

Another Deal with the Devil – What Did the Catholic Church Expect?

☒ A lot has been written recently about the Obama Administration and the controversy with the Catholic Church. The mandate in Obamacare requires all employers to provide birth control to their employees as well as abortifacients – the morning-after pills that can contribute to the abortion of a fertilized egg. Obviously, the Catholic Church’s teachings oppose their use and it caused what the WSJ called a “firestorm.”

Not surprising, the Obama administration backed off its requirement that religious employers cover contraception in health plans, but, instead, is now requiring the insurance companies to provide such coverage without explicitly charging either the religious employer or worker. In other words, the insurance companies will now have to foot the bill which means recovery of those costs will, no doubt, be picked up by all policyholders in the form of higher premiums.

While the supporters of the provision in Obamacare tried to obscure the discussion by turning it into a women’s issue, I believe it was an assault on religious liberty.

I think Jordan Sekulov and Matthew Clark, in a Washington Post article they wrote, summed it up perfectly. “The First Amendment begins with these immortal words, ‘Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof . . .’ Yet, the Obama administration made the determination, that regardless of the tenants of a particular faith, it will require religious institutions to provide for its employees (i.e. pay for something) that violates the very purpose and religious

beliefs of the institution itself.”

Whether the Obama administration would acknowledge as much, I think its reconsideration of the mandate was a political move and aimed at alienating as few potential voters as possible.

Whether you agree with the position of the administration or the Catholic Church, isn't the issue here. What I found more interesting is something I hadn't thought about but was reminded of by a good friend of mine while discussing this issue.

He reminded me that the Catholic Church was in favor of Obamacare way back when. And he was perfectly correct. I had forgotten that the Catholic Church did not care too much about the rights of other employers when they supported this massive health care bill. In November of 2009, for example, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops had “delivered a critical endorsement” to Pelosi “by signing off on a late-night agreement to grant a vote on an amendment barring insurance companies that participate in the exchange from covering abortions.” In other words, so long as abortions would not be covered, the Bishops were officially in favor of a bureaucratic plan that could spell the end to freedom of choice in health care and the eventual bankruptcy of the U.S.

In another example, Kevin Appleby, a representative of the U.S. Catholic Bishops, explained why the Bishops were so desperate to pass the health care bill. He said that the Bishops wanted a federal health plan to absorb the costs being borne by the nation's 600 Catholic hospitals to cover illegal aliens.

Not everyone remembers that the Catholic Church supported Obamacare but Presidential-hopeful Rick Santorum remembers: “They embraced it and ...here's what I said to them. Be careful when you have government saying that they can give you rights, that you have a right to health care, and government's going

to give you something, because once you are now dependant on government, they, not only can they take that right away, they can tell you how to exercise that right, and you can either like it or not. And that's the problem. That's what the Catholic Bishops Conference didn't get, that there's no free lunch here, folks. If you're going to give people secular power, then they're going to use it in a secular fashion. And that's why, you know, I hate to say it, but you know, you had it coming...."

As my friend reminded me, be careful what you wish for. When you give the federal government this type of power, what do you expect?

Unfortunately, the Catholic Bishops didn't read the fine print and now it's all coming back to haunt them. Hmmm? Isn't this what happens when you make a deal with the Devil?

I get it. The Catholic Church should've known better.