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Vatican OK with Obama's first 100 days

John Thavis Catholic News Service | Apr. 29, 2009

VATICAN CITY -- The Vatican newspaper said President Barack Obama's first 100 days in office have not confirmed the Catholic Church's worst fears about radical policy changes in ethical areas.

The comments came in a front-page article April 29 in *L'Osservatore Romano*, under the headline, "The 100 days that did not shake the world." It said the new president has operated with more caution than predicted in most areas, including economics and international relations.

t"On ethical questions, too -- which from the time of the electoral campaign have been the subject of strong worries by the Catholic bishops -- Obama does not seem to have confirmed the radical innovations that he had discussed," it said.

tIt said the new draft guidelines for stem-cell research, for example, did not constitute the major change in policy that was foreseen a few months ago.

t"[The guidelines] do not allow the creation of new embryos for research or therapeutic purposes, for cloning or for reproductive ends, and federal funds may be used only for experimentation with excess embryos," it said.
tIt added that the new guidelines "do not remove the reasons for criticism in the face of unacceptable forms of bioengineering" but are "less permissive" than expected.

tThe article saw a positive sign in the recent introduction of the Pregnant Women Support Act, which would help women overcome problems that often cause them to have abortions. It was sponsored by a group of pro-life Democrats.

t"It is not a negation of the doctrine expressed up to now by Obama in the matter of interruption of pregnancy, but the legislative project could represent a rebalancing in support of maternity," the newspaper said.

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