

BISHOPS HANG TOUGH ON SOCIAL ISSUES



Bill Donohue comments on the proceedings of the general assembly of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB):

Those who have been clamoring for the bishops to abandon socio-cultural issues in favor of socio-economic and environmental concerns lost big time in Baltimore. As reported by AP today, “the bishops said they consider opposition to gay marriage and abortion rights paramount in this presidential season and beyond.”

In a landslide vote, 210-21, the bishops voted to approve the revisions to “Faithful Citizenship,” the guide to Catholic voters. “Some issues involve principles that can never be abandoned such as the fundamental right to life and marriage as the union of one man and one woman,” the bishops said. The document also endorsed the need to fight for religious liberty.

Religious liberty and conscience rights were given a push on Monday when Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano, the Vatican’s U.S. ambassador, spoke to the bishops. It was he who arranged the meeting between Kim Davis, the courageous defender of marriage, and the pope. Vigano implored the bishops to “preserve a moral order in society.” He also chastised Catholic colleges and universities for allowing their Catholic identity to slip, especially Jesuit-run schools (e.g., Georgetown has two pro-abortion groups on campus). He received two standing ovations.

The much ballyhooed “Francis effect” was not noticeable in

either the vote on "Faithful Citizenship" or on the vote for elected positions. Regarding the latter, of the four recently appointed bishops who were up for election, three failed to capture a committee chairmanship. Moreover, Hartford Archbishop Leonard Blair expressed disdain for all the talk about a "revolution" in the Church. "There is a kind of rhetoric of regime change that is going on in the Church," he said. He cautioned everyone to be "very, very wary of that."

The bishops' resolve to hang tough on social issues evidenced itself in a new document condemning pornography. They specifically attacked the "myth of harmlessness."