

Catholic Trend/Winter-2026 (#4)

Is Catholicism incompatible with capitalism and nationalism?

According to some heads of state and economists, the answer is “NO!” Argentinian president Javier Milei, a big fan of MAGA, Elon Musk, and Donald Trump, called the late Pope Francis an “imbecile,” a “filthy leftist,” an “embarrassing communist,” a “piece of shit,” and “the representative of malignance on Earth,” delivering the last remark during his successful presidential campaign in 2023. Why the hatred? Milei is a devoted advocate of exactly the neoliberal order that Pope Francis was criticizing when he declared in 2013 that “money must serve, not rule.” Among Milei’s heroes are the Austrian school of economists – especially Friedrich Hayek and Ludwig von Mises. In 1922, Mises warned that “a living Christianity cannot exist side by side with, and within, capitalism.” For Mises, Jesus was too much a socialist. “No art of interpretation,” Mises huffed, “can find a single passage in the New Testament that could be read as upholding private property,” and “the Redeemer’s words” against the rich had done more harm than “the persecution of heretics and the burning of witches.” Mises also argued that the Catholic Church in particular was incompatible with nationalism. The West was faced with a choice: capitalism and nationalism or Christian compassion and social justice.

Bishop Robert Barron not a big fan of the Synodal process.

In a tribute to the late Pope Francis, published in *First Things*, Bishop Barron, newly installed as bishop to the Diocese of Winona-Rochester (MN) and recently a participant in the Trump Administration’s Religious Liberty Commission, voiced his frustrations at the Synodal proceedings that occurred in Rome last year:

“Though every dialogue was lively and informative, very few of them moved toward decision, judgment, or resolution. Most were stuck in what Bernard Lonergan would call the ‘second stage’ of the epistemic process, namely, being intelligent or having bright ideas. They didn’t move to Lonergan’s third level, which is the act of making judgment, much less to his fourth stage, which is that of responsible action. So respectful were we

of the ‘process’ of conversation that we had almost a phobia of coming to decision.”

Death-Dealing: Abortion ranks #1.

Abortion was the leading cause of death worldwide in 2025 – for the seventh year in a row. And the statistics are staggering, sobering, and deeply saddening. According to Worldometer, which tracks health, population, and other metrics, over **45 million people died by abortion last year**, more than triple the second leading cause of death, communicable diseases, which killed nearly 1.3 million. The number of abortions worldwide has consistently hovered between 40 and 50 million annually for the past seven years, with the approximate number of lives lost adding up to more than 300 million – which approximates the entire U.S. population (*The Christian Post*; January 13, 2026).

The Hangman Cometh

The billionaire cofounder of the software company Palantir called for the return of public hangings to demonstrate “masculine leadership” (*The Independent*; December 15, 2025). Palantir has developed data integration that analyzes data from multiple sources, enabling government agencies and militaries to support intelligence operations, counterterrorism, and civil use. Palantir does a lot of work with the Trump Administration, and when Pete Hegseth, U.S. Defense Secretary, got a lot of flack regarding military strikes on drug traffickers, Joe Lonsdale, an American entrepreneur and venture capitalist, jumped to his defense. He said that “If I am in charge later, we won’t just have a three strikes law, we will quickly try and hang men after three violent crimes. And yes, we will do it in public to deter others.”

Supporting Hegseth, Lonsdale went on to say that “Sinking narco boats publicly helps deter others. As does hanging repeat criminals.” Underscoring the MAGA machismo, Lonsdale ended with a manifesto that would look good on a bumper sticker: “Masculine truth: bold, virtuous men deter evil.”

This is what gives Dems a bad name: Whites need not apply.

The Charlotte Observer (December 15, 2025) ran a piece that makes one think, “You’ve gotta be kidding me.” It seems that the hip enclave of Asheville, North Carolina, must pay \$81,000 in attorney fees to five white residents who

experienced racial discrimination when they were rejected from a volunteer board that advises the North Carolina city on equity. The Human Relations Commission of Asheville posted applications indicating that “white persons were automatically excluded from serving unless they could prove a ‘plus factor.’” And what would be a “plus factor”? Well, if you were homosexual or transgender or living in public housing, that would open the door. More to it, “Non-white applicants did not have to demonstrate any ‘plus factors.’” One of the rejected white residents had served as Asheville’s director of risk management for 30 years. Mayor Esther Manheimer, who herself is white, acknowledged that the city must make changes to its policy “of race-based membership preferences” or face further litigation. Uh, do you think?

Intelligent Design and Building Churches.

Well, I suppose it was inevitable, but the Archdiocese of Prague is building a church in the industrial Czech town of Neratovice – using 3D-printing technology. According to *Our Sunday Visitor* (December 30, 2025), most of the structure will be assembled from computer-generated concrete blocks shaped in decorative waves with favorable acoustic features. “While we really admire the baroque churches which are everywhere in our country, such architecture isn’t possible in today’s modern conditions,” said Michal Macuda of Coral Construction Technologies. The 3D method, which uses AI-generated images, reduces concrete consumption by up to 70% and offers “unlimited design possibilities,” Macuda said, such as an “ark” shape and embossed wall details. Every part of the church will be open to sunlight, symbolizing “openness and unboundedness.” The parish website explained this innovation: “The communists founded Neratovice in 1957 as a town without a church – they wished to prove this was possible, and a church has been very much missing. If you say Neratovice today, everyone thinks of a chemical industry town full of chimneys, with a main square formed by tall, prefabricated buildings. A dominant element is missing, and the new church will fill this gap.”

“I’m ashamed to be Catholic”: Catholic conservatives are losing their minds over Pope Leo’s Iran comments.

Our Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, has held his position for less than a year, but he has already managed to rile up MAGA supporters many times with what they describe as his “outrageous” opinions. It began very early in his pontificate when

he criticized the inconsistency of those who are strongly anti-abortion while at the same time supporting the death penalty. He observed that such conflicting positions cannot truly be described as 'pro-life.'" That got the Catholic MAGA folks squirming, but they became unhinged when he spoke about ICE, saying, "No one would be forced to flee, nor exploited or mistreated because of their situation as foreigners or people in need."

Now Pope Leo has weighed in on the recently launched war against Iran or, as *The Daily Show* puts it: Mess'opotamia. The Pope tweeted: "I am following with deep concern what is happening in the Middle East and in Iran during this tumultuous time. Stability and peace are not achieved through mutual threats, nor through the use of weapons, which sow destruction, suffering, and death, but only through reasonable, sincere, and responsible dialogue."

He continued: "Faced with the possibility of a tragedy of immense proportions, I make a heartfelt appeal to all the parties involved to assume the moral responsibility of halting the spiral of violence before it becomes an unbridgeable chasm. May diplomacy regain its proper role, and may the well-being of peoples, who yearn for peaceful existence founded on justice, be upheld. And let us continue to pray for peace."

A number of American Catholics took umbrage with the pontiff on the internet as they seemed to suggest that they have a better grasp of Catholicism than does the 267th pope of the Catholic Church. It makes you wonder with the expression: **AMERICAN CATHOLIC**: which is the noun and which is the adjective?