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by Michael Sean Winters

Distinctly Catholic

I guess I should not expect more from someone who entitles her column "The Spirited Atheist," but Susan Jacoby's column in the Washington Post's "On Faith" blog is so ridiculous, it undercuts the subheading on her blog, "In search of a new Age of Reason."

Jacoby is all in a lather because of the election of Archbishop Timothy Dolan as president of the USCCB. But the sentence that jumped out at me was this: "Dolan's election was a victory for the most orthodox forces within the church." It is clear from the context, that to Ms. Jacoby, orthodoxy is a bad thing and being the "most orthodox" is a very bad thing.

In what way does this estimation of orthodoxy cohere with the Age of Reason? It is like those skeptics who employ the adjective "dogmatic" as a slur.

Is it reasonable to fault Catholics for believing what they believe? Ms. Jacoby is free to argue that what we Catholic believe is false, is unenlightened gibberish, is a threat to her more enlightened viewpoints. But, that is not the charge she is making. She is offended that more Catholics do not depart from this or that tenet of the faith. It seems unreasonable to fault Catholics for intellectual consistency.

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