In his address to the United States Congress, Pope Francis declared: "The Golden Rule also reminds us of our responsibility to protect and defend human life at every stage of its development." First of all, it is the Fifth Commandment, not the Golden Rule, which requires the defense of human life. But Francis seemed averse to mentioning anything so controversial as a divine commandment before a body of "elected representatives" which, in keeping with the dictates of the modern state system, is not permitted to recognize any authority higher than itself.

That aside, as Francis spoke these words Catholics held their breath, waiting for the Pope to condemn the horror of abortion at the very center of power in the decadent Western world, just as Mother Teresa did — explicitly, by name, fifteen times — during her address to the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington.

What followed, however, was a statement that landed with a thud heard 'round the world: "This conviction has led me, from the beginning of my ministry, to advocate at different levels for the global abolition of the death penalty." The death penalty? What does a convicted murderer sitting on Death Row have to do with "human life at every *stage of development*?" Nothing, of course. The Pope's conclusion is a rather stupefying *non sequitur*.

Francis has since upped the ante, however, demanding in mid-December that the death penalty be abolished throughout the world, while also reciting a laundry list of other social justice demands indistinguishable from planks in the platform of the Democratic Party: "conditions for legal residency for migrants, jobs for the unemployed, access to medical care for all, and forgiveness of international debt burdens."

It is telling indeed that while demanding the abolition of a penal sanction that Catholic teaching has always approved for the gravest offenses, *nowhere, at any time, has Francis called for the abolition of abortion*, the slaughter of millions of innocent children, which the Church has always condemned as an "abominable crime" in violation of the Fifth Commandment (not the Golden Rule).

Indeed, Francis himself called abortion an "abominable crime" in a little-publicized address to an Italian pro-life organization. Why, then, has he not called upon the leaders of the world to put an end to this abominable crime? Why, instead, does he demand that they abolish a legitimate penal measure, which, as Pius XII insisted, is a just penalty for murder based upon the divinely conferred "coercive power of legitimate human authority" and "the sources of revelation and traditional doctrine"?

The answer to these questions is that the papacy, along with most of the rest of the human

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element of the Church, now allows itself to be governed by political correctness as an element of the spirit of the age, according to which majoritarian politics reigns supreme over the contrary claims of religion and morality. The result is the politically correct papacy, which reduces morality to the Golden Rule and avoids any offense, much less any direct confrontation, with the powers that be. In short: a practical decommissioning of the Church Militant.

This development can hardly be laid entirely at the feet of Francis. Rather, it has been some fifty years in the making following the disastrous "opening to the world" at Vatican II. But Francis has taken the politically correct papacy to a new level, thereby earning the world's unending praise — something absolutely unprecedented in the history of the Church.

To take another example: As the people of Ireland prepared to vote on whether to legalize "gay marriage," Francis said nothing in opposition. Nor did he have a word to say by way of regret, much less condemnation, after this abomination became Irish law. Likewise, as the U.S. Supreme Court took up the case of "gay marriage," Francis observed a resounding silence before and after the decision that imposed it on all fifty states. On this score, even the ultraliberal Huffington Post, in a commentary written by a "gay" correspondent, was constrained to make this observation:

"Considering that Pope Benedict often vocally expressed harsh condemnation of marriage equality — even traveling to Spain to speak out against it when that country was among the first to legalize marriage for gays and lesbians and called it a 'threat to the future of humanity' — *it's astonishing how silent Francis is on the issue.* I've noted in the past how *he had no comment as country after country in Europe legalized marriage for gays and lesbians*. And then this past June [2015], he had no comment after the U.S. Supreme Court decision."*

And yet, as the tiny, predominantly Catholic country of Slovenia prepared to vote on whether to approve "gay marriage," only days ago, Francis did intervene, albeit in a veiled way, calling upon Slovenians "to support the family, a structural reference point for the life of society…" What was expected to be a very close vote turned out to be a rout for "gay marriage" proponents, with Slovenians voting 63-to-36 against it. One can only imagine how the vote in Ireland might have gone had Francis demanded opposition to "gay marriage" with the same constancy and wide publicity with which he demands the abolition of capital punishment.

Do you see the pattern? No demand for the abolition of abortion by any government, while condemning it before a pro-life group during an obscure speech in Italy. No opposition to the advance of "gay marriage" during its conquering march throughout the once Christian

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west, and then only muted opposition in tiny Slovenia. The pattern is this: a papacy that shrinks from any confrontation with worldly powers over the worst evils of our age; a papacy — and thus a hierarchy in general — that is even less confrontational toward institutionalized evil, above all abortion, than conservative evangelical Protestants. The result is that today the latter are "far more likely to support the right-to-life than any other religious group in the United States."

The politically correct papacy has neutralized the Church's once decisive role in the Christian's perennial combat against what Saint Paul described as "the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places." With the general in retreat, the army has followed suit. And as the entire western world descends into an abyss of depravity, slaughtering millions upon millions of innocent children who are its very future, Francis constantly demands leniency for convicted killers.

This is the astounding state of ecclesial affairs doubtless foretold in the Third Secret of Fatima.

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