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MSW Responds to +Paprocki

by Michael Sean Winters

Distinctly Catholic

I am deeply grateful for Bishop Thomas Paprocki for his speech in La Crosse, Wisconsin, on the occasion of that city's Red Mass. First and foremost, I am delighted he is evidently reading my blog, as he mentioned me by name, albeit only to criticize what I said. More on that in a minute.

More importantly, Paprocki has done those of us who care deeply about the social magisterium a favor by epitomizing, in one text, what is so pathetic about the attempts of some bishops to hand that social magisterium over to Fox News by invoking prudential judgment when it comes to budgetary matters. Paprocki also seems to have challenged the USCCB and its head, Cardinal Timothy Dolan, here, a challenge that was made explicit by George Weigel in his article commending Paprocki's speech.

Paprocki is at least clear in his intentions in this speech. He is attempting to indicate to his audience that Paul Ryan is his guy. He protests that, of course, it is not his place to endorse any candidate for office, but this rings about as true as when the Rev. Jerry Falwell spoke similar words while sharing the stage with Ronald Reagan. Then, too, there were snickers from the audience. But, is it prudent for a religious leader to so obviously show his partisan hand?

As I pointed out in my biography of Rev. Falwell, the rise of the "nones"

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