

Becket's Big Lie on Mandate

Michael Sean Winters | Jan. 3, 2014 | Distinctly Catholic

[I mentioned this yesterday](#) [1], but the lie was repeated last night on EWTN's "The World Over." Kyle Duncan of the Becket Fund argued that if the Little Sisters of the Poor self-certify that they object to covering contraception, that self-certification is a "permission slip" for the insurer or third party administrator to provide the objectionable coverage. This is a lie. If, during the Vietnam War, a young man certified that he was a conscientious objector, was he giving the government a "permission slip" to draft someone else? Of course not. Setting aside the fact that no one needs a permission slip to use contraception anymore (and I hope even our friends at Becket do not think we should re-litigate *Griswold*), this reading of the accommodation reflects the kind of defensive posture I discussed this morning that results not only in a kind of crippling paranoia, it betrays a vast and deep misunderstanding the Gospel.

If you doubt it, check out the closing section on Arroyo's show last night. My computer is slow this morning and I can't get the video to load, but he finishes with a replay of an interview he did two weeks prior with Robert Royal and a priest from New York. Arroyo asks them for their predictions for 2014. The priest said something anodyne. Royal said, correctly, that with Pope Francis the only safe prediction is that 2014 will be unpredictable. Then Arroyo said - again, I apologize for not having the exact quote - that he expects Francis to defend Church doctrines more clearly and break people's hearts. Arroyo said this with relish, even glee. Here is the older son in the story of the Prodigal. We now know his name: Raymond.

A final thought. I read the [letter from Archbishop Kurtz to President Obama](#) [2], posted at the USCCB website. +Kurtz did not use this "permission slip" language. I am putting my friends at the USCCB on notice, those with miters and those without: Do not use this horrible permission slip analogy or you will rightly be called out for bearing false witness.

Argh! To be clear, I continue to object to the accommodation because I think religious ministries should all be treated the same whether they file a 990 or not. For me, this issue has always been about the integrity of our institutions. And, I hope we will win on those grounds, not on this specious argument about permission slips.

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Links:

[1] <http://ncronline.org/blogs/distinctly-catholic/hhs-contraception-mandate>

[2] <http://www.usccb.org/news/2012/13-250.cfm>