

## Catholic (Un)Cultured

Michael Sean Winters | May. 25, 2012 | Distinctly Catholic

Dr. Jeff Mirus, [writing at CatholicCulture.org](http://writingatcatholicculture.org), [1] castigates Bishop Stephen Blaire for be willing to secure the Church's freedom "at the expense" of the conscience rights of individuals. The key point of his argument is this: "it is not enough that the institutional Church should be exempt from immoral insurance requirements. Nobody should be forced to financially support immoral practices."

Certainly, I am sure Mirus would allow that the Church has a First Amendment claim that an individual does not: The text of the First Amendment guarantees the freedom of religion, religion is a word derived from the Latin meaning "to bind," and it certainly means to us Catholics, and it certainly meant to most of the Founders, a binding not only to the moral law and its Author but to each other in some sort of religious community.

But, Mirus is wrong to assert that no one should have to cooperate with things they believe are immoral. Many of us paid taxes throughout the Iraq War and we thought that was immoral. Taxes are different from insurance premiums but certainly the government has a compelling interest in providing some basic standard of health insurance coverage to its citizens. Should those who oppose blood tranfusions be able to opt out of getting that covered?

The real rub, here is different however. For the Church, which teaches that contracpetion, etc. are wrong to be forced to purchase policies that covers these procedures and prescription drugs the Church thinks are objectionable, is to force the Church to contradict its teachings by its actions. Taco Bell, obviously, is not engaged in the teaching ministry of the Church. They make tacos. You may like their tacos or not, but the tacos won't taste different if the woman who makes them has insurance coverage for her contraception. The Church teaches contraception is wrong, also teaches that health care is a basic human right, and also teaches that our deeds must be true to our convictions. So, in order to be true to all of these moral convictions, our churches and her ministries should be exempt from this mandate.

Dr. Mirus then argues that Bishop Blaire is wrong to suggest the hierarchy should not be so engaged in politics. Well, yes, of course these issues are political in their essence but also, of course, Bishop Blaire was suggesting that the Church should not be engaged in such partisan politics.

There are thoughtful people on these issues with whom I disagree on different points. Their writings are not going to be found at CatholicCulture.org.

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### Links:

[1] <http://www.catholicculture.org/commentary/otc.cfm?id=968>