



**Notre Dame Will Review Links to Pro-Abortion Groups (1228)
*Member of American Society for the Defense of Tradition,
Family and Property calls out America's premier Catholic
university.***

BY STEVE WEATHERBE 04/04/2012

The University of Notre Dame is reviewing its summer internship policies after a Catholic organization discovered links to pro-abortion lobby groups on its website.

The American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property is an American nonprofit inspired by the work of Brazilian Catholic academic and politician Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira.

TFP's student-action director, John Ritchie, objected in a news release to America's most prominent Catholic university "offering" and "encouraging" its students to seek summer internships with such pro-abortion organizations as the Center for American Progress, Emily's List, the Feminist Majority Foundation and the National Women's Law Center.

"It's highly scandalous," said Ritchie in his initial statement. But quickly he had to correct that statement when Notre Dame objected. "We pointed out," said university spokesman Dennis Brown, "that there was no 'encouragement' and no 'offering.'" The organizations are offering internship, says Brown. Notre Dame merely listed organizations where its students had served as interns in the past.

Ritchie promptly issued a revised news release. However, he said, TFP "still thinks it is highly inappropriate for a Catholic university to be not only listing but providing links to these groups as it does, under the heading 'Summer Internship Opportunities.'"

Notre Dame may ultimately agree. Brown says the university has decided, because TFP has raised the issue, to develop a policy on which links are appropriate. It has also concluded that no academic credits had been given to students who interned with the pro-abortion organizations, as has been done for some unpaid internships with other organizations.

The university also added a disclaimer after TFP raised the issue. It states: "Our majors have interned at the following organizations. Listing here does not constitute an endorsement of the mission of agenda of these organizations by the department or the university."

The website includes a long list of links to government and partisan organizations, secular and Catholic charities, lobby groups and think tanks from across the U.S. and internationally. While these still include the pro-abortion groups identified by TFP, such groups as the Heritage Foundation, the Hudson Institute, the Cato Institute and the Senate Republican Conference can also be found.

Ritchie said TFP has found similar links to pro-abortion groups on other Catholic schools' websites, such as Boston College. He also said that TFP has had previous run-ins with Notre Dame: It joined in a widespread protest when the university gave an honorary degree to President Barack Obama in 2009 despite his pro-abortion views and policies and led earlier objections to the university's annual "Queer Film Festival."

Several Catholic schools, identified as being faithful to the magisterium by the Cardinal Newman Society, also provide links to organizations offering summer internships, but they avoid explicit connections to pro-abortion groups.

American Conservative Union

The University of Dallas, for example, provides links on its politics department's Web pages to 58 national or international lobby groups and think tanks offering internships, such as the American Conservative Union and the Alliance Defense Fund, and some targeting specific issues such as National Right to Life. As well, there are links to Republican members of Congress. Democratic politicians are named, but not linked.

Another Cardinal Newman Society pick, Thomas More College of Liberal Arts in New Hampshire, provides internship links to several

Catholic academic publications, as well as Catholic news agencies such as *Zenit*, *Inside the Vatican* and Vatican Radio, the Catholic aid organization Caritas, the pro-life Culture of Life Foundation and the Holy See itself.

On the other hand, at Georgetown University, which the Newman Society does not include in its list of faithful schools (and which, famously, covered up religious symbols for an appearance there by Obama), there are internship links to several groups supporting abortion, along with a broad spectrum of public organizations from the White House to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, including the Ethics and Public Policy Center and the American Enterprise Institute. For his troubles, TFP's Ritchie got an email from one Notre Dame instructor calling him a "monster" and claiming "you should be ashamed of yourselves." The email went on: "Remember the Inquisition and the Holocaust when your Pope refused to protect the Jews and collaborated with the Nazis." Ritchie pointed out that most historians would view that assessment of Holocaust history as a false account of the Church's role.

Ritchie is dismayed to get such a message from an instructor at Notre Dame. "Catholic students should be hearing the truth at a Catholic university named after the Blessed Virgin Mary," he said. "They are at a crucial point in their spiritual formation and should be hearing voices there that are faithful to the magisterium, not ones trying to undermine it."

Register correspondent Steve Weatherbe writes from Victoria, British Columbia.