

present President. But in any case, no matter who is the President of the United States, here is a world leader with a tremendous capacity to promote the common good, but at the same time sadly, who could—by promoting and implementing anti-life legislation measures—could be an agent of death.

**Mr. Terry:** If I was a Catholic in another country, I would be watching the news unfold in America hearing the silence of so many Catholics, the debate over communion, and it might have the effect of me just saying, “Well, we have abortion here, they’ve got it there, let’s just all learn to live with it and go on about our business.”

**Archbishop Burke:** Well, I think this is precisely the effect that it has had. The communications today are instantaneous. The whole world knows that a very high percentage of Catholics in fact voted for this very anti-life candidate and so they watch this very carefully, and what the world needs to see now is a strong witness on the part of all Catholics and we can’t be content with the fact that some 55% -or whatever it is who for whatever reason, supported this anti-life program. They have to see now that Catholics in the United States are alive and faithful and that they are going to work to protect human life, and above all, to let the President of the United States know that this is the number one issue.

**Mr. Terry:** There are many Catholics who believed that to vote for Obama -knowing his promises to extend child-killing even further -that to knowingly vote for him under those circumstances was a type of cooperation with moral evil. It was cooperating with evil. Do you concur with that and if so, why?

**Archbishop Burke:** Well, the fact of the matter is, it is a form of cooperation, because by voting we put a person in office. And people say, “What does my vote matter?” Well, your vote is either a vote

to put someone in office who will do what is right and just, or someone who won’t. And so if you, knowing that abortion is a grave crime against human life – is the killing of an innocent, defenseless human life -and you vote for the candidate who says that he intends to make that more available – that practice of infanticide -you bear a responsibility. That is, you have cooperated in the election of this person into office, there’s no question about it.

**Mr. Terry:** Archbishop, thank you for your time. Do you have any closing comments or exhortations?

**Archbishop Burke:** President Obama uses this word “hope” in a way that for us is very disturbing. We need to have hope, the hope that is founded in Jesus Christ, alive for us in the Church; Jesus Christ who gave His life for everyone without exception, and with a particular love for the suffering and for those who are the most defenseless. And so we have to be filled with hope and give ourselves more than ever to His work, to His mission of protecting human life, and so I ask God to bless you very much in what you are doing to advance the cause of life.

**Mr. Terry:** Thank you, Your Excellency; long life to you.

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Pamphlet 548

## **Interview of Archbishop Raymond Burke on Canon 915**

*The entire transcript of Randall Terry’s Mar. 2, 2009, interview of Archbishop Raymond Burke is provided below:*

**Mr. Terry:** Your Excellency, it’s a delight to be with you. Thank you so much.

**Archbishop Raymond Burke:** Pleased to have you come, and to visit with you.

**Mr. Terry:** For the umpteenth time, I and the others are asking, under Canon 915 what should or should not be done?

**Archbishop Burke:** The Canon is completely clear, it is not subject in my judgment to any other interpretations. When someone is publicly and obstinately in grave sin we may not administer Holy Communion to the person. And that, basically, for two reasons: number one, to prevent the person himself or herself from committing a sacrilege, and secondly, to protect the sanctity of the Holy Eucharist. In other words, to approach, to receive our Lord in Holy Communion, when one insists on remaining in grave sin, is such a violation of the sanctity of the Holy Eucharist, so that Communion must not be given to people who are publicly, obstinately, in grave sin.

**Mr. Terry:** And so does that apply to politicians of any party that are saying: “Yes, it’s okay to abort children” –to kill children?

**Archbishop Burke:** Yes, for someone who in any way contributes in an active way to the murder of innocent defenseless infants in the womb—children in the womb—from the very inception of human life, this is the greatest of sins. And such a

person, until he or she has reformed his or her life, should not approach to receive Holy Communion.

**Mr. Terry:** And if they do approach, the person who is administering Holy Communion should say, “No.”?

**Archbishop Burke:** Right. In fact, the Canon puts the burden upon the minister of Holy Communion whether it's the ordinary minister which would be a bishop, a priest, a deacon—or an extraordinary minister—it doesn't make any difference. It says they're not to be admitted to receive Holy Communion. Normally speaking, in my experience, when I have spoken with, for instance, Catholic politicians who have insisted on supporting pro-abortion legislation and told them they should not approach any more to receive Holy Communion, in my experience they don't. Now, where Bishops have not applied the Canon, often times it's said that this will cause some kind of disorder at the time of distribution of Holy Communion. That's not verified. It's not using Holy Communion to make a statement at all, it's simply respecting this most sacred gift we have - namely, the Body and Blood of Christ—which can only be received when one has repented of his sins. And I would also make the point—and I believe that it is true that on the contrary those public figures—Catholics—who are consistently promoting pro-abortion legislation and policies—use reception of Holy Communion to try to justify what they are doing; in other words, to present themselves as devout Catholics, when in fact they are sinning against the most fundamental teaching of the moral law. [Thou shall not murder.]

**Mr. Terry:** When the election was approaching, Bishop Martino said he would not serve Communion to Vice Presidential Candidate Joe Biden. There were a handful of other bishops who made similar statements, for which the laity and the faithful were rejoicing. But the deafening silence from so many other Bishops—and also the

bishops who stepped up such as in Washington D.C., Virginia, others ...Massachusetts...[and] said that we will serve communion—was so painful for us. What word of encouragement would you give, first to the laity on our struggle to bring orthodoxy back, and then to your brother bishops and priests?

**Archbishop Burke:** I think simply to say: reflect upon this norm of the Church's discipline—Canon 915—which is one of the most important canons to safeguard the greatest treasure that we have in this life, namely, the communion that we have with our Lord Jesus Christ, and His true body and His true blood; and to, in every way work so that also public witness is given to the sacredness of the Holy Eucharist. And so I would encourage the faithful when they are scandalized by the giving of Holy Communion to persons are publicly and obstinately in sin, that they go to their pastors, whether it's their parish priest or to their bishop, to insist that this scandal stop. Because, it is weakening the faith of everyone. It's giving the impression that it must be morally correct to support procured abortion, in at least in some circumstances, if not also generally. So they need to insist that their parish priest and the bishops, and for the rest...to my brother bishops and brother priests...simply to say: the service of the Church in the world today has to begin first and foremost with the protection of the life of those who are the most defenseless and the most innocent, namely the unborn, and certainly has to extend also to those who are gravely ill, or burdened with serious illness, who have special needs; and also now more and more their lives are being threatened by a culture of death which sadly has infected our nation. So I would just urge my brother bishops and my brother priests to see as the most fundamental witness and service which they can give in leading also the faithful in their pastoral care is the apostolate of the respect for human life.

**Mr. Terry:** The election of Obama sent shock

waves around the world concerning the right to life of babies because of his commitment to pursue FOCA, to try to force hospitals -Catholic hospitals -into giving the morning after pill, other things - [the repeal of the] Mexico City policy. From your vantage point here in the Vatican, what kind of fruit around the world is this poison that's percolating in America producing?

**Archbishop Burke:** There is no question, and I certainly see it here, living now here in Europe, and Italy, and also with the kind of communication within all of Europe that Barack Obama—President Obama—is a charismatic figure. And there was a great deal of—especially through the media—a great deal of publicity and so forth regarding the "hope," the word that he used so much, that he offered—not only for the United States— and for the world. And so you can be certain that the whole world, and especially the English speaking world—which let us recall, is a great part of the world—is following very carefully and attentively what this man is doing—this world leader—which he is. And therefore, it becomes more incumbent upon us then ever, also in our responsibility for the scandal and the harm being done, not only in our own nation which is in itself— which we think about 50 million since the Roe v. Wade decision, 50 million unborn infants murdered—but also to consider the effect that our nation is having on the whole world in this culture of death.

America has the call to lead—to use its influence in the way that will give glory to God and will serve the common good in its most essential element: and that is by turning around this culture of death, and especially protecting the right to life of the unborn. So our responsibility is even greater than just for our own nation -which is in itself such a weighty matter. But we have to see how this is also having, adding a tremendous influence in the English speaking world, but also in the whole world, because of the charismatic nature of our