

Cardinal Dolan yuks it up with America's 'second most famous Catholic'

by [David Gibson](#)

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NEW YORK (RNS) New York's Cardinal Timothy Dolan, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the most famous funny man in the American hierarchy, went on "The Colbert Report" Tuesday (Sept. 3) night to trade quips with another funny guy — and another well-known Catholic — host Stephen Colbert.

Indeed, as Colbert — inhabiting his onscreen persona as a blowhard rightwing pundit — said in welcoming Dolan: "You're the second most famous Catholic in America — after myself."

But it was actually Dolan who got the first gag, and giggles, as he walked onto the set and ostentatiously bowed and kissed Colbert's hand as if he were greeting the pope.

"I've got to get a nice big ring if you're going to be kissing my hand!" replied Colbert, who seemed — uncharacteristically — unsure of how to play the exchange.

Dolan was Colbert's only guest on the show, and he ended the interview asking Dolan what would happen if Francis retired and Dolan were elected pope — what name would he take.

The cardinal laughed, along with the audience, and after a long pause, said simply: "Stephen."

It was well-timed, and Dolan got in the last laugh even as he got the first one.

Here are some other highlights from the conversation between Colbert and Dolan:

On Dolan's new ebook, "Praying in Rome: Reflections on the Conclave and Electing Pope Francis":

Colbert: "So this blows the lid off the papal conclave."

Dolan: "There's really not much to say - I lost."

Colbert: "You did not get the gig ... I was pretty mad because I had fifty bucks on it."

On Pope Francis:

Colbert: "I don't care for the guy."

Dolan: "He loves you, Stephen."

Colbert: "Well, it's unrequited at the moment. I'll tell you why: here's the thing: he's too soft. He's too soft on sin, for me, this pope. You heard what he said about atheists? He said even atheists are redeemed by Christ ... If even atheists are redeemed by Christ, why have I been going to Mass every Sunday? I could have gotten another nine holes in! What do you think that means?"

Dolan: "Look, you don't got to Mass to win heaven. You go to ask God for help to get you there. You go to Mass to thank him for being such a great God that he wants you to spend eternity with him. That's why you go to Mass. You don't go to win heaven because you can't earn it - it's a gift. He wants to give it to all of us."

Colbert: "I don't always know why I'm going to Mass. But I'm usually glad that I did."

More on Pope Francis:

Colbert: "I was just over in Rome. Amazing. One thing I didn't care for was St. Peter's (Basilica). It was so crowded with people hoping to catch a glimpse of this new pope. Why do you think this guy is drawing crowds?"

Dolan: "Well, he's down to earth, he's simple, he's sincere, what you see is what you get."

Colbert: “But he’s not wearing the gold, he’s not in, like, the big golden throne. You know, when I put my buck in the collection plate on Sunday, that’s for production values. I want to see ‘Iron Man 3’ production values when I go.”

Dolan: “Well, whatever he is or is not wearing, it sure seems to be doing well popularity-wise. He’s marketing the message, he’s marketing in the best sense of the word. We say evangelization. But boy, he’s a pro at it, isn’t he?”

Colbert: “Yeah, yeah – marketing like Matthew, Marketing Luke and John.

Colbert: “I tell you another thing I got a problem with — and I hate to make you answer for the guy you did or did not vote for — but he also said, he was asked about homosexuals, he said: ‘Who am I to judge?’ You are the pope to judge! But aren’t we supposed to? What is a declaration of sin or no sin except judgment?”

Dolan: Yeah but we can never judge persons. We can judge actions. But we can’t judge persons. Jesus told us that. So he’s repeating the timeless teaching of the bible that we can never judge another human being. I can’t judge Bernie Madoff. I don’t like what he did. I can judge the actions. But I couldn’t judge his heart or soul.

Colbert: “But I’m a pundit. If I don’t judge someone I don’t get a check.”

On the chance of Pope Francis retiring and the conclave choosing a new pope:

Colbert: “I hope it’s someone I’m more simpatico with. If you were to be named pope, which name would you choose?”

Dolan, after a long pause: “Stephen.”