



Trump as Pope Isn't Just Absurd—It's a Moral Collapse

Description

The image was jarring: Donald Trump, dressed in papal regalia, circulated by a government-linked account during the mourning period for the pope. It wasn't a meme from a fringe forum. It was a performance—broadcast from the political center—for maximum effect. And it broke something in me. Not because I'm particularly devout these days, but because I was raised to understand what reverence means. And that image mocked it.

I'm not a practicing Catholic. But culturally, I'm Catholic—Irish Catholic on my father's side. That heritage is more than a label; it's a lens. Reverence, ritual, and moral seriousness were part of the air I grew up breathing. So when I saw that image, I wasn't just offended. I felt sick. And I can only imagine how devout Catholics around the world must have felt.

As an Irish Catholic, it's not just religious—it's cultural. Reverence is something woven into the rhythm of life. There's a respect for the rituals, the silence, the weight of sacred imagery. This wasn't just a bad joke; it was an insult that echoes across generations. And I wonder—what sort of person is amused by this? What kind of Catholic thinks this is okay?

That's why seeing a sacred symbol used as political parody didn't just offend—it exposed something broken in the soul of our civic life.

I'm also a product of fifteen years in Catholic education—all in private schools (eight in plaid skirts, four under Jesuits who believed intellect and ethics weren't just extracurriculars, but sacred obligations), followed by three more at a Jesuit university. My father and grandfather? Both Jesuit prep men. In our house, questions were scripture, logic was loyalty, and reverence was a discipline. Jesuit education isn't just about theology—it's about critical thinking, conscience, and an unshakable sense of duty to truth.

For those unfamiliar: the mourning of a pope is not just religious ceremony, but a global gesture of humility, reflection, and continuity. And for those of us educated in the Jesuit tradition, this moment held an even deeper emotional resonance. The fact that this pope—Pope Francis—was himself a Jesuit only intensified the sting. His death should have been met with reverence, not ridicule. And Trump's

choice to use that moment for self-aggrandizing spectacle only deepened my disdain.

You don't forget that kind of formation. It doesn't just shape how you believe—it shapes how you respond when belief is mocked.

This wasn't satire. It was desecration with a wink. It was power cosplay. And it was posted with a level of smug detachment that made it clear: the line between reverence and trolling no longer exists. The presidency has collapsed into performance art—stripped of gravitas, drunk on its own spectacle. Sacred symbols have become props. And respect is just a relic—nice to remember, irrelevant to the show.

Trump's entire brand is provocation. He mocks. He desecrates. His followers call it bravery. I call it moral rot—slow, deliberate, and contagious. Because this isn't just about one grotesque image. It's about the systematic hollowing out of institutions that once meant something. It's about a White House that posts memes instead of policy. It's about a nation where trolling passes for leadership.

And here's what really tears at me: I may not practice anymore, but the Catholic in me—the one shaped by questions, by humility, by reverence—knows this is not compatible with Christianity. Not the kind I was raised to understand. Christ didn't drape himself in robes for power. He stripped them off to serve.

To post that image, during a period of mourning, with zero irony and zero respect, is to wear the vestments of a faith you clearly do not understand. Or worse, understand just enough to exploit.

Would a pope ever advocate grabbing women by the genitals? Would he ever speak of dominance and entitlement as if they were virtues? Of course not. Because the papacy—whatever its flaws—is at least aspirational. It asks us to live better, to speak gently, to lead with humility. The idea that someone who has boasted of degrading others would now cloak himself in one of the world's most sacred mantles isn't just absurd—it's philosophically grotesque.

I've never voted for Donald Trump. I refused in 2016. I refused in 2020. And this latest charade—this smug, tone-deaf, blasphemous theater—cements it. I don't care what party he claims. He is not the president of America. He is the president of his own sycophancy.

We deserve better. Not just better leaders. Better standards. Better symbols. Better silence, even. Because sometimes, respect is not in what you post—but in what you choose not to.

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Date Created

May 4, 2025

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jackson