NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

David Gibson views Obama visit as setback for conservatives

Thomas C. Fox | Jul. 10, 2009 NCR Today

David Gibson on the Obama visit: [1]

> This has been a tough stretch for conservative Christians in America, especially of the Catholic variety.Notre Dame welcomed Barack Obama at commencement with open arms and an honorary degree after a number of bishops and conservative activists decreed that the nation's preeminent Catholic university had forfeited its bona fides with the invitation. The president has said that the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA) is not a priority, promised that "robust" conscience protections for health care workers are coming, and pushed for a package of abortion-reduction legislation that should be unveiled by summer's end.
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> And just this week, Pope Benedict XVI published an encyclical -- an authoritative teaching document -- on social justice that goes further than Obama ever would in castigating free-market economics and proposing vigorous oversight with "real teeth," and even international regulation of the global economy.
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> Now, fresh off his appearance at the G8 Summit in nearby L'Aquila, Obama is to buzz over to the Apostolic Palace for a sit-down with the pontiff, who upended quasi-sacred papal protocol by making room for the meeting late on Friday afternoon and delaying his summer exit to his hilltop villa at Castelgandolfo. (Popes always receive visitors in audience in the morning, and yes, such an accommodation is a big deal in the pontifical cosmos.)

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