News




Screenshot of America magazine editor-in-chief Jesuit Fr. Matt Malone, left, hosting a Facebook Live event May 1 with New York Cardinal Timothy Dolan (NCR photo)



by Jesse Remedios

View Author Profile

jremedios@ncronline.org
Follow on Twitter at @JCRemedios

## Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

May 1, 2020

Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

More than 1,000 Catholics, including the leaders of prominent social justice organizations, have signed a letter to New York Cardinal Timothy Dolan expressing outrage at his recent public displays of support for the president.

"Your recent phone call with President [Donald] Trump and appearance on Fox News sends a message that Catholic leaders have aligned themselves with a president who tears apart immigrant families, denies climate change, stokes racial division and supports economic policies that hurt the poor," the letter states. "There is nothing 'pro-life' about Trump's agenda."

The letter, which was made public May 1 and organized by Faith in Public Life Action, includes signatures from Sr. Simone Campbell, executive director of Network, a Catholic social justice lobby; Stephen Schneck, executive director of the Franciscan Action Network; and Sr. Pat McDermott, president of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas. Priests and theologians from Catholic universities across the country also signed on, according to a press release from Faith in Public Life Action.

The letter comes in response to two recent incidents in which the cardinal publicly expressed admiration and his apparent support for the president.

The first was an April 25 phone call Trump held with 600 Catholics, including Los Angeles Archbishop José Gomez, the president of the U.S Conference of Catholic Bishops. According to Crux, during the call Trump referred to Dolan as a "great friend of mine," to which Dolan joked that he calls the president more than he calls his 90-year-old mother. Trump also identified himself as the "best [president] in the history of the Catholic Church" in the call.

Advertisement

A few days later, on an April 27 appearance on "Fox & Friends," Dolan publicly praised Trump for his leadership and sensitivity "to the feelings of the religious community."

John Gehring, Catholic program director at Faith in Public Life Action, said in a statement that Dolan and other bishops should not "give the appearance of cozying

up to a president who makes a mockery of Christian values in his words and policies."

"There is nothing 'pro-life' about a leader who uses cruelty as a political weapon and shows contempt for anyone who challenges his reckless agenda," Gehring said.

Campbell said that the president's policies directly violate Catholic social teaching and that "our Church leadership should know better."

During a Facebook Live video event with America magazine editor Jesuit Fr. Matt Malone May 1, Dolan defended his decision to take part in the call with Trump and called it part of the "sacred enterprise of accompaniment" to talk to political leaders.

The cardinal also said he has gotten "much more criticism" from Catholics angry at his past efforts to work with New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo and Sen. Chuck Schumer. He said Catholic bishops have to engage with politicians, and "you gotta make gnocchi with the dough you got."

The letter's final paragraph said, "When religious leaders put access to power before principles, they risk losing the moral clarity needed to ensure politics is about the pursuit of the common good. I pray that you and other bishops will show the leadership our country needs at this difficult time."

[Jesse Remedios is an NCR staff writer. His email address is jremedios@ncronline.org . NCR Vatican Correspondent Joshua J. McElwee contributed to this story.]

Read full document:
Document
Cardinal_Dolan_sign-on_w_names.pdf