

ATTACKS ON INDIANAPOLIS ARCHBISHOP CONTINUE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the ongoing attacks on the Indianapolis archbishop:

Indianapolis Archbishop Charles Thompson continues to draw fire for his decision to speak out against the employment of two teachers who worked at local Catholic schools. His critics have taken the side of two men who publicly claimed to be married to each other in a civil ceremony (one teaches at a diocesan school and the other at a Jesuit school). The Catholic Church does not recognize the validity of such unions.

One of the critics is a writer for the Religion News Service. It is not certain what religious service this news outlet is offering by opposing the religious liberty of the archbishop, nor is it clear why it labels the Church's position "complex." There is nothing complex about affirming over 2,000 years of Church teachings on the institution of marriage.

Nor is there anything complex about enforcing a contract in the workplace. In both instances, one was in a diocesan school and the other was in a Jesuit school, the homosexual teachers voluntarily signed a contract which they subsequently violated. They are not victims.

The Religion News Service writer, Jack Jenkins, is right to note that the U.S. Supreme Court allows religious entities a "ministerial exception" in making employment decisions. This means that they can insist that its employees practice fidelity to the tenets of the Catholic Church. This is exactly what Archbishop Thompson has done.

The article by a young intern at Forbes is similarly flawed. Natalie Sachmechi follows the lead of Jenkins by citing a poll

that reveals Catholic support for gay marriage. They have yet to learn that the Catholic Church is not guided by surveys: it is guided by truth. The truth is found in the Scriptures, not in public opinion.

The intern not only wants the Church to follow the polls, she wants it to adopt the position of anti-Catholic organizations. She cites New Ways Ministry, a totally discredited entity that has been exposed as a fraud by the Vatican, and DignityUSA, another outlier group that opposes the Church's teachings on sexuality, as being legitimate Catholic voices. They are no more Catholic than a Buddhist school is.

An op-ed column by Margaret Renkl in the July 2nd edition of the *New York Times* also defends the homosexuals who violated their contract. She goes so far as to say that Archbishop Thompson's behavior looks "very much like a witch hunt."

Ironically, she is the one opening the door to a witch hunt. She is angry that Thompson chose to go after these men while not going after other teachers who break the house rules. By way of example, she mentions teachers who take birth control pills, as well as those who are divorced and remarried without an annulment. But unlike the public flouting of Church teachings by the homosexuals, the only way the Church could effectively monitor such behaviors is by conducting a witch hunt that probes the private conduct of its employees. Is that what she wants?

Renkl thinks she is on to something by defending the conscience rights of the homosexuals who violated their contract. Nice try. Archbishop Thompson has a conscience, too. Why shouldn't his conscience rights be respected?

The *Catechism* of the Catholic Church says that "Faced with a moral choice, conscience can make either a right judgment in accordance with reason and the divine law or, on the contrary, an erroneous judgment that departs from them." Importantly, it

declares that “Ignorance of the Gospel,” and “assertion of a mistaken notion of autonomy of conscience [and] rejection of the Church’s authority and her teaching” can also be “the source of errors of judgment in moral conduct.”

In other words, not all moral decisions guided by conscience are equal. Some are licit and others are not. Those who assert “a mistaken notion of autonomy of conscience,” as Renkl does, are not acting in the Catholic tradition. It is also not part of the Catholic tradition to invoke conscience rights as a way to justify their “rejection of the Church’s authority and her teaching.”

Kudos to Archbishop Thompson for standing fast against these unjust attacks.