

RELIGIOUS RIGHTS DEMANDED; BISHOPS REFUSE TO BUDGE

On March 14, the Administrative Committee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops released a statement, "United for Religious Freedom," that is the clearest exposition of contemporary Catholic thought on religious liberty in America. It is also the definitive response to attempts by the Obama administration to force Catholic institutions to violate their beliefs.

The statement yielded nothing to Church critics. The product of a two-day meeting in Washington that was attended by over 40 bishops, it speaks directly to the Health and Human Services (HHS) mandate that seeks to force Catholic non-profits to cover services it deems objectionable in its insurance plans. Mincing no words, the document declares the HHS edict to be "unjust and illegal."

The bishops debunked many myths about this issue: it is not about contraception; it is not just about Catholic religious rights; it is not about the Catholic Church trying to impose its will on others—it is about the federal government trying to impose its agenda on us; it is not about opposition to universal health care (the Church has long championed this right); and it is not about choosing political sides. It is about religious liberty.

Most important, the statement argues that the HHS mandate seeks to create a three-tiered class of citizens' rights: by defining religious rights as applying only to those who work for religious institutions that hire and serve mostly people of their own faith, the Obama administration has relegated those who work in religious institutions that serve everyone to a second-class status; those who are not a religious employer but nonetheless object on religious grounds to

funding immoral insurance plans constitute a third-class of citizens.

Bill Donohue issued the following statement as soon as the statement was released: “The good news is that the bishops aren’t flinching: there is no room for compromise when the subject is our constitutional rights—rights that come from God, as the Declaration affirmed, not government. It warms the heart to read that the ‘unprecedented magnitude of this latest threat has only strengthened our resolve’ to do what is right. The bishops have the unqualified support of the Catholic League.”

In the run-up to the meeting, Catholic critics of the bishops were telling the media how important it was for the bishops—not the Obama administration—to budge. They even predicted that the bishops would have to expand their notions of religious liberty to encompass other issues. As it turned out, their side walked away with absolutely nothing. The bishops stood fast on principle.

SNAP UNDONE

On March 13, we released a report by Bill Donohue, *SNAP UNRAVELS*; it was a critical analysis of the statements made by SNAP director David Clohessy at his January 2 court-ordered appearance in Missouri. On the same day, the *New York Times* ran a front-page story on Clohessy’s deposition. Donohue was quoted in the story, and his comments set off a firestorm.

The next day, there was an editorial in the *Times* critical of the Catholic Church for allowing “aggressive” lawyers to press Clohessy. We responded by summarizing Clohessy’s statement and by calling out the newspaper.

We know from the deposition that Clohessy has been (a) lying to the media about his work (b) falsely advertising his group as a rape crisis center (c) working with unseemly lawyers (d) exploiting his clients by providing unauthorized “counseling” services (e) ripping off those who are truly in need of help by failing to contribute even a dime for licensed counselors, and (f) pursuing priests on the basis of legal criteria he admits he cannot explain.

We also asked, “When the *Times* is sued, does it hire wimpy lawyers? Does it allow itself to be a punching bag?” Not on your life: they hire the most aggressive attorneys they can buy. So should the Catholic Church. After all, SNAP’s tactics are unethical at best, and illegal at worst. Moreover, SNAP is motivated by revenge, not justice.

GOOD GUYS AND BAD GUYS

FROM THE PRESIDENT’S DESK

William Donohue

The late Irving Kristol spoke about the overarching influence of the “new class”; they are the ones who shape public opinion. Such persons cluster in the academy, especially in the social sciences and humanities, as well as in the arts, the entertainment industry, the media, and the non-profit sector of the economy. Today they are typically called the cultural elite, or simply the elites. No one doubts their impact on our culture.

We know from several surveys that the elites are ideologically left-of-center. Moreover, they are thoroughgoing secularists: some are indifferent to religion, while others are increasingly hostile to it. Regarding the latter, there is no

religion they disdain more than our own. Why? Because they loathe traditional moral values, and we represent the nucleus of traditional morality.

There is one other characteristic of the elites that demands our attention, and that is their tendency to divide the world into two blocks: good guys (usually considered victims) and bad guys (the victimizers). They not only see entire segments of society as fitting into one of these two blocks, they see individuals that way as well. Once the label is fixed, there is little that can be done to change it.

Those segments of our society who are the good guys include liberals, homosexuals, non-whites (especially African Americans), Jews, Muslims, women, atheists, celebrities and left-wing activists. The bad guys are conservatives, heterosexuals, whites, Christians (especially Catholics and Evangelicals), men, and those who work in business. To prove I'm right, just ask yourself how these two blocks of people are generally portrayed on television.

It gets complicated when real people are involved, and not just abstract categories. What to do, for example, about individuals who cross-over? Fortunately, those who make the good guy-bad guy assignments, namely the elites, have figured out a way to untangle things: they weight list these statuses. Nothing matters more than ideology, and no group is more protected than homosexuals.

Take, for example, a conservative woman. Her views make her a bad guy, but her sex makes her a good guy. The former wins every time. Indeed, a conservative woman is typically regarded as a traitor. That's why Barbara Walters laughed when she heard that Laura Ingraham was called a slut by Ed Schultz, but got angry when Rush Limbaugh called Sandra Fluke a slut. It matters to good guys like Walters, a liberal, whether the woman being called a slut is a conservative like Ingraham (bad guy) or a liberal like Fluke (good guy). It also matters that

Ed is a liberal (good guy) and Rush is a conservative (bad guy).

Here's another example. The elites say they want more blacks on the Supreme Court. Actually, they don't. They want more liberals on the high court. Want proof? Ask them if they would prefer another black like Clarence Thomas, or another white Justice like John Paul Stevens. Obviously, they would prefer to have a white, Jewish, liberal woman like Ruth Bader Ginsburg before they would ever have another black conservative on the bench, and they would be dancing in the streets if she were also a lesbian.

In other words, for the elites, terms like "slut" have no inherent moral meaning: it depends on the individual to whom the label is affixed whether it carries a pernicious connotation. Similarly, being of the right color (black) is not sufficient to override being of the wrong views (conservative).

Mario Batali is not just a chef, he is a celebrity chef. Because he is a liberal celebrity, the elites did not criticize him when he had to pay \$5.25 million for ordering his staff to take 5 percent of the tip money for the house. Batali was able to rob bus boys and waitresses of their tips with impunity because (a) there is nothing inherently immoral about the rich ripping off the poor and (b) he is a liberal celebrity.

So is it possible for a Catholic (bad guy) to be a good guy? Of course. To the extent that a Catholic rejects the moral teachings of the Catholic Church, he moves from bad guy to good guy. Just ask the Kennedys. Nancy Pelosi and Andrew Cuomo also know how this works.

In this issue, we discuss the anti-Catholic ad placed by the Freedom From Religion Foundation in the *New York Times*. We also make mention of how the *Times* refused to run a near-

identical ad that merely switched Islam for Catholic Church. It's easy to understand why. Since there is no such thing as truth for the elites—there are no inherent moral meanings—there is nothing necessarily wrong with bigoted ads. It depends entirely on whether the object of the bigotry is a bad guy (Catholicism) or a good guy (Islam).

Also in this issue, we show what an utter fraud SNAP is. Yet because it is organized to work against the Catholic Church (bad guy), it makes no difference how unethical its leader is (he must be a good guy).

Now you know how the game is played. The rules are fixed, and there is no amount of good work on the part of the Catholic Church that can change the thinking of the elite. But, hey, look at it this way—there's something cool about being bad.

Shoddy Scholarship in the Study of Pope Pius XII

Ronald J. Rychlak

In the December 2011 issue of *Commentary* magazine, Kevin Madigan, the Winn Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Harvard Divinity School, put forth the false charge that the Vatican under Pope Pius XII intentionally helped Nazi war criminals escape justice and make their way to South America after World War II. He based his article on Gerald Steinacher's *Nazis on the Run: How Hitler's Henchmen Fled Justice* and David Cymet's *History vs. Apologetics: The Holocaust, the Third Reich, and the Catholic Church*. The combination of sloppy work and over-the-top charges provides a textbook example of how a verifiably false account can be

reported as fact in the mainstream media.

At the heart of the matter are two letters, now available on the Catholic League's webpage. Bishop Alois Hudal wrote the first letter on May 5, 1949, to Monsignor Giovanni Battista Montini (the future Pope Paul VI) who was then working in the Vatican Secretary of State's office. In that letter, Hudal suggests a pardon for political prisoners who have committed no crimes. Montini's reply, dated May 12, says that the Vatican's Secretary of State was already working with several governments toward such an end.

Steinacher incorrectly dated Hudal's letter to April 5, 1949. More seriously, in quoting the letter, he said that Hudal wanted amnesty for *German soldiers*, and elsewhere on the same page he said that Hudal sought pardon for *war criminals*. Actually, Hudal expressed sympathy for *political prisoners* who had already spent four years in prison, but he never mentioned nationalities, war criminals, or soldiers.

Steinacher also badly distorted Montini's reply. He wrote: "Montini replied that the Holy See would welcome an 'extensive amnesty,' but that the German clergy had a different attitude." In fact, nowhere in Montini's letter was there any mention of the pope, the German clergy, or a difference in their attitudes.

Madigan, who did no original research and did not read Steinacher very carefully, made things even worse. He confounded Steinacher's points and wrote: Steinacher "reports that the pope favored an 'extensive amnesty' for war criminals." That is not what Steinacher wrote, and nothing could be further from the truth.

In August 1944, Pius XII received Winston Churchill in an audience at which the pontiff expressed his understanding of the justice in punishing war criminals. In that year's Christmas message, in a section entitled "War Criminals," Pius

wrote that no one “will wish to disarm justice” when it comes to punishing “those who have taken advantage of the war to commit real and proved crimes against the law common to all peoples.” He also told a Swiss reporter: “Not only do we approve of the [Nuremburg] trial, but we desire that the guilty be punished as quickly as possible, and without exception.” Pius even provided evidence to use against Nazi defendants and assigned a Jesuit to assist the prosecution team.

It has long been known that Hudal and a Croatian priest named Krunoslav Draganović helped some former Nazis escape from Europe. Madigan, however, says that they were part of “a sort of papal mercy program for National Socialists and Fascists.” That is far from the truth.

In his memoir, Hudal explained that the assistance he gave to those fleeing justice was done without the pope’s knowledge. He had never agreed with the Vatican’s hostility toward the Nazis. His book, *The Foundations of National Socialism*, was critical of the hard line that Vatican diplomats took with the Germans. (He once sarcastically asked whether the Church was being directed by the Allies.) In 1949, when Hudal was criticized in the press, he asked the Vatican to defend him. The reply from Montini was: “there is no defense for a Nazi bishop.” That same year, Hudal scheduled a papal audience for a group of Austrian pilgrims. Pius, however, refused to meet with the group as long as Hudal accompanied them. In 1952, Pius demanded that Hudal be removed from his position at Santa Maria dell’Anima, the German national church and college in Rome.

Madigan’s alleged “papal mercy program” was the Pontifical Aid Commission (PAC). This organization coordinated efforts to assist victims of war and helped return displaced persons to their homes. As the PAC helped hundreds of thousands of legitimate refugees start life anew, some Nazi war criminals (Madigan says hundreds) took advantage of it to flee justice.

Madigan would have us believe that the Church knowingly sent Nazi officials to safety. It is, however, inconceivable that the Nazis revealed their background to reputable Church officials. It is even less likely that any such information would have reached the Vatican. The logistics of the massive relocation programs simply made it impossible to investigate most individuals who sought help.

Monsignor Karl Bayer, who was liaison chaplain responsible for prisoners of war in the north of Italy, explained:

“Well, of course we asked questions.... But at the same time, we hadn’t an earthly chance of checking on the answers. In Rome, at that time, every kind of paper and information could be bought. If a man wanted to tell us he was born in Viareggio – no matter if he was really born in Berlin and couldn’t speak a word of Italian – he only had to go down into the street and he’d find dozens of Italians willing to swear on a stack of Bibles that they knew he was born in Viareggio – for a hundred lire.”

The Church was interested in ending suffering. Some Nazis took advantage of these efforts to help dislocated people. So did some Soviet spies. Would Madigan argue that the Vatican wanted to help them? There is no indication that the Holy See intentionally tried to help Nazis escape justice.

Madigan spreads another false charge from Cymet’s book. Often when Jewish parents were deported, they left their children behind with Christian families. The children were still at risk of being uncovered and deported. The surest way to protect them was by indoctrinating them in Christianity. Sometimes over-zealous rescuers would have the children baptized. According to Madigan, Pius refused to let any such child be returned to their Jewish parents. That is nonsense.

In 2004, there was a bit of a dust-up when a document was found that purportedly contained Pope Pius XII’s directives

that: "Children who have been baptized must not be entrusted to institutions that cannot ensure their Christian education." It also said that children whose families survived the Holocaust should be returned, "as long as they had not been baptized."

It was soon discovered that this controversial document was an incorrect summary of a 1946 letter from the Vatican to the papal nuncio in France. The letter actually said that if institutions (*not families*) wanted to take those children who had been entrusted to the Church, each case had to be examined individually. The Church would breach its obligation to the parents if it turned the children over to the wrong institution. There were very few facilities fit for children in Palestine or war-torn Europe, and the pope was concerned for their welfare.

These instructions related solely to *institutions* wanting to relocate orphaned children after the war. It did not relate to children being sought by families. The letter said: "things would be different if the children were requested by their relatives." Madigan should have done his homework before spreading these malicious charges.

Commentary magazine printed a letter in which I pointed out several of Madigan's errors, but as is traditional, Madigan was given the last word. In addition to back-tracks and denials, he made a few statements that call for a response. First of all, this is but the most recent in a string of articles that Madigan has written over the past decade highly critical of Pope Pius XII, the Catholic Church, and those who disagree with him. He can't keep falling back on the argument that he is only repeating charges made by others.

Madigan complained that I referred to Montini as "one of the pope's top assistants," not as Secretary of State. I did so because Montini worked in the Secretary of State's office, but he never held that office or title.

Madigan references a 1947 declassified report that suggested that a Croatian war criminal (Ante Pavelic) was being protected due to his contacts with the Vatican. The report says: "Pavelic's contacts are so high and his present position so compromising to the Vatican, that any extradition...would deal a staggering blow to the Roman Catholic Church." Madigan snidely adds that the authors of that report "knew better than Mr. Rychlak." I have to disagree.

I have written several articles and a book chapter about the post-war situation in Croatia. In fact, the chapter was translated and published in Croatia in 2008. I have studied the topic thoroughly, and I know that Pavelic was offended by how *badly* he was treated by Pope Pius XII and Croatian Cardinal Aloysius Stepinac.

In 1947, when the intelligence report was written, the Communist government in Croatia (Yugoslavia) was conducting show trials of Catholic officials (including Stepinac) for collaborating with the Nazis. I had the advantage of writing after Communism fell and the new Croatian parliament apologized for those false charges and the bad information that was spread. Agents writing in 1947 Italy had little reason to know that this information was the creation of Soviet disinformation agents. Madigan, however, wrote after the fall of Communism. He could have looked up this history and educated his readers. Instead, he spread false information.

On the last page of Madigan's article he likened those who defend Pope Pius XII (which would include Pope John Paul II and a slew of reputable historians) to Holocaust deniers. In his reply to my letter, he said that it was not he but Cymet who made this charge. While Cymet did make it, Madigan not only quoted and discussed it at length, he said that Cymet had grounds for making it. This is but one of several issues on which Madigan tried to have it both ways, but careful readers will not let him get away with that.

Finally, Madigan dismisses the post-war Jewish praise for Pius and says it was given to garner good will for the state of Israel. In other words, Jews lied for political reasons. This is an insult not only to Catholics, but to the Jewish leaders who worked so hard to rebuild out of devastation. They were wounded; they had lost most everything, but they did not lose their integrity. They were not lying when they thanked the Church and praised Pope Pius XII. They knew the truth. Madigan's claims to the contrary are shameful.

Ronald J. Rychlak is a professor of law at the University of Mississippi. He also serves on the Advisory Board of the Catholic League. His latest book is Hitler, the War, and the Pope (revised and expanded, 2010).

SNAP UNRAVELS

At the end of 2011, a Missouri judge ordered David Clohessy, the president of the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP), to be deposed regarding his role in cases of priestly sexual abuse. Clohessy fought the order vigorously, but lost. On January 2, 2012, he was deposed; the deposition [it is available on our website] was made public only recently. [NOTE: all pages cited are taken from the deposition.]

Clohessy proved to be uncooperative, refusing to comply with a request for internal documents; he only released a small portion of them. On the stand, he was similarly recalcitrant, refusing to answer many questions. He took refuge in a Missouri law which protects the confidentiality of rape crisis centers. But there are serious reasons to doubt whether SNAP meets the test of a rape crisis center.

Clohessy was asked point blank, "Did you identify yourself as a rape crisis center?" His reply, "I don't know." [p. 87.] At another point, he admitted, "I don't know under the Missouri statutes exactly what constitutes a rape crisis center." [p. 112.] The lawyers for an accused priest were not impressed. From their questions, and from subsequent statements they've made, it is clear that they do not believe that SNAP qualifies as a rape crisis center. They have plenty of reasons for reaching this conclusion.

When asked what training he has as a rape crisis counselor, Clohessy said, "You know, I've done—I've provided support to victims of sexual assault for 20—roughly 23 or 24 years. I do not have a—no." He was then asked, "Do you have any formal education or training with regard to rape crisis counseling?" He answered, "I do not." [p. 19.]

Clohessy has a bachelor's degree in philosophy and political science. He is not a licensed counselor, yet counseling alleged victims of sexual abuse is what he does for a living. When asked, "Did you have any classes at all in counseling sexual abuse victims?" He answered, "Any formal classes?" The attorney affirmed his question, answering, "Yes." To which Clohessy replied, "No, sir." [p. 191.]

The defense attorneys wanted to know if anyone at SNAP is licensed to counsel abuse victims. Clohessy was asked, "Does SNAP have any licensed counselors in the State of Missouri?" He said, "We are a—as I said at the beginning, we're a self-help group. We are not—we don't hold ourselves out to be formal licensed counselors." [pp. 19-20.]

Clohessy then maintained that SNAP has support groups that "meet on a regular basis and offer support and comfort and consolation and guidance" to alleged victims. The lawyers picked up on this by asking, "Are there any licensed social workers or counselors on the staff at any of those meetings in the state of Missouri?" Clohessy was able to mention the

founder of SNAP, Barbara Blaine, who is “a licensed—as I said, she has a Master’s degree in social work.” The attorneys were curious. “Is Barbara Blaine licensed as a counselor or social worker in the State of Missouri or the State of Illinois?” Clohessy answered, “I don’t know.” [p. 20.]

(There is a difference between someone who holds a Master’s in Social Work and someone with a Master’s in Counseling. It is expected that if someone wants to practice independently, he obtains licensure. Typically, this means at least two years of clinical work in a supervised setting. *No one at SNAP is a licensed counselor.*)

The attorneys for the defense sought to find out where the counseling takes place. Clohessy said, “We meet people wherever they want to meet, in Starbucks, at, you know—wherever people feel comfortable, that’s where we meet.” [p. 22.] When they meet at Starbucks for their “counseling” sessions, they mostly just talk. “You know, the overwhelming bulk of our work is talking to, listening to, supporting sex abuse victims,” he admitted. [p. 23.]

Of interest to the defense attorneys was the amount of money SNAP spends on “counseling.” “How much annually does SNAP spend for individuals in individual therapy sessions?” Clohessy offered a straight-forward answer: “I have no idea.” [p. 26.] He then dug himself in deeper. He was asked how much money has been paid “to an individual counselor for an individual victim.” Explicitly, “out of that \$3 million that’s in the tax return,” how much was spent on individual counselors? Clohessy confessed, “Don’t know.” [p. 30.] Regarding the \$3 million in SNAP’s bank account, he was asked, “Where is that money kept?” He wasn’t sure. “I’m assuming it’s in Chicago.” [p. 29.]

Clohessy explained what he does for a living. He says SNAP has a business address in Chicago, but that he doesn’t know the zip code. Having no office—he works out of his home in the St.

Louis area—he fields phone calls. [p. 9.] “Individuals call me and they share their pain with me.” So what does he do about it? “I console them and I may be on the phone with them for an hour.” He said he doesn’t charge them a fee for his consolation over the phone. [p. 26].

Declaring one’s home to be a place of business raises legal questions. Clohessy was asked whether “at your house do you have an occupational license or a business license to do business out of your house.” He simply said, “No.” [p. 98.]

Clohessy refused to disclose his source of funding. When asked, “You won’t tell us the sources of your funding; isn’t that correct?”, he said, “That’s correct.” [p. 85.] Now it is well known that Church-suing lawyers have generously given to SNAP over the years [see my 2011 report, [SNAP EXPOSED: Unmasking the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests](#); it is available on our website].

When asked specifically about monies SNAP receives from lawyers, once again Clohessy refused to answer. What really set him off was the question, “Does SNAP have any agreements with attorneys regarding referral of victims to those attorneys?” Clohessy snapped, “Can I say I’m offended at the question?” [p. 32.]

Given the type of work SNAP does, it is mandated by law to give a portion of its funds to charity. “As a director of SNAP,” Clohessy was asked, “do you understand that SNAP is required by federal law to contribute so much of their assets every year for charitable purposes.” His reply, “I’m not aware of that.” [p. 82.]

So what does SNAP do with its money? In 2007, it spent a total of \$593 for “survivor support.” [pp. 102-03.] The following year it spent \$92,000 on travel. [p. 107.]

SNAP says it pursues priests who are “credibly accused.” It may interest bishops and priests what Clohessy means by this.

“How would you define the word ‘credibly accused?’” (This is important because many accused priests have been railroaded by those who have made false claims.) Clohessy replied, “You know, there’s all kinds of criteria.” All kinds of criteria? He continued by saying sometimes there are multiple accusers, but at no time did he say what the criteria were. [p. 110.]

Anyone who has followed SNAP is aware how often it holds a press conference condemning a diocese *before a lawsuit is filed*. By working with its attorneys, and some reporters, SNAP is able to get on the evening news making the diocese look bad (lawyers for the diocese are usually the last ones to receive the lawsuits). So it was not surprising that the defense lawyers would ask Clohessy about this tactic.

For example, in one case, where a lawsuit had a file stamp of October 20, 2011, the time was recorded as 2:44 p.m. When asked how SNAP could have had this information before it was filed in court, Clohessy refused to answer. [pp. 52-53.] In another case, a lawsuit had a file stamp of November 8, 2011 at 1:28 p.m., yet Clohessy was able to post information about this before it was filed with the court. When asked to explain himself, he refused. [pp. 62-63.]

Apparently, Clohessy knows next to nothing about his staff. When asked about his staff, he mentioned the founder, Barbara Blaine. He also said, “We have an administrative person who is new,” but he could only remember the person’s first name. He admitted that they also had a fundraising person but “I apologize, I don’t know the spelling of her last name.” [pp. 13-14.] Later, he was asked, “Who is in charge of SNAP’s website? Is there a specific company or is it done in-house?” Clohessy was blunt: “I don’t know.” [pp.165-66.]

Finally, Clohessy admitted that he has lied about some of his statements to the press. “Has SNAP to your knowledge ever issued a press release that contained false information?” He didn’t blink: “Sure.” [p. 39.] Did he lie about priests he

knew to be innocent, or at least thought may have been innocent? We don't know.

So is David Clohessy a sincere man driven by the pursuit of justice? Or is he a con artist driven by revenge? It may very well be that the former description aptly explains how he started, while the latter describes what he has become.

CARDINAL DOLAN'S CHALLENGE

In March, Cardinal Timothy Dolan, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), outlined in a letter to the bishops his many concerns about the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) directive mandating that the insurance companies of religious employers pay for abortion-inducing drugs, contraception and sterilization. For the most part, his letter was met with silence.

Dolan made it clear that the bishops would not budge in their demands for religious liberty. Neither the January 20 initial HHS Rule, nor the amended February 10 directive, satisfied religious liberty concerns. He correctly noted that "We'll still have to pay" under the so-called accommodation provisions.

It was revealing to learn that when members of the USCCB recently met with the White House staff, they were told that the HHS Rule was set in cement. So much for dialogue. Moreover, the Obama staff informed the Catholic officials that they should follow the "enlightened" voices at *America* magazine (the Jesuits agree with the administration). Dolan was pointed in his criticism: "The White House seems to think we bishops simply do not know or understand Catholic teaching and so, taking a cue from its own definition of *religious*

freedom, now has nominated its own handpicked official Catholic teachers.”

Catholic News Service never commented on, or posted, Cardinal Dolan’s letter in its “News Stories” section; instead, it relegated it to its blog postings never highlighting the USCCB-*America* dispute. The liberal Catholic media—*America*, *Commonweal* and the dissident *National Catholic Reporter*—went mute.

We said that Dolan’s challenge deserved a response. After all, Cardinal Dolan is one of the very few who tells it like it is.

SHILLING FOR OBAMA

The Catholic left is so deep in the tank for Obama that they are working publicly to undermine the bishops. First a little background.

On March 2, Cardinal Timothy Dolan, speaking for the bishops, said that at a recent meeting between the bishops’ conference staff and the White House staff, the former were told by the latter that the issue of religious liberty was “off the table.” Moreover, following the February 10 Health and Human Services mandate, Bishop William Lori, the point man for the bishops on religious liberty, said there was “no prior consultation” with the bishops before the edict was issued.

Reporting on this for the Religion News Service, David Gibson quoted an administration official who denied all of this, effectively saying Dolan and Lori are liars. The official said, “The White House has put nearly every issue requested by the bishops on the table for discussion...only to be rebuffed.” Indeed, the operative even accused “some bishops and staff” of

politicizing the issue. [Gibson refused to name his source. So much for transparency.]

Gibson reported that “some USCCB staff members involved in the talks are veteran culture warriors” who often take “a harder line” than the bishops. But could they be more extreme than Alexia Kelley, the left-wing Catholic who presides over the near moribund faith-based programs? Before landing her White House job, she was funded by atheist billionaire George Soros; she ran a dummy Catholic entity, one that Soros greased to the tune of hundreds of thousands through his Open Society Institute.

Gibson also said that “Catholic officials from other institutions” are working more quickly to resolve problems than the bishops’ staff is. Again, they were not identified. No matter, not only do these activists have no official standing, there is nothing for them to resolve—they’re all shilling for Obama.

OBAMA MANDATE NEVER SCRUTINIZED

Following her recent testimony before the Senate Finance Committee, Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) Kathleen Sebelius was asked whether she spoke to the bishops about the controversial mandate she is pushing. She admitted she did not. Then she said, “I know that the president has spoken to the bishops on several occasions.”

Sebelius was wrong. Bishop William Lori, who heads the bishops’ *Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty*, recently said that administration officials should have sat down with the

bishops. “That certainly did not happen,” he said. Cardinal Timothy Dolan, who heads the bishops’ conference, met once with the president, and that was last November; the two phone calls he had since were to inform him that the bishops’ religious liberty concerns would not be honored.

Under questioning from Sen. Orrin Hatch, Sebelius further admitted that HHS never subjected the religious liberty issues to a legal analysis, as requested by 27 senators. She also admitted that she never asked the Justice Department to consider this issue.

Worse was a *New York Times* report that the administration announced the Obama mandate “before it had figured out how to address one conspicuous point: Like most large employers, many religiously affiliated organizations choose to insure themselves rather than hire an outside company to assume the risk.” As the *Times* pointed out, this is not a slight issue: 60 percent of all workers with health insurance are covered by a self-funded plan, and the figure is 82 percent for large companies.

So they refused to consult with the bishops; they refused to weigh the First Amendment religious liberty concerns; and they refused to study how the mandate might impact self-insured companies. In other words, with characteristic arrogance, they just “winged it.”

SEBELIUS SMEARS CATHOLIC INSURERS

Recently, HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius said Catholic insurance carriers will not be given an exemption from the

mandate requiring insurance companies to provide for abortifacient, contraceptive and sterilization services. She explained, "Religious insurance companies don't really design the plans they sell based on their own religious tenets." This was an outrageous smear.

In January, *Our Sunday Visitor* ran an article on this subject titled, "Investing with a Clear Conscience." It listed the following companies as following Catholic investment principles: Ave Maria Mutual Funds; Christian Brothers Investment Services; Epiphany Funds; First Affirmative Financial Network; Investing for Catholics; LKCM Aquinas Funds; Prosperitas Wealth Management; and Trinity Fiduciary Partners.

The article also listed the six investment principles as laid out in the bishops' 1991 statement on socially responsible investing (it was revised in 2003): Protecting Human Life; Promoting Human Dignity; Reducing Arms Production; Pursuing Economic Justice; Protecting the Environment; and Encouraging Corporate Responsibility.

Sebelius, of course, is a champion of partial-birth abortion, so she obviously fails the bishops' test. That is her business. But she has no business misinforming the public about the honorable role played by many Catholic insurance companies.

The Catholic League uses Christian Brothers as its insurance carrier, and we will fight attempts by the Obama administration to undermine its integrity.

RELIGIOUS RIGHTS REJECTED

In March, the Senate voted 51-48 to table the “Respect for Rights of Conscience Act”; an amendment by Sen. Roy Blunt that would have guaranteed rights of conscience for the employees of religious institutions. However, this does not end the debate.

Despite this vote, a bill remains in the House sponsored by Rep. Jeff Fortenberry that would also secure conscience rights for people of faith; it has garnered a near-majority of House members. Also available as a possible remedy are the rights encoded in the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. And, of course, the U.S. Supreme Court is expected to make a decision on ObamaCare in late spring.

The Obama administration has chosen to shut out the Catholic voice (save for the dissidents). Consider the following:

- Bishop William Lori has said that there was no discussion between administration officials and the bishops prior to the decisions of January 20 and February 10 that effectively mandated Catholic institutions to pay for abortion-inducing drugs, contraception and sterilization.
- HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius has admitted under questioning that the Justice Department was never asked to consider the religious-rights implications of her draconian directive.
- Dr. Linda Rosenstock, who served on a committee of the Institute of Medicine that was empowered to study the HHS mandate, said on Tuesday that at no time did anyone on the committee ever weigh the issue of religious rights.

Obama does not want to dialogue—he wants to dictate.