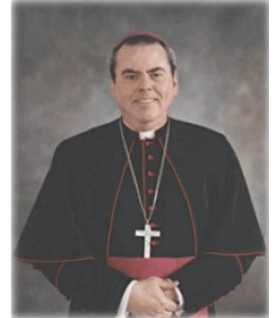




Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on October 15, 2012

Bishop to Biden: No Communion in Colorado Springs Diocese

If Vice President Joe Biden travels to Colorado to campaign for re-election, it would be better if he did not present himself for Holy Communion at a Catholic Church within the [Diocese of Colorado Springs](#). Because Bishop [Michael Sheridan](#) (pictured beneath the diocesan coat of arms and logotype), a stalwart defender of the unborn, says the pro-abortion Catholic won't likely receive it.



Sheridan said he would ensure that Biden knows he is not to partake of Holy Communion, which [Catholics believe](#) is the actual body and blood of Jesus Christ.

Sheridan's Statement

Sheridan warned Biden [during an interview](#) with a writer for the *Gazette-Telegraph* of Colorado Springs.

Columnist Daniel Cole pointed to Sheridan's strong, unequivocal statement in 2004 on the subject of abortion, politicians and the voters who put those politicians in office. [Sheridan wrote](#) in a teaching that [he reprised](#) in 2007, "There must be no confusion in these matters." He added:

Any Catholic politicians who advocate for abortion, for illicit stem cell research or for any form of euthanasia ipso facto place themselves outside full communion with the Church and so jeopardize their salvation. Any Catholics who vote for candidates who stand for abortion, illicit stem cell research or euthanasia suffer the same fateful consequences. It is for this reason that these Catholics, whether candidates for office or those who would vote for them, may not receive Holy Communion until they have recanted their positions and been reconciled with God and the Church in the Sacrament of Penance.

Cole asked the prelate whether his position had changed.

Answered Sheridan:

It's clear to me that the Code of Canon Law, [Canon 915](#), says that a Catholic politician who publicly espouses positions that are contrary, not just to any teachings of the Church, but to serious moral teachings, should not receive Holy Communion until they recant those positions publicly.

Canon 915 is a codicil of canon law that governs who may received Holy Communion and under what circumstances. It says that "those who have been [excommunicated](#) or [interdicted](#) after the [imposition](#) or [declaration](#) of the [penalty](#) and others [obstinately](#) persevering in [manifest grave sin](#) are not to be [admitted](#) to [holy communion](#)."

[Canon 915 explains](#) that "[a] [person](#) who is [conscious](#) of [grave sin](#) is not to [celebrate Mass](#) or [receive](#) the [body](#) of the [Lord](#) without [previous sacramental confession](#) unless there is a [grave reason](#) and there is no [opportunity](#) to [confess](#); in this [case](#) the [person](#) is to [remember](#) the [obligation](#) to make an [act](#) of [perfect contrition](#) (i.e., sorrow based on sincere remorse at having offended God, rather than mere fear



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of eternal punishment) which [includes](#) the [resolution](#) of [confessing](#) as [soon](#) as [possible](#).

Thus, pro-abortion Catholic politicians are barred from Holy Communion.

A voter, Sheridan said, would “need a little bit more nuance” because he might not vote for a politician solely because of his position on abortion and other “non-negotiable issues.” Still, Sheridan said, “It would be very difficult for me to understand how, if there are two candidates quite far apart in their positions on these matters, I could vote for the one who consistently opposes these Church teachings, simply because he might be in favor of a few good things.”

Sheridan also noted that Catholic politicians who support the Obama administration’s mandate [that forces](#) Catholic employers to provide free contraceptives to employees also fall under the rule of Canon 915, meaning that teaching is also “non-negotiable.”

On Biden, [Cole asked](#) this question: “If Vice President Joe Biden, who is Catholic, were to swing through Colorado Springs on a campaign tour and attend your Mass, would you deny him Communion?”

[Replied Sheridan](#), “He should know, and I would do everything I could do to make sure that he knows, he ought not to be receiving Communion.”

Though Biden is strong supporter of abortion “rights,” he says is personally opposed to it. The vice president [made that point](#) in [his debate](#) against GOP vice presidential candidate [Rep. Paul Ryan](#) on Oct. 9.

[Said Biden](#):

With regard to — with regard to abortion, I accept my church’s position on abortion as a — what we call *de fide* [dogmatic teaching]. Life begins at conception. That’s the church’s judgment. I accept it in my personal life.

But I refuse to impose it on equally devout Christians and Muslims and Jews and — I just refuse to impose that on others, unlike my friend here, the congressman.

I — I do not believe that — that we have a right to tell other people that women, they — they can’t control their body. It’s a decision between them and their doctor, in my view. And the Supreme Court — I’m not going to interfere with that.

Confused Biden

The Catholic bishops, including Sheridan, have repeatedly explained to Biden and other pro-abortion Catholic politicians that one cannot “personally oppose” abortion and support laws that permit it.

In 2008, Biden and then House Speaker [Nancy Pelosi](#) (D-Calif.) [appeared on Meet The Press](#) and [mangled Catholic teaching](#) on the matter, particularly with respect to what the Church has taught historically.

Host Tom Brokaw asked what Biden would tell Barack Obama if he asked, “When does life begin?”

[Replied Biden](#):

Look, I know when it begins for me. It’s a personal and private issue. For me, as a Roman Catholic, I’m prepared to accept the teachings of my church. But let me tell you. There are an awful lot of people of great confessional faiths — Protestants, Jews, Muslims and others — who have a different view. ... I’m prepared as a matter of faith to accept that life begins at the moment of conception. But that is my judgment. For me to impose that judgment on everyone else who is equally and



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maybe even more devout than I am seems to me is inappropriate in a pluralistic society.

Biden then explained that the Church's teaching on when life begins has been a matter of debate in the Church, noting that [St. Thomas Aquinas](#), in the *[Summa Theologica](#)*, suggested that life begins at [quickenning](#), or when the mother feels an unborn child move in the womb.

But that "debate" was about ensoulment, on when the unborn child is sufficiently developed to receive a soul from God, not whether it is "alive."

The bishops [quickly replied](#) that Biden — and Pelosi — were wrong, noting that the Church [has always](#) condemned abortion, [going back](#) to its earliest times.

[According to](#) the Church's Declaration on Procured Abortion, "In the course of history, the Fathers of the Church, her Pastors and her Doctors have taught the same doctrine — the various opinions on the infusion of the spiritual soul did not introduce any doubt about the illicitness of abortion.... [I]t was never denied at that time that procured abortion, even during the first days, was objectively grave fault. This condemnation was in fact unanimous."

Parish Shopping

Given Sheridan's admonition, Biden is understandably nervous about presenting himself for Holy Communion. [According to](#) a report in the *Washington Post*, Biden's devotion to his faith not only includes "the rosary he prays with daily," which he took to the White House Situation Room as Navy SEALs were about to kill Osama bin Laden, but also parish shopping so he will not be denied the central sacrament of the Catholic faith. "He never misses Mass," the ["She the People" blog reported](#). And "his trip planners regularly scout for parishes where there'd be no big fuss over him — and no risk of him being denied Communion over his pro-choice politics."

Related article: [Biden Says He's a Good Catholic Who Supports Abortion](#)



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