OKAY FOR BISHOPS TO SAY THE ROSARY

"The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)," Bill Donohue recently charged, "is suing the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) because the bishops are pro-life." Its pretext is a case involving a pregnant woman who visited the only hospital in her area, and claims she was not given information about the option of aborting her baby. The *New York Times,* which *always* sides with the pro-abortion industry against the Catholic Church, thinks the ACLU is doing yeoman work. But the first sentence in a recent 520-word editorial, along with the last two, prove why Donohue's first sentence is accurate.

The first sentence said that beyond state efforts to restrict abortion, there is "another, if quieter, threat [that] is posed by mergers between secular hospitals and Catholic hospitals operating under religious directives from the nation's Roman Catholic bishops." What scares the *Times* is diversity: it is resolutely opposed to the pro-life position of Catholic hospitals, and wants every hospital to perform abortions. Whenever there is a merger between secular and Catholic entities, the *Times* maintains that Catholic First Amendment rights should yield to the non-constitutional rights of secular entities.

"The bishops are free to worship as they choose and advocate their beliefs. But those beliefs should not shield the bishops from legal accountability when church-affiliated hospitals following their rules cause patients harm." These sentences are a gem: in effect, the *Times* stated that it is okay for the bishops to say the Rosary. They can even advocate their beliefs! What they can't do is act on them. This is what the *New York Times* believes are sufficient constitutional rights for Catholics in 2013.

Freedom to worship, promoted by the Obama administration, is a neutered rendition of the more robust, and constitutionally protected, right to religious freedom; it has a public dimension. As Pope Francis recently instructed, Catholics should never settle for less.