

Conservative Catholics Say Pope Francis Is a Fraud, Columnist Claims

Though Pope Francis has been hailed as a hero by many, he may have made an enemy of conservative Catholics, one columnist says.

“Francis has had harsh words against globalized capitalism, has written a major encyclical on the environment and has been a major supporter of migrants in the crisis seizing Europe. In all these controversies, he actually hasn’t strayed too far from Catholic orthodoxy. But the most charitable version of the conservative critique, which is not unjustified, is that his tone and emphasis make him sound like a straightforward progressive and risks identifying the Magisterium of the Church with the progressive left,” Pascal-Emmanuel Gobry writes for *The Week*.

But Gobry isn’t the first to make this connection.

The Washington Post recently reported on devout Catholics who have been “filled with dread” since Francis was selected as pope in 2013.

The New York Times reports Catholics who oppose Francis and his policies rejoiced when devout Catholic Steve Bannon was selected as the White House chief strategist. These Catholics reportedly believe the pope is “outwardly avuncular but internally a ruthless wielder of absolute political power, this angry moment in history is an opportunity to derail what they see as a disastrous papal agenda.”

Forty-five percent of conservative Catholics had a favorable opinion of Francis in 2015, down from 72 percent in 2014, *Washington Post* reports.

“Conservatives fear that Francis’ actions represent tentative first steps down a dangerous slippery slope. Is this the beginning of an eventual undoing of all of Catholicism’s ancient and countercultural teachings on sexual ethics? If he goes too far, could he create a new schism within the church?” Gobry asks. {eoa}