

THE CHRISTIAN POST

CP WORLD Tuesday, Jan 22, 2013

Pope Benedict Congratulates Obama, Notes Tensions on Religious Issues



(Photo: Reuters/)

Pope Benedict XVI waves as he makes his "Urbi et Orbi" (To the city and the world) address from a balcony in St. Peter's Square in Vatican April 8, 2012.

By [Stoyan Zaimov](#)

November 8, 2012 | 11:06 am

Pope Benedict XVI has congratulated President Barack Obama on his re-election on Nov. 6, but has used the occasion to further remind him of the big differences that have surfaced between the Roman Catholic Church and the current White House administration.

"In the message, the Holy Father sent his best wishes to the president for his new term and assured him of his prayers that God might assist him in his very great responsibility before the country and the international community," the Vatican said in a statement, although

[Reuters](#) reported that the exact contents of the text were not released.

While wishing Obama well and hoping that he will "be able to serve law and justice in respect of the essential human and spiritual values and the promotion of the culture of life and freedom of religion, which have always been so precious in the traditions of the American people and their culture," the Vatican also noted that the issues Catholics have with Obama's healthcare decisions cannot be swept under the carpet.

In particular, the Roman Catholic Church in the U.S. has been heavily opposed to the HHS mandate backed by the Obama administration which forces religious employers to provide insurance coverage that includes forms of birth control to its employees. While some exceptions exist to the rule, Catholic institutions have complained that they are too narrow and few would qualify. Official Catholic teachings warn against any forms of contraceptives, and are also opposed to abortion – while Obama is a pro-choice president.

The University of Notre Dame, the Catholic University of America and the Archdiocese of New York

are among the 20-plus institutions that have filed lawsuits against the HHS Mandate, with churches and organizations even saying that they might be forced to end their charity and community outreach programs if there is no way for them to escape the mandate.

The main Catholic body in the U.S., the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, put up a website around the time of the U.S. elections warning believers that their faith is being re-written, not protected. Besides the HHS Mandate, Catholics have also been up in arms against legislation that they say prohibits churches from providing services to undocumented immigrants.

President Obama first met Pope Benedict XVI at the Vatican in July 2009, where the two engaged in a "frank but constructive" conversation, as described by [The Associated Press](#).

Source URL : <http://www.christianpost.com/news/pope-benedict-congratulates-obama-notes-tensions-on-religious-issues-84631/>