

Was a Catholic Priest Right to Refuse Joe Biden Communion?

I am not Roman Catholic, but from my perspective as a Protestant believer, Father Robert E. Morey of Florence, South Carolina, was absolutely right in refusing to allow former Vice President Joe Biden Communion this past Sunday. Communion is not for those in outright, public disobedience to the Lord's commands.

If a man left his wife and was shacking up with his girlfriend, should he be allowed to take Communion? Obviously not.

What about a drug lord who was dealing drugs to minors? Or a gang leader feared for his brutality and cruelty?

In each case, the answer is a clear and obvious "No."

As for presidential candidate Biden, his increasingly pro-abortion stance, which has become more extreme in recent months, was sufficient grounds to be forbidden Communion.

In the words of another Catholic priest, Father Ryan Hilderbrand, "Grave sin must be MANIFEST – that is, public and enduring over time – before I can deny someone Holy Communion.

"This is where Mr. Biden comes in. Voting to protect abortion 'rights' is clearly grave matter for sin. That he voted like this multiple times is much, much worse.

"By his actions, he leads us to believe that he has willingly placed himself outside the Communion of the church. Therefore, so that he does not 'eat and drink unto his own condemnation,' it is an act of mercy to deny Mr. Biden Holy Communion."

This would be similar to Rev. Charles Finney (1792-1875), refusing to minister Communion to slaveholders in the 1800s.

As explained by Roger Joseph Green, "Finney's condemnation of slavery in principle was strong, and as Finney grew older he attacked slavery not just because of personal but from a firm ideological base—the moral law of God, to which nations as well as individuals are subject, forbid the enslaving of human beings. He practiced what he preached, and he would not allow slaveholders to take communion at his New York churches. Of this Finney was sure: Slaveholding was sin."

Not surprisingly, left-leaning (and gay-affirming) Jesuit priest James Martin took exception to Morey's actions, tweeting, "Denying Communion to politicians, Democrat or Republican, is a bad idea. If you deny the sacrament to those who support abortion, then you must also deny it to those who support the death penalty. How about those who don't help the poor? How about 'Laudato Si'? Where does it end?"

John Hirschauer at the *National Review* corrected Martin forcefully, writing, "Surely Fr. Martin does not mean to suggest that support for the death penalty for heinous criminals—a practice the Catholic Church has supported (and enacted!) in various moments in its history—is comparable to supporting the slaughter of unborn children. Neither, one imagines, could he possibly be suggesting that excessive use of air conditioning, or failing to recycle plastic goods, as outlined in Pope Francis's environmental encyclical 'Laudato Si,' are acts of similar moral gravity as a politician publicly supporting abortion rights."

But Martin had more to say.

"Besides," he added, "a priest has no idea what the state of a person's soul is when the person presents himself or herself in the Communion line. As we were taught in theology studies, the person may have repented of any sins and gone to

confession immediately before Mass. You have no idea.

"Finally, as Pope Francis has said, the Eucharist 'is not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak.'"

Martin, of course, is correct. Only God knows what is going on inside someone's heart. But public sin needs to be repented of publicly.

In this case, since taking Communion is a public act and Biden's pro-abortion position is publicly known, he would need to renounce his position before receiving Communion. Otherwise, he would sow confusion into the minds and hearts of his fellow worshippers. And doesn't a change of heart require a change of action to be considered true repentance in God's sight?

As for Communion not being "a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak," Martin, again, is correct. But there is a difference between weakness and wickedness. Weakness is when I know what is right but struggle to do it, calling out for help. Wickedness is when I willfully choose to do wrong and then defend my actions.

When it comes to Biden, Michael Gerson noted in June that, "By forcing Joe Biden to abandon his support for the Hyde Amendment—which currently prevents the funding of abortions through Medicaid—the abortion lobby and activist liberals have taken the first major step toward reelecting Trump.

"The problem here is not only that Biden appears weak and vacillating on an issue of conscience—which he does. Or that he will now be pressured to repudiate every hint of moderation in his 36-year legislative career—though he will be. The Hyde Amendment has played a particularly important role for Catholic politicians. It has allowed them to draw a distinction between permitting abortion and promoting it. Supporting the amendment has let them claim neutrality on

abortion even while being effectively pro-choice. For Biden, this fig leaf is now removed. And seeing a 76-year-old man religiously and ethically naked is unappealing.”

It is so unappealing that it led to the public embarrassment of a Catholic priest denying a lifelong Catholic a seat at the Lord’s Supper.

May this be a wake-up call to the conscience of Joe Biden.
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