



Time for a "Charitable Anathema"

A Republican lawyer in my fair city once told me he is a "moderate" on economic issues and conservative on social issues, which is the opposite of the switch-hitting proclivities of most "moderate" Republicans. That is, he told me, because politicians tend to view issues as either "right or left," while he is more concerned with "right and wrong."

That is refreshing, though I watch in vain for any sign in his political writings of a sharp division between right and wrong. He has praised Sen. Joseph Lieberman, I-Conn., for example, as a "moderate" and a man of principle, even though Lieberman's principles do not permit him to support a ban on partial birth abortion. But the man is basically "decent," you understand, and morally upright,



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Now the gentleman I have described writes a political column for a New Hampshire business publication and that may be a strange place for me to be looking for some hint of condemnation of a pro-abortion or, as it is commonly called, a "pro-choice" stand. But newspaper reports in general try to muddy the issue in the interest of "fairness," or "objectivity," or neutrality or some such thing. So you will see very little reference to "right and wrong" in most news reports. That is why the pro-abortion stand is always "pro-choice." But the reporters and copy editors neatly slip the mask of neutrality by transposing "pro-choice" with "abortion rights."

Case in point: Roman Catholic Bishop Thomas Tobin of Providence, Rhode Island has asked U.S. Rep Patrick Kennedy, D-R.I., (picture, above left) to abstain from Holy Communion because of Kennedy's very public "pro-choice" position. Supposed neutrality in this case requires the news reporter to present the bishop as an opponent of choice. A little further into the story you find that the bishop's quarrel with Kennedy is over the lawmaker's support of "abortion rights." So not only is the bishop an opponent of "choice," he is an oppressor of "rights." Fair and balanced, you see.

The bishop is thus presented to the secular world as a living relic, one who evokes memories of the Inquisition. But we are not in the Spain or even the England of the 16th Century. We are free men and women and we make our own choices and expect our governors and legislators to protect those choices from interference by churchmen in Providence or Washington or Rome or wherever. And we like to think our lawmakers are required to protect us from such interference by their solemn oath of office. They must respect and protect our "rights."

But can wrongs ever be "rights"? Was the apologist for slavery in the first half of 19th Century America a defender of "property rights"? Were the abolitionists oppressors of those "rights"? Can the "right" to kill babies as a matter of "choice" ever be consistent with Christian morality?



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on November 24, 2009

Bishop Tobin had, and other bishops still on the fence have, a difficult decision to make. Do they, for the sake of civil and ecumenical peace, continue to countenance in silence Catholic public officials who proclaim their allegiance to Christ on Sunday mornings and to Moloch during the rest of the week? (Abortion, yes, but "Never on Sunday.") Abortion is not the only issue. Earlier this month the voters of Maine had their say on a bill enacted by the state's legislature and governor last spring redefining marriage to accommodate same sex couples. Maine voters chose to repeal that law, to "kill it in the crib" as it were, before its effective date. The Catholic Church in Maine supported the repeal effort. Governor John Baldacci, a Democrat, opposed the repeal and made campaign speeches in support of the law making marriage gender-neutral. Hmmm. I wonder what Baldacci's religious affiliation is? You guessed it: Roman Catholic.

But if the Bishop of Portland has asked Gov. Baldacci to stay way from Holy Communion until he has changed his position on "gay" marriage, he has not said so publicly. He should. And the Bishop of Manchester in New Hampshire should publicly say the same to Gov. John Lynch, a Catholic who supports abortion "rights" and who signed that state's same-sex "marriage" bill into law. But his silence is deafening. And scandalous.

Say what you will about the "separation of church and state." Marriage is not a matter about which the church is now or ever has been indifferent. God defined marriage long before the American continent had been discovered or the Code of Hammurabi had been written. In the beginning He made them male and female, so that a man would leave his father and mother and cleave unto to his wife. It is proclaimed in the first couple of chapters of Genesis and affirmed by Jesus. It's right there in all our Bibles. Yet New Hampshire has an Episcopalian bishop who wants to marry his same-sex partner. Go figure.

Catholic prelates are not called to straighten out Episcopalian bishops. They have problems enough with their own flocks. But one of the problems is the flocks lack shepherds who will lead. The rod and the staff do not comfort us. There is none to protect us from the wolves in our midst. Indeed, in the typical parish, the "pro-choice" wolves, the enablers of the baby killers, are choir directors and lectors and even, God help us, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion (aka, "Eucharistic ministers"). Imagine a "pro-choice" extraordinary minister being required to deny communion to a "pro-choice" Catholic politician.

Is this giving "scandal to the brethren"? If not, it should. A friend of mine, who years ago was living in Connecticut, recalls a time he approached Christopher Dodd, now a U.S. Senator, but was then a member of the U.S. House from that state. He pleaded with Dodd, a prominent blown-dry liberal, to change his stand on abortion. Dodd had a ready reply.

"My position is the same as Father Drinan's," he said. Robert Drinan, now deceased, was then a Jesuit priest and a member of the U.S. House from Massachusetts. A Democrat, he was steadfastly "pro-choice."

The pope eventually forced Drinan to give up his political career, but his work as a priest could hardly have been for the glory of Jesus Christ. The bishops need to act now, to take strong public stands to avoid spreading further scandal to the faithful, while time still permits. They need to cut the ground out from under Catholic lay people who justify their own participation in and promotion of the Culture of Death by saying their position on abortion, euthanasia or even "gay" marriage is "the same as Gov. Lynch's [or Gov. Baldacci's or Vice President Biden's or Speaker Pelosi's]. And they are all Catholics in good standing, aren't they?" There are times when one or more members of a body must be amputated



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to save the life of the body.

There is a time, in other words, for a "charitable anathema."



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