

Catholic Bishop Denies Communion to Pro-Abortion Democrat Sen. Dick Durbin: “Until He Repents of His Sin”

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Pro-life Catholics who wish Catholic Church leaders would step up and deny communion to leading politicians who support abortion are getting good news today.

One Catholic bishop is denying communion to pro-abortion Democrat Dick Durbin, a top Democrat in the Senate who has long supported and promoted abortion. [Durbin joined other Democrats to block a bill banning abortions after 20 weeks.](#)

Bishop Thomas J. Paprocki of Springfield, Illinois says Durbin is “cooperating in evil” and persisting in “manifest grave sin” because of his abortion advocacy and must therefore “not be admitted to Holy Communion until he repents of his sin.”

In a [statement](#) on the Diocese of Springfield [website](#), Bishop Paprocki said, “Fourteen Catholic senators voted against the bill that would have prohibited abortions starting at 20 weeks after fertilization, including Sen. Richard Durbin, whose residence is in the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois.”

The full statement reads:

I agree completely with His [Eminence](#), Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Chairman of the [United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ \(USCCB\) Committee on Pro-Life Activities](#), who called the U.S. Senate’s failure to pass the *Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act* “appalling.”



Fourteen Catholic senators voted against the bill that would have prohibited abortions starting at 20 weeks after fertilization, including Sen. Richard Durbin, whose residence is in the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois. In April 2004, Sen. Durbin’s pastor, then Msgr. Kevin Vann (now Bishop Kevin Vann of Orange, CA), said that he would be reticent to give Sen. Durbin Holy Communion because his pro-abortion position put him outside of communion or unity with the Church’s teachings on life. My predecessor, now Archbishop George Lucas of Omaha, said that he would support that decision. I have continued that position.

Canon 915 of the Catholic Church’s *Code of Canon Law* states that those “who obstinately persist in manifest grave sin are not to be admitted to Holy Communion.” In our 2004 Statement on *Catholics in Political Life*, the USCCB said, “Failing to protect the lives of innocent and defenseless members of the human race is to sin against justice. Those who formulate law therefore have an obligation in conscience to work toward correcting morally defective laws, lest they be guilty of cooperating in evil and in sinning against the common good.” Because his voting record in support of abortion over many years constitutes “obstinate persistence in manifest grave sin,” the determination continues that Sen. Durbin is not to be admitted to Holy Communion until he repents of this sin. This provision is intended not to punish, but to bring about a change of heart. Sen. Durbin was once pro-life. I sincerely pray that he will repent and return to being pro-life.

[A 2013 letter from Pope Francis](#) says pro-abortion politicians should not be eligible for communion in the Catholic Church.

In the letter, Pope Francis directed the Argentinean bishops to govern the Church there following the Aparecida Document.

The text states, in part, “[people] cannot receive Holy Communion and at the same time act with deeds or words against the commandments, particularly when abortion, euthanasia, and other grave crimes against life and family are encouraged. This responsibility weighs particularly over legislators, heads of governments, and [health](#) professionals.”

“These are the guidelines we need for this time in history,” the pope wrote to the bishops.