

NETT UPDATE

We were recently given the opportunity by the Wisconsin Office of Lawyer Regulation to review its report and give any final concerns regarding its investigation of the anti-Catholic statements made by attorney Rebekah Nett; in December 2011 the lawyer and her client made a number of anti-Catholic statements in a Minnesota courtroom.

We found the report on Nett to be thorough and fair. We maintained that because the evidence of Nett's bigotry presented in the report was clear and overwhelming, she needed to be disciplined in a manner that is commensurate with the gravity of her offenses.

On August 8, the Office of Lawyers Professional Responsibility in Minnesota said that Nett should be suspended. It is now in the hands of the State Supreme Court.

FIGHT FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY MOUNTS

The U.S. bishops made it clear over the summer that the Fortnight for Freedom was hardly the extent of their efforts to challenge the HHS mandate.

Daniel Cardinal DiNardo heralded the inclusion of the Abortion Non-Discrimination Act, and key provisions from the Respect for Rights of Conscience Act, in the appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2013 of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor/HHS. These measures would strengthen the right of health care providers not to provide for abortion, and protect

religious entities who object to those parts of ObamaCare they deem objectionable.

That same week, while the seven states that filed suit against the so-called contraception mandate lost when a U.S. District judge said they lacked standing, he noted something important: that “the rule is currently undergoing a process of amendment to accommodate these organizations.”

What Judge Warren Urbom said is true, and perhaps the discussions will yield positive results. But if they do not, the Catholic community is not walking away. Importantly, Catholics are not alone. Another development occurred when Wheaton College, a distinguished Protestant institution, joined Catholic University of America in suing over the mandate purely on religious-liberty grounds.

Moreover, in July the Religious Freedom Tax Repeal Act was introduced by Rep. James Sensenbrenner and Rep. Diane Black. It would block any punitive taxes from being levied on religious organizations that refuse to accede to the anti-religious liberty components of ObamaCare. It was also announced that Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago joined the Catholic Charities of the Dioceses of Joliet and Springfield in challenging these components.

We will continue to monitor the development regarding the fight for our religious liberty. Stay tuned.

BUSINESS OWNERS V. OBAMACARE

U.S. District Judge John Kane recently issued a warning to the Obama administration by granting an injunction that allowed the owners of a private company not to provide abortifacients,

contraceptives, and sterilization services to their employees as mandated by ObamaCare.

The ruling in *Newland v. Sebelius* meant that the administration not only has to contend with Catholic non-profits who object to providing immoral services in their healthcare plans, they must deal with Catholics in the private sector who similarly object. By invoking the Freedom Restoration Act and the First Amendment religious liberty guarantees, the plaintiffs broke new ground for private employers.

Lawyers for the Obama administration were taken aback when Kane sided with the Catholic owners of Hercules Industries. The attorneys for the government were correct when they maintained that if the injunction were granted, it would mean that they would be faced with a flood of requests seeking an exemption. "These interests are countered," Kane said, "and indeed outweighed, by the public interest in the free exercise of religion."

We will do what we can to get the word out to all Catholic business owners: the time to revolt is now. There is no virtue in complying with a government edict that violates the conscience rights of Catholics, independent of whether they work in the public or private sector. But there is great virtue in suing the administration by invoking the religious liberty principles as articulated in this case.

OBAMA SPINS CATHOLIC DIALOGUE

At an August campaign stop, President Obama addressed the HHS mandate saying, "We worked with the Catholic hospitals and universities to find a solution that protects both religious

liberty and a woman's health." The president also said that Mitt Romney "joined the far right of his party to support a bill that would allow any employer to deny contraceptive coverage to their employees."

Regarding the first remark, Obama was singularly dishonest. On February 8, Archbishop William Lori, who chairs the bishops' Committee for Religious Liberty, said point blank that "no one from this administration has approached the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops for discussions on this matter of a possible 'compromise.'" Was Obama suggesting that Archbishop Lori was lying? Furthermore, on February 13, Lori made it clear that only after the original HHS mandate of January 20 was revised and ready to be announced on February 10 did the White House contact Archbishop Timothy Dolan, head of the bishops' conference.

Regarding the other remark, Obama was referencing the Blunt Amendment; it secured conscience exemptions for health care providers. Not only was it not a product of the "far right," it lost by only three votes in the U.S. Senate, with three Democrats joining with the Republicans; one Democrat was Senator Bob Casey, hardly a "far right" zealot. More important, a March *New York Times* poll showed that 57 percent of Americans believe that religiously affiliated employers should be able to opt out of the HHS mandate. Are most Americans part of the "far right," Mr. President?

Demagoguery will not make Obama's "war on religion" vanish. Only respecting the conscience rights of Catholics will do that.

ISRAEL HOLOCAUST MUSEUM MAKES CHANGES

Israel's Holocaust Museum, Yad Vashem, recently amended the wording of its text on Pope Pius XII. The change acknowledges the pope's Christmas radio address in 1942 where the Holy Father called attention to the "hundreds of thousands of persons, who, without any fault on their part, sometimes only because of their nationality or ethnic origin" were killed by the Nazis.

Another change in the wording says Pius XII "did not publicly protest" when Jews were deported from Rome; previously, the text said he "did not intervene." Language regarding other matters was also softened to reveal a less harsh appraisal of the pope.

The changes were welcome if insufficient. For example, a new panel says, "The pope's critics claim that his [the pope's] decision to abstain from condemning the murder of the Jews by Nazi Germany constitutes a moral failure." To be sure, there are such critics. But it is important to note that this accusation is historically inaccurate. Indeed, even the *New York Times*, in two back-to-back Christmas editorials in 1941 and 1942, singled out the pope for "not being silent." Moreover, the reason 800,000 trees were planted in Israel after the war was to commemorate the 800,000 Jews who were saved by the pope.

In the Yad Vashem statement, it said the update was the result of new research. It is hoped that when more evidence is revealed that the text will be further amended. However, there is already plenty of evidence that during and after the war the Jewish community was effusive in its praise for Pope Pius XII. If the people closest to these historical events regarded the pope as their hero, it begs the question why Pius XII is

not regarded as a “Righteous Gentile”; those who have made an in-depth study of the pope’s record (including prominent Jewish scholars) have already reached this conclusion.

We await the day when Yad Vashem also recognizes the pope as a “Righteous Gentile.”

OLYMPICS FAIL TO HONOR SLAIN ISRAELIS

Leading up to the start of the Summer Olympics, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) made the decision not to allow a moment of silence at the opening ceremony for the 11 Israeli athletes who were murdered by an arm of the Palestinian Liberation Front at the 1972 Munich games.

A few days before the games began, Olympic officials led a small gathering of attendees in a moment of silence in memory of the Munich massacre. If they were truly interested in honoring the Israelis who were murdered by terrorists, they would not have chosen a pre-Olympic event: they would have chosen the opening ceremonies. The official reason given for not doing so was that such an event would be “political.”

The Olympics are not exactly virginal in matters political. For example, at the 1908 Summer Olympics, the Irish were told they could not fly the Irish flag; they had to compete under the British flag. At the 1964 Summer Olympics, South Africa was suspended because of its practice of apartheid (the suspension was not lifted until 1992).

Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, also pointed out some hypocrisy on the part of the

IOC: "It should be noted that moments of silence have been held at previous Olympic ceremonies, including one remembering the victims of the 9/11 attack at the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, Utah."

If anything, it appeared that politics explained why the Munich massacre was not considered worthy of commemoration. Were officials afraid of incurring a backlash from Muslim extremists? Was cowardice at play? Or was something else at work?

When Bob Costas of NBC Sports caught wind of this he pledged that he would observe a moment of silence during the televised opening ceremonies; he fulfilled that pledge. Leading up to his 12-second moment of silence, Costas acknowledged the small memorial service the week before but said, "for many, tonight, with the world watching, is the true time and place to remember those who were lost, and how and why they died."

SHOOTING DEMONSTRATES TOXIC ENVIRONMENT

On August 15, a man walked into the offices of the Family Research Council and opened fire striking a security guard. The suspect was reported as a volunteer at a gay activist organization and it appears that his motives are cause for serious concern.

One source told Fox News that the suspect "made statements regarding their policies, and then opened fire with a gun striking a security guard." After he was apprehended the suspect said, "It was not about you. It was about what this place stands for." Authorities called it an act of domestic

terrorism.

Is this what we have come to? Has the environment become so toxic that a faith-based organization becomes a target of an attack simply because it holds traditional values on sexuality, marriage and life? Unfortunately it seems that this may be the case.

We hope that this incident is taken seriously. There are still a couple of months to go before the election and signs indicate that they will be contentious. We called on people of goodwill to call for civility and condemn this attack.

MEDIA COVERAGE OF BISHOPS AND NUNS

The media coverage of the recent “Fortnight for Freedom” events sponsored by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), and the competing “Nuns on the Bus” campaign, proved revealing.

A total of 141 dioceses, involving tens of thousands of Catholics, participated in the USCCB events; it ended with a crowd of 5,000 at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception on July 4. Although Bill Moyers wrote that “a bus filled with nuns” participated in the “Nuns on the Bus” campaign, in actual fact a total of two nuns made the entire bus trip; there were never more than six at any one time on the bus. No matter, CNN did eight stories on the nuns, and none on the bishops; MSNBC did six on the nuns, and one on the bishops; and CBS News did two on the nuns and none on the bishops.

The nuns were helped by a media advisor for Faith in Public Life, a group that is funded by atheist billionaire George Soros, and whose Catholic Program Director is John Gehring, a left-wing operative who sought to manipulate the media against the USCCB events. Leading the nuns was a registered Washington lobbyist, Sr. Simone Campbell of Network. This group's founder, Sr. Marjorie Tuite, was threatened with expulsion in the 1980s for her pro-abortion work. Today, Network employs nine people, three of whom are nuns.

The "Nuns on the Bus" tour made its biggest splash when the luxury bus parked outside the United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C. Lauding them was a leader of the Islamic Society of North America. According to renowned student of terrorism, Steve Emerson, this organization "has sponsored extremists, racists, people who call for Jihad against the United States." Not that the embrace of totalitarianism is anything foreign to these activists: an 88-year-old nun who was on the bus said she had just gotten back from Cuba, where she expressed her solidarity with the Communists.

To prove that media bias has rarely been so starkly naked, we provided links to these stories. The links can be found in our press release on this topic.

CROSS ON CITY LOGO SCARES ATHEISTS

Recently a group of atheists tried to intimidate city officials in Steubenville, Ohio into banning a proposed new city logo that includes a chapel and a cross; the symbols represent the Franciscan University of Steubenville.

Nothing scares atheists more than religion, none more so than than Catholicism. That is why atheists from the Freedom From Religion Foundation threatened to sue Steubenville over the proposed new city logo: the design shows a silhouette of the campus chapel and cross, along with such landmarks as Fort Steuben and the Veterans' Memorial Bridge.

As is commonplace, city logos reflect the people and institutions associated with the municipality, and in the case of Steubenville, this means including symbols that represent Franciscan University. Because of its national reputation as a first-class Catholic university, any depiction of the school that does not reflect its Catholic identity would be dishonest.

Initially, city officials were wary of the costs involved (if the city loses it has to pick up court-ordered legal fees), so they opted for a new logo: the university would be featured without a depiction of the cross and chapel. But after a groundswell of support for the initial logo, experienced pro-bono lawyers stepped forth. Everything was put on hold.

It is entirely constitutional to have religious symbols outside City Hall at Christmastime, provided they are accompanied by secular symbols. It should also be constitutional to have religious symbols accompany secular ones on a city logo, especially when the former clearly represent an institution that is integrally associated with the municipality.

We hope Steubenville Mayor Domenick Mucci, Jr., who is on our side, refuses to buckle.

SNAP DISGRACES ITSELF AGAIN

On July 10, the Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests (SNAP) placed a full-page ad in the *New York Times*. Once again the so-called victims' group disgraced itself.

Instead of looking at the positive reforms made by the U.S. bishops over the last decade, the professional victims' lobby rehashed its age-old claim that there is an ongoing abuse crisis in the Catholic Church. Never mind that in the last three years, an average of seven new credible accusations were made against over 40,000 priests in this country. Indeed, 99.98% of Catholic priests did not have a credible accusation made against them last year.

The ad also falsely claimed that priests have been accused of molesting over 100,000 nationwide. In citing this figure on its website, SNAP said, "Experts at the Vatican summit in February, 2012 state that there are more than 100,000 victims in the USA alone." That was wrong. Even the story that SNAP linked to said that the experts who addressed the Vatican said that the figure of 100,000 was an *estimation* of some. So SNAP just flat out lied.

The John Jay College of Criminal Justice issued its *Causes and Context* study last year that found the abuse scandal ran from the mid-60s to the mid-80s, peaking in the 70s. After it was published, we issued a report analyzing the study. Since the end of the scandal, the Church has reformed its policies and curbed the problem, thus becoming a model of how to protect children.

We told the media not to let the SNAP ad fool them. While SNAP purports to be concerned with the safety of children, their real agenda is to sunder the Catholic Church. Indeed, last year its annual conference turned into a Church-bashing event. How do we know this? We had trusted sources attend and fill us

in on the rhetoric.

Earlier this year, SNAP's director David Clohessy, was deposed regarding his role in priest abuse cases and what was disclosed was truly revealing: SNAP, the bastion of child protection, contributed \$593 in 2007 to "survivor support," yet spent \$92,000 the following year on travel. Clohessy even admitted to giving false statements to the press—so why would anyone choose to believe what he and his organization was bandying about in the *Times*?

It is becoming increasingly clear that SNAP is on its last legs. Their recent annual conference held in July was a total bomb and was subjected to a complete media blackout, except for one Dallas blogger. The blogger reported that he received an e-mail from a victim who wanted to attend the conference but was told by SNAP officials that he was not welcome. The same officials even asked the hotel security remove him from the premises, but were told that they could not do so because he had not disrupted the conference (the e-mailer said that he had been escorted from SNAP's conference two years prior). So much for SNAP's care and concern for the victims.

But where today's scandal truly lies—and one that SNAP is partly responsible for—is the high number of false accusations made against many priests. SNAP's attempt to resurrect itself by cashing in on old problems will continue to fail. That is something that cannot be fixed by high-priced ads or conventions attended by malcontents.