

Cardinal Dolan slams anti-Catholic NY Times ad

"No woman can call herself free who does not own and control her body." — Margaret Sanger
(Her motto: "No gods — No masters.")

DOGMA SHOULD NOT TRUMP OUR CIVIL LIBERTIES

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ALL-MALE, ALL-ROMAN CATHOLIC MAJORITY ON SUPREME COURT PUTS RELIGIOUS WRONGS OVER WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Are you dismayed and alarmed by the Supreme Court's June 30 Hobby Lobby ruling? The Supreme Court's ultra-conservative, Roman Catholic majority — Justices Roberts, Scalia, Alito, Kennedy and Thomas — has sided with zealous fundamentalists who equate contraception with abortion. The court has granted employers with "sincere" religious objections the right to deny women employees insurance coverage for birth control.

This ruling marks a turning point in the struggle to uphold civil liberties in the face of relentless attacks by the Religious Right. In *Citizens United*, the Supreme Court ruled that corporations are people.

A New York Times ad criticizing Catholic Supreme Court justices who ruled in favor of Hobby Lobby's religious freedom case is part of a long history of anti-Catholic bigotry in the U.S., Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York has said.

"In keeping with a long, shadowy, legacy of antipathy, justices who happen to be Catholics... are branded and bullied by a group who only succeed in providing the latest example of a prejudice that has haunted us for centuries," Cardinal Dolan said in his July 3 column for Catholic New York.

The cardinal facetiously thanked the Freedom from Religion Foundation for giving him "yet another handout" for his talks on anti-Catholic bigotry in the U.S.

The secularist foundation's full page ad, headlined "Dogma should not trump our civil liberties," ran July 3 on page 10 in the New York Times' front section.

The ad claimed that the "all-male, all-Roman Catholic majority" on the Supreme Court "puts religious wrongs over women's rights."

It claimed that the Supreme Court majority in the Hobby Lobby case was an "ultra-conservative, Roman Catholic majority" that sided with "zealous fundamentalists."

The ad reacted to the Supreme Court's June 30 5-4 ruling that the Obama administration violated the Religious Freedom Restoration Act in attempting to mandate that closely held corporations provide employees with insurance coverage for possible abortifacient drugs.

The legal cases concerned Hobby Lobby, a craft store giant owned by a Protestant family, and Conestoga Wood Specialties, which is owned by a Mennonite family. Both employers objected that they could not provide some of the required drugs without violating their religious beliefs.

The five justices who ruled in Hobby Lobby's favor are Catholic; one remaining Catholic justice, Sonia Sotomayor, sided with the Obama administration, as did the court's three Jewish justices.

Cardinal Dolan said the Freedom From Religion Foundation ad did not provide a "robust examination" of the decision in a way that attacked ideas and viewpoints.

Rather, its arguments attacked persons, "the weakest and most vicious of arguments."

He said the ad "attacks the people on the court, and implies that their Catholic faith makes it impossible for them to protect the cherished Constitution they have sworn on a Bible to uphold."

The cardinal said that the decision was not surprising, citing White House sources who said they knew the mandate would not pass constitutional muster.

"Scholars, journalists, and thoughtful commentators have elsewhere convincingly defended the unsurprising and long-predicted Supreme Court defense of 'our first and most cherished freedom,' religious liberty, from the hyperbolic over-reaction of the ideologues who claim that there is a 'war on women,'" the cardinal said.

He also noted that Catholic Supreme Court justices have made "frequent votes" that are not in accord with Catholic teaching.

Cardinal Dolan described the Freedom From Religion Foundation as “notoriously anti-Catholic.” He said that the foundation would not take out an ad, and a newspaper would not publish an ad, questioning Jewish, Baptist, or Mormon public figures on the grounds of their religious affiliation.

He claimed that the ad was part of a long line of bigotry against Catholics dating back centuries, to New England Puritans, to the anti-Catholic nativists and Know-Nothings of the 19th century, and the Ku Klux Klan and other groups which included Catholics among the objects of their hate in the 20th century.

The Freedom from Religion Foundation, which had filed an amicus brief against Hobby Lobby, claimed that the Hobby Lobby ruling allows employers “to decide what birth control an employee can use,” charging that this is not an “exercise of religion,” but “of tyranny.”

The foundation’s ad called for the repeal of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, a 1993 law passed by overwhelming majorities and signed into law by Democratic president Bill Clinton in response to Supreme Court decisions which weakened religious freedom protections.

Its ad follows similar attacks targeting the Hobby Lobby decision on the basis of the Catholic affiliation of the justices in the majority.

On June 30, Huffington Post blog contributor Ronald A. Lindsay, head of the secular humanist Center for Inquiry, asked “Is it appropriate to have six Catholic Justices on the Supreme Court?”

Lindsay claimed that the majority in the Hobby Lobby case “may now be resurrecting concerns about the compatibility between being a Catholic and being a good citizen, or at least between being a good Catholic and an impartial judge.”

The National Organization for Women has also grouped many Catholic organizations, including the Little Sisters of the Poor, EWTN, the University of Notre Dame and several Catholic dioceses, as the “Dirty 100” because they are plaintiffs in cases challenging the federal mandate on religious freedom

grounds.

EWTN News/CNA