



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on March 10, 2015

San Francisco Seeks to Punish Catholic Schools for Being Catholic

It's ironic in a city whose name translates into "Saint Francis," but the San Francisco government is apparently shocked and dismayed to learn that Catholic schools are supposed to be, well, Catholic. In the latest salvo against faith, some city supervisors are condemning San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone (shown) for seeking to uphold Catholic educational integrity. One local legislator even says that the city is considering legal action. As *Lifesite News* [writes](#):



Gay activists, politicians and dissident Catholics [have launched an all-out media attack campaign](#) against the archbishop after he [recently announced](#) that he wants to codify a long-standing, commonsense expectation that Catholic schoolteachers in his diocese uphold and display public integrity regarding Catholic teachings on a wide variety of topics.

This includes Catholic teaching on controversial issues like abortion, contraception, chastity, and same-sex "marriage," as well the Eucharist and the teaching authority of the Church.

The diocesan announcement was made February 3 and involves the addition of a passage in faculty and staff handbooks for its four high schools that reiterates long-standing Catholic teaching. In a nutshell, the diocese stated that teachers have a "ministerial" role and an obligation to not oppose Catholic principles when conducting their educational duties. Given that schools' purpose is teaching, that Catholic schools would be teaching Catholic teaching is just common sense. Apparently, though, this is very uncommon among some. As *Lifesite's* Lisa Bourne [wrote](#) Friday:

Earlier this week the San Francisco Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a resolution calling Archbishop Cordileone's efforts to preserve the Church's moral teaching "contrary to shared San Francisco values of non-discrimination, women's rights, inclusion, and equality for all humans."

The resolution pressed the archdiocese "to fully respect the rights of its teachers and administrators, and pursue contract terms with ... educators that respects their individual rights, but also recognizes the informed conscience of each individual educator to make their own moral decisions and choices outside the workplace."

According to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, supervisor Mark Farrell, who is Catholic, says "city officials are considering legal action to prevent what [Farrell] described as Cordileone's discriminatory measures from going into effect."

This action follows a February 17 letter in which eight California legislators said that Archbishop Cordileone's efforts "'conflict with settled areas of law,' 'foment a discriminatory environment,' 'send an alarming message of intolerance to youth,' and 'strike a divisive tone,' as well as infringe upon personal



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employees' freedoms and violate their civil rights," *Lifesite* [tells us](#).

The archbishop's response was swift and well reasoned. As *Lifesite* also reported:

"Would you hire a campaign manager who advocates policies contrary to those that you stand for, and who shows disrespect toward you and the Democratic Party in general?" Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone asked the state legislators in a [February 19 letter](#).

"My point is: I respect your right to employ or not employ whomever you wish to advance your mission," he said. "I simply ask the same respect from you."

But reciprocated respect seems in short supply. In fact, individuals identified only as "concerned parents" have gone so far as to hire public-relations expert Peter Singer — [described](#) as an "oil company hit man" — to target the archbishop. Billed in his bio, Catholic News Agency [tells us](#), as "'one of the most powerful people in the San Francisco Bay Area' for 'his ability to impact the news for his clients,'" Singer wrote in an Ash Wednesday Google+ post, "Everyone is praying that the Pope will remove the San Francisco Archbishop and these priests." Who or what he was praying to wasn't specified.

While it's questionable how many people are thus praying, quite a few are with Singer preying. Eighty percent of the teachers — which amounts to 355 educators — at the four Catholic San Francisco high schools have signed a petition opposing the archbishop's upholding of Catholic teaching. As *Lifesite* [reported](#), "'We believe the recently proposed handbook language is harmful to our community and creates an atmosphere of mistrust and fear,' the letter said. 'We believe our schools should be places of inquiry and the free exchange of ideas where all feel welcome and affirmed.'"

Of course, talk of "academic freedom" is to be expected, but it's an argument of convenience. The principle's exercise was sorely absent in the case of Oregon teacher Bill Diss, [fired](#) for expressing pro-life views and, he alleges, engaging in off-campus pro-life activism; the same can be said in the case of a Florida educator [suspended](#) for posting an anti-faux-marriage message to Facebook. Then there was the high-school student punished for [saying](#) "bless you," and the countless others who suffer punishment, scorn, ostracism, or grade reduction for expressing politically incorrect views.

So is what we're witnessing here merely the Saul Alinsky tactic of preaching liberty when without power and practicing tyranny once attaining it? Perhaps this is why philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche observed, "Liberal institutions cease to be liberal as soon as they are attained: later on, there are no worse and no more thorough injurers of freedom than liberal institutions."

And what does the squelching of the above diversity indicate? The reality is that while traditions, such as Catholic teachings in Catholic schools, are often overthrown using the pretext of "diversity," the Left is merely imposing its own orthodoxy. So the result of the modern diversity movement — which tramples freedom of association and forces private entities to all adopt the same employment and business policies — is the elimination of diversity. As I [wrote](#) in 2005:

It's a bit like insisting that every can of paint contain equal amounts of every color, so as to ensure that every color has a place in every can. This certainly would increase the constituent elements in every can, but the end result is that you would be left with only one color of paint in the world. Trying to make the constitution of every unit of society uniformly diverse does not yield true diversity, for it serves to make every unit the same.

Or consider restaurants: Great diversity only exists among them because there are Chinese, Italian,



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Indian, German, and many other types of eateries that “discriminate” against dishes not part of their species of cuisine. Imagine, however, laws stated that every restaurant must offer all different kinds of foods, that a “No Chinese Dishes” rule at an Indian place was prohibited. The “diversity” within any individual restaurant would be greater, with a Greek-diner-on-steroids menu approximating tax-code size, but the more important diversity among restaurants as a group would be gone.

Yet even this doesn’t truly illuminate the issue — which is that “diversity” is a con. While diversity in taste matters such as cuisine is wonderful, matters of Truth are something else. We certainly don’t want the diversity of teachers who advocate to students Nazi or Marxist doctrine, pedophilia, slavery, or human sacrifice. And virtually everyone draws much narrower lines than that. The reality is, to use a twist on a Chesterton line, there are only two kinds of people: those who would enforce dogmas and know it, and those who would enforce dogmas and don’t know it.

All civilizations must create laws, social codes, and traditions — which, by definition, limit, exclude, and discriminate — with which to govern themselves. It’s just a matter of creating the right ones. And today, the wrong ones are enforced by the wrong people as everyone else is distracted by the wrong arguments.

Photo showing Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone walking through a gate to Sacred Heart Cathedral Preparatory School: AP Images



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