

AMERICA

Jesuit magazine makes absurd parallel between Biden-Benedict XVI resignations

WORLD

27_07_2024

**Miguel
Cuartero**



Comparing the President of the United States of America Joe Biden to Benedict XVI might seem like an exaggeration. In reality, it is an insult and an insult to the memory of the German pope. Moreover, it is a sign of not having understood who Joe Biden is and

who Benedict XVI, born Joseph Ratzinger, was. This is somewhat alarming for priests who boast studies in theology, who work as journalists, therefore contribute to shaping public opinion among Catholics, and who hold pioneering pastoral roles.

We are talking about the American Jesuits of the more progressive and radical wing who operate *America* magazine. Among them, the prominent name is that of the Reverend James Martin, well known throughout the world for his battles in favour of the claims of the LGBT community. Less well known is his Jesuit brother Michael O'Loughlin, editor of *Outreach*, a magazine dedicated to 'LGBT Catholicism' and linked to *America* Media. Mr. O'Loughlin has received numerous awards and honours including one from an association of LGBT journalists (NLGJA: The Association of LGBTQ+ Journalists) for his efforts to raise awareness of rainbow issues.

Following the declaration of the current American president's renouncement to his candidacy for the White House race, O'Loughlin penned an emotional reflection for *America* on Joe Biden's greatness and what he calls 'a gesture of heroic humility'. It is an article full of sentimentality in which he burns incense to mortal Biden as unique in the history of the United States, a president like no other, a 'Catholic politician who grew up in a church reinvigorated by the reforms of the Second Vatican Council and who saw the Democratic Party as the best way to serve the poor'. Even leaving aside how the Council supposedly reinvigorated the Catholic Church, the affirmation that he 'serves the poor' through the Democratic Party casts a disturbing shadow over President Biden's performance.

But let us consider the amazing comparison made between Biden and Ratzinger. After praising Biden's heroic humility in relinquishing power for the good of the country, O'Loughlin refers to Benedict XVI as 'another Catholic leader' who 'had spent his life close to power and eventually obtained it'. Benedict too had to recognise his own incapacity and give up power for the good of the Church.

It's true Benedict's resignation surprised the whole world, but the circumstances are completely different and do not justify a comparison with Biden's desperate gesture, because Ratzinger: a) did not renounce his candidacy but the exercise of his mandate; b) did not do so out of self-evident incapacity, as demonstrated by the lucidity he maintained in the years following his retirement and up to his last days on earth; c) did not suffer the media pressure of an entire country and large supporters and financiers.

Comparing a Supreme Pontiff to a politician is certainly risky, but to say that Benedict would have sought power to the point of obtaining it is, in fact, a gratuitous

insult to one who was first and foremost a servant of truth against the drifts of a society and a Church undermined by the 'dictatorship of relativism'.

Cardinal Ratzinger did not campaign for himself. He did not engage in primaries to defeat other candidates, nor did he avail himself of large donations to support his candidature; moreover, there were no shadows on his election, nor did he flaunt any kind of superiority after being elected, rather he described himself as 'a humble worker in the vineyard of the Lord'. He did not leave the Church inflamed by wars, but, on the contrary, he worked for peace and unity, to mend and improve (just think of the motu proprio *Summorum Pontificum* and the door opened to the Anglicans with the apostolic constitution *Anglicanorum Coetibus*). His person and legacy is well-known.

Perhaps less well known is the battle that Biden waged during his presidency in favour of abortion, calling it a 'constitutional right' and promising initiatives to curb the restrictive policies of individual states. Biden has been accused of blasphemy by American evangelicals for having celebrated 'transgender visibility day' on Easter Day, the holiest holiday for Christians. In addition to putting several LGBT holidays on the calendar, Biden - following in the footsteps of Clinton and Obama - called June gay 'pride month', the same month that for all Catholics is dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

In short, the differences between Biden and Ratzinger are such that no one would think of comparing them over a single event, which moreover occurred in completely different circumstances and situations. It is true that ideology blinds, just as power blinds. And that the first thing to be blinded is reason. It is true that sentimentalism is one of the fruits of ideology that prevents reasoning and shifts the discourse to feelings.