

CATHOLIC COLORADO LAWMAKERS DEFY BISHOPS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on Catholic politicians in Colorado who reject the Church's teaching on abortion:

Separation of church and state cuts both ways, but few in the media have any interest in reporting on this when it is the state that is crossing the line. That's what is happening in Colorado.

In March, Democratic Colorado lawmakers passed a bill that explicitly rejects the humanity of unborn children; it was signed into law in April by Democratic Gov. Jared Polis. Not unexpectedly, Catholic bishops denounced the legislation.

In a letter signed last week by Denver Archbishop Samuel Aquila, Jorge Rodriguez, Auxiliary Bishop of Denver, Pueblo Bishop Stephen Berg and Colorado Springs Bishop James Golka, they said it is "a gravely sinful action because it facilitates the killing of innocent unborn babies, and those Catholic politicians who have done so have very likely placed themselves outside the communion of the church."

The letter made it clear that these politicians are "encouraging others to do evil," thus giving scandal to the Church. As such, until they seek repentance in confession, they should "voluntarily refrain from receiving communion."

The bishops did their job and did so without drama. The drama came from some Catholic lawmakers who are now telling the bishops they are wrong. Rep. David Ortiz, for example, said the bishops were not "stewarding people's souls" and were guilty of "confusing spirituality and politics."

Ortiz could not be more wrong. In fact, the bishops are

charged with upholding Catholic teachings on public policy issues (abortion being one of them) and are expected to follow canon law prescriptions regarding Catholic politicians who are in open defiance of those teachings. They are not the ones who are politicizing this issue—it is those who are publicly challenging them. That they are agents of the state makes their stance even more serious.

Rep. Monica Duran, another pro-abortion Catholic critic of the bishops, accused the bishops of “sending the wrong message” to Catholics. She has it backwards. By standing their ground, the bishops are sending the right message to practicing Catholics: they are saying to them that fidelity to the Church’s teaching on abortion is expected by those who publicly claim to be part of the Catholic community.

Brittany Vessely, executive director of the Colorado Catholic Conference, defended the bishops, noting that abortion “violates a fundamental moral teaching of the Church in its complete desecration of life and the millions of children who are killed annually.”

Every organization, including secular ones, has tenets that those who belong to it are expected to follow. If some find it too burdensome to do so, they know where the exit door is. It is the height of audacity when those who reject strictures they voluntarily embraced to claim victim status when they are called out for doing so.

Kudos to the Colorado bishops and the Colorado Catholic Conference.

Let Denver Archbishop Aquila know of your appreciation for what he and the other Colorado bishops are doing.

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