

A Cosmopolitan Church Confronts Right-Wing Populism

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Are all human beings of equal moral worth? If so, does this proposition generate moral obligations to others that transcend national and cultural boundaries? Cosmopolitans would answer yes to each of these questions, as would Pope Francis and Catholic Social Teaching (CST). Given our interconnected economic system, a global perspective on justice is not only pragmatic but also morally essential. In recent years, however, what had been an emerging consensus centered on a cosmopolitan view of the reciprocal responsibilities of nations has been stifled by a rising tide of nationalism and right-wing populism.

One dramatic example of this change has been the growing animosity towards migrants in Europe and in the United States. Consistent with long-standing Catholic teaching and the cosmopolitan orientation of the Catholic Church, Pope Francis has been a champion of the world's immigrants and refugees. Pope Francis believes the challenge of global migration is integrally related to a broader set of global justice issues, which raise serious concerns about human dignity of the poor and the marginalized around the world. Pope Francis stated, "Solidarity with migrants and refugees must be accompanied by the courage and creativity necessary to develop, on a world-wide level, a more just and equitable financial and economic order, as well as an increasing commitment to peace, the indispensable condition for all authentic progress."¹

As migrants and refugees have surged into the wealthy nations of Europe and North America in recent decades, immigration has become an extraordinarily volatile issue, particularly in the United States in the wake of the Great Recession of 2008–2009. In the United States, immigration was a decisive issue in the 2016 presidential election and at the forefront of policy initiatives in the new Trump administration. In fact, it may very

* I would like to thank Samantha Ryan for her research assistance.

1. See Pope Francis, *Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the 101st World Day of Migrants and Refugees (2015): Church Without Frontiers, Mother to All*, HOLY SEE (Sept. 3, 2014) [hereinafter Pope Francis, *Message of His Holiness*], http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/migration/documents/papa-francesco_20140903_world-migrants-day-2015.html [<https://perma.cc/23CJ-EDRF>].

well be the primary issue that continues to inflame America's internal political and cultural fissures for the foreseeable future. President Trump's election is already testing the nation's cohesion in ways that have not been seen in decades, and to some extent, since the mid-nineteenth century.

President Trump has thrown down the gauntlet he campaigned on and is now governing from a position of right-wing populism. Although there are several ways to define populism, typically populism sets a unified "people" against a corrupt, morally bankrupt "elite." "Populism . . . is a particular *moralistic imagination of politics*, a way of perceiving the political world that sets a morally pure and fully unified—but . . . ultimately fictional—people against elites who are deemed corrupt or in some other way morally inferior."² Right-wing populism brings forth some additional features:

Right-wing populism adds a second antagonism of 'us versus them' to this constellation as well as a specific style of political communication. Firstly, based on a definition of the people as culturally homogenous, right-wing populists juxtapose its identity and common interests, which are considered to be based on common sense, with the identity and interests of 'others,' usually minorities such as migrants, which are supposedly favored by the (corrupt) elites. Secondly, right-wing populists strategically and tactically use negativity in political communication. Tools range from the calculated break of supposed taboos and disrespect of formal and informal rules (e.g., 'political correctness') to emotional appeals and personal insults.³

President Trump's political ideology resembles charismatic right-wing populist movements in early twentieth century Germany and Italy, and inasmuch as a "playbook" for right-wing populism exists, he appears to be following it very closely. David Frum's recent piece in *The Atlantic* offers some perspective on how President Trump is an heir to those movements, although cloaked in a twenty-first-century guise.⁴ President

2. JAN-WERNER MÜLLER, WHAT IS POPULISM 19–20 (2016).

3. Thomas Greven, *The Rise of Right-Wing Populism in Europe and the United States*, FRIEDRICH EBERT STIFTUNG 1 (May 2016), http://www.fesdc.org/fileadmin/user_upload/publications/RightwingPopulism.pdf [<https://perma.cc/2VE6-PV8L>]. Similar definitions have been offered by John Judis. See generally JOHN B. JUDIS, THE POPULIST EXPLOSION: HOW THE GREAT RECESSION TRANSFORMED AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN POLITICS 15 (2016) (explaining how right-wing populists cater to people by accusing left-wing groups "of coddling a third group, which can consist . . . of immigrants, Islamists, or African American militants").

4. See David Frum, *How to Build an Autocracy*, ATLANTIC MONTHLY, Mar. 2017, at 48, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/03/how-to-build-an-autocracy/513872/> [<https://perma.cc/AC2J-X547>] (explaining how "Trump is poised to mingle business and government with an audacity and on a scale more reminiscent of a leader in a post-Soviet republic than anything ever before seen in the United States").

Trump's pledge of "America First" in his inaugural address established an ideological position that requires defining internal and external "others"—those who are not part of the nation, who do not serve the nation's interest, or who are the nation's enemies.⁵ It was hardly surprising that one of his first official acts as president was to sign an executive order immediately barring entry of immigrants from seven predominantly Muslim countries that he had deemed "detrimental to the interests of the United States."⁶

President Trump's political movement in its current form is less explicitly ethnically nativist than the nationalist and populist movements of the 1930s—after all, ethnically, who exactly is American? But those elements are clearly present in similar movements in Europe and elsewhere around the world, and it is only a matter of time before more explicit nativism—long present in American culture and history—emerges from the Trump White House. This nativism is already quite explicit among many of President Trump's supporters and advisors.⁷

Although American Christian religious conservatives offered overwhelming support to President Trump in the presidential election, President Trump's political movement, and right-wing populism around the world more generally, is mainly secular. President Trump curried favor with Christian conservatives by promising to appoint judges with a pro-life and "religious freedom" agenda—a promise that he seems committed to keep—but the religious right cynically offered its support notwithstanding the rest of his views. It appears that religion has little influence in President Trump's life, despite a few meager attempts⁸ to demonstrate it during the presidential campaign. His wholesale

5. *Inaugural Address: Trump's Full Speech*, CNN (Jan. 21, 2017, 9:21 AM), <http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/20/politics/trump-inaugural-address/> [<https://perma.cc/9FKZ-EG6G>]; see also Jena McGregor, *In His Dark "America First" Inaugural Speech, Trump Has a Message for the World*, WASH. POST (Jan. 20, 2017), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/on-leadership/wp/2017/01/20/in-his-dark-america-first-inaugural-speech-trump-had-a-message-for-the-world> [<https://perma.cc/3T54-VBQ5>].

6. Exec. Order No. 13,769, 82 Fed. Reg. 8,977 (Jan. 27, 2017).

7. The most prominent of whom is Stephen Bannon. Bannon's association with the Breitbart organization, long known for its sympathetic coverage of alternative right-wing and white nationalist groups, has drawn intense criticism and concern from organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League. See *Stephen Bannon: Five Things to Know*, ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE, <http://www.adl.org/sp/stephen-bannon-background/bannon-background.html> [<https://perma.cc/FE43-WAW5>].

8. Trump revealed his unfamiliarity with the Bible when he attempted to cite to "Second Corinthians" while speaking to a religious crowd at Virginia's Liberty University, saying "Two Corinthians." See Blake Hounshell, *Trump Bungles Bible Reference at Liberty University*, POLITICO (Jan. 18, 2016, 11:44 AM), <http://www.politico.com/story/2016/01/trump-liberty-university-bible-217938> [<https://perma.cc/GJ53-CMFA>]; see also Jonathan Merritt, *Trump's Bible Fail*, ATLANTIC (Apr. 15, 2016), <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/04/trumps-bible-fail/478425/> [<https://perma.cc/NU9L-GP3F>].

demonization of Islam also suggests that he is incapable or unwilling to distinguish religious extremism from genuine religious commitment. Yet, key Christian evangelical leaders vouched for President Trump's Christian commitment, despite his obvious lack of any lived faith commitment in his adult life.⁹ Many religious conservatives are invested in a worldview that pits the "Christian" West against Islam in an apocalyptic confrontation, something I will discuss in more detail. President Trump's right-wing populism provides the perfect vehicle for gathering support for this battle, regardless of whether that support is coming from a place of religious conviction.¹⁰

As a right-wing populist leader of a major world power, President Trump stands in sharp, jarring contrast to the emergence of Pope Francis as one of the preeminent global moral leaders of our time. Pope Francis's leadership of the Roman Catholic Church has drawn new attention to the philosophical commitments of CST and to the longstanding position of Catholicism as a global faith, at a time when globalism and pluralism have become suspect. Pope Francis's theological and philosophical commitments embrace a cosmopolitan vision of the world's future in direct opposition to the secular nationalism offered by President Trump and other rising right-wing nationalists, such as Nigel Farage in the United Kingdom and Marine Le Pen in France, who have both embraced President Trump's victory with enthusiasm.

POPE FRANCIS AND THE SUPPORT OF MIGRANTS

The issue of global migration is particularly useful as a means of highlighting the fundamental difference in worldview that Pope Francis offers during this very dangerous and volatile time. In particular, the Trump administration's hostility towards migrants—the essential "other" that is a focus of the righteous anger of his populist coalition—demonstrates the tensions between right-wing nationalism and Catholicism. Pope Francis is probably the most prominent of the world leaders advocating global responsibility for the poor, for the environment,

9. Key evangelical leaders such as Jerry Falwell, Jr. made a concerted effort to connect Trump to religion. See Clare Foran, *Jerry Falwell Gets Religion on Trump*, ATLANTIC (Jan. 26, 2016), <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/01/falwell-trump-endorsement/431109/> [<https://perma.cc/22GN-52S6>]; see also R. Scott Hanson, *Donald Trump, God and the Depth of Faith*, TIME (Jan. 22, 2017), <http://time.com/4642696/donald-trump-god-faith/> [<https://perma.cc/6LBC-4FCV>].

10. Indeed, many secularists and atheists fear the growth of the Muslim population in Europe and North America because it adds more committed religious believers to public discourse at a time when native populations are becoming less religious. See Sam Harris, *Response to Controversy*, SAM HARRIS (June 21, 2014), <https://www.samharris.org/blog/item/response-to-controversy> [<https://perma.cc/L479-QGQT>].

and for an economic system that considers the needs of the weak and marginalized within the reality of a global economy. For Pope Francis, of course, this vision is a natural product of more than a century of CST regarding the rights of human beings, the special option for the poor,¹¹ and the need for economic structures that serve human needs. The right-wing populism that propelled President Trump to power in the United States is a direct threat to the Catholic concept of human dignity for several reasons. Most notably, right-wing populism prioritizes the nation (or “the people”) over the individual, rejects any notion of shared responsibility for the circumstances and fates of the global poor, and targets migrants and refugees.

Immigration is not a new phenomenon for the United States and is deeply tied to our identity as a “settler nation.”¹² The demography of the immigrant population has changed in recent decades. In 2013, the U.S. foreign-born population reached a record of 41.3 million people, an increase from 19.8 million in 1990 and 9.6 million in 1970.¹³ Significantly, the percentage of immigrants in the population has more than doubled since 1970, which means that many people in their 40s and older have lived through a dramatic change in the ethnic and racial make-up of the American population, at least in certain areas of the country.¹⁴ Not only are there more immigrants, but fewer immigrants are European and more of them are Asian, Latin American, and African.¹⁵ The consequences of these changes for the American population have been dramatic. The 2010 Census showed that racial and ethnic minorities accounted for 91.7% of U.S. population growth since 2000, with Hispanics accounting for 56% of the increase.¹⁶ The majority of U.S. births are now among nonwhites,

11. Throughout its history, the Church has held a unique commitment to the poor and encouraged others to take care of those who need it the most. It came to be called the “preferential option for the poor.” See Allan Figueroa Deck, *Commentary on S.J. Populorum Progressio*, in *MODERN CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING: COMMENTARIES AND INTERPRETATIONS* 292, 298 (Kenneth Himes ed., 2004).

12. WILL KYMLICKA, *MULTICULTURAL ODYSSEYS* 71–73 (2007).

13. *Chapter 5: U.S. Foreign-Born Population Trends*, PEW RES. CTR (Sept. 28, 2015) <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2015/09/28/chapter-5-u-s-foreign-born-population-trends/> [<https://perma.cc/XQD2-FN46>].

14. Immigrants represent thirteen percent of the population in the United States today, an increase from about five percent in 1970 and eleven percent in 2000. Joel Kotkin, *The Changing Demographics of America*, SMITHSONIAN (Aug. 2010), <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/40th-anniversary/the-changing-demographics-of-america-538284/?all> [<https://perma.cc/4MMU-366C>].

15. *The Facts on Immigration Today*, CTR. AM. PROGRESS (Oct. 23, 2014), <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/report/2014/10/23/59040/the-facts-on-immigration-today-3/> [<https://perma.cc/RAV9-5JCS>].

16. Jeffrey S. Passel et al., *Explaining Why Minority Births Now Outnumber White Births*, PEW RES. CTR. (May 17, 2012), <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2012/05/17/explaining-why-minority-births-now-outnumber-white-births/> [<https://perma.cc/TF2Y-SW3W>].

topping 50% in 2011,¹⁷ and the increase in the Hispanic population is now driven by birth rate.¹⁸ The number of U.S.-born Hispanics reaching adulthood is approximately 800,000 per year,¹⁹ and the U.S. Census Bureau predicts that the United States will become a “majority minority” (those who identify other than single-race white) nation before 2050.²⁰

Our changing population has become a cultural flashpoint in the wake of the Great Recession of 2008–2009. Outright hostility to immigrants, including explicit lies and outrageous statements about Latino immigrants, was an essential part of Donald Trump’s campaign rhetoric.²¹ Stoking fear of Muslim “difference” was also central to his message.²² It was this latter thread of rhetoric that provided the impetus for President Trump’s recent immigration ban affecting several predominantly Muslim countries.²³ The chaos resulting from this executive order is widely known.²⁴

In stark contrast to the rhetoric of the election, Catholic doctrine teaches that human dignity is God-given and transcends racial, ethnic, religious, and political boundaries.²⁵ The human person is both sacred and social, and this truth implies both moral and legal obligations of mutual

17. *Id.*

18. *Id.*

19. Jens Manuel Krogstad & Mark Hugo Lopez, *Hispanic Nativity Shift*, PEW RES. CTR. (Apr. 29, 2014), <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2014/04/29/hispanic-nativity-shift/> [https://perma.cc/H98Q-PPWJ].

20. See Kotkin, *supra* note 14.

21. Eyal Press, *Trump and the Truth: Immigration and Crime*, NEW YORKER (Sept. 2, 2016), <http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/trump-and-the-truth-immigration-and-crime> [https://perma.cc/5HQ9-MDWE] (accusing Mexico of sending its “rapists” to the United States); *Fact Check: Donald Trump’s Speech on Immigration*, NPR (Aug. 31, 2016), <http://www.npr.org/2016/08/31/492096565/fact-check-donald-trumps-speech-on-immigration> (vastly overestimating the pace of Mexican immigration in recent years).

22. See Jenna Johnson, *Trump’s Rhetoric on Muslims Plays Well with Fans, but Horrifies Others*, WASH. POST (Feb. 29, 2016), https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trumps-anti-muslim-rhetoric-plays-well-with-fans-but-horrifies-others/2016/02/29/477f73dc-de37-11e5-846c-10191d1fc4ec_story.html [https://perma.cc/AJ4Q-MMUW].

23. See Exec. Order No. 13,769, 82 Fed. Reg. 8,977 (Jan. 27, 2017); *Executive Order: Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States*, White House Press Release (Jan. 27, 2017), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/01/27/executive-order-protecting-nation-foreign-terrorist-entry-united-states> [https://perma.cc/68W2-43AK].

24. The ban separated families and wreaked havoc at airports across the nation. Specific incidents of the chaos included the barring of foreign-born medical residents attempting to return to their jobs in the United States. See Michael Hiltzik, *Another Casualty of Trump’s Muslim Ban: U.S. Medical Training and Rural Healthcare*, L.A. TIMES (Feb. 1, 2017), <http://www.latimes.com/business/hiltzik/la-fi-hiltzik-ban-medical-20170201-story.html> [https://perma.cc/PUT7-DX8C].

25. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church* para. 105 (2005), http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html [https://perma.cc/BN7U-9YM7].

support and assistance in the community.²⁶ This is important because, in this way, Catholic doctrine parts with the concept of rights most commonly articulated in the American context in recognizing that human beings need access to certain basic economic, cultural, and social goods to live a dignified existence.²⁷ Indeed, when circumstances are especially desperate within a particular community or nation, CST recognizes a right to migrate to a place where these economic, social, and cultural goods can be obtained.²⁸ This right implies a concomitant responsibility on the part of other nations and communities to receive these migrants.

In their pastoral letter *Strangers No Longer*, Mexican and American bishops offered one of the more comprehensive statements on immigration in modern Catholic teaching.²⁹ Beginning with apostolic constitution, *Exsul Familia*, written by Pope Pius XII in 1952, the bishops traced the development in CST of the rights and responsibilities of states regarding immigration.³⁰

Although the church recognizes the right of sovereign states to control their borders, this right is not absolute and the needs of migrants must be measured against the needs of receiving countries.³¹ *Exsul Familia* was followed by an expansion of the understanding of the right to migrate in *Pacem in Terris*, written by Pope John XXIII in 1963.³² Pope John announced a cosmopolitan political theory in which political authorities were responsible for the common good not only within their particular societies but also beyond them.³³ Addressing the issue in 1963, Pope John wrote: “We must bear in mind that of its very nature civil authority exists, not to confine men within the frontiers of their own nations, but primarily

26. L. Roos, *The Human Person and Human Dignity as Basis for the Social Doctrine of the Church*, in *PRINCIPLES OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING* 53, 57 (David A. Boileau ed. 1998).

27. Fr. Dominique Peridans, *Catholics, Immigration, and the Common Good*, *CTR FOR IMMIGRATION STUD.* (Aug. 2009), <http://cis.org/sites/cis.org/files/articles/2009/catholics-and-immigration.pdf> [<https://perma.cc/L4DS-J2D4>].

28. U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Inc. & Conferencia del Episcopado Mexicano, *Pastoral Letter, Strangers No Longer Together on the Journey of Hope* para. 30 (2003), <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/immigration/strangers-no-longer-together-on-the-journey-of-hope.cfm> [<https://perma.cc/9Z4R-PMJZ>].

29. *Id.*

30. See Pope Pius XII, *Apostolic Constitution, Exsul Familia Nazarethana* (1952), <https://s3.amazonaws.com/berkeley-center/1952ExsulFamilia.pdf> [<https://perma.cc/5YXT-JD7J>].

31. *Id.*

32. Pope John XXIII, *Encyclical Letter, Pacem in Terris: Establishing Universal Peace in Truth, Justice, Charity, and Liberty* (1963), http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_11041963_pacem.html [<https://perma.cc/HS9D-TU4L>].

33. Drew Christiansen, S.J., *Commentary on Pacem in Terris*, in *MODERN CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING: COMMENTARIES AND INTERPRETATIONS* 217, 229 (Kenneth Himes ed., 2004).

to protect the common good of the State, which certainly cannot be divorced from the common good of the entire human family.”³⁴

The idea of the universal common good means that states have a responsibility to receive migrants who have just reasons for leaving their countries.³⁵ Wealthier states bear a stronger obligation in this regard.³⁶ Pope John Paul II continued this direction in Catholic teaching. In his *Message for World Migration Day* in 1995, he addressed the issue of undocumented migrants by linking the phenomenon to the problem of underdevelopment around the world and noted the need that wealthy nations had for the labor these migrants provide.³⁷ Ultimately, *Strangers No Longer* announced five principles from Catholic teaching on the issue of migration:

I. Persons have a right to find opportunities in their homeland. All persons have the right to find in their own countries the economic, political, and social opportunities to live in dignity and achieve a full life through the use of their God-given gifts. In this context, work that provides a just, living wage is a basic human need.

II. Persons have a right to migrate to support themselves and their families. The Church recognizes that all the goods of the earth belong to all people. When persons cannot find employment in their country of origin to support themselves and their families, they have a right to find work elsewhere in order to survive. Sovereign nations should provide ways to accommodate this right.

III. Sovereign nations have the right to control their borders. The Church recognizes the right of sovereign nations to control their territories but rejects such control when it is exerted merely for the purpose of acquiring additional wealth. More powerful economic nations, which have the ability to protect and feed their residents, have a stronger obligation to accommodate migration flows.

IV. Refugees and asylum seekers should be afforded protection. Those who flee wars and persecution should be protected by the global community. This requires, at a minimum, that migrants have a right to claim refugee status without incarceration and to have their claims considered by a competent authority.

34. See Pope John XXIII, *supra* note 32, para. 98.

35. See, e.g., Christiansen, *supra* note 33, at 217, 231; Andrew M. Yuengert, *The Right to Migrate and the Universal Common Good*, PEPP. U. J. PEACE & JUST. STUD. (2004), <http://seaver-faculty.pepperdine.edu/ayuenger/imm%20and%20univ%20cg.pdf> [https://perma.cc/8LNE-QQCC].

36. U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Inc., *supra* note 28, para. 30.

37. Pope John Paul II, *Undocumented Migrants: Message for World Migration Day* (1996), http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/migration/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_25071995_undocumented_migrants.html [https://perma.cc/9UCX-CDNU].

V. The human dignity and human rights of undocumented migrants should be respected. Regardless of their legal status, migrants, like all persons, possess inherent human dignity that should be respected. Often they are subject to punitive laws and harsh treatment from enforcement officers from both receiving and transit countries. Government policies that respect the basic human rights of the undocumented are necessary.³⁸

Although Catholic teaching recognizes nations' right to control their borders,³⁹ this right is heavily balanced by the responsibilities elaborated in the other four principles, and it is fair to say that CST is primarily concerned with the human needs of migrants. While recognizing the pragmatic need for nations to secure their borders, Catholic teaching does not invest any special significance in the laws that create borders or define the legal status of migrants that would outweigh the moral imperatives to treat migrants with dignity. Furthermore, CST recognizes a "preferential option for the poor,"⁴⁰ which means that when the ramifications of legal, political, and economic structures are considered, the needs of the poor and marginalized should take priority. We therefore should be concerned when fundamental rights are denied based on these structures, particularly when we know that they have been created by, and tend to favor, the wealthy and the powerful.

In his most recent encyclical on climate change and the global environmental crisis, *Laudato si*, Pope Francis offered a very clear statement on what a preferential option for the poor means in the context of extreme global inequality:

It needs to be said that, generally speaking, there is little in the way of clear awareness of problems which especially affect the excluded. Yet they are the majority of the planet's population, billions of people Indeed, when all is said and done, they frequently remain at the bottom of the pile. This is due partly to the fact that many professionals, opinion makers, communications media and centres of power, being located in affluent urban areas, are far removed from the poor, with little direct contact with their problems. They live and reason from the comfortable position of a high level of development

38. U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Inc. & Conferencia del Episcopado Mexicano, *supra* note 28, para. 33.

39. *Id.*

40. Pope John Paul II, *Encyclical Letter*, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* para. 42 (1991), http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html [<https://perma.cc/T6GQ-WXMW>].

and a quality of life well beyond the reach of the majority of the world's population.⁴¹

Catholicism's cosmopolitanism in this instance is rooted in its vision of global responsibility for the protection of human dignity and its commitment to global distributive justice. Justice claims are not limited to ethnic or cultural groups, or the nation-state. It is not that those communities do not matter, but they are not supreme. Pope Francis's position on global responsibility is clear and CST has developed in one consistent direction. Yet, despite these hopeful signs, there is a significant split among Catholics regarding right-wing populism.

RIGHT-WING POPULISM AND TRADITIONALIST CATHOLICISM

Many American Catholics are conflicted on how to identify politically.⁴² Opposition to abortion has become indispensable for some, and it has caused many to vote Republican regardless of any other aspects of the Republican political agenda that might conflict with Catholic teaching.⁴³ But, in the United States this tendency appears to be the province of certain white Catholics. Nonwhite Catholics, notably Hispanics, have generally rejected appeals to collapse their political engagement into the abortion issue.⁴⁴ Knowing that they were the prime subjects of the Trump campaign's xenophobia, or, if they are native-born, that they probably are not viewed as part of "the people," it appears they had a personal stake in rejecting Donald Trump and his pro-life and religious freedom appeals. Theologian Stephen Pope noted shortly after the election that:

Many of Trump's Catholic supporters presumably found his callousness and cruelty to be "personally distasteful," but *not objectionable enough* to make them repudiate him. Yet if we vote for the candidate we have to take responsibility for supporting the whole

41. Pope Francis, *Encyclical Letter, Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*, at para. 49 (2015), http://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_encyclica-laudato-si_en.pdf [https://perma.cc/QCZ6-FNZW].

42. See Jacob Lupfer, *Why Donald Trump is Losing Catholic Voters*, RELIGION & POL. (Sept. 20, 2016), <http://religionandpolitics.org/2016/09/20/why-donald-trump-is-losing-catholic-voters/> [https://perma.cc/5NJT-X99Y] (attributing a significant departure of white Catholics away from Trump to some of his views on immigration and deportation).

43. Olga Khazan, *Why Christians Overwhelmingly Backed Trump*, ATLANTIC (Nov. 9, 2016), <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2016/11/why-women-and-christians-backed-trump/507176/> [https://perma.cc/TU8T-RTWU].

44. Fifty-two or fifty-three percent of Catholics voted Trump overall, but sixty-seven percent of Hispanic Catholics voted for Clinton and sixty percent of white Catholics voted for Trump. Gregory A. Smith & Jessica Martínez, *How the Faithful Voted: A Preliminary 2016 Analysis*, PEW RES. CTR. (Nov. 9, 2016), <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/09/how-the-faithful-voted-a-preliminary-2016-analysis/> [https://perma.cc/VY4B-8CNZ].

package, not just the particular traits or policies we happen to like. Catholic social ethics recognizes the importance of jobs at a living wage, affordable health care, and national security, but insists that we ought not to seek these goods by unjust means or in any way by dehumanizing others. Christian identity makes more fundamental claims on us than does American identity. Many Catholics either don't know about or don't want to apply this principle to their electoral decision-making.⁴⁵

Some white Catholics in the United States may have found Donald Trump's populist message appealing because it is their American identity that comes first, and how they position themselves within that identity is what drives their political choices. Moreover, identifying as "white" at the exclusion of any other ethnic background may also be particularly compelling at a time when darker skinned immigrants are increasingly seen as dangerous "others."⁴⁶ The racialization of immigrants would be consistent with the longstanding American tradition of marginalizing or "othering" through binary categorizations—white vs. black, good vs. bad, free vs. slave, us vs. them.⁴⁷ Furthermore, in the current political environment, native-born, nonwhite people, notably African-Americans, are arguably viewed as the undeserving beneficiaries of identity politics and the favors of the illegitimate elite. For these Trump supporters, it increasingly appears that Catholic identity has been collapsed into certain notions of what it means to be American, white, and politically conservative in the United States today. That identity is uncomfortable with what the Catholic Church teaches about the poor, the marginalized, and global distributive justice:

Millions of Catholics helped to elect someone who has displayed contempt for much of what lies at the heart of Christian morality—compassion, forgiveness, humility, fidelity, and patience. His campaign proposals run directly contrary to core values affirmed by CST's—solidarity, the preferential option for the poor, the common good, stewardship of the planet, and the intrinsic dignity of every person, regardless of race, religion, or gender. Most striking is his constant denigration of and contempt for society's so-called "losers"—precisely those to whom Jesus paid the most attention.⁴⁸

45. Stephen J. Pope, *Not the Time for Reconciliation*, COMMONWEAL MAG. (Nov. 21, 2016), <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/not-time-reconciliation> [<https://perma.cc/9RPS-JG68>].

46. GREGORY WEEKS, U.S. AND LATIN AMERICAN RELATIONS 235 (2015).

47. See EVELYN NAKANO GLENN, UNEQUAL FREEDOM: HOW RACE AND GENDER SHAPED AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP THROUGH LABOR 10 (2002).

48. *Id.*

If one considers how Catholics worldwide have responded historically to right-wing populism, white American Catholics have been following a fairly predictable path. In both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, conservative Catholics in Latin America and Europe were drawn to charismatic right-wing leaders who promised to “clean up” disorderly societies.⁴⁹ These leaders were very effective at identifying external and internal enemies that many Catholics also viewed with suspicion: Jews, foreigners, communists, atheists, student agitators, and so on.⁵⁰

These tendencies among some Catholics are emerging again in Europe. For example, in twenty-first century France, a renewed interest exists in appealing to committed Catholics as part of the electorate.⁵¹ Much of the discussion turns on conversations about French identity. Who is French? Do you have to be white and Catholic? French democracy, like its American counterpart, was the product of revolutionary ideas viewed as universal, and traditionally, it has not been ethnically particular or racialized.⁵² Indeed, for over a century France has embraced “laicism” as a means of removing religion—mainly the Roman Catholic Church—from public life.⁵³ This tradition is so entrenched in French politics that even Marine Le Pen’s right-wing populism rejects public engagement with Catholicism or Christianity.⁵⁴ The “people” in the populism of the National Front are not necessarily Catholic.

Nevertheless, the current crisis around immigration, refugees, the rise of Islam (France’s second largest religion),⁵⁵ and the populist right has coincided with the emergence of a more vocal group of practicing French Catholics engaging in public debate; they divide along two groups. One group arguably sees Catholicism as an essential part of French culture, particularly in the face of the growing presence of Muslims in Europe. These voices are critical of the Catholic hierarchy for not resisting the threat Islam poses to European identity, and they accuse recent popes and

49. See Greven, *supra* note 3, at 2.

50. See Geoff Read et al., *Trumpism, Fascism, and the Lessons of History*, ACTIVEHISTORY (Jan. 20, 2017), <http://activehistory.ca/2017/01/trumpism-fascism-and-the-lessons-of-history/> [https://perma.cc/FL9K-BLLC] (“Like German Lutherans, Catholics, and Seventh-Day Adventists for Nazism, and Catholics for Italian and French fascist movements, American Protestant evangelicals provided a deep reservoir of electoral support for Trump . . .”).

51. Sylvie Kauffman, Opinion, *God is Back – in France*, N.Y. TIMES (Jan. 26, 2017), https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/26/opinion/god-is-back-in-france.html?_r=0.

52. See Jean Bauberot, *The Evolution of the French Secularism*, in MAKING SENSE OF THE SECULAR: CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES FROM EUROPE TO ASIA 44–45 (Ranjan Ghosh ed., 2014).

53. *Id.*

54. Andrew Callus, *Le Pen Slams Rival Fillon Over Use of Religion in Politics*, REUTERS (Jan. 11, 2017), <http://www.reuters.com/article/uk-france-election-secularism-idUSKBN14V0ZL> [https://perma.cc/8CRP-QWSB].

55. JONATHAN LAURENCE & JUSTIN VAÏSSE, INTEGRATING ISLAM 15 (2007).

the Catholic hierarchy of abetting the destruction of European civilization.⁵⁶ The other group, however, sees Christianity as a source of tolerance and rejects calls to aggressive assertions of Christian identity. Erwan le Morhedec calls this a struggle between “faith” and “identity.” Le Morhedec argues that the flight to Christian identity on the political right is occurring while ignoring core Christian teachings around hospitality and engagement with others.⁵⁷ A faithful Christian would take a worldview exemplified by the messages of Pope Francis, rooted in the traditional teachings of the Gospels and concerning itself with living out Christian values in a changing world.⁵⁸

American Catholics are prone to the same tensions, although they manifest themselves around different issues in the American context.⁵⁹ President Trump’s key political advisor, Stephen Bannon, is a conservative Catholic who reportedly has close ties to traditionalists in the Vatican.⁶⁰ He and other conservative American Catholics have made similar “clash of civilization” arguments as those being expressed by French Catholics on the right.⁶¹ They expect the Pope to shore up a crumbling Christian civilization that is under threat internally and externally, and they see Pope Francis as not only failing in this task but also accelerating Christendom’s destruction through his outreach to global Islam and embrace of Muslim migrants.⁶²

As “white” becomes an “identity” in which to situate grievance in a time when the United States has become more diverse and the politics of

56. See LAURENT DANDRIEU, *ÉGLISE ET IMMIGRATION: LE GRAND MALAISE* 151–92 (2017) (explaining that the Roman Catholic Church has been complicit in allowing a Muslim “invasion” of Europe through unchecked immigration that threatens to overwhelm the Christian foundations of European society and democracy. Dandrieu does not view Islam as a compatible partner with French democracy and pluralism, and he believes the Pope Francis has failed in his role as defender of the faith).

57. See ERWAN LE MORHEDOC, *IDENTITAIRE: LE MAUVAIS GENIE DU CHRISTIANISME* 816–35 (2017) (warning against “identitarianism,” a movement that attempts to capture Catholicism as part of a racialized French identity set in opposition to multiculturalism and employed to fuel anti-Muslim sentiment. Le Morhedec views this identity-based Catholicism as religiously inauthentic and inconsistent with the message of the Christian gospels, particularly as witnessed by Pope Francis).

58. *Id.*

59. Such issues, for example, include a desire to keep out Mexican immigrants painted as murderers and rapists. See Greven, *supra* note 3, at 4.

60. Jason Horowitz, *Steve Bannon Carries Battles to Another Influential Hub: The Vatican*, N.Y. TIMES (Feb. 7, 2017), <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/07/world/europe/vatican-steve-bannon-pope-francis.html>.

61. See generally SAMUEL HUNTINGTON, *THE CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS AND THE REMAKING OF WORLD ORDER* (1996).

62. Paul Weldman, *Steve Bannon is the Most Powerful Person in the Trump White House. That Should Terrify Us.*, WASH. POST: THE PLUM LINE (Feb. 1, 2017), https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/plum-line/wp/2017/02/01/steve-bannon-is-the-most-powerful-person-in-the-trump-white-house-that-should-terrify-us/?utm_term=.efadd595036d [<https://perma.cc/C2ZP-RDXJ>].

identity has assumed enormous political salience, Donald Trump's political message and the people with whom he surrounds himself suggest that "real" America is white America. This is where the ethnic nativism long present in American culture finds its home—in whiteness. Without naming it explicitly, President Trump calls upon "whiteness" in his assemblage of "the people." Immigrants, migrants, and refugees do not belong because of the economic competition they offer and the danger they pose to the American way of life.⁶³ Blacks and Latinos live in—and cause—"carnage" and are the tools of the left-leaning elites who have benefited from globalization and the destruction of the middle class.⁶⁴ When the elites make common cause with minorities and immigrants through "political correctness" and multiculturalism, many white Catholics ally themselves with other whites who view the nation's growing diversity as yet another threat to their prospects.⁶⁵ They see people like themselves in the snarling anger and moral outrage of Stephen Bannon and Bill O'Reilly on Fox News,⁶⁶ and they believe they represent the real America regardless of what the Catholic Church teaches.

Despite all this, Trump's presidency may offer an opportunity. If President Trump maintains his bargain with religious conservatives on issues of religious freedom, space may open up in public discourse for Catholics and others to form a religiously informed counter-narrative. It is of course difficult to know whether President Trump is serious about allowing religious diversity to flourish, and to some degree this seems unlikely.⁶⁷ We should not assume that the expanded religious freedom he promises would be for all religions. If, for instance, President Trump is successful in securing the repeal of the Johnson Amendment,⁶⁸ thereby

63. Trump painted a picture of "American carnage" in his inaugural address, placing blame on "the crime and gangs and drugs" that run rampant in our inner cities. *Inaugural Address: Trump's Full Speech*, *supra* note 5.

64. *See id.*

65. *See* Joan Walsh, *How Donald Trump is Helping White Christian America Commit Suicide*, NATION (July 11, 2016), <https://www.thenation.com/article/how-donald-trump-is-helping-white-christian-america-commit-suicide/> [<https://perma.cc/Q3CP-5HHK>] (explaining that white Christian America sees the modifier "white" as the cornerstone of self-identity).

66. Bill O'Reilly expressed his outrage on Fox News over Mexican immigrants, claiming they are "not achievers in the economic sense" and that the percentage of Mexican criminals represents "a huge burden on the American taxpayer and a dangerous situation for we, the people." *See* Bill O'Reilly, *Bill O'Reilly: The Vilification of Donald Trump Over Illegal Immigration*, FOX NEWS (July 7, 2015), <http://www.foxnews.com/transcript/2015/07/07/bill-oreilly-vilification-donald-trump-over-illegal-immigration.html> [<https://perma.cc/XHQ3-T7BZ>].

67. *See* Ian Lovett et al., *Trump Draft Order Would Expand Religious Rights, Could Allow Denial of Service to Gays*, WALL ST. J. (Feb. 5, 2017), <https://www.wsj.com/articles/draft-of-executive-order-proposes-expanding-legal-protections-on-religious-grounds-1486071114>.

68. 26 U.S.C. § 501 (2015); Mark Landler & Laurie Goodstein, *Trump Vows to "Destroy" Law Banning Political Endorsements by Churches*, N.Y. TIMES (Feb. 2, 2017),

freeing religious congregations and institutions to engage in politics while retaining their tax-exempt status, are we confident that imams will enjoy the same freedoms as rabbis, priests, and pastors?⁶⁹ The repeal of the Johnson Amendment has been pressed by Christian evangelical conservatives, but they arguably lack concern about the implications of this freedom for non-Christians in American political life and public discourse.⁷⁰

As Angus Ritchie argues, when we think of the role of religion in public life, we need to move away from the binary model of “Christendom” versus secularism and move toward a model of healthy pluralism:

It is often assumed that there are only two possible positions with respect to the place of religion in public life—*either* a settlement which continues the arrangements of a previous age, in which Christianity has a foundational role in civic life *or* a settlement which removes a distinctive Christian voice from the public square. If those are the only two positions a journalist or commentator can imagine, they will inevitably understand any new set of proposals falling into one or the other category.⁷¹

Ritchie argues for a third way—a “deep pluralism” that

conceives of a settlement in which *no* particular worldview has a foundational role The motivation for denying any worldview that foundational role is not the relativistic conviction that every worldview is equally valid. Rather, the reason for denying any worldview a foundational role is that citizens cannot agree on *which* of the contending worldviews is true. In order to sustain a peaceable and constructive common life, we need to find a way of conducting a public discourse which is seen as equitable by people with very different convictions.⁷²

Pope Francis offers inspiration for a future built on deep pluralism. Catholicism, properly understood, rejects right-wing populism, based on

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/02/us/politics/trump-johnson-amendment-political-activity-churches.html>.

69. See Jeremy W. Peters, *The Johnson Amendment, Which Trump Vows to “Destroy,” Explained*, N.Y. TIMES (Feb. 2, 2017), <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/02/us/politics/johnson-amendment-trump.html>.

70. See Tribune News Services, *Trump Vows to ‘Totally Destroy’ Rule Imposing Political Limits on Churches*, CHI. TRIB. (Feb. 2, 2017), <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/ct-donald-trump-johnson-amendment-20170202-story.html> [<https://perma.cc/NY5F-7NXU>].

71. Angus Ritchie, *After Christendom*, in *Strangers into Citizens: Faith and Public Life in the Age of Global Migration* (unpublished manuscript) (on file with author).

72. *Id.*

its embrace of certain truths about human dignity.⁷³ A global embrace of this message means engaging those who hold other worldviews and religious convictions, but recognizing the shared belief that human dignity knows no nation and that it must be respected everywhere.

73. See Pope Francis, *Message of His Holiness*, *supra* note 1.