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MAGA vs Catholicism: The Republican believers backing Trump over spat with Pope

While many GOP players have rallied behind his attacks on the Vatican, a handful have shunned the president



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US President Donald Trump's war of words with Pope Leo XIV appears to have split his own MAGA movement. While a number of prominent Republicans have distanced themselves from the exchange, others have stepped in to reassure him of their continued support.

The feud erupted after Pope Leo, the first American-born pontiff, publicly criticized the US-Israeli war on Iran, calling Trump's threat to destroy Iranian civilization "*truly unacceptable*" and stating that God "*does*



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not listen to the prayers as Jesus after attacking Pope (AI of those who wage war." IMAGES)

The pontiff has also expressed concern over the Trump administration's handling of immigration.

Trump responded with a social media tirade, calling the Pope *"WEAK on Crime, and terrible for Foreign Policy"* and posting an AI-generated image of himself as a Jesus-like figure, robed in white, healing a sick man while surrounded by fighter jets and US flags.

Here are the Republican believers who have come out of left field:

Senator Lindsey Graham

One of the most prominent hawks in Washington slammed Pope Leo in a Fox News interview, claiming the pontiff was *"miscalculating"* by advocating for world peace.

"The Catholic Church didn't really get Hitler," Graham claimed, arguing that the Vatican is now repeating the same mistake by failing to recognize the *"evil"* of Iran.

Graham, a Southern Baptist who says he bases his unconditional support for Israel on the Bible, insists that Iranian leaders are *"religious Nazis"* who would *"kill all the Jews if we let them."*

House Speaker Mike Johnson

The Southern Baptist defended Trump by suggesting that Pope Leo had deserved the backlash for *"wading into political waters."*

He also tried to lecture the pontiff on Christian theology, claiming that Pope Leo did not understand the *"just war"* doctrine which Washington has used to justify its attack on Iran.

Developed by Saint Augustine, the doctrine holds that warfare is permissible only as a tragic last resort to restrain evil and restore peace, never for vengeance or gain. Pope Leo was an Augustinian friar for 12 years.

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J.D. Vance

The US Vice President, a Catholic convert, also accused Pope Leo of misinterpreting the Augustine doctrine, urging the pontiff to *“be careful when he talks about matters of theology.”*

He also argued that the Vatican should *“stick to matters of morality”* rather than foreign policy.

Bernie Moreno

The Catholic senator from Ohio delivered a pointed personal attack, stating that his *“mother would be ashamed of the current pope.”*



Tom Homan

Trump's latest 'Border Czar' and a

self-described *“lifelong Catholic”* told the Vatican

to *“stay out of immigration”* and that they *“don't know what they're talking about.”* He also offered to *“sit down to explain”* Catholic doctrine to the Pope.

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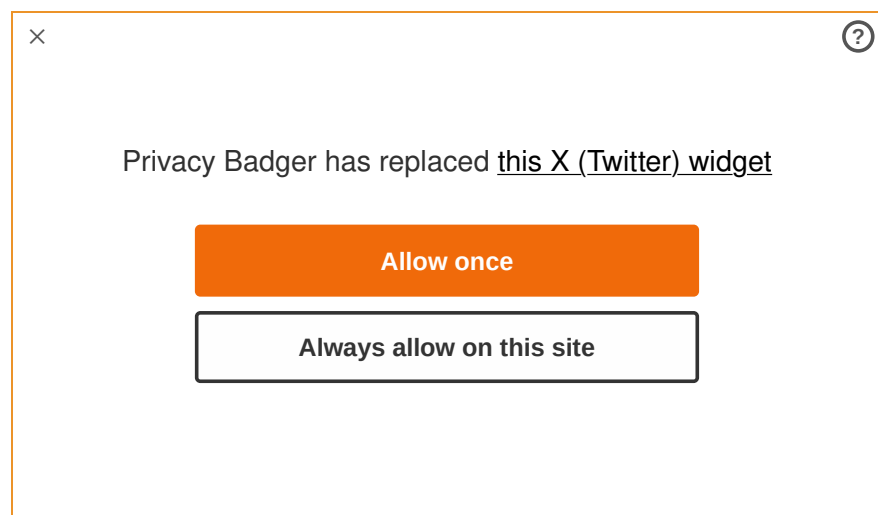
Elise Stefanik

The New York congresswoman claimed on network news that the pope had *“politically attacked”* Trump, insisting the papacy should remain *“strictly spiritual.”*

MAGA financier Hal Lambert

Pope Leo's criticism of Trump is part of a *“Chicago-centric”* plot involving former President Barack Obama to hurt

Republicans in the midterms, according to the Point Bridge Capital CEO, a prominent Republican megadonor.



A crack in the MAGA movement

Trump has made U-turns on a number of campaign promises, including the war on Iran, and has already seen his support base fracture. His sudden attack on the Catholic Church has ruffled even more feathers within the MAGA movement.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune responded to Trump's latest tirade by calling on the president to *"leave the church alone."* Republican Senator Susan Collins, a Catholic, said she found



Trump's comments *"offensive and inexplicable,"* adding that *"he should not be treating the Pope as a political rival."*

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Former congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene, who has become a vocal Trump critic, went further by denouncing the president's AI Jesus image as *"blasphemy"* and condemning Trump for attacking the Pope on Orthodox Easter.

Three other prominent conservatives who have recently had a falling out with Trump, namely Tucker Carlson, Candace Owens, and Alex Jones, all delivered scathing critiques of the president's feud with the Pope and the AI Jesus image.

Jones and Owens have gone as far as to call for Trump's removal under the 25th Amendment, describing him as a "*genocidal lunatic*."

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