judicial philosophy either. But they have been eager to describe her as a person of tremendous character, a brilliant professor, an intelligent judge, a loving mother to seven and a generous friend. She's maintained an impeccable reputation and an impressive career, all while not compromising on her commitment to her faith.

Her faith is in no way disqualifying from the position she's been nominated for. Far from it. Throughout her career she's proven more than capable of being a fair-minded legal scholar and judge who reveres our nation's legal framework and applies the law equally.

At some point in our nation's history it became acceptable to consider a person's deep faith as disqualifying from a life of public service. We must reject that notion. Whether one is a

secular or a religious person, every American has a belief system. Everyone has some form of a worldview that leads to their philosophy of government and the rule of law.

Amy Coney Barret's combination of genuine faith, her admiration for the U.S. Constitution and her desire to serve the public is not usual.

She's not a nut. She's a hero and a role model, to me and to many. {eoa}

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