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Law, Lori and the LCWR

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Perhaps it should surprise no one, given the byzantine culture of Catholic hierarchy and Vatican bureaucracy, that just beneath the surface of the most recent attack on LCWR, one might find evidence of Cardinal Bernard Law, whose gross mishandling of the sex abuse crisis fairly upended the venerable church of Boston, and Archbishop William Lori, the fiery point man in the episcopacy's religious liberty campaign and recently rewarded with the prestigious Baltimore see.

It is one of the ongoing curiosities ? pointed out abundantly on this site and within the pages of NCR ? that those who have caused the greatest scandal and damage to the church are those who still sit in judgment of all else in the community. And they are using their prerogatives, which they bestow upon themselves and are available only to those within the secretive, all-male, celibate world of Catholic hierarchy, to flail about, pointing up dangers and faults they are seeing all about them, in others and in endless other sectors of the Catholic community.

In the most recent instance of the women religious, The (London) Tablet's Robert Mickens traces the timeline and personalities who have been working to bring the Leadership Conference of women Religious to heel. As his reporting shows (the link here is to America magazine and a posting by Jesuit Fr. James Martin, who also provides links to the Tablet piece) the good bishops can be persistent in their pursuit of orthodoxy and proper behavior on the part of others, especially vowed women.

One of the figures in Mickens' timeline, and one who allegedly influenced the investigation of LCWR, is Carl Anderson, a former Reagan administration official and now head of the Knights of Columbus. Taken all together, one can only conclude that considerable hierarchical might and substantial conservative Catholic heft and money has been brought to bear on the proposition that one of the more compelling problems to be dealt with in the church is the sisters. Read more here.

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