



“FROM THE DESK OF FATHER JONATHAN”



FEBRUARY 28, 2016

I'm sure many of you heard in the news that Pope Francis made some comments about one of the presidential candidates, in response to a reporter's question regarding immigration policy. There has been some dispute over what the Pope actually said and what he meant by it. Since then, the Vatican has clarified that his remarks were not meant to be a personal attack or to influence how people vote.

What exactly did the Pope say? He said that if a person thinks **ONLY** of building walls to keep people out rather than building bridges, that is not a Christian approach. I think we can all agree. Both in a literal understanding of "walls" and a figurative one, if we **ONLY** build walls between peoples, we are not living the Christian mandate to love our neighbors. This doesn't mean, however, that the Pope is advocating for open borders or saying that our government doesn't have the right to control immigration levels. It has always been the social teaching of the Church that a sovereign state has not only the right but also the responsibility to do this. I would agree with Pope Francis that we need urgent political will to solve the unsafe and unjust situation at our borders and in our country.

The Pope also said, that if this presidential candidate said the things that the reporter said he did, then "that man is not a Christian". In my opinion, Pope Francis made a mistake here. Even if someone has a policy that is unchristian, that does not take away his or her Christian identity. It doesn't make void his baptism. I'm sure Pope Francis would agree; it is just unfortunate that his words were so confusing. Popes are infallible when they make definitive declarations on dogma "ex cathedra", but not in everything they say or do. I love Pope Francis, and I know he wouldn't mind this respectful critique. Perhaps you have a different take on this. Feel free to share it with me.

Let us all pray for wise and virtuous political leaders to solve not only this issue of immigration but so many other pressing matters our country faces at this junction.

God Bless.

Father Jonathan

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