

BULLETIN – OCTOBER 23

FYI: News from the State of Michigan. Governor Snyder recently signed into law a bill to reimburse non-public schools for complying with health and safety mandates required by the state. The Governor had asked for an advisory opinion from the State Supreme Court. The Court decided against issuing an advisory opinion, but in doing so did not find the reimbursements unconstitutional. The Michigan Constitution forbids any kind of state support or sharing of state moneys with non-public schools, for instance, in the form of school vouchers that are possible in some other states. However, the moneys in question are to be used in situations that arise from state-mandated regulations, for which public schools are automatically reimbursed. These are not education-related funds, and it would seem to be a stretch to say that they constitute “aid to religion” or support of religious beliefs and doctrines. Typically, public school advocacy groups are already threatening litigation to stop the payments, which would begin to be distributed next August. These groups are ever fearful that some nickel or dime might be “taken away” from what they characterize as vastly underfunded public schools. They complain that such payments drain needed funds from public schools, when the public schools have had ALL the money for ALL these years. That being the case, why are so many of those schools still underachieving? It would seem that if the real interest were the solid education of Michigan’s children, the advocacy groups would be eager to see and promote success WHEREVER it might occur, without discriminating on the basis of religion.

How appropriate that in this month of intense political activity in our country, the Holy Father’s special prayer intention is for *journalists*! If I were a journalist these days, I’d likely be out of a job in short order. A big fan of the Hardy Boys series in my youth, I’ve always had a bit of the detective in me. I was flattered many years ago when a man who knew me both as a police chaplain and as diocesan archivist presented me with a “cold case.” He had no little interest in the matter, and wanted to know what I could find out about someone whose death had been attributed to a self-inflicted injury, whereas my contact was quite sure that homicide was involved. Good grief! I pondered a course of action for a while, knowing that, even as a local police chaplain, I would never have access to the closed and confidential reports of the original investigation. Hoping to find something either confirming or overturning my contact’s suspicions, I thought to go down to the county clerk’s office and look up the cause of death listed on the death certificate, a matter of public record. “Self-inflicted injury,” just as had been reported in the newspapers at the time. But—what was this? Nearly all the other death certificates I examined were personally signed by a medical examiner. This one was not. The name of the examiner was simply typed in, with the same typewriter used on the rest of the certificate. Not only was it impossible to say whether the examiner had actually personally approved the reported findings; it was quite amazing that in a case in which there was bound to be a fair amount of controversy, the examiner would NOT have made sure the death certificate contained an authentic signature. My findings were certainly not enough to ever bring the matter up to the prosecutor; but they satisfied the hunch of my contact that foul play had been involved. All parties involved are now long deceased,

but the case sticks in my mind as one in which careful examination of details might at the time have led to different conclusions.

The current political climate, it would seem, should provide an incredible amount of material for such careful examination of details. One need not doubt that the current President of the U.S. was born in this country to ask a few simple questions. Why is the position of those who *do* express some doubt about the matter now called a “racist lie,” when similar questions were also raised about the qualifications of Senators John McCain and Ted Cruz? Why did Barack Obama in 1991 allow his literary agent to publish a promotional piece referring to him as “born in Kenya and raised in Indonesia and Hawaii”? Was it a convenient “mistake,” to provide him with the credentials of an outside observer? Why has he never publicly explained or disowned that piece of information? Why did he not do so at the time? What would his college application forms show as his place of birth? And why has he, unlike his predecessors, refused to make those same college records public? Do they contain information that he might not want made public? How did he come to receive aid as a foreign student if he was born in the U.S.A.? And why were these questions never asked by the mainstream media in its investigative reporting eight years ago?

I would ask one of the candidates running for president if the name Nakoula Basseley Nakoula means anything to her. Does she recall that this was the American citizen, a Coptic Christian, arrested for alleged parole violations? That this was after his YouTube video *Innocence of Muslims* was blamed by her and the Obama administration *for weeks* after the attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi, Libya, on September 11, 2012, resulted in the deaths of our ambassador and three other American personnel? Does she recall admitting, within 24 hours of that attack, to her daughter and to the president of Egypt, that we knew the video had nothing to do with the attacks? Does she recall promising the families of the deceased that the filmmaker would be arrested, when she knew that his video had absolutely nothing to do with the incident? And what could have been the motive for making up an explanation out of thin air? Was it done with the hope that it could deflect attention from other actions or inactions of the Administration and her State Department? And why have these questions never been asked by the mainstream media in its “investigative” reporting?

And lest anyone think that my old-fashioned journalistic inquiries would target only the members of one political party, I would have plenty of questions for members of the other party. Why do so many of them seek to overturn compulsory arbitration laws for public safety workers? How can they in conscience vote to abolish sensible motorcycle helmet laws, which has resulted in costing everyone more money to cover the uninsured? Why do so many of them fight the very existence of Amtrak when they provide generous subsidies for highways and airlines? Why do some politicians spend their time complaining about city employees, especially the police and fire fighters whose heroism they often praise, for bankrupting their cities with their pension plans? Isn't that kind of like blaming the victim? Wasn't it the cities who agreed to the generous pension plans when economic times were good, and who subsequently failed to pay their agreed-upon annual shares into the plans, even though the employees were all paying theirs? And why is there such criticism, from some in the party, of the Catholic Church in its support of immigration reform? Isn't the accusation that the Church is just anxious to get more Hispanics into its vacated pews as cynical as the *other* party's suggested

connivance to infiltrate the Catholic Church with “liberal ideas”? (Surprise, that’s already been happening for 50 years. And we thought they were the *progressive* party!)

Thanks, Joe! Joe Nezwek, son of our late parishioners Frank and Sally Nezwek, lives out in Burlingame, California. Joe periodically sends us a generous gift in memory of his folks, who were active and involved in just about EVERYTHING going on here at SS. Peter & Paul for many decades. His most recent gift of \$500.00 came as he recalled in his note that his father has been gone now for ten years. It hardly seems possible. Thanks to Joe and to so many devout alumni who keep us in mind, and whom we keep in prayer, especially at a Mass offered for all our benefactors at 8 a.m. on the first Saturday of each month. God bless you!

Fr. Den

Thought for the week: “There is nothing more powerful than a dreamer who has money” (Mike Julien, administrator for the Meijer Foundation). And we might add: “Along with many of more modest means who are on board with the dream.”