NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

The "Freedom to Worship" Canard

Michael Sean Winters | Feb. 27, 2014 Distinctly Catholic

Fr. James Schall, S.J. has a post up at Crisis magazine [1] in which he repeats the right-wing canard that President Obama is intent on reducing the freedom of religion to a freedom to worship. He writes:

Every January 16 since 1996, the American president has issued a proclamation setting aside that day as Religious Freedom Day. The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom keeps extensive files on religious freedom in most countries. While most declarations retain the phrase ?religious freedom,? it has been noted that around 2010, the phrase, ?freedom of worship,? rather than ?freedom of religion? sometimes appeared. If we understand ?freedom of religion? to mean ?freedom of worship,? does it make any difference? Small errors in the beginning lead to huge errors in the end, as Aristotle long ago remarked. Freedom of worship, at least in idea, seems to be designed to distinguish or separate religious freedom from freedom to worship. Even when the term ?freedom of religion? is used, many of the actions of the current U.S. government, such as those forcing religious believers to support government programs contrary to their faith, indicate that ?freedom of worship? is meant.

So, you see, this restriction of religious freedom to the freedom to worship is of relatively recent vintage, right? No. Here is a quote from the speech delivered by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt on January 6, 1941, his famous "four freedoms speech." Q.E.D.:

In the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms.The first is freedom of speech and expression ? everywhere in the world.

The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way ? everywhere in the world.

The third is freedom from want ? which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants - everywhere in the world.

The fourth is freedom from fear ? which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor ? anywhere in the world.

Try again, Fr, Schall.

Source URL (retrieved on *09/18/2014 - 00:03*): http://ncronline.org/blogs/distinctly-catholic/freedom-worship-canard

Links:
[1] http://www.crisismagazine.com/2014/obamas-right-to-worship-ushers-in-new-state-religion?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+CrisisMagazine+%28Crisis