

Pennsylvania ... Casey's 'parish'?

Bernie Shire of the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference recently told *Catalyst* about a rather interesting exchange he had in the pages of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

The saga began with a snippy column by Melissa Dribben ("Wasting Time on Abortion," 1/20/94) bemoaning the fact that Pennsylvania Governor William Casey was about to implement the law which his state defended successfully in the U.S. Supreme Court and his refusal to implement the easy access to abortions authorized by the Clinton administration. The phrase that launched a thousand words was: "Gov. Casey believes Pennsylvania is his parish."

Shire rightfully took umbrage at this loose lipped characterization of Casey and a Letter to the Editor duly appeared in the *Inquirer* on February 13. He called her remark "blatant anti-Catholicism," and went on to note that her remark only served to perpetuate the pro-abortion myth that abortion is just a Catholic issue. He concluded that such comments had no place on the Commentary page.

On February 21, the *Inquirer* published a letter from Peter Conn, a professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania, arguably the nation's most politically correct campus.

Conn's message was simply stated in the headline which the *Inquirer* chose to drape above it: "Catholics need to accept their critics."

Conn's cheap shot broadside against all things Catholic ("The Catholic Church has chosen to compete in local and national politics" ... "Catholic pronouncements on human sexuality seem especially ironic and even impertinent" ... etc., etc.) would be

laughable if his missive hadn't come from the University of Pennsylvania, the campus where black students were allowed to confiscate and destroy all copies of a student newspaper because it contained an alleged racial slur.

Using the same rules, the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference should have been able to round up and bum all copies of Dribben's drivél.

Shire reports that he bit his tongue and decided that it was pointless to attempt an answer to Conn's letter. We are forced to agree with that judgement but will keep an eye on future developments at the University of Pennsylvania and in Casey's "parish" as well.

We wonder what Casey's pastor thought of all this....