

Say What, Mr. Obama?

Michael Sean Winters | Feb. 6, 2014 | Distinctly Catholic

At the National Prayer Breakfast this morning, President Obama said:

Yet even as our faith sustains us, it's also clear that around the world freedom of religion is under threat. And that is what I want to reflect on this morning. We see governments engaging in discrimination and violence against the faithful. We sometimes see religion twisted in an attempt to justify hatred and persecution against other people just because of who they are, or how they pray or who they love. Old tensions are stoked, fueling conflicts along religious lines, as we've seen in the Central African Republic recently, even though to harm anyone in the name of faith is to diminish our own relationship with God. Extremists succumb to an ignorant nihilism that shows they don't understand the faiths they claim to profess -- for the killing of the innocent is never fulfilling God's will; in fact, it's the ultimate betrayal of God's will.

Today, we profess the principles we know to be true. We believe that each of us is wonderfully made in the image of God. We, therefore, believe in the inherent dignity of every human being -- dignity that no earthly power can take away. And central to that dignity is freedom of religion -- the right of every person to practice their faith how they choose, to change their faith if they choose, or to practice no faith at all, and to do this free from persecution and fear.

This would make sense if he had added, "Therefore, I am instructing the Secretary of Health and Human Services to stop obstructing the awarding of contracts to combat human trafficking to the USCCB which does such great work in that field. I am also instructing Secretary Sebelius to devise a better means of delivering the free contraceptive care to women who want, finding a way that does not infringe on the religious liberty of those religious institutions that object to contraception and, further, I am instructing the Attorney General to let the University of Notre Dame alone. And, I would also like to take this opportunity to apologize on behalf of the Department of Justice for that ridiculous brief in Hosanna-Tabor."

But, the President did not say any of that, which makes what he did say about religious freedom seem at least a little bit rich.

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