

Wonder What Pope Francis Thinks of Tim Kaine?

Prior to Senator Tim Kaine's selection as Hillary Clinton's running mate, faith was not a subject the Democratic Party boasted much about. Yet, within minutes of the campaign's announcement, Sen. Kaine's faith "resume" was broadcast around the world. With his Jesuit training and missionary stint in Latin America emanating out of the Clinton campaign like a sign from heaven, a veritable halo fell down upon him.

Soon, it was as if there was a mass party conversion at the DNC convention. A gospel choir even kicked off the whole affair—literally! Afternoon and evening sessions were opened and closed in prayers that sounded more like sermons.

Virginia Rep. Bobby Scott invoked the famous exhortation of Micah 6:8 as he introduced Sen. Kaine as the vice presidential nominee:

"The Bible calls us to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly. There are few people who live out that creed as fully and completely as Tim Kaine."

For the Democratic Party, salvation had arrived—or so it seemed—when it was politically helpful. It's been the case since.

The media's consensus has been that Senator Kaine was a sensible, albeit "safe," choice for VP, and at first blush, it's easy to agree with their conclusion. Kaine—a moderate, white Catholic male from a Southern state—checks off a lot of boxes for Secretary Clinton as she attempts to woo voters in the Rust Belt.

They're playing politics, as politicians do.

While I would never question the sincerity of Sen. Kaine's faith, it does strike me as highly suspicious that the Democratic Party has suddenly found God after endorsing an astonishing series of executive, judicial and legislative actions that recently prompted Rabbi Abraham Cooper, associate dean of Los Angeles' Simon Wiesenthal Center, to note, "Today, hundreds of millions of minority Baha'i, Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims—but chiefly Christians—have no confidence that American power or policy have their backs."

As a Christian, I celebrate when people give their lives and hearts to Christ; and yet it's difficult not to interpret the Democrats' sudden salvation as anything other than political theater. If Sen. Kaine—a Roman Catholic like many in my Hispanic community—does indeed intend to leverage his Christian faith as part of the Democratic platform, I must then ask him to answer two simple questions, directly:

1. Will he support the appointment of originalist Supreme Court justices who would preserve the religious liberty of evangelicals and Catholics in this country?
2. Does he believe that life starts at conception and will his policy priorities reflect that conviction?

The answers to these foundational questions strike at the heart of a believer's worldview—and his politics. They are the surest sign of whether Sen. Kaine's Catholicism aligns itself with the majority view of almost all Catholic and evangelical Hispanics. Nothing is more important to us than our faith and our families, not even immigration reform.

In Mr. Kaine's case, it's extremely telling that he received a perfect score from Planned Parenthood while receiving a *zero* from the anti-abortion Right to Life Committee. This is an issue where Christians of all traditions find common ground.

Shouldn't we be able to expect Sen. Kaine to reasonably disagree with his own party on at least this one Catholic

issue? It appears not. In fact, Sen. Kaine has gone on record stating he is a “strong defender of *Roe v. Wade*.”

There are many more legislative issues we could discuss including marriage, families and adoption, but his stance on abortion alone raises serious questions about Sen. Kaine’s ability and or willingness to translate his faith into policy. Sen. Kaine has said, “My faith is central to everything I do,” and yet this position is clearly contrary to well-established Catholic teachings, positions adamantly held by Pope Francis, who, like Kaine, is also a Jesuit. It all reminds me of words written by James in the Bible: “*faith without works is dead*.”

If the Clinton campaign insists on using Mr. Kaine’s faith as a political asset, I respectfully ask that the Senator address these questions head on. Though, I think I already know his answers. {eoa}

Rev. Tony Suarez *is Executive Vice President of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, America’s largest Hispanic evangelical organization, which represents millions assembled in more than 40,000 U.S. churches and another 500,000 congregations worldwide and spread throughout the Spanish-speaking diaspora.*