

**Statement of Callista L. Gingrich
Ambassador-Nominee to the Holy See
Submitted to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
July 18, 2017**

Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Murphy, and distinguished members of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations:

I am honored to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Holy See. I am thankful to President Trump for the confidence and trust he has placed in me to be his representative at this important Embassy. In addition, I want to express my gratitude to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson for supporting my nomination.

It is a special honor to be introduced by Chairman Johnson from my home state of Wisconsin. I am also grateful to appear before this Committee today with the full support of my husband, Newt. As veterans of Capitol Hill, we both have great respect for your role in assessing and confirming those who represent the American people abroad. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the members and staff of this committee.

Like the United States, the Holy See is active on a global scale. It is engaged on every continent to advance religious freedom and human rights, to fight terrorism and violence, to combat human trafficking, to prevent the spread of diseases like Ebola and HIV/AIDS, and to seek peaceful solutions to crises around the world.

Those who serve in the State Department are known the world over for their patriotism and dedication. The professional staff at the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See exemplifies these traits. They work tirelessly to leverage the Vatican's global reach and to advance our strong bilateral relationship. Chargé d'Affaires Louis Bono and the Embassy team did an extraordinary job preparing for and hosting the President on his visit to the Vatican in May.

During that visit, President Trump and Pope Francis highlighted shared concerns, including the protection of Christian communities in the Middle East. Pope Francis has powerfully called on religious leaders and people of all faiths to unequivocally reject terrorism and violence in the name of religion.

The Vatican and its organizations play an active role in troubled areas around the globe, from Venezuela to South Sudan to the Democratic Republic of the Congo – countries where the Holy See’s support for peaceful solutions and democratic institutions directly benefits the interests of the United States.

The Catholic Church is a unique global network, overseeing the world’s second-largest international aid organization, operating 25 percent of the world’s healthcare facilities, and ministering to millions in every corner of the world.

As global leaders, the United States and the Vatican must continue to work closely to advance our shared values of human dignity and freedom. This can only happen if we maintain and build upon a strong foundation of trust and mutual communication. If confirmed, I will continue this vital dialogue – which has been so important for the people of the United States and the world.

I understand how the United States and the Holy See can act as a world-wide force for good, when we work together. Several years ago, I had the honor of producing a documentary film entitled, *Nine Days that Changed the World*. It chronicles Pope John Paul II’s historic pilgrimage to Poland in 1979 – an event that inspired the Polish people to renew their hearts, reclaim their courage, and free themselves from the shackles of Communism.

Producing this film required substantial work with key church leaders and other experts in the United States, Poland and the Vatican. This film has been well received by the Catholic Church and is used in religious education programs throughout the United States. Most importantly, the film is a powerful example of the invaluable role the Vatican plays in international affairs.

Recently I produced another documentary film entitled, *Divine Mercy: The Canonization of John Paul II*. These projects, along with my decades-long membership in the Choir of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, have given me the opportunity to build relationships with many Church leaders, clergy and religious scholars.

These experiences have instilled in me the highest respect for the Holy See, a deep appreciation for the responsibility of this post, and confidence that the United States-Vatican bilateral relationship is a force for good, and one that cannot be ignored.

As a lifelong Catholic, business owner, documentary film maker, author, and former public servant, I am profoundly humbled at the prospect of serving my country as the United States Ambassador to the Holy See.

If confirmed, I will work diligently to develop even stronger ties between the United States and the Holy See.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, and members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today and would be pleased to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.