

Justyna Ball from 2

Catholicism, as I see it, is a non-political commitment and is actually not affiliated with any of the parties, although many Right Wing supporters would like to think so. And you often hear from the church's pulpit: We won't tell you for whom to vote, just vote.

A popular Polish politician, a Catholic, on Polish TV, stated publicly, that he does not like Obama's views because "Obama wants to talk to terrorists! You don't talk to terrorists! You kill terrorists!" he said. Most of you, I bet will agree, right? Hold on, a Catholic who wants to kill? The bible does not distinguish between baby killing and terrorist killing. It simply says, "Do not kill." What we should do in a civilized world, is...capture them, judge them and sentence them, but kill them? Don't you know that to some, they are terrorists, but to others, they may be martyrs? Polish Home Army soldiers were "bandits" and "terrorists" in Germans' eyes, and the Palestinian Intifada fighters against Jewish rule are called the same with the American media playing the judge. So who is right and who is wrong?

The more I research the subject of Catholics and the elections, criteria for the candidates, etc., the more I find out that the church actually leaves this to one's... conscience.

That's right. The partisan organizations within the church like the Catholic Answers, Republican Faith Partisans (RFP), you know, the "Catholic taliban," may try to promote their agenda, manipulate your mind and influence your vote by issuing voter's guides, but you may not realize it, the Catholic teachings are wiser than that, way wiser than that...

From the Catholic Free Press: "In July 2004, Washington Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, presenting a task force report to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, cited a letter from then-Cardinal Josef Ratzinger, head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, applying that distinction to voters. A Catholic would be guilty of sinful formal cooperation in evil" said McCarrick, "only if he were to deliberately vote for a candidate precisely because of the candidate's permissive stand on abortion." At the time, as Cardinal Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, wrote, specifically referring to abortion, "When a Catholic does not share a candidate's stand in favor of abortion and / or euthanasia but votes for that candidate for other reasons, it is considered remote material cooperation, which can be permitted if there are proportionate reasons."

(See, that's the wisdom of the Catholic Church. That requires you to think rather than follow.) And what might those reasons be?

For the RFP, it's simple: anybody who is not for life is against us. What if... I'm for life, but I think the number of abortions may be lowered if we vote for the candidate whose concern is to create a safe and comfortable environment for the future mother so she is more likely to keep the baby rather than abort it.

That's what Catholics for Obama clearly support and their critics cannot comprehend.

The problem of abortion won't be solved unless we get to the essence of it.

The church would like for us to practice abstinence, but we are not clones, and we don't think the same way. Some of us live in a la la land, where only happy babies are being born, to the mothers who all waited for them and they live happy lives for the rest of their earthy existence. The other group is more realistic and sees things as they are. It will also seek ways to help women so they can experience conscious pregnancies, which will limit pathologies.

We allow thousands of babies (born by mothers with AIDS) to carry the virus (which equals death). Is it because we

know so little about the disease or because faith blinds us? Only because we don't believe in condoms.

In the real world, where the majority still lives, not every pregnancy is desired, not every motherhood expected, not every child born is cared for.

Women have brains, and there is no need to tell them what to do. Also, we women don't have to vote for a woman to get things done. We just need to vote for a man who understands our issues. I don't believe there is a woman who would not be scarred for life after having an abortion, but there may be thousands of reasons for her act but only one to whom she will have to answer. And it's not you or me...

I also understand someone's urge to side with the unborn. If you won't, who will? That's so very human. But some of us go too far and ignite a war within the church, and I don't believe that was God's intention.

Let's concentrate on the issues that we all agree on, because only then something can actually be done and our place in history may have a greater meaning.

In July, Los Angeles Cardinal Roger Mahoney when asked whether a Catholic could in good faith vote for a Democrat responded, "There's nobody running for office at any level who is with the church on every single issue. We have to weigh the various goods and consider what's best for our people, and then each of us has to decide who is better going to represent the many concerns we have."

If you read the whole statement by the bishop Francis Cardinal George, you will not only find the notion about "respect for human dignity of every human person from conception to natural death," but also that "Catholics should vote for that person most committed to being a public servant dedicated to the common good."

Community organizations do just that, often attending to those who are left out of the system. How is fueling the war in Iraq with taxpayers' money helping our economy and our disadvantaged?

Aiding those starving in Darfur is one thing, but destroying Iraqi lives, culture and infrastructure under the pretext of WMD, so we can rebuild it is another. I have seen brutal abortion pictures on numerous websites, but I also saw such pictures of children who were already 2, 4, and 12 years old, and they were Iraqi children. Have you seen those? Are there any good Christians amongst us protesting their senseless murders? None? Anybody?

So we don't want the mother to abort the baby, but later on we insist on sending that kid to war and he is killed in the name of freedom, or to bring democracy?

Abortion kills, but so does war.

If the unborn has the very right to live, so does an Iraqi child. Why do we value their lives differently? Is it because they're NOT Christians?

The Polish American press, which often takes the side of being anti-abortion, rarely, or never mentions the fact that the late John Paul was very much AGAINST the Iraq invasion. So it is not only the Left Wing press that manipulates the church's stance, but the Right Wing as well. How often do you read about the issue of the death penalty which Catholic church also STRONGLY OPPOSES?

The money that goes to Iraq surely would help our distressed at home. Often, we see our needy as a nuisance, as those who don't want to work and only milk the system, and those overseas as truly impoverished. We would rather adopt children from Third World countries, who often are stolen from their parents, rather than adopt our own crack babies. I question such as Christian behavior...

To those who are willing to try to understand rather than blindly follow, I would recommend this (challenging) book: "Can a Catholic Support Him? Asking Big Questions About Barack Obama" by Douglas W. Kmiec (Republican) an American legal scholar,

professor of Constitutional Law at Pepperdine University. He was banned from taking communion for supporting senator Obama, but later apologized to by the church.

In the introduction of Kmiec's book we read: "One major reason not often explored that Catholics oppose abortion so strongly is the belief that if they do not do so they are personally responsible for cooperation in mass murder, and that they will be forced to acknowledge their guilt to the numerous innocent unborn victims in the judgment of the afterlife. (...) But if this is the judgment to come (on all of us), are we not responsible as well for every innocent man, woman, and child slain so violently during our misadventures in Iraq and Afghanistan? Could we not, in fact return to the previous century with our military involvement in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Guatemala to include the numerous innocent victims so violently slain in those countries to advance United States opposition to communism? And would not the judgment need to be enlarged by the same policy to include Vietnam and all of South East Asia, where nearly three million innocent victims were violently offered up to the gods of the Cold War? And do we dare to include acknowledgment of guilt for the untold number of innocent Japanese civilians who perished so violently unseen beneath the mushroom clouds covering Hiroshima and Nagasaki?"

Here is where the discussion ends and the name calling begins starting with "blind democrat (either you are or you are not, it does matter)", socialist, communist and if possible even a Nazi which does not make sense, as they are on opposite ends of the spectrum but it goes with... "genocide."

See, as much as you want to believe it, our country does not stay the same, and times change. Every four years, we face the same issues but priorities change. Often actions of a previous administration (either economy related or our military involvement in foreign lands) changes that order. You look at the candidate who is the best for the job, at this moment in history, surely the one with the most common sense, that's how I see it.

Some of the Polish American press has yet to acknowledge that we have a new president-elect even though they had full-page ads for McCain prior to Election Day (I guess, to please the readers, mainly Republicans, possibly Catholics.).

You may not realize this, but Polish-Americans voting for Obama are not so uncommon. According to the Global Electoral College study conducted by The Economist, Poland's response was: 28% for McCain and 72% for Obama.

The majority isn't buying that "terrorist, socialist, Muslim, whatever" smear.

I'm personally disgusted with Sarah Palin's views, and not because she opposes abortion, I respect that, but the fact that she opposes abortion EVEN IN THE CASE OF RAPE OR INCEST. I mean, this is beyond my "open mindedness." Who is this woman? What kind of mother is she? In my local paper, Robert Nemetz, the (supposedly) retired editor and Hungarian émigré called Obama's family "dysfunctional." Let's see, telling your child that (his, her) daddy is also his grandpa isn't? And how is this child, when he/she grows up, going to face the same dilemma when explaining the "family tree" to his or her children and so on... To support this you must be nuts. And these days, in the Internet era, where there are no limits to information, the child will know.

Obama was criticized for comparing teen pregnancy to "punishment." To make some innocent girl keep the baby as a result of horrible act done to her by some relative, they wouldn't call it a reward, at least where I come from.

Abortion being illegal won't stop women and men from having sex. It does not work this way. Opposed are often men

who are with all due respect, way over the reproductive age. I wish they used their energy volunteering at homeless shelters or taking foster children in or promoting adoption among family members and friends.

Abortion occurs amongst the rich and poor although the richer will always have access to private clinics outside the country and will travel to Canada or Europe. The abortion numbers amongst the poor are always greater, with financial difficulties often stated as an argument.

The poor will drive to Mexico or trust the local "charlatan" and die from bleeding, commit suicide, or kill the newborn. And is the church really for it? Will it take all the "unwanted" in, feed them, clothe them, and pay for their college?

At the end, I'll give you Poland's example. Under the communist regime where supposedly 96% were Catholic, the birth rate was 1.5 children per family. A miracle? Hardly... This was I repeat, a Catholic country. Now, do not tell me that Catholics had 6 or more children and 4% of non-Catholics had minus 106.5 children, to make up for the 1.5 average. No, that's not how it happened. What it meant was that legal abortion provided hospital care for those women who were in need of it even in a religious society. Catholic women had abortions legally and the greater "evil" was not abortion but Communism. I do not recall any anti-abortion protests organized by the church at that time strangely enough...

By the way, the same group of Poles (Right Wing) that cheered for McCain in America are supporters of PiS in Poland and critics of... the privatization of medical care. Why? Because many are elderly, actually liked the old system, and believe that "privatization" means that they have to bring a suitcase of money each time they visit the hospital. While in the US, it's quite the opposite.

PiS won't aid PO's idea of privatization because it will go against the electorate. Go figure...

Now, the Catholic conservatives have tried to convince me that I should vote for McCain. The Republican candidate representing the same party that in 8 years of ruling brought upon us this economic Armageddon. We are facing the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, and as a result, millions of jobs have disappeared with probably more to come.

Reuters reported that: "The housing slump is set to worsen in 2009 as fallout from this year's plunge in the stock market and consumer confidence continues to cast a pall over potential buyers."

The auto industry (our pride and joy) is in shambles. We are supposed to bail out a bunch of "experts" who did not see it coming. We saw it, they didn't, go figure... Two Bush terms and we're heading for catastrophe, and we all are getting a share of it, sooner or later, in one way or another. You may want to put that retirement plan to rest for now, and get ready for a rough ride, courtesy of president Bush and his fellow party acquaintances.

And you are telling me I cannot vote for Obama because of his stance on abortion? Are you out of your mind? □

Beginning Polish Language Study Group

Meet at Hastings Library
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Beginning Saturday September 20th
from 1.00 PM to 4.30PM.
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