

GAY CATHOLIC TEACHER HAS AN AGENDA

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a controversy at an Ohio Catholic school:

It is not uncommon for employees, prospective or current, to sign a contract that binds them to conduct expectations, and this is especially true of jobs where workers are role models. Violations of moral turpitude are an example: if said conduct is deemed shameful or vile by the standards of the organization, the employee can be sanctioned, even dismissed.

What would we think of a professional football player who committed an act that violated his contract, was released from the team, and then threatened to sue the NFL? Did he not voluntarily sign the contract, knowing what was expected of him? What if after he is let go he decides to present the NFL with a proposal, the terms of which would negate existing strictures, saying he will go forward with his lawsuit unless the league plays ball with him?

Something analogous to this happened in a Cincinnati Catholic school, Alter High. Jim Zimmerman, who taught English at the school for 23 years, expressly violated his contract with the school when he married his boyfriend in 2016, a union which he kept secret. When the school recently found out, it decided not to renew his contract. He then threatened a lawsuit—not to get money but to force the school to change its contract.

Matt Deters is a former Alter High School teacher who supports Zimmerman. He quit his job in 2014 when he was asked to sign a contract, the conditions of which he found objectionable; he did not like the conduct clause. He did the right thing. But now he is showing his authoritarian side by siding with Zimmerman. He wants the government to police Catholic schools,

telling them what norms they can institute. The two men do not believe in separation of church and state.

Deters is very honest about his objective: His goal is to change the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. "When the Church's catechism says that homosexual acts are 'acts of grave depravity,'" that has to go. The change would make him happy. Indeed, he would be as happy as adulterers would be if the Church changed its teaching on cheaters.

Deters' problem, one which is widely shared, extends beyond the teachings of the Catholic Church: the ultimate source of his discontent is the Bible. It is the word of God that angers him.

Let's be clear what the issue is. Homosexuals can teach in Catholic schools, just as heterosexuals can. Their sexual orientation is not an issue.

However, when homosexual Catholic teachers marry someone of the same sex, or when heterosexual Catholic teachers shack up with someone of the opposite sex—and their conduct becomes publicly known—they have no right to claim victim status when they are terminated for violating their contract. And they certainly have no right to beckon the heavy hand of the state to vitiate the doctrinal prerogatives of the Catholic Church.

Cincinnati Archbishop Dennis Schnurr did the right thing. Contracts matter. They matter more when they are grounded in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.