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More on Michigan's Asst. AG

by Michael Sean Winters

Distinctly Catholic

In the article linked on "Morning Briefing," everyone agrees that the highly disturbing comments and behavior of a Michigan Assistant Attorney General, Andrew Shirvell, are reprehensible, but the ACLU evidently supports Attorney General Mike Cox's decision not to fire Shirvell. An official said, "As offensive and as despicable as Mr. Shirvell's comments are, they are protected expression under the First Amendment when they are not used as a direct threat," she said. "Without making specific threats against others, this is just another example of speech that society must tolerate, even though it is profoundly disturbing and stirs many to anger." This misses the point.

No one denies Mr. Shirvell's right to say what he wants. The question is whether his speech indicates a lack of judgment and, frankly, basic moral decency, that we expect from public officials. He should not be fired because of what he said. He should be fired because what he said and did indicates someone who is disturbed at best. How else would you know someone is unbalanced except by listening to them? In this case, just looking at the interview Shirvell gave to Anderson Cooper (about which I wrote yesterday) shows someone who is wrestling with his own demons. Admit it, didn't you half-expect him to ask Cooper out on a date?

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