

Trump's nomination

Catholic influence increases with **Brian Burch**, new US Ambassador to the Holy See

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On Friday, December 20, President Donald Trump announced Brian Burch, President of CatholicVote, as the new United States ambassador to the Holy See. The decision, while unexpected for some, reflects Burch's prominent status as a Catholic leader and fierce

advocate for the Church's teachings and traditions. A father of nine and a co-founder of CatholicVote, Burch has dedicated his life to inspiring Catholics to integrate their faith into public life, making him a fitting choice for this significant diplomatic role.

Born and raised in Phoenix, Arizona, Burch attended Catholic schools throughout his upbringing, including Most Holy Trinity, St. Thomas the Apostle, and St. Mary's High School. He later graduated with a degree in Political Philosophy from the University of Dallas in 1997, a highly regarded Catholic university in Texas. During his summers, he worked alongside migrant laborers on his family's farm, where he harvested watermelons and cantaloupes. These early experiences shaped his appreciation for faith, hard work, and community. Reflecting on these times, Burch has often joked about learning Spanish from his coworkers, albeit "not the most elegant or appropriate words."

Burch's Catholic leadership has garnered numerous accolades, including the Cardinal John O'Connor Defender of the Faith Award from Legatus and the St. Juan Diego Leadership Award from the Tepeyac Institute. He also serves as President of Seton Academy Catholic Montessori School in Illinois. Under his guidance, CatholicVote has become a leading voice for Catholics nationwide, advocating for Church values and supporting U.S. bishops against criticisms from traditional media and activist groups.

CatholicVote has taken bold stances on critical issues, notably keeping the most accurate and up-to-date track of both Catholic churches and pro-life pregnancy centers. The attacks followed the Supreme Court's Dobbs decision overturning Roe v. Wade.

These efforts aim to ensure these incidents are recognized and prosecuted as hate crimes under federal law, a critical step in addressing the alarming rise in violence against religious institutions. By categorizing such actions as hate crimes, the law emphasizes the gravity of these offenses and provides stronger deterrents and penalties. This approach also fosters greater societal awareness of the need to protect religious freedoms and respect diverse faith communities, reinforcing the fundamental rights enshrined in the U.S. Constitution. The organization's tracker of such attacks is one of the most comprehensive tools available and has drawn national attention to the rising threats against Catholic institutions.

One of CatholicVote's most publicized victories occurred in June 2024 when it successfully pressured the popular baseball team Los Angeles Dodgers to cancel the honoring of an anti-Catholic LGBT militant group of transvestites, "The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence," which openly mock Catholic sisters and the Catholic faith in general. The group was initially slated to be honored during a pregame ceremony

during “Gay Pride” month. CatholicVote’s protests led to the event being scaled back significantly and secured a commitment from the Dodgers to dedicate an annual game in July to Christian families. The controversy drew widespread attention, culminating in the Dodgers’ crushing 15-0 defeat to their rivals during the game.

Despite criticisms from progressive Catholics labeling him a “culture warrior” or opposing Pope Francis, Burch has consistently defended the papacy, especially against the growing number of sedevacantists in the country. CatholicVote notably welcomed Pope Francis’ election with a widely praised video, reinforcing Burch’s commitment to unity within the Church.

Also, recognizing the growing influence of Hispanic Catholics, Burch launched Voto Católico in 2022, the Spanish counterpart to CatholicVote, and introduced “El Lazo,” a newsletter inspired by Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, to engage Spanish-speaking Catholics.

Burch’s nomination has been met with positive reaction from Catholic organizations. Jonathan J. Sanford, President of the University of Dallas, lauded him as “a man of deep faith, strong character, and genuine prudence.”

The organization of Catholic entrepreneurs Legatus celebrated his appointment as that of a leader who will make Catholics proud, and Cristofer Pereyra, President of the Tepeyac Institute called him “an extraordinary example of Catholic lay leadership.”

Burch himself expressed deep gratitude for the opportunity, emphasizing the inspiration he draws from his wife, Sara, their nine children, his late father, and the entire CatholicVote team. “This is an extraordinary opportunity to represent the United States in our relationship with the Vatican. Serving in this role will be a profound responsibility,” he said. He also highlighted the personal significance of the moment, recalling the values instilled by his father, who passed away earlier in 2023, and the recent joy of welcoming his first grandchild.

Burch’s influence extends beyond his advocacy work. He was the first to host and interview J.D. Vance, a Catholic convert who at that time was a little known candidate for the senate representing the state of Ohio. Their relationship has grown into a close friendship, with Vance now set to become Vice President of the United States. This marks a significant moment for Catholic representation in leadership, as Burch joins a growing number of Catholics occupying key roles in the future Trump administration.

This visible representation of Catholics in Trump’s has the potential to influence

both policy and public perception by integrating faith-based perspectives into governance. It underscores the increasing recognition of Catholic contributions to societal issues and may encourage a broader dialogue on the role of religion in shaping national and international policies. Moreover, it signals a commitment to values-driven leadership that could inspire trust and engagement among diverse faith communities. These include individuals like Vance, whose conversion story and commitment to faith-based values have inspired many.

If confirmed, Burch will relocate to the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See with four of his children, marking the first time since 2012 that the embassy has hosted children. His family's presence reflects his deep-rooted values of faith and family, which have been central to his public and private life. The nomination also highlights the enduring importance of U.S.-Vatican relations, established formally in 1984 under President Ronald Reagan and Pope John Paul II. Burch's appointment underscores a commitment to strengthening these ties while promoting shared values of human dignity and the common good.