

Trump Policies Threaten Catholic Bishops' Funding - By Christopher Manion - April 21, 2017

"No no no, not God bless America, God damn America!"

Obama's Pastor Reverend Jeremiah Wright, on racist Americans

"Nativists" "Racists" "Xenophobes" "Bigots" "Irrational"

US Catholic Bishops describing opponents of amnesty

Last fall, America's Catholic bishops needed a victory. Their credibility and their bank accounts had been battered as the clerical abuse and cover-up scandals endlessly dragged on. Donations from the faithful had tanked. Thirty million had simply left the church, now identifying themselves as ex-Catholics. So many had left, in fact, that Hispanics were now the largest population of Catholics under 35.

For years the bishops had set moral teaching aside and placed all their bets on the passage of legislation conferring amnesty on undocumented immigrants. It was a financially rewarding campaign, since the Obama Administration had been giving them hundreds of millions of dollars a year to harbor illegal aliens and Muslim refugees. Bishops undoubtedly expected that funding to grow under President Hillary Clinton, and they needed it desperately. So they decided that Hillary Clinton was the horse they were going to ride. She was going to win.

Granted, Clinton and her fellow Democrats were the bedrock of support for abortion rights, which the Church considers to be support of murder of the most innocent. But there's no federal funding for the bishops in fighting abortion, or in calling out those Catholic politicians who support it. Moreover, those same pro-abortion Democrats were also the bedrock supporters of amnesty, and, like any other federal grantee, bishops don't like to bite the hand that feeds them. So they put abortion on the shelf.

But while Bishops held their moral fire regarding Catholic abortion supporters (e.g., Vice President Joe Biden, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, Senate Democrat Whip Dick Durbin), they lit into supporters of the rule of law, including millions of Catholics, with a public vengeance that they had seldom displayed regarding the abortion issue. Focusing on Donald Trump, they laced their rhetoric with countless epithets, many of them vile (see links above). With a wink, bishops supplied Clinton Democrats with some of their best campaign lines. Democrats, in turn, appreciated the bishops' moralism, often citing it in their talking points supporting amnesty and opposing Donald Trump.

No doubt the bishops harbored a certain personal distaste for Mrs. Clinton but they didn't like Trump either. Moreover, a Clinton victory would seal not only their financial survival, but their moral

rehabilitation.

Hillary's victory would mean that the bishops' long march for amnesty had finally succeeded. For years amnesty had been their prime moral mandate.

So a Clinton victory would be their victory both financially and morally. Their long national nightmare of immorality, reflected in the endless abuse and cover-up scandals, would finally be over; after all those years in the moral wasteland, they could declare victory.

And then Trump won.

Like the rest of the establishment, Catholic bishops were shocked. They were simply and totally unprepared. Their feckless welfare agency bureaucracies, loaded with third-rate experts largely funded by the taxpayer, were as surprised and horrified as their colleagues in the opposition media. They had no Plan B. Countless bishops had spent the past year and more lambasting Trump and vilifying his supporters. After all, their expert staffs had assured them that Trump was a loser, period: so joining the anti-Trump hysteria was cost-free, while it could gain valuable support from a friendly media and the new Clinton administration for their taxpayer funding.

When the curtain came slamming down on their federal funding dream on election day, frantic bishops turned to the faithful with less than promising results. New York's Cardinal Timothy Dolan, America's most visible Catholic prelate, had already confronted widespread outrage from his flock because of Pope Francis' ongoing condemnations of capitalism, his Global Warming fixation, and his thinly-disguised disdain for the United States. His Trump-bashing didn't help either. Just two weeks after the election, Dolan sent a blistering letter to every priest in his archdiocese, hectoring them to turn up the pressure on the people in the pews and raise more money. The Evangelicals sure demand stewardship, he blared. The Mormons sure do! Our Jewish Synagogues do! Planned Parenthood sure pushes its donors!

Apparently, it didn't work. Four months later, bereft of sufficient funds from those parishes, Dolan was forced to mortgage valuable church property on Madison Avenue to pay \$100 million in settlements for victims in the clerical sex abuse and cover-up scandals. Federal tax dollars can't be used to settle those cases, or to pay off those mortgages and the Cardinal had to get the money from somewhere. In his desperation, he even threatened to sell his chancery in midtown Manhattan.

Cardinal Dolan's problems are only the tip of the iceberg. Catholic dioceses all over the country are facing drastic reductions in the hundreds of millions in federal aid they have received in recent years. While bishops have been stentorian in their ongoing campaign for amnesty, they are universally mute when asked about their federal funding. The national Catholic bishops' headquarters does not respond to repeated requests for details regarding the funding the bishops receive through countless federal agencies and programs. Independent researchers have found that under Obama the amount for the limited number of Catholic programs they have been able to identify surpassed \$100 million a year, but that may be a small part of the total.

After the election, many Catholics hoped that their bishops would welcome Trump's reversal of Obama's pro-abortion policies regarding the U.N., Planned Parenthood, the federal courts, and so much more. After all, Catholic teaching considers abortion to be an objective evil, while Catholic teaching encourages lay Catholics to take the lead, and even disagree, on political issues like immigration. Nonetheless, while there's no money in opposing abortion, the bishops' welfare agencies have received billions in taxpayer funding. So the bishops are going for broke. They continue to vilify President Trump's immigration policies, while they remain silent all the while regarding the federal dollars at stake.

Is there a connection? Draw your own conclusions.

[This is the sixth in a series on the role of the Catholic Church in the decline and fall of the Republic by Christopher Manion. The others can be found at LewRockwell.com]

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