

WELCOME, ARCHBISHOP DOLAN

The following is an excerpt from an article that Bill Donohue wrote for the op-ed page of the New York Daily News on April 17:

In the fall of 2007, I had an opportunity to work with Archbishop Dolan. The Miller Brewing Company, headquartered in Milwaukee, was a major sponsor of a vile anti-Catholic gay event in San Francisco, the Folsom Street Fair. Six weeks after the Catholic League orchestrated a major PR campaign against the company, and a boycott of Miller beer, we succeeded in extracting four apologies for four specific anti-Catholic incidents. The input that Milwaukee Archbishop Dolan offered—conveying a sense of Catholic outrage to Miller officials—was critical.

Dolan's tough skin will soon be tested again. Thanks to Gov. Paterson, New York is now considering a bill legalizing gay marriage. This has set in motion a collision course with people of many faiths, all but insuring a role for New York's archbishop.

The Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA) is the most sweeping and radical piece of abortion-rights legislation ever written: it would repeal every abortion restriction put in place in all 50 states. Moreover, it arguably could force Catholic hospitals to perform abortions as a condition of receiving federal funds. In other words, it may result in the closing of Catholic hospitals. Rep. Jerry Nadler and Sen. Barbara Boxer have said they will reintroduce the bill, and President Obama has pledged to sign it.

New York State is currently considering two bills addressing the sexual abuse of minors. One would suspend the statute of limitations for one year so that those who were allegedly abused in a Catholic school a generation ago could now sue;

incredibly, this same bill would do nothing to undo the current protections scripted into law affecting the public schools (e.g., an abused student has 90 days to file a claim). Archbishop Dolan can be expected to support a bill by Assemblyman Vito Lopez that treats private and public schools equally.

No one expects the New York Archbishop to be the great moral elixir: he has many important tasks in front of him that have nothing to do with joining the culture war. But given the tenor of the times, and the kind of person he is, it is only natural that Archbishop Dolan will be called upon to act. He will need all the support he can get from lay Catholics.