Culture
News



by Joshua J. McElwee

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

May 7, 2020
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

Editor's note: *NCR has published Stephen Schneck's commentary, "President Trump cannot have the Catholic endorsement" and Stephen P. Millies' commentary "Cardinal Dolan's public flattery of Trump forgets a few things."*

U.S. Catholic magazine, a storied national outlet published by the Claretian Missionaries, has quietly unpublished from its website two recent articles that were critical of New York Cardinal Timothy Dolan's flattering comments about President Donald Trump.

Users who click the separate links to the articles, originally published around April 29 and April 30, are now greeted with a note that reads "You are not authorized to access this page."

One of the articles has been preserved by the WayBack Machine, a digital archive that allows people to see websites as they existed at various points in time. The other article has not been so preserved, but the link is still referred to in various tweets and still listed by the news aggregation service Google News.

The preserved article was a commentary by Catholic Theological Union public theologian Steven P. Millies, which carried the headline: "Cardinal Dolan's public

flattery of Trump forgets a few things." That headline is also readable in the now non-functioning link to the original posting of the piece.

The other article, according to the tweets, carried the headline: "President Trump cannot have the Catholic endorsement." That headline, too, is readable in the now non-functioning link to the original posting of the piece.

Stephen Schneck, a political scientist and the executive director of the Franciscan Action Network, had tweeted about the second article May 1. In a brief interview May 7, Schneck confirmed to NCR that he had written the piece and said U.S. Catholic had taken it down without informing him.

"They haven't communicated with me in any way," said Schneck. "Obviously, they're entitled to run what they want to run. But I would have expected to at least have a conversation before a piece was taken down."

Several hours after the publication of this article, Millies announced on Twitter that he would no longer write columns for U.S. Catholic. Millies said it was “a difficult decision because I enjoy it and because I think contributing to the debate as a public intellectual is more needed now than ever.”

An editor at U.S. Catholic did not immediately respond to requests for comment on the unpublishing of the two articles.

Millies' article began by asking if the U.S. bishops had "crossed a sort of Rubicon" by taking part in a controversial phone call with Trump on April 25. The theologian also wondered if Dolan's later flattery of Trump during an April 27 "Fox & Friends" appearance "may prove to be a moment from which American Catholicism cannot turn back."

Advertisement

Dolan's comments in both appearances have proven very controversial. More than 1,000 Catholics signed a May 1 letter expressing outrage that the cardinal was so publicly praising a president known for separating migrant families and stoking racial divisions in the country.

U.S. Catholic was originally founded by the Claretians in 1935 as The Voice of St. Jude magazine. The Claretians are an order of priests and brothers, founded in Spain in 1849 with a focus on evangelization.

The magazine previously came into controversy in the 1990s for a story that focused on women who felt called to be Catholic priests. (That story was written by current NCR executive editor Heidi Schlumpf, who at the time was an editor at the magazine.)

After Vatican officials criticized the magazine for publishing the piece, the Claretians had U.S. Catholic print church documents explaining the church's position against the ordination of women to the priesthood.

[Joshua J. McElwee (jmcelwee@ncronline.org) is NCR Vatican correspondent. Follow him on Twitter: @joshjmac.]

A version of this story appeared in the **May 29-June 11, 2020** print issue under the headline: US Catholic magazine unpublishes two articles critical of Dolan.