



NOTIFICATION

To the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress Nancy Pelosi

The Second Vatican Council, in its Decree on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, reiterated the Church's ancient and consistent teaching that "from the first moment of conception life must be guarded with the greatest care while abortion and infanticide are unspeakable crimes" (n. 51). Christians have, indeed, always upheld the dignity of human life in every stage, especially the most vulnerable, beginning with life in the womb. His Holiness, Pope Francis, in keeping with his predecessors, has likewise been quite clear and emphatic in teaching on the dignity of human life in the womb.

This fundamental moral truth has consequences for Catholics in how they live their lives, especially those entrusted with promoting and protecting the public good of society. Pope St. John Paul II was also quite consistent in upholding this constant teaching of the Church, and frequently reminded us that "those who are directly involved in lawmaking bodies have a 'grave and clear obligation to oppose' any law that attacks human life. For them, as for every Catholic, it is impossible to promote such laws or to vote for them" (cf. *Doctrinal Note on some questions regarding the participation of Catholics in political life* [November 24, 2002], n. 4, §1). A Catholic legislator who supports procured abortion, after knowing the teaching of the Church, commits a manifestly grave sin which is a cause of most serious scandal to others. Therefore, universal Church law provides that such persons "are not to be admitted to Holy Communion" (Code of Canon Law, can. 915).

With regard to the application of these principles to Catholics in political life, then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, wrote to the U.S. bishops in 2004 explaining the approach to be taken:

... when a person's formal cooperation becomes manifest (understood, in the case of a Catholic politician, as his consistently campaigning and voting for permissive abortion and euthanasia laws), his Pastor should meet with him, instructing him about the Church's teaching, informing him that he is not to present himself for Holy Communion until he brings to an end the objective situation of sin, and warning him that he will otherwise be denied the Eucharist. When 'these precautionary measures have not had their effect ...,' and the person in question, with obstinate persistence, still presents himself to receive the Holy Eucharist, 'the minister of Holy Communion must refuse to distribute it.'


In striving to follow this direction, I am grateful to you for the time you have given me in the past to speak about these matters. Unfortunately, I have not received such an accommodation to my many requests to speak with you again since you vowed to codify the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision in federal law following upon passage of Texas Senate Bill 8 last September. That is why I communicated my concerns to you via letter on April 7, 2022, and informed you there that, should you not publically repudiate your advocacy for abortion "rights" or else refrain from referring to your Catholic faith in public and receiving Holy Communion, I would have no choice but to make a declaration, in keeping with canon 915, that you are not to be admitted to Holy Communion.

As you have not publically repudiated your position on abortion, and continue to refer to your Catholic faith in justifying your position and to receive Holy Communion, that time has now come. Therefore, in light of my responsibility as the Archbishop of San Francisco to be "concerned for all the Christian faithful entrusted to [my] care" (Code of Canon Law, can. 383, §1), by means of this communication I am hereby notifying you that **you are not to present yourself for Holy Communion and, should you do so, you are not to be admitted to Holy Communion, until such time as you publically repudiate your advocacy for the legitimacy of abortion and confess and receive absolution of this grave sin in the sacrament of Penance.**


Please know that I stand ready to continue our conversation at any time, and will continue to offer up prayer and fasting for you.

I also ask all of the faithful of the Archdiocese of San Francisco to pray for all of our legislators, especially Catholic legislators who promote procured abortion, that with the help and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they may undergo a conversion of heart in this most grave matter and human life may be protected and fostered in every stage and condition of life.

Given at San Francisco, on the nineteenth day of May, in the Year of our Lord 2022.



Archbishop of San Francisco



Chancellor