

---

## A WORD FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

### *The Roman Catholic Church and International Relations*

Politics has been significantly influenced by religion in the post-9/11 world. That is why the Editorial Board of the *Politics and Religion Journal* has decided to employ a wide spectrum of scholars who would help us all to better understand the political role of religion in the contemporary world. As a consequence, our authors come from very different cultural settings and societal groups. The main goal of such policy is to offer a wide spectrum of opinions and to analyze the political role of all worlds' major religions, as we strongly believe that understanding each of these religions' is important for getting the whole picture. This special issue is dedicated to the role of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States of America.

Catholic Church in the U.S. gathers over a ¼ of the electoral body, thus its political attitudes are very important not only for the U.S., but for the whole world. This is particularly important if we know that the number of Catholics in the U.S. is on the rise, mostly because of migration from Latin America. If this trend continues, Catholic Church will become the single most dominant religious community in the U.S. This fact will surely have significant political consequences for the country, which is, let us not forget, founded as a protestant country in the first place. This is a fact. It is worth noting that before John F. Kennedy, no Catholic had ever occupied the Oval Office, regardless of their qualities. And today, there is another Catholic in the Oval Office – Joseph Biden.

I argue that these changes have to be analyzed in a wider context – Catholic Church is the most dominant religious community in the world. According to the Vatican, in 2021 this community gathered 1.3 billion of baptized members. However, it should be emphasized that the Catholic Church is facing some challenges that are influencing its societal and political role. For example, the decline of adherents; particularly in Europe, but also in other parts of the world. According to Cipriani, the Catholic Church in Spain went from 83% in 1965 to 27,7% in 2008.<sup>1</sup> Similar story is happening in Latin America, where I personally witnessed the full Pentecostal churches. And just a couple of decades ago, these Pentecostals were surely Catholics.

At present, it appears that the Catholic Church's influence is most prominent in Africa and in the Philippines, serving as two pivotal bastions of its strength. And yet, in Democratic Republic of Congo there is a significant number of Catholics who convert to newly founded Christian denomination, such is

---

<sup>1</sup> Roberto Cipriani, A Word from the Guest Editor, *Politics and Religion Journal*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 2015, p. 143.

---

the “Awakening Church”. Nevertheless, the Catholic Church continues to wield significant power in DR Congo, a country where you can find many devoted Catholics. A vivid example of this fact was the visit of Pope Francis to Kinshasa earlier this year. While we delve into the political influence of the Catholic Church in Africa and in the Philippines, it should be noted that the Catholic Church is more politically powerful in Africa. Anyhow, Catholics often argue that some of the future popes should come from these regions of the world.

**Miroljub Jevtić<sup>2</sup>**

---

<sup>2</sup> Founder and editor-in-chief of Politics and Religion Journal. At the moment, prof. Jevtic serves as an Ambassador of Serbia in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Contact E-mail: [jevticmiroljub@yahoo.com](mailto:jevticmiroljub@yahoo.com)