

The Donald vs. The Pope—the campaign heats up

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Hollywood, MD - America's most famous businessman-turned-politician Donald Trump triumphed over his rivals in the Saturday, Feb. 20 South Carolina Republican Presidential Primary. By far the biggest challenge for Trump during the days leading up to the vote came not from GOP rivals Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio or Jeb Bush, but rather Pope Francis.

Pope Francis? What's the Holy Father running for? According to national news sources, the war of words between the man who would be president and the man who is pope was started by Trump, who criticized the Pontiff for presiding over a Mass in Juarez, Mexico.

One of the pillars of Trump's campaign is to build an \$8 billion wall—which Mexico will be invoiced for—to keep illegal immigrants and drug dealers out of the United States.

The pope—who appears to have either a better rapport with the press (or maybe a kinder, softer press corps following him around) than his counterpart, Trump—was asked his opinion of Trump's plan.

"A person who thinks only about building walls, wherever they may be, and not building bridges, is not Christian," said Pope Francis, adding, "we must see if he said things in that way and on that I give him the benefit of the doubt."

Trump's response was to declare, "no leader, especially a religious leader, should have the right to question another man's religion or faith." Trump has also been quoted as saying, "I'm proud to be a Christian."

Additionally, Trump has stated that the walled community where the Pope resides, Vatican City, is the "ultimate trophy of ISIS. "I can promise you that this pope would have only wished and prayed that Donald Trump would be president because this would not have happened," Trump said in a statement shortly after learning about Pope Francis' comments.

For the record, Pope Francis lives amid heavy security and has never indicated he wants the walls of Vatican City to come down. Everywhere he travels--and the Pope has traveled extensively--his security detail goes with him and the places he visits go through great expense to reinforce protection. Trump seems sincere in his desire to see Americans are safe from non-American groups that might disrupt our peace.

Has Pope Francis created a metaphoric wall between himself and someone who may become arguably the most influential world leader? In as much as Francis is not an American citizen, not a politician and may have had comments misinterpreted by the press (imagine that!), Americans perhaps should extend the same courtesy to the Holy Father as he has given to Mr. Trump—"the benefit of the doubt."

Trump will have plenty of time going forward to outline his vision on all the issues, not just immigration and terrorism. Whether he is the answer to America's prayers will be for the voters to decide.

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