



## Pence defends faith as normal after TV host calls it crazy to think Jesus talks to him

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WASHINGTON — Vice President Pence has defended his Christian faith after one of the co-hosts of the ABC daytime talk show *The View* cracked that Pence is mentally ill if he thinks Jesus talks to him.

"It's one thing to talk to Jesus. It's another thing when Jesus talk to you," Joy Behar, an actress and comedian, said on the show last week. "That's called mental illness, if I'm not correct. Hearing voices."

Pence responded that Behar's comments are "evidence of how out of touch some in the mainstream media are with the faith and values of the American people."

"I'd like to laugh about it, but I really can't," Pence said when asked about the comments by the news site Axios last week.

Pence repeated his concerns Monday in an interview with Fox & Friends that he tweeted out.

"When I heard that ABC had a program that likened my Christianity to mental illness, I just couldn't be silent," Pence said.

The issue started when the former White House staffer Omarosa Manigault Newman called Pence "scary" and "extreme."

"I'm Christian, I love Jesus, but he thinks Jesus tells him to say things," she told her housemates on CBS' *Big Brother: Celebrity Edition* last week. "I'm like, 'Jesus didn't say that.'"

The co-hosts of *The View* then took up the topic. After Behar made her comment, some of the other hosts pushed back.

"As a Christian, that's just par for the course," said Sherri Shepherd. "You talk to Jesus. Jesus talks back."

Behar later added: "Say what you will about Mike Pence and his religiosity and everything else. I don't think that he's mentally ill, even though he says he is hearing voices."

The show revisited the issue two days later, after Pence had responded to Behar's comments.

Behar said she had been joking and doesn't think Christians are mentally ill.

"That would make me mentally ill since I'm a Christian myself," she said. "I don't mean to offend people, but apparently I keep doing it. It was a joke."

But co-host Meghan McCain said Behar's comments had made her uncomfortable and McCain apologized to Pence and his family.

"It's important to recognize that so many people were upset and offended," said McCain, who described her entire family as devoutly Christian.

Pence call his Christianity "the most important thing in my life."

"I try and start every day by opening the good book. My wife and I try to have a prayer together before I leave every morning," Pence told Axios. "I can honestly tell you, my faith sustains me in all that I do. And it's just a regular part of our lives."

And, Pence said, that's not unusual. Calling himself a "very typical American," Pence said he had to speak out against a major network allowing a forum "for invective against religion like that."

"It's an insult not to me," Pence said, "but to the vast majority of the American people who, like me, cherish their faith."

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