

Religious, lay leaders react to Trump win in presidential election

By Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON - Lay and religious leaders of all stripes reacted to news of Donald J. Trump's upset win in the Nov. 8 presidential election.

Most expressed hope that Trump would pay attention to their agenda, while others were more decidedly downbeat and still others counseled prayer.

Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, president of the U.S. bishops' conference, outlined an ambitious agenda in a Nov. 9 post-election statement that congratulated Trump and all election victors.

"The bishops' conference looks forward to working with President-elect Trump to protect human life from its most vulnerable beginning to its natural end. We will advocate for policies that offer opportunity to all people, of all faiths, in all walks of life," Archbishop Kurtz said.

"We are firm in our resolve that our brothers and sisters who are migrants and refugees can be humanely welcomed without sacrificing our security. We will call attention to the violent persecution threatening our fellow Christians and people of other faiths around the world, especially in the Middle East. And we will look for the new administration's commitment to domestic religious liberty, ensuring people of faith remain free to proclaim and shape our lives around the truth about man and woman, and the unique bond of marriage that they can form."

Archbishop Kurtz added, "Now is the moment to move toward the responsibility of governing for the common good of all citizens. I believe God will give us the strength to heal and unite," he said, referring to a need to bridge the divides created in the country by such a contentious election.

After Trump clinched the Electoral College majority early Nov. 9, Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley of Boston tweeted, "Congratulations to President-elect Donald Trump. May God grant you good health, wisdom and courage during your presidency."

"We are delighted that tonight's election results reflect America's pro-life consensus in the House, Senate and presidency. We applaud candidates that took a stand on the most critical human rights issue of today, abortion," said Jeanne Mancini, president of the March for Life.

"We congratulate President-elect Trump on his hard-fought win, as well Vice President-elect Pence, and our friends in Congress," Mancini added. "We look forward to working together to fulfill President-elect Trump's campaign promises to ensure pro-life Supreme Court justices, pro-life policies, and defunding America's

primary abortion provider, Planned Parenthood.”

Philippe Nassif, executive director of In Defense of Christians, urged Trump to “prioritize the protection of the ancient ethnic and religious minority communities of the Middle East, and a region in which these communities can coexist and thrive peacefully in their native lands” in a Nov. 9 statement. “The Christian values of tolerance and coexistence, and the innovations that these communities have contributed to their societies for so many centuries are essential for a stable and secure Middle East, which is in the national security interests of the United States and the world.”

“We must continue the fight to reconcile (the Rev.) Billy Graham’s message of righteousness with (the Rev.) Dr. Martin Luther King’s march for justice,” said a Nov. 9 statement by the Rev. Samuel Rodriguez, president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference.

“Now that the presidential election is finally behind us, our nation must put partisan politics and divisive rhetoric behind us as well. Instead of the agenda of the donkey or the elephant, Christians must be about the Lamb’s agenda,” Rev. Rodriguez added.

“We are committed to dialoguing with those who think differently and will attempt to engage President-elect Trump,” said a Nov. 9 statement by Scott Reed, executive director of the PICO National Network, which was founded by a California priest. “But President-Elect Trump should be forewarned that our faith will not allow us to permit him to fulfill his promise to criminalize immigrants by conducting mass deportations, or sit idly in the face of racial profiling of African-Americans, Latinos and religious minorities.”

“I’m struggling to find the words to process the fact that a bully who vowed to ban Muslims from our country, boasts about sexual assault, demonizes immigrants and called Pope Francis ‘disgraceful’ was elected,” said a Nov. 9 statement by John Gehring, Catholic program director at Faith in Public Life.

“As a Christian and a father of young children, I’m anguished. But as a Christian, I’m also committed to walking the hard road of faith and hope,” Gehring added. “I don’t understand Catholics who supported Trump, but there is too much at stake not to work for common ground and the common good.”

“Today is indeed a dark day in American history. A man who built the foundation of his campaign for the White House on some of the most disturbing elements of our nation – racism, xenophobia, sexism – is now set to become the most powerful leader in the world,” said a Nov. 9 fundraising email by Laura Barrett, the new executive director of Interfaith Worker Justice.

“Whether it’s health and safety on the job, the ability to recover stolen wages from unscrupulous employers, or progress toward a living wage, we can’t assume any

worker justice victory is safe from being rolled back under a Trump presidency,” Barrett said.

“Donald Trump made many promises to pro-lifers over the course of his campaign, and the pro-life generation will make sure he keeps those promises as president,” said a Nov. 9 statement from Kristan Hawkins, president of Students for Life of America.

“Our nation rejected a party and a culture that supports not a single restriction on abortion. Abortion mattered in this election as it was the most-searched term in regards to the election on Google,” she added. “The bottom line is this: today’s election results give us the momentum we need to achieve our mission of abolishing abortion in our lifetime.”

David Harris, CEO of the American Jewish Committee, congratulated Trump on his win and also offered best wishes to his Democratic rival, Hillary Clinton, in a Nov. 9 statement.

“Now that the election is over, a first priority should be to address the wounds of an extraordinarily divisive contest,” Harris said. “The United States is one country with one destiny, and any expression of bigotry and exclusion, as we’ve regrettably seen during the extended campaign, must never be allowed to corrode our pluralistic fabric.”

Also see:

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