

# Melania Trump reveals she is Catholic: The First Lady shares her faith with the world after meeting the Pope as the first Catholic to live in White House since JFK

Daily Mail

When

Melania Trump recited The Lord's Prayer before a Melbourne, Florida presidential rally in February, the Internet went hog wild.

Now we know one reason why the first lady began with 'Let us pray' and 'Our Father who art in heaven' when she introduced the president that evening: She's a practicing Roman Catholic.

Her spokeswoman Stephanie Grisham confirmed that to DailyMail.com on Wednesday, hours after Pope Francis blessed a rosary for her at the Vatican.

The last Catholics to live in the White House were John F. Kennedy and his wife Jackie. Melania and her son Barron will move to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue over the summer.

Mrs. Trump did more than just show up for a Papal audience.

She spent time in prayer at the Vatican-affiliated Bambino Gesù (Baby Jesus) Hospital, and laid flowers at the feet of a statue of the Madonna.

She also prayed in the hospital chapel and read to a young

Greek boy in need of a donor heart – holding his hand in the Intensive Care Unit while camera shutters snapped.

The almighty may have heard her.

‘Upon landing in Belgium, I learned a young boy and his family who had been waiting for a heart transplant was informed that the hospital has found a donor,’ she said in a statement.

‘I read a book and held hands with this special little one just a few hours ago, and now my own heart is filled with joy over this news.’

The first lady later tweeted about the development with the hashtags ‘#Blessings’ and ‘#Faith.’

In another tweet, she sent ‘blessings to all’ after her Papal audience.

Mrs. Trump told Pope Francis at the Vatican that she was looking forward to going to the hospital ‘for the bambinos.’ She later called the visit ‘very moving.’

‘To spend time speaking to and coloring with children who have such a positive spirit despite illness was an amazing gift,’ she said.

‘The time I spent with the little ones in the Intensive Care Unit is something I will never forget, and I will pray for each of them daily.’

It’s unclear when Mrs. Trump became a Catholic. The president is a life-long Presbyterian, and they were married in a Florida Episcopal church.

Growing up as the daughter of a Communist Party member in rural Slovenia, her family maintained the outward appearances of being atheists, according to people in her childhood village of Sevnica who [spoke to DailyMail.com](#) in late 2015.

Accordingly, Melania and her sister were not baptized and did not make their First Holy Communion with other children their age.

It's still not clear when Mrs. Trump was baptized into the Catholic faith. Grisham did not immediately respond to a question about that detail.

But the Trumps have been in a reflective religious mood since arriving in Saudi Arabia last Saturday. That frame of mind persisted throughout their time in Israel.

The president addressed 55 world leaders from Arab and other Muslim-majority nations in Riyadh, imploring them to be part of 'a coalition of nations who share the aim of stamping out extremism and providing our children a hopeful future that does honor to God.'

In Jerusalem he visited the famed Western Wall, slipping a written prayer between the centuries-old stones as custom permits.

He 'marveled at the monument to God's presence and man's perseverance,' he said Tuesday in a speech at the Israel Museum.

'I was humbled to place my hand upon the wall and to pray in that holy space for wisdom from God,' Trump told an audience of Jewish officials.

'This city, like no other place in the world, reveals the longing of the human heart – to know and worship God.'

Trump issued a proclamation on Wednesday calling for a national 'day of prayer for permanent peace' on May 29, the upcoming Memorial Day holiday.

'On this ceremonious day, we remember the fallen, we pray for a lasting peace among nations, and we honor these guardians of our inalienable rights,' he said.

'I designate the hour beginning in each locality at 11:00 a.m. of that day as a time when people might unite in prayer. I urge the press, radio, television, and all other information media to cooperate in this observance,' Trump added.

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## Trump vows to use presidency for peace after 'fantastic' talks with Pope Francis

AFP

US president [Donald Trump](#) vowed on Wednesday to use his [US presidency](#) to promote global peace after meeting [Pope Francis](#) for the first time.

The two men sidestepped deep differences over issues ranging from the environment to the plight of migrants and the poor.

"Honor of a lifetime to meet His Holiness Pope Francis," a star-struck Mr Trump wrote on [Twitter](#) before leaving Rome for Brussels and the next leg of his first overseas trip as US president.

"I leave the Vatican more determined than ever to pursue PEACE in our world," he added.

In Brussels, a city he once dubbed a "hellhole", Mr Trump faced thousands of protesters ahead of his first summits on Thursday with leaders of Nato and the [European Union](#).

The US president sparked fears of an end to Nato when he dismissed the world's biggest military alliance as "obsolete" while on the campaign trail and mortified the EU by backing

Brexit.

Mr Trump said that the most important issue during his time in Belgium was terrorism after the “horrible situation” in the English city of Manchester, where a suicide bomber killed 22 people in an attack late on Monday night.

“We are fighting very hard, doing very well under our generals. Making tremendous progress,” he told [Belgian prime minister](#) Charles Michel.

“But when you see something like what happened a few days ago you realise how important it is to win this fight. And we will win this fight.”

Mr Trump left Rome declaring his determination for peace following his keenly anticipated encounter with Pope Francis, the 80-year-old former Jesuit priest who has made championing the poor and the third world major themes of his papacy.

In their world view and tastes, the Argentine pontiff who eschews the use of the palaces at his disposal and the billionaire president appear worlds apart.

But despite the pope looking initially grim-faced, both men ended up mostly all smiles, relaxed and even jovial.

Accompanied by his wife, Melania, and daughter Ivanka, Mr Trump met the pontiff in the private library of the [Apostolic Palace](#), the lavish papal residence which the pope decided not to live in, instead opting for more modest lodgings.

“He is something,” Mr Trump later said of his host. “We had a fantastic meeting.”

There was even a light-hearted moment when Pope Francis made an apparent allusion to Mr Trump’s imposing physical size.

“What do you feed him on? Potica?” Pope Francis asked Melania, in a reference to a calorie-laden cake that comes from her

native Slovenia and is pronounced “potteezza”.

Mr Trump also told the pope he was committing more than US\$300 million (Dh1.1 billion) to help prevent or tackle famine in Yemen and several countries in Africa.

The Vatican described the discussions as “cordial” and emphasised the two men’s joint opposition to abortion and shared concern for persecuted [Christians in the Middle East](#).

The pope presented Mr Trump with a medallion engraved with an olive tree, the international symbol of peace.

He also gave the president copies of the three major texts he has published as pope, including one on the environment which urges the industrialised world to curb carbon emissions or risk catastrophic consequences for the planet.

Mr Trump, who has threatened to ignore the Paris accords on emissions and described global warming as a hoax, vowed to read them.

\* [Agence France-Presse](#)

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## [Donald Trump, Pope Francis Meet, Vow to Fight for ‘Life, Freedom of Worship’](#)

[The Christian Post](#)

President [Donald Trump](#) and [Roman Catholic Church](#) leader [Pope Francis](#) met on Wednesday at the [Vatican](#) where they spoke for 30 minutes in private, and vowed to fight together for life,

peace, and freedom of worship.

“Honor of a lifetime to meet His Holiness Pope Francis. I leave the Vatican more determined than ever to pursue PEACE in our world,” Trump posted on [Twitter](#) following the meeting.

[BBC News](#) reported that the two world leaders held a 30-minute private meeting, with the Vatican later explaining that they talked about their shared commitment to “life, freedom of worship, and conscience,” and expressed hope that they can collaborate “in service to the people in the fields of healthcare, education and assistance to migrants.”

They also reportedly talked about the “promotion of peace in the world through political negotiation and interreligious dialogue,” along with the need to protect Christian communities in the [Middle East](#), which are suffering at the hands of [Islamic extremists](#).

[Catholic News Service](#) noted that Francis presented Trump with a split medallion held together by an olive tree, symbolizing peace.

“It is my desire that you become an olive tree to construct peace,” Francis said, to which Trump replied: “We can use some peace.”

The Vatican leader also gifted copies of his documents “The Joy of the Gospel,” on the family, and “Laudato Si.’” on the environment, which the billionaire businessman promised to read.

Trump presented Francis with a box containing five of Martin Luther King Jr.’s books, including a signed copy of *The Strength to Love*.

Francis and Trump [have clashed](#) on some issues in the past, such as the president’s vow during the 2016 election campaign to build a massive wall at the Mexican border in order to keep

illegal immigrants and traffickers out of the country.

Francis went as far as to say that building such walls is “not Christian,” but did not comment on the [border fence](#) that already exists between [California and Mexico](#) that was built during former president Bill Clinton’s administration in 1993. Trump, who is Presbyterian, previously said it was “disgraceful” for the pope to question his faith.

There appeared to be no sign of major disagreements during Trump’s visit, with the U.S. President calling it a “fantastic meeting.”

When saying his goodbyes with Francis, Trump said: “Thank you, thank you. I won’t forget what you said.”

[Reuters](#) reported that he later told reporters about how meeting the pope went: “Great. He is something. He is really good.”

Trump’s visit to the the Vatican is part of a nine-day foreign tour, which has already seen him deliver speeches in Saudi Arabia and Jerusalem.

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## [‘I won’t forget what you said,’ Trump tells pope after meeting at Vatican](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YVCm1-toVFg>

Gerald O’Connell  
[America Magazine](#)



President Donald Trump and Pope Francis, two leaders with contrasting styles and differing worldviews, met at the Vatican City on Wednesday, setting aside their previous clashes to broadcast a tone of peace for an audience around the globe.

Mr. Trump, midway through his grueling nine-day maiden international journey, called upon the pontiff at the Vatican early Wednesday where the two had a private 30-minute meeting laden with religious symbolism and ancient protocol. While this is the normal length of time for such face-to-face meetings with heads of states it was perhaps shorter than many had expected for this first encounter between the two world leaders.

According to a summary provided by the Holy See, the pope and president talked, among other things, about “the promotion of peace through negotiation and inter-religious dialogue, with special reference to the Middle East and the protection of Christian communities.”

In their private conversation and in a subsequent one with two of the pope’s top advisors—Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the secretary of state, and Archbishop Paul Gallagher, secretary for relations with states, a Vatican statement said the two leaders discussed their “joint commitment in favor of life, and freedom of worship and conscience” and expressed the hope for “serene collaboration between the State and the Catholic Church in the United States, engaged in service to the people in the fields of healthcare, education and assistance to immigrants.”

Surprisingly, the summary included no mention about “care for our common home” or climate change, but that does not mean the issue was not addressed in the two conversations that lasted a total of 80 minutes.

The president, accompanied by his wife and several aides, had

arrived at the Vatican just after 8 a.m. local time. The president greeted Francis in Sala del Tronetto, the room of the little throne, on the second floor of Apostolic Palace Wednesday morning.

The visit began with a handshake between the two men. Mr. Trump could be heard thanking the pope and saying it was "a great honor" to be there. They then posed for photographs and then sat down at the papal desk, the pope unsmiling, as their private meeting began.

The audience started in a somewhat tense manner, with both looking rather serious and conscious of its importance, but it ended in a much relaxed, warmer and friendly way, with many smiles and some jokes. Significantly, as he bade Pope Francis farewell, Mr. Trump said, "Thank you, thank you, I won't forget what you said!"

At the end of their private conversation, Mr. Trump presented his delegation, which included his wife, Melania, his daughter Ivanka and her husband Jared Kushner, the national security advisor, Lt. Gen. H. R. McMaster, and Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson. After receiving the entire delegation, Pope Francis escorted him to a table in the center of the room for the traditional exchange of gifts.

Mr. Trump began the gift exchange telling Francis, "This is a gift for you. These are the books of Martin Luther King. I think you will enjoy them. I hope you do."

Pope Francis looking clearly pleased responded, "Thank you, thank you very much!"

The first pope from the Americas, for his part, gave the U.S. president a medallion of the Olive branch of peace as he does to many heads of state and explained its significance, saying, "It's our hope that you may become an olive tree for peace."

“We could use peace!” Mr. Trump responded.

Francis then gave the president the three main documents of his pontificate: “The Joy of the Gospel,” which is his programmatic document; the encyclical “Laudato Si’,” which highlights the urgent need to combat climate change; and “The Joy of Love,” his post-synod exhortation on the family. He explained that these are documents that he wrote for Catholics and that they relate to “the family, the joy of the Gospel and the care of our common home—the environment.” He also gave Mr. Trump a copy of his Message for the World Day of Peace 2017, which focuses on the politics of non-violence, and said, “I signed it personally for you.”

After exchanging gifts, the pope led the president back to their original positions under the magnificent painting of the Resurrection of Jesus, by the famous Italian artist Perugino, for a final photo-op. And before the delegation departed he gave a gift to each one starting with the president.

When he came to Melania, he said with a smile, “Do you give him *potizza* to eat?” *Potizza* is a traditional rich Slovenian cake given for dessert which Francis likes.

Mr. Trump laughed and commented, “Delicious!”

After Melania, the pope then greeted Ivanka Kushner and her husband, Jared, in what seemed like a family gathering, as the president and his wife looked on.

His predecessor, Barack Obama, had a private audience with Francis at the Vatican in 2014 that lasted 50 minutes. But the timing on Wednesday was tight as Francis had his weekly Wednesday general audience, the thousands of pilgrims on hand forced Trump’s motorcade to enter Vatican City from a side entrance rather than the grand entrance through St. Peter’s Square.

Mr. Trump is the 13th incumbent president of the United States

to meet a reigning pope in the Vatican since Woodrow Wilson visited Pope Benedict XV on Jan. 4, 1919. Four popes have visited the United States in that same period, starting with Paul VI on Oct. 4, 1965. Francis went there from Sept. 22 to 23, 2015. This was the 30th meeting between a U.S. president and a pope over the past 100 years.

The content of their private conversation has not been revealed. This is normal, as Francis explained on the flight back from Cairo at the end of April. When a reporter asked what he had discussed in his private conversation with the Egyptian president, the pope replied, "Generally when I am with a head of state in private dialogue, that remains private, unless, by agreement, we say 'let's say on this point, we'll make it public.'"

The same is true today. Pope Francis will not reveal what has been said, unless he and the president have jointly agreed to make a specific point or points known.

After the papal audience, a Vatican official accompanied the president and his top advisors, Mr. McMaster, Secretary Tillerson and Mr. Kushner, for private talks with two of the pope's most trusted senior collaborators: the Italian-born secretary of state, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, who is Francis' right-hand man, and the secretary for relations with states, Archbishop Paul Gallagher, the first Englishman ever to hold that post. They talked together behind closed doors for 50 minutes, suggesting they went into the issues in considerable depth.

During that time, Vatican officials treated the first lady to a guided tour of the Pauline chapel and Sala Regia, and once the president had concluded his conversation at the Secretariat of State, they escorted him, Mrs. Trump and the U.S. delegation for a guided tour of the Sistine Chapel and St. Peter's Basilica. This was an unusual honor, one rarely given to heads of state, but one that will surely have pleased

the president.

Following that tour, the presidential motorcade left the Vatican for the Quirinale to meet the Italian president, Sergio Mattarella, and then drove to the Villa Taverna, the residence of the Italian ambassador, where he had lunch with Italy's prime minister, Paolo Gentiloni. The first lady drove to the Bambino Gesù, the largest pediatric hospital and research center in Europe, financially supported by the Vatican, which stands next to the North American College where future priests for the United States are trained.

Ivanka Trump drove to the Sant'Egidio international lay community's headquarters in Trastevere, where she met some women victims of human trafficking.

The meeting between pope and president, which concluded Mr. Trump's tour of the world's largest monotheistic religions, provided powerful imagery to Catholic voters back in the United States. The two collided head-on early last year, when Francis was sharply critical of Mr. Trump's campaign pledge to build an impenetrable wall on the Mexican border and his declaration that the United States should turn away Muslim immigrants and refugees.

Mr. Trump arrived in Rome Tuesday evening, his motorcade closing a busy Italian highway just after rush hour and prompting hundreds of onlookers to briefly step out of their gridlocked cars to gawk at the fleet of armored vehicles. He spent the night at the U.S. ambassador to Italy's residence.

In recent days, Pope Francis and Mr. Trump have been in agreement on a need for Muslim leaders to do more against extremists in their own communities. But there are few other areas where their views align.

The president's prior anti-Muslim rhetoric—including his musing that Islam "hates" the West—is the antithesis of what the pope has been preaching about a need for dialogue with

Muslims. Pope Francis also differs sharply with Mr. Trump on the need to combat climate change and economic inequality.

Mr. Trump's visit to the Eternal City comes after two stops in the Middle East where he visited the cradles of Islam and Judaism. In Saudi Arabia, he addressed dozens of Arab leaders and urged them to fight extremists at home and isolate Iran, which he depicted as menace to the region. And in Israel, Mr. Trump reaffirmed his commitment to strong ties with the nation's longtime ally and urged both the Israelis and the Palestinians to begin the process of reaching a peace deal. No details or timetable have yet to be established for negotiations.

But while Mr. Trump received extravagantly warm welcomes in Riyadh and Jerusalem, the reception could grow much cooler now that he's reached Europe, site of widespread protests after his election. Climate change activists projected the words "Planet Earth First" on the massive dome of St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican Tuesday night and protests are expected Wednesday in Rome and later in the week when Mr. Trump travels to Brussels for a NATO meeting and Sicily for a G7 gathering.

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## **Brown: Trump will come around on climate change**

Carla Marinucci  
[Politico](#)

[SAN FRANCISCO](#) – [California](#) Gov. [Jerry Brown](#), one of the

Democratic Party's most outspoken critics of Republican climate change policy, said Wednesday he now believes that President [Donald Trump](#) is a political "realist" who will likely listen to what [Pope Francis](#), [China](#) and other world leaders are saying on the key issue – and that progress under his administration may be "not as disastrous as we thought a few months ago."

Brown cited Trump's meeting with Pope Francis on Wednesday – and the delivery of a papal encyclical on climate change – as one reason for optimism. Other positive signs: China's growing efforts to contain pollution and the effects of global warming, and the Trump administration's approval this week of \$657 million for the electrified Caltrain project in the San Francisco [Bay Area](#).

"President Trump is a realist – and there's nothing more real than the atmosphere and the chemistry that determines our weather and our long-term climate," Brown told reporters at a climate change conference hosted by the Netherlands in San Francisco on Wednesday. "I don't know that he's going to come aboard immediately – but I do know that with our efforts in California, joining with other states and other provinces in the world, that we will be successful in pushing this agenda."

"There will be some bumps in the road," Brown said. "There's a great deal of denial – I see that in some of the people [Trump has] appointed. But I'd say the trend is toward dealing with climate change – and I don't think President Trump will stand in the way of that, ultimately."

The California governor – who has in the past lambasted Republicans as "luddites" on the climate change issue and Trump as a climate change denier – said he took it as a good sign that the president met with Pope Francis and that the two discussed the issue.

 California Gov. Jerry Brown poses in a group shot during

the joint Netherlands and [California Environmental Protection Agency](#) conference called “Climate is Big Business” at the Presidio in San Francisco. | AP Photo

“Don’t underestimate the power of the [Holy Father](#),” Brown said. “The pope is talking about climate change, he’s handing him an encyclical ... and there are many conservative leaders in the world who support” efforts to reduce climate change.

The papal encyclical calls for drastic cuts in fossil fuel emissions, and the gift has been viewed as pressure on Trump to not withdraw from the Paris climate accord.

Trump has recently played up his admiration and positive relationship with Chinese President Xi Jinping, and Brown noted that the fact that “China is asserting such a world leadership role” in the matter is key. Brown will head to China next month to meet with Chinese leaders “and further that effort ... and I don’t think President Trump will want to stand aside as this climate story unfolds.”

Brown also cited the federal funding for Caltrain – the electrification of a commuter rail project that serves tens of thousands of workers daily in Silicon Valley – as a sign of progress, because it comes in spite of objections from [GOP](#) Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy and the Republican House delegation.

“Obviously, President Trump had a very different view than Mr. McCarthy,” Brown said. While it appeared initially that the project was in danger from the Republican opposition, “that’s the wonderful thing about politics – no matter what someone says today doesn’t mean they won’t change their minds tomorrow.”

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[Christian Post](#)

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# What common ground could Trump and Pope Francis find?

Elsie Harris

[Catholic News Agency](#)

When Pope Francis was asked last week about his upcoming meeting with U.S. president Donald Trump, he made headlines for answering that he always tries to look for common ground.

Given that they have vocally disagreed on prominent issues in the past, what will the areas of shared agreement be?

The two are set to meet at the Vatican Wednesday, May 24, at 8:30 a.m., before Pope Francis' weekly general audience.

President Trump arrives to Italy May 23 after stopping in both Saudi Arabia and Israel as part of his first international trip, which lasts nine days. He will also attend a NATO meeting in Brussels on May 25 and a G7 summit in Sicily on May 26.

Perhaps the most prominent area of disagreement between Trump and Francis is immigration.

During a Feb. 18, 2016, in-flight press conference, the Pope was asked to respond to Donald Trump's immigration stand, particularly his threat to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Pope Francis responded saying "a person who thinks only about building walls, wherever they may be, and not building bridges, is not Christian. This is not in the Gospel." However, he also said that he would "give the benefit of the doubt" to the political candidate.

One week prior, Trump had bashed Pope Francis as a "pawn" for the Mexican government and "a very political person" who does

not understand the problems of the United States.

After the fact, then-Holy See spokesman Fr. Federico Lombardi told Vatican Radio that the Pope's comment "was never intended to be, in any way, a personal attack or an indication of how to vote" and had repeated a longstanding theme of his papacy: bridge-building.

During Trump's time in office so far, U.S. bishops – who have Francis' full backing on the issue – have been critical of Trump's moves on immigration, criticizing the "ban" he implemented in his first week in office halting refugee admissions for 120 days – indefinitely for Syrian refugees – and temporarily banning visa permissions for people seeking entry to the United States from Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia and Yemen.

Trump and Francis also have very divergent opinions on climate change. Francis insisted on the need to protect creation in his environmental encyclical *Laudato Si*, saying problems such as global warming are caused by human activity.

The Pope gave his full support of the Paris Climate deal in 2015, sending Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, to the Nov. 30-Dec. 11 summit as his personal delegate to the gathering.

Trump later threatened to back out of the deal, but delayed the process until after the G7 summit he'll be participating in this week.

While there will certainly be these and other points the two disagree on, there are several issues – other than their shared disregard for formal protocol – that could actually bring the two together.

These, to name a few, could be: pro-life issues, above all defense of the unborn; religious freedom, particularly for Christians in the Middle East; and the push for a solution to

the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Since his campaign days, Trump has identified himself as pro-life, and even gave a shout-out to the Jan. 27 March for Life in Washington D.C. in a clip of an interview with David Muir of ABC.

U.S. Vice President Mike Pence became the first vice president to participate in the event, giving a keynote speech that stressed the “sanctity of life.”

Pro-life issues are likely to be at least one strong point of union for Trump and Francis, who has often spoken out against abortion and other concerns such as euthanasia, calling them in one audience in 2014 “sins against God.”

He has also encouraged the use of conscientious objection based on religious convictions, at one point describing it as “a basic human right.”

When it comes to the Trump administration, the pro-life issue remains a big issue for many U.S. Catholics, who praised the president’s reinstatement of the “Mexico City Policy,” which prohibits U.S. funding of non-government organizations that either promote or perform abortions through family-planning funds.

Trump was also lauded for his appointment of Niel Gorsuch to fill the Supreme Court vacancy left when Justice Antonin Scalia passed away last year. Gorsuch has been praised not only for his pro-life stance, but also for his commitment to religious freedom.

Pope Francis and Trump are also likely to share concern for persecuted Christians and other religious minorities in Iraq and throughout the Middle East.

Both Trump and Francis have called for greater solidarity and protection of persecuted Christians.

Francis has repeatedly spoken out on modern persecution, saying there are more martyrs today than in the early Church, with the “ecumenism of blood” having become a watermark phrase of his pontificate.

Trump himself said during his campaign that protecting persecuted Christians would be a priority. As evidence of this intent, at a May 11 summit on persecuted Christians U.S. Vice President Mike Pence said, “We’re with you, we stand with you,” and assured of both his and Trump’s prayers.

As with any political figure, questions still loom as to how much Trump will actually do, especially if differing political opinions get in the way. But overall, the topic will likely be a point of agreement and collaboration with the Vatican.

And while Trump’s previous rhetoric on Islam is something Francis would likely hastily disagree with, a recent shift in the president’s tone is something the Pope would certainly welcome.

During his election campaign, Trump called for the “total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States,” and voicing his opinion that “Islam hates us.”

However, so far Trump’s rhetoric on Muslims has cooled during his first international trip abroad.

In his May 21 speech at the Arab Islamic American Summit in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Trump avoided the phrase “radical Islamic terrorism,” referring instead to “the crisis of Islamist extremism and the Islamist terror groups it inspires.”

“The nations of the Middle East will have to decide what kind of future they want for themselves, for their country and, frankly, for their families and for their children,” Trump said, speaking to leaders from more than 50 predominantly Muslim countries.

The choice is “between two futures,” and “it is a choice America cannot make for you,” he said, adding that “a better future is only possible if your nations drive out the terrorists and drive out the extremists.”

He said he didn't come to “lecture,” but to seek an end to terrorism and the beginning of peace in the Middle East region, noting that roughly 95 percent of terrorist victims are themselves Muslim.

The president said he wants a partnership with people who share the same “interests and values” as the U.S., calling Islam one of the “great faiths” with an “ancient heritage” that has served as the “cradle of civilization.”

In addition, Trump said the problem of terrorism is not “a battle between different faiths, different sects, or different civilizations. This is a battle between barbaric criminals who seek to obliterate human life and decent people of all religions who seek to protect it...This is a battle between good and evil.”

The U.S. president's more moderate tone on Islam, and indeed his unprecedented praise of some aspects of Muslim culture, is something Pope Francis would likely appreciate. The Pope has on multiple occasions warned against “Islamophobia,” insisting that not all Muslims are terrorist.

However, while the two might have new-found common ground in terms of how they refer to the Muslim community, at least in the public sphere, Francis will likely take issue with the weapons deal signed by Trump and Saudi King Salman.

The deal guarantees the Middle Eastern powerhouse some \$350 billion in weapons over the next 10 years, with \$110 billion going into effect immediately.

Francis has consistently called for an end to the arms trade, criticizing nations that sell weapons to warring countries in

order to keep the conflicts going that line their own pockets. The Pope has used almost countless occasions to insist for an end to this "scourge."

Saudi Arabia has also been criticized by many other Middle Eastern nations for funding ISIS, most directly through weapons sales.

But regardless of the deal, terrorism is sure to be one of the key topics discussed, and if Trump's speech in Saudi Arabia is an indication of how he intends to address the issue from here on out, the two just might be able agree on this point.

After leaving Saudi Arabia, Trump flew to Israel for an official visit in a bid to cement Israeli ties and help move forward on a peace deal with Palestine. After arriving this morning, he voiced hopes to Israeli President Reuven Rivlin of a broader peace deal in the region.

"You have a great opportunity right now. Great feeling for peace throughout the Middle East. People have had enough of the bloodshed and the killing. I think we're going to start see things starting to happen," he told Rivlin.

In a speech to Israeli Prime Minister on the tarmac, Trump said: "We have before us a rare opportunity to bring security and stability and peace to this region and its people, defeating terrorism and creating a future of harmony, prosperity and peace, but we can only get there working together. There is no other way."

In a previous encounter, Trump had asked Netanyahu to "hold off" on building more settlements in order help give space to further peace discussions in the region.

Earlier this month Trump met with Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas at the White House, telling him that when it comes to a deal that pleases both parties, "we will get it done."



The commitment to a two-state solution has been a longstanding priority for the Vatican, which was reinforced during a recent 2015 agreement between Palestine and the Holy See to promote religious freedom in the area.

Trump himself, however, has said his administration is not married to the idea of a two-state solution to the decades-long conflict, deviating from previous administrations on the issue.

While the Vatican and Trump might not agree on what exactly a peace deal looks like, it's likely to be a shared concern.

Another topic that could be a point of union between the Pope and the president is human trafficking; not necessarily because Trump himself has been a hardliner on the issue, but more likely because the president's daughter and high-profile adviser Ivanka Trump has made a commitment to it.

It is in this capacity that she is participating in each of the nine days of Trump's first trip abroad as president, including the public portion of his meeting with Francis.

While in Italy, Ivanka is also set to meet with the Community of Sant'Egidio, a group often praised by Pope Francis for their work with the poor and refugees, to discuss putting an end to human trafficking.

During the meeting, the Ivanka is expected to meet with several women who are victims of trafficking, and discuss various ways in which the Church and the U.S. government can collaborate on the issue.

So while there are clearly many areas in which Pope Francis and Trump diverge, the meeting will likely find both men seeking to find common ground.

Francis himself during his May 13 press conference refrained from making a premature evaluation of Trump, saying "I never

make a judgment of a person without listening to them. I believe that I should not do this.”

When the two finally meet, “things will come out, I will say what I think, he will say what he thinks, but I never, ever, wanted to make a judgment without hearing the person.”

Peace and friendship are things that can't be forced, he said, explaining that they take daily effort and are “handcrafted.”

“Respect the other, say that which one thinks, but with respect, but walk together,” he said. Even if someone thinks differently, “be very sincere,” and respectful.