

## [News](#)



Cardinal Blase Cupich of Chicago delivers the invocation at the United Center, on Aug. 19, Day 1 of the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. (OSV News photo/Reuters/Mike Segar)



by Carol Zimmermann

[View Author Profile](#)

## [Join the Conversation](#)

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

August 28, 2024

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

As pundits continue to discuss what was said or unsaid at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, one thing that was probably not on anyone's bingo card was how Chicago Cardinal Blase Cupich wore his pectoral cross when he gave the [invocation](#) Aug. 19 at the convention's start.

The cardinal prayed that "our nation become more fully a builder of peace in our wounded world," and called for Americans to find a spiritually guided sense of national responsibility. His prayer was quickly criticized by some church leaders and pro-life groups for not condemning the Democratic Party's abortion platform and was also faulted for not saying Jesus' name but instead referring to the "God of all creation."

But how the Chicago prelate wore his cross while on the stage, tucked into his black suit jacket, also garnered criticism.

Kansas City Chiefs kicker Harrison Butker, the football player who gained national attention three months ago for his controversial [graduation speech](#) at Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas, [had something to say on X](#), formerly Twitter, about the cardinal's cross position.



Kansas City Chiefs kicker Harrison Butker speaks to the media during NFL football Super Bowl 58 opening night Monday, Feb. 5, 2024, in Las Vegas. Butker railed against Pride month along with President Biden's leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic and his stance on abortion during a commencement address at Benedictine College last weekend. (AP/Charlie Riedel, File)

The Catholic three-time Super Bowl champion, retweeted video of Cardinal Cupich giving the DNC's invocation where the chain of the pectoral cross, worn only by bishops, is visible but not the actual cross.

"America needs more Jesus not less. We need our shepherds to fearlessly lead and not be afraid to proclaim that Christ is King. It starts with bishops boldly wearing their pectoral cross outside their jackets," Butker said.

The post stirred up a very specific discussion about the canonical rights and wrongs of pectoral cross placements.

America needs more Jesus not less. We need our shepherds to fearlessly lead and not be afraid to proclaim that Christ is King ☩ It starts with bishops boldly wearing their pectoral cross outside their jackets †  
<https://t.co/pwY00Tql8L>

— Harrison Butker (@buttkicker7) [August 20, 2024](#)

David Dault, assistant professor of Christian spirituality at the Institute of Pastoral Studies at Loyola University Chicago, said in an Aug. 25 post on X: "There's a good reason why Cardinal Cupich is dressed the way he is (including the pectoral cross in his pocket): he is following the stipulations in canon law that direct how a bishop is to appear when speaking to those outside his diocese."

In a thread, he noted that since the DNC prayer was being televised to dioceses around the country where he is not the local bishop, he is "canonically forbidden to appear as one."

He also pointed out that there are circumstances that a "traveling bishop might appear wearing the visible symbols of the episcopacy, but that is the exception, not the norm," referring to canon law.

#### Advertisement

Dault also hosts the weekly radio show, "Things Not Seen: Conversations About Culture and Faith" and co-hosts "[The Francis Effect](#)" podcast along with Heidi Schlumpf, senior correspondent for National Catholic Reporter and Franciscan Fr. Daniel Horan, director of the Center for Spirituality at Saint Mary's College in Notre Dame, Indiana.

J.D. Flynn, editor and co-founder of [The Pillar](#), a Catholic media outlet, joined the fray, saying he was a canon lawyer and he disagreed with Dault's assessment which he said seemed to have been fabricated.

Michael Lewis, editor of the online Catholic site, [Where Peter Is](#), posted on X a quote from the book *The Church Visible: The Ceremonial Life and Protocol of the Roman Catholic Church* which said pectoral crosses "should never be worn hanging freely about the neck" when a bishop is wearing a black suit coat, adding that the cross

should "rest in the left-suit coat or vest pocket."

About that.... <https://t.co/3oTirjLWkh> [pic.twitter.com/4U2ix2fb6A](https://pic.twitter.com/4U2ix2fb6A)

— Mike Lewis (@mfjlewis) [August 25, 2024](#)

And in the-picture-is-worth-a-thousand-words-category, he also posted a photo of Cardinal Raymond Burke – a former top Vatican official who has taken an increasingly critical tone against Pope Francis over the last decade – coincidentally standing alongside Butker at an empty football stadium. The cardinal is wearing a black suit coat with only the chain of the pectoral showing while the cross appears to be placed in a pocket.

Lewis points out that the cardinal is wearing the cross "correctly here."