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How about not wanting to be rude?

Michael Sean Winters | May. 19, 2009 NCR Today

Not sure what to make of Archbishop Chaput's most recent blast against Father Jenkins [1].

The sentence that jumps off the page is this: "And we also have the duty to avoid prostituting our Catholic identity by appeals to phony dialogue that mask an abdication of our moral witness." The words "phony" and "mask" suggest an assessment of the motives of others that is frankly astounding from one called, as are we all, to charity.

He also says that 70 bishops share his views, but he seems to suggest that Notre Dame should have rescinded their invitation and Cardinal George, for one, said that they should not do so, even while he expressed his disappointment at the original decision.

Then it is on to more assignation of Father Jenkins' motives: "There was no excuse ? none, except intellectual vanity ? for the university to persist in its course. And Father Jenkins compounded a bad original decision with evasive and disingenuous explanations to subsequently justify it."

Gee, I can think of a few reasons to persist in its course. How about not wanting to be rude? How about thinking that the strictures a document entitled "Catholics in Political Life" did not apply to a man who belongs to the United Church of Christ? How about seeing much good in President Obama alongside his disappointing position on abortion and embryonic stem cell research and realizing that reaching out with the hand of friendship might be a better way to approach the President than with a clenched fist? But, alas, to engage with someone who is ranting is dangerous because, in this case, it is important to keep the focus on the rant. Where is the Christian charity in any of this?

Chaput sneers at Jenkins. He sneers at Obama. (I am assuming he sneers at L'Osservatore Romano which had a far different interpretation [2] of the President's visit to Notre Dame.)

Perhaps the most vital question is this: Are there no anger management seminars in Denver?

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[1] http://www.archden.org/index.cfm/ID/2081
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