

VATICAN

With letter to US bishops Pope declares war on Trump

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It has been clear for some time that Pope Francis dislikes US President Donald Trump. So much so that even the recent [appointment of Cardinal Robert W. McElroy](#) as the new archbishop of Washington was seen as a snub to the new president. But such a direct

attack as the [letter to the US bishops on immigration](#), dated 10 February and published yesterday, is something completely unprecedented. And also disturbing (like his contribution last night at the Sanremo yearly Music Festival in Italy, accompanied by the singing of Imagine).

The explicit aim of the letter is the “programme of mass deportations” that is “taking place in the United States”, against which the Pope expresses “open opposition” and invites the bishops and all American Catholics to do the same, also living in “solidarity and fraternity”; something that the American Church has been doing for decades, promoting aid to immigrants and - perhaps the Vatican doesn't know this - [almost entirely financed by the American government](#).

Pope Francis appeals not only for respect for the 'infinite dignity of all', but also for the principle that the expulsion of illegal immigrants is only lawful if they have committed 'violent or serious crimes during their stay in the country or before their arrival'. This last principle is questionable, to say the least, since illegal entry, like any violation of the law, requires sanction and reparation. And it is also grotesque that this position should be taken by the sovereign of the Vatican State, who last December [approved new laws](#) that increase prison sentences and fines for those who enter his territory illegally. In short, everyone is good at welcoming if it's within the borders of others.

We said at the outset that the letter was disturbing. Firstly, because it shows a lack of knowledge of what is happening in the United States. It's true that illegal immigration was one of the hottest topics during the election campaign, and Trump - as is his style - used hyperbolic language, and even in his first weeks in the White House he made questionable statements about immigration, such as showing videos of dozens of illegal immigrants being handcuffed during deportation operations or being transported to Guantanamo. And there has also been controversy with the American Catholic bishops.

But many of the bombastic statements and threats are aimed at forcing countries of origin and transit to police their borders. A questionable method, of course, but we are still in the realm of political options in the face of an objective problem that all administrations have had to face.

But Trump is doing exactly what the Biden and Obama administrations did before him. It may surprise you to learn that the [record for deportations and repatriations](#) belongs to the Biden presidency: 4.44 million people were repatriated in the first two years of the presidency alone, more than the entire previous Trump

administration, which reached 3.13 million, a figure even lower than the 3.16 million repatriations carried out during Barack Obama's presidency. But even when it comes to **deportations alone**, Biden scored worse than Trump's first term; and fiscal year 2024 saw a record number of deportations, with 271,000 illegal immigrants removed from the country, up from 267,000 in 2019, which was the peak of the Trump I era. And the record year was 2014, with 316,000 forced returns under the Obama presidency.

It is possible that Trump II will set new records, but for now these are the established figures. Yet there was not a single word of criticism from Santa Marta when it was his Democratic friends who were 'deporting'.

Similarly, there was never a letter from Pope Francis to the American bishops criticising the Biden administration's universal spread of free abortion, which had even made it a flagship policy. On the contrary, Pope Francis has put in a difficult position those few American bishops who have had the courage, in accordance with canon law, to deny Communion to pro-abortion politicians. This was the **case of the Archbishop of San Francisco, Salvatore Cordileone**, who refused communion to the then Speaker of the House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi.

It's true that the Pope has often used fiery words on abortion - words his predecessors would not have been forgiven for - but the facts speak for themselves. Biden and Pelosi, fanatical abortionists, are always welcome in the Vatican, treated as good Catholics, and woe betide anyone who denies them communion. And let's not talk about gender and the promotion of the LGBT agenda, which was even a foreign policy priority for Biden.

The contradictions are all too obvious, but the real underlying problem is that whenever the Pope intervenes in social and political issues, he always gives the impression of being biased. He doesn't call for criteria and ultimate values that everyone should follow, but enters the arena of conflicts, supporting one side against the other and vice versa, always remaining on a worldly plane, bending biblical quotations and the Church's social doctrine to his own convictions.

This is how the papacy loses credibility both inside and outside the Church.