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Minn. Teen Denied Confirmation Over His Support for Same-Sex Marriage

A Minnesota teen who posted a [photo on his Facebook page](#) showing his support for same-sex marriage has been denied confirmation by the Catholic Church, according to his parents. [Doug and Shana Cihak](#) said that their 17-year-old son Lennon wasn't allowed to be confirmed at their parish, Assumption Church in Barnesville, Minnesota, after he posted the picture of himself with a [Minnesota for Marriage](#) sign that he had defaced to oppose the proposed state constitutional amendment that would have defined marriage as only between a man and a woman. Following intense pressure from homosexual activists and their supporters, the amendment referendum was defeated on the November 6 ballot.



According to the Associated Press, Shana Cihak was called into a private conversation with the church's priest, the Rev. Gary LaMoine, who supposedly informed her that her son would not be confirmed with the rest of his religion class, even though he had attended mass every week and volunteered around the community. She complained that while other students in his confirmation class had "liked" Lennon's photo on Facebook, they were still allowed confirmation. "I just thought it was wrong to single him out," said Mrs. Cihak.

The mother said she was shocked by the treatment of her son. "You kind of know the Catholic beliefs, but I never thought they would deny somebody confirmation because you weren't 100 percent," she told the *Forum of Fargo-Moorhead*.

As for Lennon Cihak, while denigrating the sacrament of marriage closely embraced by the Catholic Church, he nonetheless insisted that "I don't want the church to be put down. I don't want the Catholic religion to be put down. It's just the way the priest has things running. He's so strict. He won't loosen up about things."

In response to media queries about the story, the Rev. LaMoine explained that it was Lennon Cihak who ultimately chose not to go through with confirmation, although the priest conceded that in light of the revelations about the teen's views on marriage he would not have been able to confirm him anyway. LaMoine told [LifeSiteNews.com](#) that his secretary stumbled upon Lennon's Facebook post and photo the day after the priest had engaged in a lengthy meeting with the family, during which he had addressed several issues, including the fact that the parents were not coming to church. However, no mention was made of Lennon's views on marriage. The next day, after discovering the controversial post, "the priest says that he then telephoned Lennon, and in the course of that conversation the boy said he had chosen not to go forward with Confirmation," reported LifeSite News.

The priest added that once he realized the young man's opposition to the Church's teaching on marriage, he would not have allowed him to be confirmed. "You can't have people out there saying



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things that are so contrary to the central teaching and doctrine of the Catholic faith, and going through confirmation," LaMoine explained. "After he put it out in the public, we would have looked like a bunch of hypocrites in confirming him."

Lennon Cihak was not the only teen at the church denied confirmation over the same-sex marriage issue. In a letter addressed to congregants of Assumption Church, Father LaMoine wrote that "a couple of candidates chose not to enter into full communion with the Catholic community because of their disagreement with the teaching of the Church concerning marriage." The other individual reportedly was a student who supported Cihak in his publicly shared opinion.

Additionally, LaMoine apologized to the parish for the actions of the Cihak family. "I have personally spent much time talking to them face to face about their unwillingness to accept the teaching of the Church on marriage but to no avail," he wrote. LaMoine told a local news source, [Detroit Lakes Online](#), that the situation "has caused a great upheaval and a lot of hurt in the parish over this whole thing, but the family has really pushed this."

The Minnesota teen certainly isn't the only individual to be called to account in recent weeks for views contrary to Church teaching. During a debate with Republican opponent Paul Ryan in October, Vice President Joe Biden, a supposedly practicing Catholic, expressed his defiance for the Church's absolute prohibition on abortion. While claiming that "my religion defines who I am, and I have been a practicing Catholic my whole life," Biden qualified his commitment to his faith on the issue of legalized infanticide. "I accept my church's position on abortion as what we call *de fide* doctrine," Biden intoned. "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 Christian and Muslims and Jews, and I just refuse to impose that on others." He added that "I do not believe that we have a right to tell other people that ... they can't control their body. It is a decision between them and their doctor, in my view, and the Supreme Court. I am not going to interfere with that."

Biden's comments prompted Catholic leaders to point out that in his 1995 encyclical letter, [Evangelium Vitae](#), Pope John Paul II confirmed that laws "which authorize and promote abortion and euthanasia are ... radically opposed not only to the good of the individual but also to the common good; as such they are completely lacking in authentic juridical validity." The Pope added that "abortion and euthanasia are thus crimes which no human law can claim to legitimize. There is no obligation in conscience to obey such laws; instead there is a grave and clear obligation to oppose them by conscientious objection."

One bishop, Michael Sheridan of Colorado Springs, responded to Biden's comments by saying during an interview with a columnist for the [Colorado Springs Gazette](#) that should the vice president find himself in that community he should forgo receiving communion. "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," Bishop Sheridan said.

[Catholic.org](#) reported that Sheridan's comments were a followup to his 2004 statement that there were four non-negotiable issues upon which Catholic politicians must follow Church teaching in crafting their platforms and policies: abortion, embryonic stem-cell research, euthanasia, and same-sex marriage. The Catholic website noted that "Biden has put himself on record as supporting the wrong side on each of these issues."



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