News




New York Cardinal Timothy Dolan and New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo are seen in a 2017 and 2016 combination photo. On SiriusXM radio Jan. 29, 2019, Cardinal Dolan took issue with Cuomo on several fronts, including the governor's claim he is more in tune with Pope Francis than the bishops are when it comes to advocating for victims of sex abuse. (CNS/ Reuters and Greg Shemitz/ Mike Segar)

by Catholic News Service

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New York Cardinal Timothy Dolan in a Sirius XM broadcast Jan. 29 criticized Gov. Andrew Cuomo for his "stinging criticism of the Catholic Church" in singling out Catholics over the crisis surrounding the sexual abuse of minors.

"He really caricatured the church and only the church, singling it out for the sexual abuse of minors and contesting that we were the ones that had blocked the Child Victims Act," Dolan told Father Dave Dwyer, co-host of "Conversation With Cardinal Dolan," which airs every Tuesday afternoon on Sirius XM's The Catholic Channel.

"And then misquoting, taking out of context, Pope Francis, and to flaunt his dissent from established church teaching and to use all that as an applause line," the cardinal said of the governor.

He was referring to Cuomo's State of the State address in which he cited his own Catholic faith and Pope Francis and at the same time emphasized his full backing of a bill – now signed in to law – to radically expand abortion access in the state. Cuomo also criticized the state's Catholic bishops for their earlier opposition to the Child Victims Act, also now a law.

The new law makes it easier for abuse victim-survivors to sue. The bishops did support the final measure because it included both private and public institutions. Earlier versions only targeted the church.

Cuomo also criticized the Catholic bishops in a news conference and radio interview Jan. 28 claiming that despite the teachings of Christ about "truth and justice," the bishops resisted justice for victims and had worked to protect the church over doing justice.

"I found that very hurtful, I found that very disappointing and most of all I found it terribly inaccurate," Dolan told Dwyer according to a transcript of the show provided by Sirius XM.

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He said he had not watched Cuomo's address live and when he watched a videotape of it, he thought someone was imitating the governor, because he couldn't believe his "stinging criticism."

"Now we know and he knows that if you want to talk about sexual abuse of minors, you're talking about families, foster care programs, public schools," Dolan said. "You're talking about organizations, every religion, you're talking about public schools, it is a societal, cultural problem. There is no occupation that is freed from

it."

The U.S. Catholic Church "is no greater (an) offender than anybody else. In fact, some of the statistics would say that priestly abuse among minors is less than other professions," the cardinal said. "Now he knows that, he knows that, and yet he singled out the Catholic Church and continues to do so for negligence in this terribly important area."

He explained that bishops of the state had first been against the Child Victims Act because it exclusively focused on the church, but that the bishops and their policy people worked with the lawmakers to get an acceptable bill.

It raises the statutes of limitations and creates a one-year "look-back window" to allow adults abused as children to file claims no matter how long ago they said the abuse occurred.

Dolan also expanded on the Catholic Church's opposition to the Cardinal Dolan expanded on what he called the "ghoulish" Reproductive Health Act, signed into law by Cuomo Jan. 22. "It's not an issue of the catechism, (abortion is) an issue of civil rights."

"To talk about the fact that a baby born alive who survives an abortion, the doctor's under no legal ... expectation to save that baby's life," Dolan said. "Now, a doctor isn't even necessary. I thought this was supposed to be about women's health. Conscience rights of people who oppose it, that it can be done right up to the moment of birth. This is hideous. All right? And, this isn't a Catholic issue."

He added that not only was such a "ghoulish law" passed, but "then to celebrate it. ... to have parties, to light up the Twin Towers here. Twin Towers, by the way, have you heard? Twin Towers is right at the site of 9/11."

He was referring to Cuomo ordering that the needle atop the One World Trade Center – the tallest building in the United States – be lit pink in celebration of the new law.