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Patrick Reilly Slanders Jesuits

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Distinctly Catholic

Patrick Reilly is the President of the inappropriately named Cardinal Newman Society. Newman, alas, was a careful thinker and Reilly's attacks on what he perceives to be a lack of orthodoxy at certain Catholic colleges are something less than careful.

He has published a new braodside [1]against Seattle University because some of its students are, he claims, referred to Planned Parenthood for some services and others undertake internships with pro-choice groups. I am no fan of Planned Parenthood, but I also know poor women who avail themselves of the services Planned Parenthood provides and which have nothing to do with abortion or birth control. But, as I say, Mr. Reilly is not a careful distinguisher of facts.

But what really galls is the headline of his article: "Is Planned Parenthood in the 'Jesuit Tradition'?" he asks. Even if one university is involved in a morally compromised situation, which is a big if, why slur the entire Society of Jesus? I did not attend Jesuit schools, but I admire their work. I did write for America - and still do on occasion - and I greatly admire the contribution the editors there make to both the nation's and the Church's dialogue on important issues. That magazine, too, is part of the "Jesuit Tradition" slandered by Reilly.

Guilt by association is always a dangerous business. I do not endorse many of the activities of, say, the Chinese government, but I think it would be really stupid, even immoral, for the United States not to enter into diplomatic negotiations with that regime. They, too, cooperate with abortion. The old Soviet Union also encouraged abortions, but we also needed to negotiate nuclear arms treaties with them. By analogy, a poor student who needs a free pap smear might be well advised to go to a Planned Parenthood clinic to get it. Alas, such complications never enter the mind of Mr. Reilly.

One last point. If reilly were a Protestant, you can imagine that Bill Donohue would be attacking him. But, these two peas in a pod are allies in viewing the Church as their own private plaything and they are quite willing to take their toys and walk away. Keep walking.

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Links:
[1] http://www.insidecatholic.com/feature/is-planned-parenthood-in-the-jesuit-tradition.html