

OBAMA 'S CONTEMPT FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

On January 20, the Obama administration announced it was moving forward with its original "Obamacare" policy mandating that most religious employers cover contraception and sterilization services (including abortifacients) in their healthcare plans. We immediately hit back.

Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius said that aside from houses of worship, all other religious agencies and organizations would be required to provide sterilization and contraceptive services, including abortifacients, in their employee healthcare plans; none will be allowed to charge co-pays or deductibles. The policy goes into effect in August 2013 for these entities; all others will be required to provide these services in August 2012.

Sebelius explained how her directive applies to non-church religious entities such as Catholic hospitals and universities: "Employers wishing to take advantage of the additional year must certify that they qualify for the delayed implementation. This additional year will allow these organizations more time and flexibility to adapt to this new rule." She also said, "I believe this proposal strikes the appropriate balance between religious freedom and increasing access to important preventive services."

With stunning magnanimity, Sebelius told Catholic non-profits that they could take advantage of their one-year reprieve as long as they seek the blessings of the federal government. If they pass muster with the bureaucrats, then they have time to figure out how they can prostitute their religiously grounded convictions, or prepare for bankruptcy. To top things off, after shoving the radical secular agenda down the throat of Catholics, Sebelius congratulated the Obama administration for

striking a “balance” between religious liberty and Obamacare. But, of course, no balance was struck: the edict granted nothing to those who believe in religious liberty.

That this dictatorial edict was announced in an election year indicated both contempt for the First Amendment and stupidity.

LAWMAKERS SEEK TO UNDO DAMAGE

Before the Obama edict mandating healthcare plans to cover abortifacients, contraception and sterilization was announced, there had already been legislation—held up in committee—in the House and the Senate that sought to protect religious liberties. After the edict was announced, these bills found new life and the backing of the U.S. bishops. The legislation, named “The Respect for Rights of Conscience Act,” was proposed by Rep. Jeff Fortenberry in the House and Sen. Roy Blunt in the Senate and was hailed by Timothy Cardinal Dolan saying that they would produce an “ironclad law simply saying that no administrative decrees of the federal government can ever violate the conscience of a religious believer individually or religious institutions.”

In addition to “The Respect for Rights of Conscience Act,” Sen. Marco Rubio introduced legislation in January designed to repeal the Obama edict. The Catholic community was delighted to learn of his courage in seeking to combat the Obama administration’s unprecedented assault on religious liberty.

If the administration were to get its way, Catholic non-profits would be forced to carry healthcare services that the Church deems immoral. What’s at stake is the First Amendment right to religious liberty, and nothing goes to the heart of this civil liberty more than conscience rights.

We appreciate all of the incredible support we have received from people of all faiths, as well as from some agnostics and atheists. We pledge to them that we will support our bishops in pursuing every legitimate remedy to this outrageous threat to religious liberty. Rubio properly titled his bill the “Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 2012.”

MUST-SEE MOVIE

On March 23, the film “October Baby” will hit theatres nationwide and will surely be a hit. The movie is unequivocally pro-life and an invigorating reminder of what truly matters.

The film revolves around the story of Hannah, a college freshman, who discovers that she is the survivor of a failed abortion. Her physical ailments and psychological distress now seem to make sense to her.

Eventually, Hannah meets the nurse who assisted in the failed abortion. Her testimony is the movie’s core. The phrase “nonviable tissue” was used to cover up the horror: “When you hear something enough times,” the nurse says, “somehow you start to believe it.” When the abortion failed, Hannah’s mother came back the next day to finish it, but didn’t realize she was in labor. The nurse took her to the hospital. Hannah had a twin brother. His arm was torn off in the failed attempt. When he was born, the nurse saw him—still alive and trembling. She says, “I didn’t see no nonviable tissue. I saw the face of a child.”

This life-affirming movie appeals not just to adolescents and college kids but also to anyone who realizes that the pro-life cause is the most important civil rights issue of our time, as

this movie so vividly illustrates.

When asked about the film, Bill Donohue said, “‘October Baby’ is the most gripping drama ever produced about the central civil rights issue of our time—the right to life. The script is superb, the acting is first-class, and the presentation is flawless. No one who sees this film will ever think the same way again about the tragedy of abortion. Young people, in particular, will find it intensely moving. This is a must-see movie for all Americans.”

WHY WARREN BUFFETT IS ANTI-CATHOLIC

Recently, Warren Buffett’s comment that the rich should pay higher taxes was enshrined by President Barack Obama as the “Buffett Rule” and drew much applause. What was not discussed was the billionaire’s support for anti-Catholicism. We offered some background information to enlighten the public.

Over several decades, Buffett has spent a fortune funding radical abortion organizations like NARAL and Planned Parenthood; he has lavishly given money to train a new generation of abortion physicians; he has spent millions to help RU-486 (the abortion-inducing drug) to win FDA approval; and he gave his pro-abortion, population-control friends at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation nearly \$31 billion in 2006 for more of the same. There’s nothing anti-Catholic about any of this, but when he intentionally seeks to subvert Catholicism by dishonestly funding pro-abortion organizations that have hijacked the Catholic name, that’s another story.

To be specific, Buffett has given millions upon millions over

the years to anti-Catholic front groups like Catholics for Choice (formerly Catholics for a Free Choice) and its sister organization in Latin America, Catholics for the Right to Decide. In 2010, the Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation alone gave \$759,822 to the former, and almost \$1.7 million to the latter. These letter-head organizations wouldn't exist if they depended on donations from members—they don't have any—they exist because of the likes of Warren Buffett.

Now you know why Warren Buffett has earned the tag anti-Catholic.

PHILLY PROSECUTOR IS MALICIOUS

The Philadelphia Archdiocese was recently named an “unindicted co-conspirator” by prosecutors in a case involving clergy sexual abuse. At the pretrial hearing, Assistant District Attorney Mark Cipolletti made accusations against a defrocked priest, Edward Avery, and the archdiocese. Cipolletti said “the archdiocese was supplying him [Avery] with an endless amount of victims.” Msgr. William Lynn will also face trial in March. He is charged with covering up incidents of sexual abuse for the archdiocese.

Attorney Thomas Bergstrom, who is representing Msgr. William Lynn, called Assistant District Attorney Mark Cipolletti's remarks “nutty.” He also cited the fact that all but one of the seven allegations made against Edward Avery were made after Lynn had left his post in the archdiocese where he was responsible for dealing with these cases. Bergstrom also noted that the prosecutors are conceding this issue—they know that

Lynn wasn't aware of these cases—yet they continue to hammer away.

It was too kind to simply call Cipolletti “nutty.” What Cipoletti did was malicious. Just think about what he said. We were expected to believe that the archdiocese was “*supplying* [Avery] with an endless amount of victims” [our italic]. This statement simply boggles the mind. Was the Archdiocese of Philadelphia operating a human conveyor belt—lining the boys up single file before feeding them to predators? Or did archdiocesan officials follow the advice of therapists and allow for treated abusers to return to ministry, *just the way every other institution, religious and secular, did up until recently?*

In other words, was evil at work or bad judgment? Cipolletti says it's the former. Let him prove it.

PHILLY JUDGE SHOULD STEP DOWN

The presiding judge in the trial of two Catholic priests from the Archdiocese of Philadelphia recently expressed dissatisfaction with the following question for prospective jurors: “Do you believe child sex abuse is a widespread problem in the Catholic Church?” Common Pleas Court Judge M. Teresa Sarmina said, “Anybody that doesn't think there is widespread sexual abuse within the Catholic Church is living on another planet.”

As soon as we caught wind of her statement we said that Judge Sarmina should step down immediately. Her remark, whether based on ignorance or bias, clearly demonstrated her inability to preside over any trial concerning allegations of priestly sexual abuse. After we called for her to step down, the

defense attorneys for the archdiocese did the same, citing our press release. She refused to recuse herself.

Sarmina's use of the present tense showed she is unfit to rule. Between 2005 and 2010, the average number of new credible allegations made against over 40,000 priests in the United States was 8.3. How did this compare to other religions? Well, in one borough of New York City, Brooklyn, there have been 85 arrests of Orthodox Jews in the last two years (most of whom are rabbis) for sexually molesting minors. Perhaps she should acquaint herself with what is going on in the public schools: as the AP reported in a major investigation in 2007, sexual abuse is rampant.

Almost all the problems with priestly sexual abuse occurred between the mid-1960s and the mid-1980s. In other words, the scandal ended a quarter century ago. Are there news stories of a more recent vintage? Yes, but they are not recent cases. The John Jay College of Criminal Justice report last year said, "The most common time period for allegations reported in 2010 was 1970-1974." Moreover, as Penn State professor Philip Jenkins said in 2010, "Out of 100,000 priests active in the U.S. in this half-century, a cadre of just 149 individuals—one priest out of every 750—accounted for over a quarter of all the allegations of clergy abuse." In short, there is no widespread problem today.

CARDINAL BEVILACQUA TREATED UNFAIRLY

Much of commentary following the death of Anthony Cardinal Bevilacqua was unfair, beginning with the Catholic News

Service. Never once in its article did it mention that he was *never indicted* for any alleged infraction. Oh, they tried.

In 2005, the Philadelphia District Attorney, Lynne Abraham, smeared Bevilacqua in public with a grand jury report, but came up empty: she knew from the get-go that nothing could be done because of this “civil liberties technicality” called the statute of limitations. Moreover, when the first grand jury was empaneled in 2001, it was charged with investigating “the sexual abuse of minors by individuals associated with religious organizations and denominations.” But Abraham ignored this charge and focused exclusively on the Catholic Church. We wrote to her on March 31, 2011 asking her to explain which “religious organizations and denominations” she investigated besides the Roman Catholic Church. She refused to respond.

In 2011, another grand jury decided not to press charges against Cardinal Bevilacqua because they didn’t have the evidence needed to convict.

The vilifying of Bevilacqua, only hours after his death, was most definitely unwarranted.

“WHITE IRISH CATHOLICS” ROIL MICHELLE

Recently, columnist Lynn Sweet reported that in Jodi Kantor’s new book, *The Obamas*, Michelle Obama is described as being “distressed” over the dominance of three famous Illinois families. The future First Lady apparently made her comments in the early 1990s when she worked in Chicago Mayor Richard Daley’s City Hall.

Kantor said Michelle Obama “particularly resented the way power in Illinois was locked up generation after generation by a small group of families, all white Irish Catholic—the Daleys in Chicago, the Hynes and Madigans statewide.”

To say that Illinois politics, especially the Chicago brand, has been run by “white Irish Catholics” for a long time is true. It is also true, as I once said, that secular Jews run Hollywood (and unlike an earlier generation of Jews who made reverential movies about Catholicism, films about the Catholic Church over the past few decades have been mostly negative). But the high priests of political correctness only take exception to the latter generalization. No matter, Michelle did not have to answer for her remark, despite the fact that she “resents” the dominance of “white Irish Catholics” in her home city and state.

Does this mean Michelle has a problem with the Catholic League? After all, its long-time president and vice president are both “white Irish Catholics.”

In all honesty, it’s time for the politically correct gang to take a deep breath and get a life. Generalizations about any

BIGOT NOMINATED TO NJ HALL OF FAME

When Catholics found out recently that Thomas Nast was among the 50 nominated for the New Jersey Hall of Fame’s (NJHF) class of 2012, they were justifiably outraged. The NJHF includes luminaries as diverse as Albert Einstein and Shaquille O’Neal and should not be dishonored by including bigots. Nast is not only the most bigoted cartoonist in

American history, the 19th-century artist consistently inflamed hatred against the Irish and Catholics alike.

Amazingly, the NJHF's website omitted any mention of Nast's anti-Catholic legacy. No one denied his many talents as a creative cartoonist, but to discuss his work without mentioning his virulent anti-Catholicism was on a par with discussing filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl's contributions without citing her role in generating anti-Semitism in Nazi Germany. Nast and Riefenstahl belong in a Bigots Hall of Shame, not in any honorary club.

Nast's cartoons show a long and pernicious pattern of bigotry born of nativism. He encouraged the mixing of racism and anti-Catholic bigotry in his depictions of the Irish as a race of inferior gorillas; he demonized the Church as a nefarious institution threatening America's public schools; he depicted an attack on Fort Sumter by priests and bishops; he demonized bishops by portraying them as crocodiles with miters for jaws; and he also depicted them as emerging from slime while prowling towards children.

Bill Donohue wrote to NJHF's Executive Director Don Jay Smith asking him to withdraw Nast's nomination. The NJHF bills itself as "a source of learning, inspiration and hope for children." Nast was not a "significant and powerful" role model for children in the 19th century, and he sure is not a role model for anyone today.

Largely due to the work of the Catholic League and the Ancient Order of Hibernians, when the votes were cast, Nast's ballot came up way short.

JAY LENO GOES BACK TO SEWER

Jay Leno, a serial anti-Catholic bigot, recently opened up his show with a monologue in which he commented on an auxiliary bishop from Los Angeles who had stepped down after admitting he fathered two children.

After explaining what happened, Leno said, "I thought bishops could only move diagonally. I didn't know they could move up and down." When making these remarks, Leno gestured with his hands, waving them side to side, and then up and down. Leno went on to say, "Isn't it amazing the bishop of L.A. confessed to fathering two children? But, hey, he didn't use birth control, so at least he followed the church rules. Ya gotta give him credit for that."

There are those who said, sure, Leno was tough on the bishop, but what do you expect from a late-night host? After all, had there been no wrongdoing, there would have been no wise crack. This view is seriously mistaken.

The most serious cases of the sexual abuse of minors currently taking place are among Orthodox Jewish rabbis in Brooklyn, yet Leno would never tell a joke at their expense. The rate of HIV/AIDS among homosexuals is 50 times higher than in the rest of the population, yet Leno would never tell a joke at their expense. [Note: making such jokes would be equally offensive.] But if there is one wayward Catholic clergyman, it's not only acceptable to ridicule him, it's okay to mock the teachings of the Catholic Church.

What makes this so disturbing is Leno's sordid history: he has a long track record of bashing Catholicism.