



Written by [Ralph R. Reiland](#) on May 29, 2017

## Trump, Walls, and the Pope

Could it be that Donald Trump is mellowing?

Known for his harsh monikers to put down his critics — little Marco, Pocahontas, lying Ted, low-energy Bush, crazy Bernie and crooked Hillary — Mr. Trump didn't take the easy shot when he recently arrived at the Vatican and refer to Pope Francis as the walled-up pontiff.

Injecting himself into the Republican presidential race in 2016, Pope Francis, formerly Marco Mario Bergoglio and the Archbishop of Buenos Aires, put forward the idea that Mr. Trump "is not a Christian" because of his campaign promises about building a wall along the U.S.-Mexican border, making Mexico foot the bill, and increasing the deportation of immigrants.



Said Pope Francis aboard the papal plane (Shepherd One, as it's referred to by some) after his six-day visit to Mexico when a reporter asked him about candidate Trump, "A person who thinks only about building walls, wherever they may be, is not a Christian."

Various popes, however, all apparently Christians, have commissioned the defensive and longstanding walls that surround the Vatican. "The Walls of the Popes," a Vatican tourist guide, details the building, extension and revamping of the fortress-like walls encircling the Vatican that was done at the bequest of numerous popes: Leo IV, Pius IV, Pius IX, Nicholas V, Paul III, Urban VIII, Alexander VI, Innocent X,

Candidate Trump issued a quick and forceful response to the misgivings that Pope Francis expressed about Mr. Trump's religion: "For a religious leader to question a person's faith is disgraceful."

Trump also charged the Mexican government of "using the Pope as a pawn" because "they want to continue to rip off the United States, both on trade and the border, and they understand I am totally wise to them."

More broadly, Trump linked Islamist terrorist attacks to the security of the Vatican: "If and when the Vatican is attacked by ISIS, which everyone knows is ISIS's ultimate trophy, I promise you that the Pope would have only wished and prayed that Donald Trump would have been elected President because this would not have happened. ISIS would have been eradicated unlike what is happening now with our all talk, no action politicians."

In his February 24, 2017 article in *FrontPage* magazine, "Pope Francis Condemns Europe's Ancient Walls Against Islam; Safely ensconced behind the Vatican's walls, he calls on others to 'tear down their walls,' " Raymond Ibrahim, a Fellow at the David Horowitz Freedom Center, contended that "Pope Francis continues to argue for two interrelated points that, while seemingly humane, compromise Western nations and expose their citizens to danger."



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Pope Francis, reported Ibrahim, “reiterated his first point earlier this month when he said ‘I appeal not to create walls but to build bridges,’ imploring Western nations not to close their doors against more incoming Muslim migrants, and reiterated his second point a few days ago when he said ‘Muslim terrorism does not exist.’ ”

Moving to an accusation of papal hypocrisy and naivety, Ibrahim referred to long-running wall building by the papacy and the view from Vatican balconies and windows: “When every morning Francis wakes up in the Vatican and looks out his window, he sees a very large and visible reminder that gives the lie to both his argument against walls and his argument in defense of Islam. I speak of the great walls surrounding Vatican City, more specifically the Leonine Walls.”

The Leonine Walls, a fortification surrounding the Vatican, were commissioned by Pope Leo IV following raids by marauders and the sacking by Muslim raiders of the Old St. Peter’s Basilica in 846.

A few years after Islamic prophet Muhammad died in 632,” wrote Ibrahim, “his followers erupted out of Arabia and conquered the surrounding lands of non-Muslims in the name of Islamic jihad. In a few decades, they had conquered two-thirds of what was in the 7th century Christendom.”

By the 9th century, reported Ibrahim, “Muslim raiding fleets from North Africa landed near Rome. Unable to breach the walls of the Eternal City, they sacked and despoiled the surrounding countryside, including — to the consternation of Christendom — the venerated and centuries-old basilicas of St. Peter and St. Paul.”

Contrary to the opinion of Pope Francis about a person who thinks “only of building walls, wherever they may be, is not a Christian,” Pope Leo IV (847-855) responded to the aforementioned attack, recounted Ibrahim, “by building large walls and fortifications along the right bank of the Tiber to protect the sacred sites from further Muslim raids. Completed by 852, the walls were in most places 40 feet high and 12 feet thick.”

Ten feet lower than Pope Leo’s walls fortifying the Vatican, “The Trump administration wants to build a 30-foot high border wall,” reported The Associated Press on March 18, 2017, “according to a pair of contract notices posted to a government website” detailing Trump’s plans for the U.S.-Mexico border wall. “The notices were made public by Customs and Border Protection, the Homeland Security Agency that will oversee the project and eventually patrol and maintain the wall.”



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