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Kathryn Jean Lopez on Pope Francis

Michael Sean Winters | Jan. 24, 2014 Distinctly Catholic

I really, really want to like Kathryn Jean Lopez. I think she is one of those conservative thinkers who is at least trying to get her head around the Pope Francis effect, not undermine it, or dismiss it. And, in this latest article, [1] she is entirely within her rights to try and correct the record on Francis regarding his pro-life credentials. And, I am very grateful to her for unearthing this quote from then-Cardinal Bergoglio:

I consider that [the battle against abortion] to be part of the battle in favor of life from the moment of conception until a dignified, natural death. This includes care of the mother during pregnancy, the existence of laws to protect the mother postpartum, and the need to ensure that children receive enough food, as well as providing health care throughout the whole length of life, taking good care of our grandparents, and not resorting to euthanasia. Nor should we perpetrate a kind of killing through insufficient food or a nonexistent or deficient education, which are ways of depriving a person of a full life. If there is a conception for us to respect, there is a life for us to take care of.

But, she criticized the media for focusing on a single sentence or paragraph of Evanglii Gaudium - no doubt, she has in mind the "trickle-down" comments - but then focuses herself on one paragraph in that document about abortion. More troubling is the fact that Lopez neglects to mention, what she surely knows, that there were certain American prelates who were allergic to the kind of "seamless garment" argument then-Cardinal Bergoglio was making. I know one bishop who was, at the time an auxiliary, who used the phrase "seamless garment" in a talk and was called in by his ordinary and told never to use it again.

So, in a nutshell, I hope Lopez will continue to wrestle with the Francis Effect, but she can do better than she did in this piece.

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[1] http://www.catholicpulse.com/cp/en/columnists/lopez/012214.html