

The Catholic Lawyer

Volume 32
Number 3 *Volume 32, Number 3*

Article 3

October 2017

Introduction

Rev. Robert N. Lynch

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.law.stjohns.edu/tcl>



Part of the [Catholic Studies Commons](#)

This Diocesan Attorneys' Papers is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at St. John's Law Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Catholic Lawyer by an authorized editor of St. John's Law Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact selbyc@stjohns.edu.

INTRODUCTION

REV. ROBERT N. LYNCH*

On behalf of Monsignor Daniel Hoye, the General Secretary, and the other members of the management of the Conference, I would like to welcome all of you, and through you, your various spouses and families, to Washington and to this 24th annual meeting of the Diocesan Attorneys Association. I am told that this is the largest assemblage of this group ever and I trust and hope that your presence here demonstrates not only your approval of the program which has been prepared, but your acceptance of the efforts of our Office of General Counsel in meeting your various needs throughout the year.

I would like to emphasize three points this morning in my short welcome. First, I want you to know that the National Conference of Bishops through its Office of General Counsel is most desirous of supporting your work on behalf of your local Bishops throughout this country. When Mark Chopko was promoted to the position of General Counsel, Monsignor Hoye specifically asked that he work hard to develop a professional, service-oriented relationship with the Diocesan Attorneys. Because we work for those same Bishops who employ you, we know the need for and the value of supporting you in all your efforts.

Secondly, I want to offer some words of acknowledgement and encouragement regarding the sacrifices and difficulties your work for the church entails. In today's litigious environment, the expectations placed on each of you is far higher than even a decade or two ago. Recent challenges the church is facing in matters such as the sexual conduct of its employees, its tax exempt status, its ability to meet the just financial expectations of its employees, and so forth, all can often try the patience in even the most Job-like among us. While all of you are compensated for your work, I know that it is sometimes less than you might make with other clients, and that difference merely highlights the sacrifices you are willing to make for your client, the local church. For this I also wish to offer my thanks.

Thirdly, Catholic lawyers often find themselves in pursuit of the "right" thing to do which is often perhaps slightly nuanced away from the "legally correct" thing to do. By this, I in no way mean to imply anything

* Associate General Secretary, NCCB/USCC.

other than respect for the law, but the morally and ethically right thing to do can at times be at variance with the clearly legal thing to do. Abortion is an example of that of which I am speaking. The Catholic lawyer in defense of human life acknowledges that the law says abortion is legal, but moral and ethical judgment deem it wrong. The resulting conundrum can sometimes be difficult and painful but you women and men stand for what is morally correct and I appreciate that and wish to acknowledge it today.

I hope your meeting is successful, that you leave here renewed in your commitment to the church which you assist, and assured that the staff of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops/United States Catholic Conference supports you, encourages you in your work, acknowledges the sacrifices it often occasions, and is genuinely grateful for the morally and ethically sound stands which you often find it necessary to take.

I am grateful to Mark Chopko and his fine staff for their competent, cheerful and quite professional service to me and to my superiors. I trust that they will do everything in their power to make you welcome and your experience at this meeting professionally enriching and personally gratifying.