



Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, is pictured in this screen capture from Vatican News, an official website of the Vatican, in an article about the U.S. bishops' June 17 approval to draft a document on the Eucharist. (CNS photo)

Cindy Wooden

[View Author Profile](#)



Catholic News Service

[View Author Profile](#)

[Join the Conversation](#)

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. [Learn more](#)

Rome — June 21, 2021

[Share on Bluesky](#)[Share on Facebook](#)[Share on Twitter](#)[Email to a friend](#)[Print](#)

While the U.S. bishops authorized the drafting of a teaching document on the Eucharist and insisted its planned section on "eucharistic consistency" was not aimed at denying Communion to any specific group of people, the bishops' online debate led many Italian media outlets to a different conclusion.

The Italian version of Vatican News, operated by the Dicastery for Communication, [headlined its coverage](#) June 18: "Abortion and Communion, USA bishops vote yes for a document for Catholic politicians."

The lead paragraph noted that 168 bishops voted in favor of drafting "a text on the Eucharist with a section on the importance of being worthy to receive it. Numerous bishops asked that it establish principles for deciding whether or not to allow access to the sacrament for believers in public office who support laws in favor of abortion and euthanasia."

Vatican News in English, meanwhile, [headlined its coverage](#): "U.S. bishops vote in favor of drafting document on Eucharist."

Describing "a plan to draft a text focusing on the meaning of the Eucharist in the life of the church," the piece did not mention eucharistic consistency or politicians at all but focused on speeches and debate during the meeting June 16-18 about the need to promote the unity of the church in the United States and the potential of the document to make that difficult.

L'Osservatore Romano, the Vatican newspaper, based its report on the news release June 18 from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops about the bishops' approval to have their doctrinal committee write a document on the meaning of the Eucharist in the life of the church.

"The final communique does not specify anything else," the story said.

Apparently not aware the discussions were livestreamed, it continued: "Leaks about the content of the debate speak of a document that, probably in November, will be offered for the examination of the episcopate; it should contain, among other things, a kind of admonition to Catholic politicians and other public figures who do not respect the teaching of the church on abortion and other fundamental doctrinal questions."

Advertisement

Avvenire, the daily newspaper of the Italian bishops' conference, headlined its coverage June 19: "USA bishops: Yes to a document on the Eucharist. The knot of Biden and abortion."

In the subhead, the article said, "Cardinal Luis Ladaria, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, had advised them of the risk that a vote on the question could 'become a source of discord'" when he wrote to the bishops in late May.

The newspaper explained that the text to be developed is expected to be proposed to the bishops in November and would need to be approved by two-thirds of the members of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

"The content of the document has not yet been defined, but over the past few days the virtual discussion, most of which was open to the press, clarified that it will contain a reminder of the theological foundation for the discipline of the church regarding the reception of Communion and will include a 'special invitation' to those Catholics in positions of leadership to give witness to their faith."

The Italian agency Adnkronos used the headline: "USA bishops against abortion; no Communion for Biden?"

The story said, "The American Catholic bishops have voted in favor of creating guidelines on Communion, a controversial step that could lead to limitations for Catholic politicians who, like President Biden, support the possibility of interrupting a pregnancy. The measure passed with 168 votes in favor, 55 contrary and six abstentions after more than three-and-a-half hours of inflamed debate at the spring assembly, which was held online."

Agenzia Italia, another news service, ran the headline: "Bishops, abortion and USA politics. Communion for Biden at risk."

The agency described the debate as a "total clash between the American Catholic bishops and Joe Biden," and said the document on the meaning of the Eucharist in the life of the church "could impede the head of the White House and other Catholic politicians in favor of the right to abortion to receive Communion."

The newspaper Corriere della Sera ran a headline saying the bishops' decision was a "challenge to the pope" with a "document to deny Communion to Biden."

"The assembly of the USA episcopal conference decides to prepare and vote in the fall on the document that the Vatican had asked them to avoid," the paper said, citing Cardinal Ladaria's letter.

The news site Affaritaliani.it took a more extreme line, headlining its piece: "Biden sabotaged by American bishops. Communion denied. Clash with the pope."

This story appears in the **Bishops, Biden and Communion** feature series. [View the full series.](#)