



Written by [Dennis Behrendt](#) on November 13, 2008

U.S. Bishops Take Action on Abortion

About 300 bishops gathered in Baltimore [to draft a statement](#) from the bishops to the incoming Obama administration that would make clear that the Catholic Church will not stray from its defense of the unborn. Fearing an attack on religious freedom by the new administration, a number of bishops called for no compromise on the issue and arguing that it was time to start holding Catholic politicians accountable for their legislative actions.

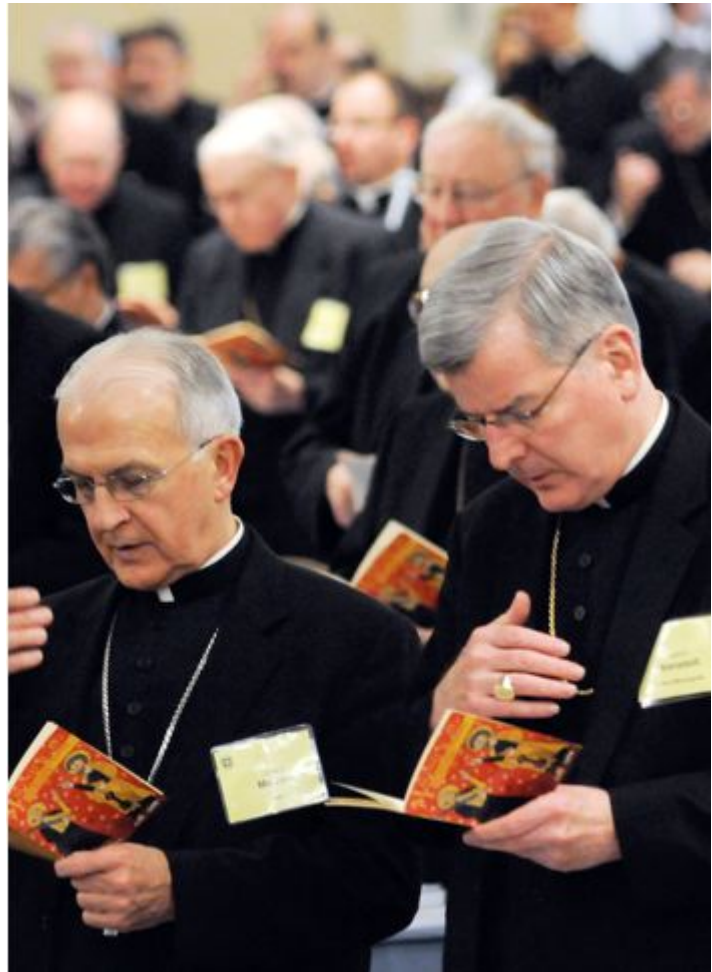
Scranton, Pa., Bishop Joseph Martino singled out vice president-elect Joe Biden as one Catholic politician who has failed to follow Catholic teaching by consistently supporting abortion-rights legislation. "I cannot have a vice president-elect coming to Scranton to say he's learned his values there when those values are utterly against the teachings of the Catholic Church," commented Martino. Other bishops like Kansas City's Archbishop Joseph Naumann echoed similar sentiments. "They cannot call themselves Catholic when they violate such a core belief as the dignity of the unborn," said Naumann.

The Kansas City archbishop has often held Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius publicly accountable for her support of abortion rights, advising her to stop receiving Communion until she conforms to Catholic teaching.

Obama's pledge to overturn states' restrictions on late-term abortions and parental-consent requirements has alarmed many among the Catholic hierarchy who fear that such legislation might threaten laws that permit Catholic hospitals to refrain from providing abortions. Any such legislation that would mandate the violation of conscience would be viewed as unacceptable. "If Catholic hospitals were required by federal law to perform abortions, we'd have to close our hospitals," said Bishop Thomas Paprocki of Chicago.

Chicago Cardinal Francis George, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), is the author of the document that is expected to present a message that radical pro-abortion policies will be considered as direct attacks on the Catholic Church. Such attacks, said the bishops, would "permanently alienate tens of millions of Americans."

Faithful Catholics will no doubt argue that the action taken by the U.S. bishops is long overdue, given the fact that a slight majority of the nation's Catholics voted for the pro-abortion candidate in the





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presidential election. The new, seemingly harder public stance coming from the USCCB might have been more effective had it been delivered earlier.

Meanwhile, Catholic bishops also took the opportunity in Baltimore to cut off funding to the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, otherwise known as [ACORN](#). Revelations of embezzlement by Dale Rathke, brother of the founder of ACORN, and rampant voter-registration fraud compelled U.S. Catholic Bishops to take a closer look at their relationship with the heavily partisan ACORN. Evidence that Rathke made off with nearly \$1 million dollars of ACORN funds was made known as early as July 2008, and ACORN-linked voter-registration-fraud allegations surfaced prior to the election.

According to Auxiliary Bishop Robert Morin of New Orleans, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development will cease future grants to ACORN. The Catholic group had intended to make available \$1 million to fund community groups through ACORN this fiscal year. "There will be no funding relationships with ACORN groups in the future," said Morin.

Given the actions taken in Baltimore, it appears that U. S. Roman Catholic Bishops are poised to do a better job of educating Catholics about the consequences of voting for pro-abortion candidates.

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