



UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME: RESCIND JOE BIDEN'S LAETARE AWARD
AN OPEN LETTER TO FATHER JENKINS

Feast Day of Saint Bede the Venerable 2025

Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C., Outgoing President
University of Notre Dame
400 Main Building
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556

Dear Father Jenkins,

We, the undersigned alumni, parents, students, and others of the Notre Dame family, write to urge the University to rescind the 2016 Laetare Medal awarded to then-Vice President Joe Biden.

Whatever the warrant for the award at that time, Biden as President has become the most formidable adversary of the Catholic Church on abortion, the very issue the nation's bishops, in their guide to Catholic voters, have consistently [declared](#) their "preeminent priority."

Far from "illustrating the ideals of the Church," the [defining characteristic](#) of Laetare Medal awardees, Biden seeks to subvert a Church teaching whose importance was recently underscored by the Vatican's Dicastery for Doctrine in its [Declaration Dignitas Infinita](#).

There, in reiterating the Church's condemnation of abortion, the DDC cited Pope Francis's description in [Evangelii Gaudium](#) of the unborn as "the most defenseless and innocent among us" and his denunciation of efforts "to deny them their human dignity and to do with them whatever one pleases, taking their lives and passing laws preventing anyone from standing in the way of this."

In these circumstances, President Biden's perduring title to the Laetare Medal dishonors both the Medal and the University and scandalizes her students and alumni as well as the broader Catholic community.

In analogous circumstances, the University has revoked honors previously bestowed in order to avoid scandal and protect its reputation as a Catholic institution and the integrity of its awards. For reasons we relate below, the case for rescission here is far more compelling than it was in those instances.

Here are the grounds for our petition in more detail:

We need not describe at length President Biden’s full-throated commitment to the pro-abortion cause, for it is the subject of continuous media attention. As NBC has [observed](#), “Abortion is at the center of President Joe Biden’s re-election campaign.”

That is precisely where President Biden put it in his [2024 State of the Union address](#) when he pledged:

If Americans send me a Congress that supports the right to choose, I promise you, I will restore Roe v. Wade as the law of the land again!

This is especially lamentable since, “citing his Catholic faith,” President [Biden opposed](#) Roe v. Wade as late as 2006.

But there is much more that is not widely known but is surpassingly important. President Biden and his pro-abortion accomplices have put in place an extensive web of executive and administrative actions and proposed regulations and legislation with the common purpose of facilitating abortion.

These actions are described in detail in a [compilation](#) entitled [Tracking the Most Pro-Abortion Administration Ever](#) by Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America, one of the nation’s preeminent pro-life organizations. We refer you to the SBA document for a complete description of the measures, which are far too numerous and complex to summarize here. Still, the major headings suggest the comprehensiveness of the program:

- Force American Taxpayers to Fund the Abortion Industry At Home and Overseas
- Suppress & Eliminate the Rights of Pro-life Americans and Coerce Pro-life Medical Personnel into Participating in Abortion
- Expand Extreme Abortion Policies that Most Americans Reject
- Appointing the Most Pro-Abortion Cabinet in U.S. History
- Change Foundational American Institutions to Expand Abortion
- Weaponizing the DOJ and Ignoring Violence Against Pro-Life Americans

This Biden-inspired multi-pronged assault on life is wholly at war with the stated purpose and legacy of the Laetare Medal and, we submit, calls for its rescission.

That is so particularly in light of the precedent you have established.

During your tenure, you directed the revocation of honors previously granted to Messrs. [Theodore McCarrick](#), [Bill Cosby](#), and [Jean Vanier](#), each for a number of instances of sexual abuse. These offenses, while grievous indeed, are dwarfed by President Biden’s wide-ranging campaign to stoke America’s malignant abortion abattoir.

Some, we suppose, might caution about appearing to send a political message. We note that such a consideration did not deter you from withholding an invitation to then-President Donald Trump to be commencement speaker and honoree because, [you have indicated](#), he did not meet the “bar” of “moral decency.”



In any case, the political message that might be inferred from rescinding President Biden's Laetare Medal is a reason for, not against, rescission.

If this petition is unanswered and President Biden retains the Laetare Medal, the clear message to American Catholics will be that the nation's most prominent Catholic university is untroubled by President Biden's pro-abortion campaign. Recission, on the other hand, would signal Notre Dame's unashamed dedication to the sanctity of life and its acknowledgement that, accordingly, honors awarded the nation's foremost abortion champion should not stand.

And that is how it should be. As the inscription on the Laetare Medal proclaims, "Truth is mighty, and it shall prevail."

In closing, let us say we are putting this matter to you in the first instance rather than waiting for Father Dowd to assume the presidency because you selected President Biden for the Laetare Medal and also established the precedent of revoking honors when circumstances demand it.

Respectfully,

Sycamore Trust Officers & Directors
with the Undersigned (available at sycamoretrust.org/view-signatures)

CC: Rev. Robert Dowd, C.S.C., Incoming President of The University of Notre Dame
John J. Brennan, Chairman of The Board of Trustees of The University of Notre Dame.

