

# CUOMO'S TYRANNICAL EDICT

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo's latest edict:

Orthodox Jewish neighborhoods in New York are witnessing a spike in coronavirus infections, and the response by New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo is to shut down all churches, synagogues and schools—private, religious, and public—in an attempt to quell the spread of the disease. The authoritarian language he invoked to justify this extraordinary measure was chilling.

"We know religious institutions have been a problem," he said. He then took direct aim at synagogues. "If you're not willing to live with these rules [banning mass gatherings], then I'm going to close the synagogues." He also said he would deploy the police to enforce his edict. If there are too many people entering a house of worship, he said, "the state police officer is down the block, and he will come help you."

There are two major problems with Cuomo's order: his authority to execute it is in serious doubt and his decision to blanket Catholic churches and schools—where there are no problems—is discriminatory.

Last June, after violent mobs went on a rampage attacking innocent people, destroying property, looting, and tying up traffic in an illegal demonstration, neither New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio nor Gov. Cuomo did anything to stop it. The police were told to stand down and both men expressed sympathy with the thugs. Obviously, social distancing was summarily ignored.

Their duplicity did not go unnoticed. On June 26, U.S. District Judge Gary Sharpe issued a preliminary injunction saying de Blasio and Cuomo exceeded their authority. By allowing the protests, he said, they were "encouraging what they knew was a flagrant disregard of the outdoor limits and

social distancing rules.” In doing so, they “sent a clear message that mass protests are deserving of preferential treatment.” Neither de Blasio nor Cuomo challenged the judge’s ruling.

Cuomo showed his contempt for Catholic churches and schools when he subjected them to his order. *There is no spike in coronavirus in any Catholic church or school in the Archdiocese of New York or the Diocese of Brooklyn.* Why is he penalizing Catholic institutions, which are not a problem, but is allowing commercial establishments in these same neighborhoods to conduct business as usual?

The New York State Catholic Conference, speaking for the two dioceses, is right to condemn Cuomo’s “broad-brush approach.” Catholic schools in New York, which have spent millions to ensure a safe environment, “have rightly been held up as a model of safety,” earning considerable media applause. Why, then, are Catholic institutions being burdened because of the “inferior protocols at non-Catholic schools”? This is “a profound injustice” to the Catholic community.

Why is Cuomo doing this? Here’s my perspective.

On March 25, Cuomo ordered still recovering coronavirus patients to be sent to nursing homes. It led to over 4,300 deaths (before he rescinded his directive). Dr. Daniel Choi of Hofstra University’s School of Medicine branded his decision “a death sentence.”

When this happened in March, I told our staff that Cuomo, having been burned in the press for his “death sentence,” would seek to compensate for his initial incompetence by shutting down New York indefinitely. He could not risk screwing up New York on the backend of the pandemic after screwing it up at the beginning.

The man is a wreck. His politicization of Covid-19 is a national disgrace. Now Catholics are being asked to pay the

price for his delinquency.

Contact Cuomo's press office: [Press.Office@exec.ny.gov](mailto:Press.Office@exec.ny.gov)