

CARDINAL DOLAN TARGETED; CRITICS EXPOSED

Cardinal Timothy Dolan was recently the source of one of the most unprincipled and well-orchestrated attacks against a bishop to surface in many years. The politics that underscored the campaign were palpable.

The trigger for this onslaught was a conference call that 600 Catholic educators had with President Trump on April 24. The president asked Cardinal Dolan to begin the exchange; the New York archbishop obliged. Days later Dolan appeared on “Fox and Friends” and took the opportunity to praise the president for his outreach to the Catholic community and for what he has done to promote religious liberty.

This is pretty standard stuff. The president of the United States wants to curry favor with religious leaders and religious leaders want to curry favor with the president. They both have something to gain by coming together, at least on some issues.

Conversely, both parties have much to lose if they decide not to play ball. Grownups understand how this works. Indeed, many bishops (including Cardinal Dolan) did not hesitate to praise President Obama, even though they disagreed strongly on some key issues.

It is hardly a secret to acknowledge that there are those in the Catholic community who hate President Trump—many of them are delirious—and that is why they cannot stomach any kind words said about him. They saw a chance to try and intimidate Cardinal Dolan (good luck with that) and so they pounced. Their own politics drove this campaign.

The first salvos came from two reporters for the *National Catholic Reporter*, a publication that is Catholic in name

only; it rejects many Church teachings. One columnist said Dolan was “seduced by power and celebrity” and that he, and the other bishops on the conference call, were “masterfully manipulated.” This gay activist then criticized the Church’s teaching on marriage. The other columnist sounded hysterical, warning the bishops to “Stay away from the president.”

Cardinal Dolan is used to this type of criticism. In 2012, he accepted an invitation to speak at the Republican National Convention and was vilified for doing so. He also spoke at the Democratic National Convention that year and was blasted by left-wing Catholics for simply recognizing the unborn.

President Trump is a lightning rod for criticism, and he does much to inspire it. But like him or not, any fair assessment of his record on religious liberty would conclude that no president has done more. For our bishops not to recognize this would be delinquent.

Cardinal Dolan acted responsibly. His critics did not. Worse, many are part of an agenda-ridden crowd of dissidents (see p. 4).