JIHAD WATCH AND THE LEFT COLUMN

Catholic Bishops Meet with President Trump: 'Like Sheep in the Midst of Wolves'

Nov 3, 2026 12:00 pm By Stephen M. Kirby

On October 22, 2026, twelve Catholic bishops went to the White House for a pre-arranged meeting. After initially meeting with White House policy staff and advisors, the bishops went into the Oval Office where President Trump presented them commemorative tokens and they prayed together. Photographs and video of the meeting between the bishops and President Trump were later released to the media.

A number of the bishops expressed displeasure with the release of the photographs and video, accused the administration of using the religious gathering for political purposes, and issued publicly apologies for meeting with Trump. Bishop William Joensen of the Diocese of Des Moines joined them in issuing an apology, but took it a step further in his official statement:

I was recently invited by officials connected with the White House Faith Office to come to the Executive Office Building, along with other Catholic bishops, to discuss policies spanning a variety of issues…There are many things tied to this present Administration that are blatantly at odds with our Catholic faith…in no way did any of us intend by our involvement to endorse any political party or any individual candidate. That said, in retrospect, I would have done well to be more mindful of Jesus' admonition: "Behold, I am sending you like sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and simple as doves" (Matthew 10:16). I wish I had been more shrewd and less simple, like those who exploited our meeting for partisan political purposes. I pray I am more prudent and wise going forward, even as I remain resolute in my openness to engaging and praying for political leaders at all levels. [1]

His statement about the bishops being "sheep in the midst of wolves" at the Trump White House was widely quoted in the media.



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Why did Bishop Joensen feel like the bishops were "sheep in the midst of wolves" when meeting with President Trump? For that we first need to understand what Jesus meant by this phrase.

Father Nnamdi Moneme, OMV, provided this explanation:

Being lambs in the midst of…[wolves] *means that the disciples of Jesus Christ are living in constant danger and exposed to risks at every moment of their lives. Both their natural lives and their spiritual lives are constantly being threatened. The created world of men hostile to Gospel values, the devil, and the sinful flesh wage a constant war on man. In this world, the life of the disciple entails constant dangers and risks whether we like it or not. A serious disciple of Jesus Christ cannot live without dangers and taking risks for the master.[2]*

So Bishop Joensen appears to be saying that being in the White House with President Trump and his staff exposed the bishops to danger, risks and threats.

It's interesting that he felt that way, and it is quite a contrast to how he felt when he attended the opening of the Es-Selam Mosque in Granger, IA, on September 27, 2025. At that opening ceremony he stated to his Muslim audience,

May the seeds that have been sown in each of us forge bonds of unity, common projects, and sharing dreams going forward.[3]

A Catholic Bishop talking about bonds of unity, common projects, and shared dreams with the followers of Islam? The reality is that the commands of Allah found in the Koran and the teachings and example of Muhammad provide no support for such goals; in fact, they teach and advocate the opposite.

Regular readers of Jihad Watch will be familiar with the following information about those teachings of Islam. But on the other hand, this information should be very eye-opening to those less familiar with those teachings.

Let's start off looking at some of what Allah had to say in the Koran about Christians and Jews (To read the actual Koran verses mentioned in this article and the commentary about these verses by authoritative Muslim scholars, see *Appendix 1* at https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fXP98qpxGWr_icBAcgDIqkwxjnnS7AkM/view?usp=sharing):

1. The only religion acceptable to Allah is Islam (3:19 and 3:85).
2. Allah states that Islam is to be made superior over all other religions, even if the non-Muslims don't like it (9:33, 48:28, and 61:9).
3. Allah states that he is angry with the Jews, and the Christians are misguided in their beliefs (1:7).
4. Christians and Jews know that Islam is the true faith, but they reject it anyway and hinder those seeking to follow Islam (3:98-99).
5. Allah forbids Muslims from being friends with Christians and Jews (3:28 and 5:51).
6. He commands Muslims to fight the Christians and Jews until those Christians and Jews pay the *jizyah*, a "Head tax imposed by Islam on all non-Muslims [*Dhimmis*] living under the protection of an Islamic government,"[4] and it is taken from them "as a mark of their subjugation and humiliation."[5] (9:29).
7. Christians and Jews are disbelievers (2:120, 3:99, 3:110, and 5:65).
8. Disbelievers are ever open enemies to the Muslims (4:101).
9. Muslims are severe against the disbelievers and merciful among themselves (48:29).
10. Jews are among the worst enemies of Muslims (5:82).
11. Allah curses Christians and Jews (9:30) and states that those who believe that Allah had a Son commit the one unforgiveable sin in Islam, Shirk (4:48 and 4:116).
12. Those who commit Shirk will go to Hell (3:151 and 5:72-73).
13. Allah specifically states that Jesus was not the Son of God (4:171, 5:72, and 9:30).
14. Allah commands that Jews and Christians must believe that Jesus was only a Messenger of Allah (4:159) – It is interesting to note that according to "the opinion of most of the commentators," 4:159 meant that Jesus would kill all the Jews and Christians and leave only Muslims on the earth.[6]
15. Allah states that Christians and Jews are among the worst of creatures and "will abide in the fire of Hell" (98:6).
16. Muslims are the best of creatures (98:7 and 3:110).

Christianity is considered a false religion because Allah states in Koran 4:157-158 that Jesus was not crucified, but it only appeared so. Muhammad's cousin Ibn 'Abbas explained how this happened:

"Just before Allah raised 'Isa [Jesus] *to the heavens, 'Isa went to his companions, who were twelve inside the house…and he said, 'There are those among you who will disbelieve in me twelve times after he had believed in me.' He then asked, 'Who volunteers that his image appear as mine, and be killed in my place. He will be with me (in Paradise)?' One of the youngest ones among them volunteered and 'Isa asked him to sit down. 'Isa again asked for a volunteer, and the young man kept volunteering and 'Isa asking him to sit down. Then the young man volunteered again and 'Isa said, 'You will be that man,' and the resemblance of 'Isa was cast over that man*

while 'Isa ascended to heaven from a hole in the house. When the Jews came looking for 'Isa, they found that young man and crucified him…"[7]

This means that Muslims who know their religion look at a crucifix or a painting of the Crucifixion and see an imposter hanging on the cross. And of course, if there was no Crucifixion, there would be no Resurrection. So, Islam teaches that Christianity is a false religion based on a fraud.

The Muslim scholar Ibn Kathir also made an interesting observation. He noted that those twelve companions in the house knew that Jesus ascended to Heaven from the house and that it was someone else who was crucified.[8] The implication is that it was the Twelve Apostles in the house, which would mean that those Apostles then went out and knowingly preached a lie that spread across the world as the Christian religion.

And here are some of the things that Muhammad said about Jews and Christians:

It was narrated from 'Amr bin Shu'aib, from his father, from his grandfather, that the Messenger of Allah ruled that the blood money for the People of the Book is half of that of the blood money for the Muslims, and they are the Jews and Christians.[9]

Abu Huraira reported that Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) had said: Do not greet the Jews and the Christians before they greet you and when you meet any one of them on the roads force him to go to the narrowest part of it.[10]

Narrated Abu Hurairah: Allah's Messenger said, "The Hour will not be established until you fight against the Jews, and the stone behind which a Jew will be hiding will say, 'O Muslim! There is a Jew hiding behind me, so kill him.'"[11]

Muhammad said that the Jews were grave robbers. Al-Bukhari reported this *hadith* under the heading of *What has been said about Bani Israel*:

'Uqba bin 'Amir said, "I heard him [Muhammad] *saying that the Israeli used to dig the grave of the dead (to steal their shrouds)."*[12]

At one point Muhammad had a peace treaty with the Christians of the Bani Taglib tribe, but one of the conditions of the treaty was that the Christians would not baptize their children into Christianity.[13]

Muhammad said that Jews and Christians who refused to believe in what he taught were going to Hell:

It is narrated on the authority of Abu Huraira that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: By Him in whose hand is the life of Muhammad, he who amongst the community of Jews or Christians

*hears about me but does not affirm his belief in that with which I have been sent and dies in this state (of disbelief), he shall be but one of the denizens of Hell-Fire.**[14]***

Muhammad said that on the Day of Resurrection, mountains of sins would be removed from the backs of Muslims and put onto the Jews and Christians. **[15]**

It was reported that among the last things Muhammad said was:

"May Allah fight the Jews and the Christians! They took the graves of their Prophets as places of prostration. Two deens [religions] *shall not co-exist in the land of the Arabs."***[16]**

And on his death bed Muhammad said this about Jews and Christians:

*It has been narrated by 'Umar b. Al-Khattab that he heard the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) saying: I will expel the Jews and Christians from the Arabian Peninsula and will not leave any but Muslims.***[17]**

Both Christians and Muslims believe that Jesus will return to earth. However, Islam teaches a radically different reason for that return. Here is what Muhammad said would happen when Jesus returned to earth:

*Imam Ahmad recorded that Abu Hurayrah said that the Prophet said, The Prophets are paternal brothers; their mothers are different, but their religion is one. I, more than any of mankind, have more right to 'Isa, son of Maryam, for there was no Prophet between him and I. He will descend, and if you see him, know him. He is a well-built man, (the color of his skin) between red and white. He will descend while wearing two long, light yellow garments. His head appears to be dripping water, even though no moisture touched it. He will break the cross, kill the pig, and banish the Jizyah and will call the people to Islam. During his time, Allah will destroy all religions except Islam and Allah will destroy Al-Masih Ad-Dajjal (the False Messiah). Safety will then fill the earth…'Isa will remain for forty years and then will die, and Muslims will offer the funeral prayer for him.***[18]**

So during those forty years, Allah would destroy all religions except Islam. And Jesus would be breaking the cross of Christianity and calling the people to Islam.

And according to Muhammad, Jesus would also be judging mankind by the laws of the Koran:

Narrated Abu Hurairah: Allah's Messenger said, "How will you be when the son of Maryam (Mary) ['Isa (Jesus)] descends amongst you, and he will judge people by the law of the Qur'an and not by the law of the Gospel."[19]

Conclusion

Bishop Joensen felt as if the bishops were sheep when meeting with the wolves of the Trump administration, including the President (head wolf?) himself, and thus were being exposed to danger, risks and threats. Was that simply because, as the Bishop said,

There are many things tied to this present Administration that are blatantly at odds with our Catholic faith.

If this was the cause, then considering what Islam teaches about Jews and Christians, his attendance at the opening of the Es-Selam Mosque in 2025 was an example of "sheep in the midst of wolves" on steroids. With all due respect for his position as Bishop, perhaps, now having had the opportunity to learn what Islam really teaches about Jews and Christians, next time he will be more shrewd, prudent and wise, and less simple when dealing with the followers of Islam.

Dr. Stephen M. Kirby is the author of six books and numerous articles about Islam. His latest book is *Islamic Doctrine versus the U.S. Constitution: The Dilemma for Muslim Public Officials*.

[1] "Bishop shares message following a meeting at the White House," *Diocese of Des Moines*, October 24, 2026, https://www.dmdiocese.org/news/bishop-shares-message-following-a-meeting-at-the-white-house.

[2] Father Nnamdi Moneme, OMV, "Being Lambs in the Midst of Wolves," *Catholic Exchange*, July 10, 2013, https://catholicexchange.com/being-lambs-in-the-midst-of-wolves/.

[3] Thai Theodoro, "Es-Selam Mosque opens in Granger, welcoming hundreds in multicultural celebration," *Des Moines Register*, September 28, 2025, https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/local/2025/09/28/des-moines-es-selam-mosque-opening-granger-first-purpose-built-iowa/86350262007/.

Similar hopes were repeated by Detroit Archbishop Edward Weisenburger at the June 6, 2026, opening ceremony of the new headquarters of the Islamic Institute of America (IIOA) and the inauguration of the Imam Al-Hasanain Mosque:

"There is no place where I feel more respect, fraternity and kindness," Weisenburger declared. "From the moment I entered this beautiful site, I felt a profound divine presence. We are members of the same human family. All churches, all mosques, all synagogues, all places where God reaches out and touches with his finger are sacred. This is a truly wonderful and sacred place, a place that will bring all of humanity, I believe, into a deeper communion with our one god."

Timothy D. Lusch "Celebrating Islam in an Archdiocese of Decline," *The Catholic World Report*, June 21, 2026, https://www.catholicworldreport.com/2026/06/21/opinion-celebrating-islam-in-the-archdiocese-of-decline/.

[4] *Interpretation of the Meanings of The Noble Qur'an*, trans. Muhammad Muhsin Khan and Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali (Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Darussalam, 2007), Glossary, p. 862.

[5] Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Habib al-Basri al-Baghdadi al-Mawardi, *Al-Ahkam As-Sultaniyya: the Laws of Islamic Governance*, trans. Asadullah Yate (London: Ta-Ha Publishers Ltd., 2005), p. 207.

[6] Salahuddin Yusuf, *Tafsir Ahsanul-Bayan*, trans. Mohammad Kamal Myshkat, (Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Darussalam, 2010), Vol. 1, p. 549.

[7] Abu al-Fida' 'Imad Ad-Din Isma'il bin 'Umar bin Kathir al-Qurashi Al-Busrawi, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* (Abridged), abr. Shaykh Safiur-Rahman al-Mubarakpuri, trans. Jalal Abualrub, et al. (Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Darussalam, 2000), Vol. 3, p. 28.

[8] Ibid., Vol. 3, p. 27.

[9] Muhammad bin Yazeed ibn Majah al-Qazwini, *Sunan Ibn Majah*, trans. Nasiruddin al-Khattab (Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Darussalam, 2007), Vol. 3, No. 2644, p. 521.

[10] Abu'l Hussain 'Asakir-ud-Din Muslim bin Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naisaburi, *Sahih Muslim*, trans. 'Abdul Hamid Siddiqi (New Delhi, India: Adam Publishers and Distributors, 2008), Vol. 6, No. 2167, p. 439. The Muslim scholar At-Tirmidhi wrote the following explanation for this *hadith*:

"Do not precede the Jews and the Christians[in greeting]*": Some of the people of knowledge said that it only means that it is disliked because it would be honoring them, and the Muslims were only ordered to humiliate them. For this reason, when one of them is met on the path, then the path is not yielded for him, because doing so would amount to honoring them.*

Abu 'Eisa Mohammad ibn 'Eisa at-Tirmidhi, *Jami' At-Tirmidhi*, trans. Abu Khaliyl (Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Darussalam, 2007), Vol. 3, No. 1602, p. 365.

And there was an interesting, modern commentary about this *hadith*:

In normal conditions when Muslims are in power and they are not living as a minority, and they are not under any compulsion or subjugation, it is an order for Muslims that they should not give such leeway to the non-Muslims and they should not greet them first nor yield the way for them…In a country where Muslims are living as a minority, they are allowed to give such leeway to non-Muslim rulers for the greater interest of the Muslim community.

Jami' At-Tirmidhi, Vol. 3, Comments, p. 366.

[11] Muhammad bin Ismail bin Al-Mughirah al-Bukhari, *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, trans. Muhammad Muhsin Khan (Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Darussalam, 1997), Vol. 4, Book 56, No. 2926, p. 113.

[12] *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Vol. 4, Book 60, No. 3452, p. 413. *Bani Israel*, or *Banii Israa'iil*, is an expression used in the Koran to refer to the early Jews. See the entry for *Israa'iil* in Mahmoud Ismail Saleh, *Dictionary of Islamic Words & Expressions*, 3rd ed. (Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Darussalam, 2011), p. 102.

[13] 'Imaduddeen Isma'eel Ibn Katheer Al-Qurashi, *Winning the Hearts and Souls: Expeditions and Delegations in the Lifetime of Prophet Muhammad*, trans. Research Department of Darussalam (Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Darussalam, 2010), p. 227.

[14] *Sahih Muslim*, Vol. 1, p. 103, No. 153.

[15] *110 Ahadith Qudsi: Sayings of the Prophet Having Allahs Statements*, 3rd ed., trans. Syed Masood-ul-Hasan (Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Darussalam, 2006), No. 8, titled *Superiority of the believers in the Oneness of Allah and the punishment of Jews and Christians*, pp. 19-20.

[16] Malik ibn Anas ibn Malik ibn Abi 'Amir al-Asbahi, *Al-Muwatta of Imam Malik ibn Anas: The First Formulation of Islamic Law*, trans. Aisha Abdurrahman Bewley (Inverness, Scotland: Madinah Press, 2004), 45.5.17, p. 377.

[17] *Sahih Muslim*, Vol. 5, No. 1767, p. 189.

[18] *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Vol. 3, pp. 31-32. Muhammad also said that when the Muslims were lined up for battle against the False Messiah and the prayer was called, Jesus would "descend and lead them in prayer." See *Sahih Muslim*, Vol. 8, No. 2897, p. 338; and *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Vol. 3, p. 33.

[19] *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Vol. 4, Book 60, No. 3449, p. 412.