

CARDINAL DOLAN'S CHALLENGE

In March, Cardinal Timothy Dolan, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), outlined in a letter to the bishops his many concerns about the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) directive mandating that the insurance companies of religious employers pay for abortion-inducing drugs, contraception and sterilization. For the most part, his letter was met with silence.

Dolan made it clear that the bishops would not budge in their demands for religious liberty. Neither the January 20 initial HHS Rule, nor the amended February 10 directive, satisfied religious liberty concerns. He correctly noted that “We’ll still have to pay” under the so-called accommodation provisions.

It was revealing to learn that when members of the USCCB recently met with the White House staff, they were told that the HHS Rule was set in cement. So much for dialogue. Moreover, the Obama staff informed the Catholic officials that they should follow the “enlightened” voices at *America* magazine (the Jesuits agree with the administration). Dolan was pointed in his criticism: “The White House seems to think we bishops simply do not know or understand Catholic teaching and so, taking a cue from its own definition of *religious freedom*, now has nominated its own handpicked official Catholic teachers.”

Catholic News Service never commented on, or posted, Cardinal Dolan’s letter in its “News Stories” section; instead, it relegated it to its blog postings never highlighting the USCCB-*America* dispute. The liberal Catholic media—*America*, *Commonweal* and the dissident *National Catholic Reporter*—went mute.

We said that Dolan’s challenge deserved a response. After all,

Cardinal Dolan is one of the very few who tells it like it is.