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Archbishop Dolan's life won't get easier

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The new Catholic power couple of New York -- State Attorney General Andrew Cuomo, who is running for governor, and his newly-selected running mate for lieutenant governor, Rochester, NY Mayor Robert Duffy -- support abortion rights and gay marriage and oppose the death penalty.

If elected, there should be areas of collaboration with the church, both in New York City and in the rest of the state. However, there will be no doubt areas of intractable conflict. All of which means that Archbishop Dolan's life won't get easier.

If the Catholic Power Couple gets elected, there will no doubt be back-slapping galore and the politicians respect for the role of the church in social services and in elementary and secondary education, a shrinking enterprise to be sure. But we'll all be watching the Sunday morning Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral for the bully pulpit presentations about the issues of the day.

It will also be interesting to see how the "no pro-choice speaker" policy plays out in the state and especially with respect to the iconic annual dinner, the Alfred E. Smith Memorial Foundation dinner held in October, where every politician in the state attends. The foundation's offices are located in the archdiocese's headquarters.

The dinner memorializes the legacy of Alfred E. Smith, the former beloved governor of New York. In 1918, to the surprise of many, Al Smith was elected Governor of the State of New York. Although he lost the 1920 election, he ran successfully again in 1922, 1924, and 1926 - making him one of three New York State Governors to be elected to four terms. While Governor, he achieved the passage of extensive reform legislation, including improved factory laws, better housing requirements, and expanded welfare services. Additionally, he reorganized the State government into a consolidated and business-like structure.

Governor Smith won the Democratic Party's nomination for President of the United States in 1928. During his campaign he continued to champion the cause of urban residents.

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