

CATHOLICS TURN ON ARCHBISHOP DOLAN

New York Archbishop Timothy Dolan spent his first six months getting to know the priests, religious, seminarians and laity of his new archdiocese. He also got acquainted with the many issues facing him, a daunting exercise for anyone, never mind someone from out of town. By all accounts, he was off to a fast start, winning the admiration, and indeed love, of New Yorkers across the board. Then he decided to criticize the *New York Times*.

At the end of October, the New York Archbishop submitted an op-ed (opinion-editorial) article to the *Times* that took the newspaper to task for three recent news stories and one op-ed column it published; the three news stories and the column by Maureen Dowd were also the subject of Catholic League news releases. In any event, the *Times* decided not to run his piece.

The *Times* had every right to reject the article, though there was a time not long ago when it would never say no to the Archbishop of New York. Dolan, of course, had every right to post his submission on his own blog, which he did. It all should have ended there, but it didn't. That's because liberals decided to get him: Dolan offended their sacred organ, the *New York Times*, and now it was payback time. No one was more furious than dissident Catholics, as evidenced by the *National Catholic Reporter*, a weekly newspaper.

Tom Roberts is a senior writer at the *Reporter*. In a piece that reeked with anger, he slammed Dolan for choosing "to play the tired anti-Catholic card so early in his tenure," insisting that "the anti-Catholic narrative is a canard." Indeed, Roberts said, "The cry 'anti-Catholic' has become a cheap and easy accusation." He also blasted Dolan for aligning

himself with “such imprudent screamers as William Donohue and his Catholic League.” As a matter of fact, I did scream at him once on TV: I indicted him and his newspaper on “Hardball” for rejecting the Church’s teachings on sexuality. He never responded, even though the host begged him to do so.

If there ever was any doubt that the *Reporter* has a real problem with the teachings of the Catholic Church on sexuality, as well as with many bishops, the article by Roberts settles the matter once and for all. Here are a few excerpts:

- “First, no organization or institution in the world moralizes as publicly or persistently as the Catholic Church on matters of sex and sexuality. Its rules and sanctions are severe.”
- “On the matter of homosexuality, the church claims to know the mind and intent of God so intimately and perfectly that its officials confidently pronounce that a whole category of humans who have a homosexual orientation are intrinsically disordered and are forever condemned to a life of sexual abstinence in order to remain within the community.”
- “The church is a severe taskmaster when it comes to human sexuality. Any organization so absolute in its rules and so unforgiving in its sanctions naturally invites scrutiny of its own conduct, particularly that of its ministers and teachers.”
- “Second, no organization on earth—not other denominations or faith groups, not the Boy Scouts or teachers or families—has the equivalent capacity and culture of the Catholic Church for hiding and protecting sexual abusers.”
- “Finally, in dealing with the sexual abuse crisis, the bishops have trampled the church’s fundamental teachings on what is required for seeking forgiveness and reconciliation within the community.”

· “The bishops betrayed the community’s sacramental life, and no amount of pointing the finger at others will heal that breach.”

“Severe,” “condemned,” “taskmaster,” “unforgiving”—this is the way the *National Catholic Reporter* sees Catholicism. Not surprisingly, this newspaper is considered gospel by left-wing Catholic academics. It explains their profound alienation from the Catholic Church.

This article was unusual, if only for its honesty. It was not unusual if measured against the way left-wing Catholic dissidents really think: I spent many years with Catholic professors, and what Roberts said accurately captures their sentiments.

So why do they stay if they are so unhappy? Are they masochists? Some are. But most stay because they know where the power is. And nothing motivates the left more than control—it’s what they live and die for. They could, of course, jump ship and join one of the mainline Protestant denominations. The problem with that option is that the mainliners are in free fall. What’s really perverse about all this is that the mainline groups are dying precisely because they adopted all the zany ideas about sexuality that the Catholic dissidents adore.

Archbishop Dolan is not only a great man—he is a gift from God. He has the erudition, commitment and courage that make for success. Moreover, he will not be deterred by the likes of the *New York Times* or the *National Catholic Reporter*. And like all the other bishops, he can count on the strong support of the Catholic League.