

Schools have the right to limit free speech. But how much should they?

Ellen K. Boegel

[America \(Jesuit\) Magazine](#)

From [Halloween costumes](#) to prom dresses, Facebook posts to commencement addresses, school administrators are required to make difficult decisions regarding appropriate limits on free speech and expression. For the educational community, the summer is a good time to review, reflect on and possibly revamp current policies.

Dress codes

Headaddresses, tattoos and form-fitting clothing present increasingly complicated challenges for school administrators seeking to balance the values of fun, comfort and fashion with individual and community sensitivities, educational and social propriety, contractual and statutory provisions and, for public educational institutions, constitutional requirements.

[As evidenced by the 2015 Yale controversy](#) and [the 2016 creepy clown scare](#), Halloween costumes create problems at all educational levels. In addition to safety concerns regarding weapons and dangerous props or materials, codes of conduct at many schools prohibit “offensive” or “hostile” conduct.

Application of conduct restrictions to one-time occurrences, such as the wearing of an insensitive costume, is problematic. Public and private school students have due process and/or contractual rights (based on student registration and tuition payments) that require clearly articulated dress codes; vague and subjective terms are unenforceable. In addition, public school students enjoy [First Amendment rights](#) that protect

expressive clothing.

Restrictions on the speech of public college-level students must be “narrowly tailored to serve a significant government interest.” Public secondary and elementary school students are granted less extensive [free speech rights](#). Apparel that “materially disrupts classwork or involves substantial disorder or invasion of the rights of others” may be prohibited. Clothing with lewd or sexually explicit messages and those that are viewed as encouraging illegal drug use also may be banned in secondary and elementary schools.

Nevertheless, school administrators should use their authority sparingly lest they become enmeshed in even more disruptive (and expensive) litigation. In Pennsylvania, for example, a middle school’s unconstitutional prohibition of “I ♥ Boobies” cancer awareness bracelets engendered a lawsuit that lasted four years and cost taxpayers close to \$400,000 in legal fees.

Gender-conforming clothing requirements at public schools are prohibited by the [Equal Protection clause](#), but reasonable restrictions may be placed on feminine and masculine attire. This means a female student should not be forced to wear a skirt or dress and a male student should not be prohibited from wearing a skirt or dress, but restrictions can be placed on skirt and dress lengths. Dress code restrictions are more common on feminine attire, which has led to [the #iammorethanadistracted movement](#).

Private schools that accept federal funds must abide by Title IX gender discrimination protections, but religious schools with religious objections are exempt. Thus, religious schools can impose gender-specific clothing restrictions but that does not shield them from [student discontent and publicized controversy](#), often involving prom attire.

Legal rights are not self-enforcing; many unlawful codes and enforcement practices persist. Students and parents who object

to overly restrictive policies must comply, negotiate or sue. [A recent CNN story](#) highlighted the ingenuity of one family who used a marker to disguise their son's non-complying decoratively shaved hair. School officials who want to avoid conflict and litigation should dispense with judgmental and gender-biased rules and then collaboratively create and uniformly apply standards designed solely to promote safe and effective learning environments.

Campus Speech

[Public college](#) and university students enjoy full free speech rights. Federal and state anti-harassment laws only may be used to limit public university speech when it is so objectively severe or pervasive that it reasonably can be determined to interfere with another student's ability to learn.

University officials also may place reasonable time, place and manner restrictions on student speech and may impose additional restrictions on spaces considered limited public fora, such as lecture halls reserved solely for curriculum-related events. Nevertheless, students and student groups with myriad controversial viewpoints must be given equal access to campus facilities. The [twice-cancelled appearance by Ann Coulter at the University of California, Berkeley](#), illustrates the difficulty of meeting these constitutional requirements while protecting the safety of the entire campus community.

The "special characteristics of the school environment" enable secondary and elementary public school administrators to regulate classroom speech and school-sponsored speech to a greater extent than permitted on public college campuses. Most states have anti-bullying laws that promote inclusiveness and prohibit harassment. As with dress codes, non-disciplinary discussions that lead to cooperative compliance are better than banning speech that does not pose a realistic threat or is objectively harmful or disruptive. One [public high school](#)

teacher learned this lesson the hard way when he lost a lawsuit brought by a student disciplined for stating, "[I don't accept gays because I'm Catholic.](#)"

[Private school](#) students are not protected by the First Amendment and are subject to all clearly articulated speech restrictions. Moreover, private schools may prohibit or invite any speaker to a school forum. As was evidenced by [student protests during Vice President Mike Pence's commencement address](#) at the University of Notre Dame, however, freedom from government involvement does not eliminate controversy. Private schools that accept federal funding are subject to civil rights laws and, except when based on religious considerations, may not permit harassment of students based on disability, race, gender, religion or national origin. State anti-bullying laws generally do not apply to private schools.

Social media posts

Out-of-school expression on social media is of growing concern to public and private school administrators. Although the forum is different, the same legal principles apply.

Public universities may impose disciplinary action when restrictions are narrowly tailored to serve a significant government interest. Protecting fellow students from discriminatory or harassing conduct is a significant government interest, but derogatory social media posts may be prohibited only when they amount to an actual threat or objectively impair the educational environment. Posting bomb threats on the internet may be prohibited, but lewd online behavior and off-campus criticism of teachers and principals should be tolerated. Private schools may adopt whatever restrictions are deemed appropriate and clearly communicated to students and parents.

Teachers understand the tremendous risks and benefits of free expression, and administrators understand there is no pleasing

some people (parents, students or teachers). The best-reasoned and most clearly written code of conduct will not prevent every controversy nor quell every protest, which, in a free society, should not be the goal. Education, rather than litigation, is the best tool we have to create respectful environments for the free exchange of ideas. Town hall meetings, student-designed codes of conduct, inclusive lesson plans and academic presentations may do more to achieve compliance with reasonable guidelines than threats of discipline.

Making student buy-in a priority does not guarantee unanimity, but it does increase understanding of school policies and defeat claims of ignorance, which is, after all, an important educational goal.

[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.

[President Trump Declares a National Day of Prayer for 'Permanent Peace'](#)

Bob Eschliman
[Charisma News](#)

Memorial Day was once meant to honor the sacrifice of those who lost their lives in the service of their country.

While it remains that way for many Americans, for most in more recent times, it's become the "unofficial start of summer," and a day of picnics, barbecues and retail shopping sales. President Donald Trump is asking the country to take a step back and recognize the day as it was meant to be celebrated. Additionally, he's asking the country to set aside one hour, beginning at 11 a.m. locally, for prayer for permanent peace.

The president signed his annual Memorial Day proclamation on Wednesday night. It states:

Memorial Day is our nation's solemn reminder that freedom is never free. It is a moment of collective reflection on the noble sacrifices of those who gave the last measure of devotion in service of our ideals and in the defense of our nation. On this ceremonious day, we remember the fallen, we pray for a lasting peace among nation and we honor these guardians of our inalienable rights.

This year, we commemorate the centennial anniversary of America's entry into World War I. More than 4.7 million Americans served during The [Great War](#), representing more than 25 percent of the American male population between the ages of 18 and 31 at the time. We remember the more than 100,000 Americans who sacrificed their lives during "[The War to End All Wars](#)," and who left behind countless family members and loved ones. We pause again to pray for the souls of those heroes who, one century ago, never returned home after helping to restore peace in Europe.

On Memorial Day we honor the final resting places of the more than one million men and women who sacrificed their lives for our nation, by decorating their graves with [the Stars and Stripes](#), as generations have done since 1868. We also proudly fly America's beautiful flag at our homes, businesses, and in

our community parades to honor their memory. In doing so, we pledge our nation's allegiance to the great cause of freedom for which they fought and ultimately died.

In honor and recognition of all of our fallen service members, the [Congress](#), by a joint resolution approved May 11, 1950, as amended (36 U.S.C. 116), has requested the president issue a proclamation calling on the [people of the United States](#) to observe each Memorial Day as a [day of prayer](#) for permanent peace and designating a period on that day when the people of the United States might unite in prayer. The Congress, by Public Law 106-579, has also designated 3:00 p.m. local time on that day as a time for all Americans to observe, in their own way, the [National Moment of Remembrance](#).

NOW, THEREFORE, I, [DONALD J. TRUMP](#), [President of the United States of America](#), do hereby proclaim Memorial Day, May 29, 2017, as a day of prayer for permanent peace, and 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.

I further ask all Americans to observe the National Moment of Remembrance beginning at 3:00 p.m. local time on Memorial Day.

I also request the governors of the [United States](#) and its territories, and the appropriate officials of all units of government, to direct that the flag be flown at half-staff until noon on this Memorial Day on all buildings, grounds and naval vessels throughout the United States and in all areas under its jurisdiction and control. I also request the people of the United States to display the flag at half-staff from their homes for the customary forenoon period.

'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.

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.”

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

[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.

[Why the 500th Jubilee of the Reformation is significant for Catholics](#)

Note: This was an op-ed that was placed on the CRUX Website, being reposted here to show their thoughts on the [Protestant Reformation](#).

Joyce Ann Zimmerman

[CRUX](#)

[The following is paid advertising from the Sisters of the Precious Blood.]

On October 31, 2017, the Christian world will celebrate the 500th jubilee of [Martin Luther](#)’s nailing of his famous “Ninety-five Theses” to the door of All Saints Church in Wittenberg, Germany. Most Catholics would acknowledge this as an important date to commemorate in the Protestant world.

But what about for Catholics? To be sure, it is also an important commemoration for us. How so?

First, Catholic participation in various commemorative events would acknowledge the tremendous strides we have made since

the [Second Vatican Council](#) and its promulgation of *Unitatis redintegratio*, the 1964 [Decree on Ecumenism](#).

At the local, national, and international levels we have taken seriously this document's opening statement: "The restoration of unity among all Christians is one of the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council."

The Decree goes on to note that there have been divisions in Christianity in both the East (dating to the early Christological heresies, for example; and, most notably, the [Great Eastern Schism](#) of 1054 A.D.) and divisions in the West, most notable of which is the Protestant Reformation (see no. 13).

Ecumenical achievements have been made in the past half century concerning both doctrine and worship. Being a liturgical theologian, my ecumenical work has largely been in the area of worship where there is a surprising amount of agreement.

There is mutual recognition of baptism among a large number of Christian denominations. This means that if a Protestant wishes to become a Catholic, or a Catholic decides to become a member of a [Protestant denomination](#), generally the baptism is accepted and not repeated, provided baptism has been celebrated with water and the Trinitarian formula (see Matt 28:19).

The import of mutually recognized baptism is that we Catholics are members of the Body of Christ with our Protestant brothers and sisters.

Contrary to the belief of some Catholics, some Protestant denominations do believe in the real Presence of the risen Christ in the Eucharist, although they would not use the doctrine of transubstantiation to explain the change in the bread and wine into the very Body and Blood of the risen Christ. It is no small ecumenical achievement that some

Protestant denominations actually have included one or other of the Roman Catholic Eucharistic Prayers in their various books of worship.

The liturgical renewal brought about by *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy) has had a great impact on the way some [Protestant churches](#) worship. Significantly, after the promulgation of the first English translation of the Roman Lectionary, a Common (Revised) Lectionary was published.

This had a two-fold impact. First, Catholics and many Protestants were now hearing the same readings at their Sunday liturgies. Second, the Common (Revised) Lectionary encourages greater attention by Protestants to the unfolding of the liturgical year.

While all prayer/worship has at its foundation tenets of faith/doctrine (the ancient principle, *lex orandi, lex credendi*), the primary purpose of prayer/worship is not to expound tenets of faith/doctrine but to give God glory, praise, and thanks.

One way to commemorate the Reformation in 2017 is to make a concerted effort to promote ecumenical worship around themes that are part of significant worship practices for both Protestants and Catholics. These include, for example, the power of the word of God, God's overwhelming goodness to us, the graciousness of creation, the call to holiness, God's abiding divine Presence and help.

So often our regard for the "other" (Protestant or Catholic) is based on inadequate or incorrect knowledge. For example, some Protestants believe that Catholics worship Mary and the saints; some Catholics believe that all Protestants regard [Holy Communion](#) as merely a symbol and not truly Christ's Body and Blood given for us. Both statements are incorrect and need to be greatly nuanced in conversations. Various kinds of

education programs could address misconceptions about what each other accepts as true.

We should embrace all that is common to us as our primary conversation starter and basis for relationships. We all share in Christ's mission to bring salvation to all. We need to commit ourselves to growing in the holiness to which we are called. We need to emphasize what is good and shared by us Christians, for example, a commitment to living the Gospel, caring for others, regarding others as Christ would.

We need to embrace the ecumenical dynamism that has been ongoing for a half century and do so with a genuine will to overcome our differences and heal divisions. We need to embrace the principle that divisions are healed when all understand that everyone must give a little to come to unity. We need to internalize a vision of unity as a valued goal that is achievable. We need to embrace that the other is good and holy as we are.

This five-hundredth jubilee of the beginning of the Protestant Reformation is significant for Catholics because it reminds us of the divisions among the Christian churches at the same time it calls us to celebrate the many ecumenical achievements that have been realized. It calls us to pray for one another, that our hearts may be open to the goodness and truth we share.

It urges us to learn more about our own Catholic faith as well as appreciate the depth of faith our Protestant brothers and sisters live. It helps us realize just how human an institution our churches are and begs us to admit and be sorry for hurtful judgments and actions, both past and present, and move forward with genuine charity and desire to be one in Christ.

We Catholics are probably not ready to introduce Martin Luther onto our calendar of saints. But we can thank him for reminding us that, ultimately, [Christian unity](#) will be

achieved when we live out of the simple fact that the Church is that of Jesus Christ, guided by the Holy Spirit, all to the praise and glory of God.

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