

WASHINGTON'S VALLEY FORGE PRAYER

[Bill Donohue](#)

This originally appeared on [The American Spectator](#).

Most Americans will proudly celebrate the 250th anniversary of our nation, but there are some—all smug left-wing “deep thinkers”—who delight in telling us that many of the stories about the Founding that we believe are true are actually false.

A closer look at their account often reveals that they resort to challenging the conventional wisdom by making unsupported claims. In other words, they are very good at *asserting* something isn't true, without providing the evidence that discredits stories about the Founding. A classic example was recently published on the website of National Public Radio, the government-run media outlet that the “deep thinkers” adore.

NPR focused on “The Prayer at Valley Forge,” a painting by Arnold Friberg that was done to celebrate America's bicentennial in 1976; it shows Washington kneeling in prayer.

The painting is featured at the Museum of the Bible in Washington, D.C. The description on the wall says, “is a poignant portrayal of George Washington during one of the most critical moments in the American Revolution...many believe Washington knelt in a moment of solitary prayer, seeking guidance and strength from God.”

The NPR article seeks to punch a hole in this popular rendering, saying, “many historians do not believe there is much evidence to this story.” Many historians. How many of them are there? How many historians disagree with them?

Moreover, to say there is not much evidence suggests there is some. Where is the evidence that those evidentiary claims are wrong?

The NPR story cites Thomas Tweed, professor emeritus at the University of Notre Dame, as its source. Tweed claims that Parson Weems, Washington's early biographer, "concocted this story." How does Tweed know this to be true? Conveniently, he cites an essay he wrote for Yale University Press. So I accessed it.

I looked in vain to see the evidence that Weems "concocted this story." What I found, instead, was Tweed admitting that "There is some truth in the claim, and in the images. Washington did pray, though perhaps not the way Weems described..."

Some truth. How much, and on what basis did Tweed come to this conclusion? Moreover, to say "perhaps not the way Weems described" is to admit that perhaps *it is* the way Weems described. So why is Tweed so cocksure that Weems "concocted this story"?

Tweed cites two books to support his claim. I accessed them both.

One book is by Sheila Brennan, *Stamping American Memory*, and the other is by Mary V. Thompson, *In the Hands of a Good Providence*. Neither offers the level of proof Tweed would have us believe.

Brennan argues that the image of Washington "was completely contrived." How does she know that? She says it is "based on a tale first recanted by Parson Mason Weems in 1804." In an endnote, she cites as evidence, "Weems's claims have never been proven and attempts to debunk this particular myth were published in 1926 during the sesquicentennial." Now if the attempts succeeded, she would have told us. But she didn't.

Just as important, if Weems' claims have never been proven, it is also true that no one has disproven them. *To put it differently, why should we believe someone writing in the 21st century about an event that took place in the late 18th century, but not someone who wrote about an eyewitness account in the early 19th century?*

Thompson is no better. She recounts the story told by Weems about a Quaker farmer named Potts. In the sixth edition of Weems' biography, published in 1808, he tells the story of how Potts came across Washington praying on his knees in the woods near his Valley Forge headquarters. Thompson is free to believe that this is a "highly suspect" story, but she offers zero evidence that disproves the Potts-Weems account.

On the website of "Historic Valley Forge" there is an examination of the evidence regarding this event. It says that the "nearest to an authentication of the Potts story of Washington's prayer in the woods seems to be supplied by the 'Diary and Remembrances' of the Rev. Nathaniel Randolph Snowden, an ordained Presbyterian minister, graduate of Princeton with a degree from Dickinson College."

Snowden handwrote, "I knew personally the celebrated Quaker Potts who saw Gen'l Washington alone in the woods at prayer. I got it from himself, myself." He then elaborated on what he heard, which supports the conventional wisdom.

The document ends by saying, "Is it not reasonable to believe that a man who had, on frequent occasions, paid homage publicly to the God of all nations and earnestly exhorted his soldiers and his fellow countrymen to 'express our grateful acknowledgement to God, for the manifold blessings he has granted to us,' may have sought seclusion for his own private communication with the Father."

The cynics don't want us to believe this story. They love to poke fun at patriotic Americans, setting themselves up as

experts who are much smarter than the masses. Yet in the end all they have is conjecture. Their hubris is appalling.

Catholic League Report: Clergy Sexual Abuse Audit Is Encouraging

In this episode of “Catholic League Report” Catholic League President Bill Donohue and Policy Analyst Nick Palczewski discuss the annual audit released by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops on clergy sex abuse, and how the data show that reforms and safeguards protecting children are working.

To watch, click [here](#).

CLERGY SEXUAL ABUSE AUDIT IS ENCOURAGING

[Bill Donohue](#)

If there is one member of the Catholic clergy who goes astray, the media will make sure everyone knows about him. But when the evidence shows that clergy sexual abuse has long been checked, the data are ignored. That’s because good news about priests and deacons is not deemed worthy of disseminating. Just bad news.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) recently released its annual audit on clergy sexual abuse. It reports on its findings from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025. The "2025 Annual Report" was based on an audit by Stonebridge Business Partners, the Progress Report of the USCCB's Child and Youth Protection, and survey data from the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University.

The Report found that during this period there were 1,070 allegations made by 973 persons about abuse that occurred extending back to 1950. Consistent with previous audits, most of the alleged abuse took place between the mid-1960s and the mid-1980s, the heyday of the sexual revolution. The good news is that almost all of the alleged offenders are either dead or have been kicked out of the priesthood; none are still in active ministry.

Also consistent with previous findings, over 80 percent of the victims were postpubescent males. This means—though the Report is reluctant to admit it—that the lion's share of the abuse was committed by homosexuals. Not to admit that the Church had a homosexual crisis—not a pedophilia crisis—ill serves everyone. Proper remedies depend on a proper diagnosis.

What about what cases of alleged abuse that took place between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025? There were 24 cases of clergy sexual abuse reported during this period. Of that number, four were substantiated. Given that there were 47,818 members of the clergy during this time period, this means that .008 percent had a substantiated case made against them.

Understandably, the Report does not compare this figure to data from other religious and secular institutions where adults regularly interact with minors. But I have done so (see [*The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse: Clarifying the Facts and the Causes*](#)) and I can say, without reservation, that there is no institution which has less of a problem with the sexual abuse of minors today than the Roman Catholic Church.

It is horrible for any adult to molest a minor, whether the victim is male or female. Having said that, it is important to note that of the 24 allegations, 6 were male, 17 were female and one was unidentified. This suggests that the steep decline in homosexual clergy members—a function of much-needed reforms—is working.

It would be great if those doing this audit had more to say about innocent clergy members who have had their reputations sullied by unsubstantiated accusations. The rights of accused priests have long been given a second-class status.

The fact of the matter is that it takes a whole lot more courage to stand up for the due process rights of priests than it does to stand up for the rights of victims. But this is not a zero-sum game.

There is no reason why the rights of accused priests should be treated any differently than the rights of victims. This is especially true now that the USCCB strengthened the Dallas Charter on June 11 to ensure that the accused are entitled to “the presumption of innocence.”

Catholic League Report: Attacks On Fatherhood Are Attacks On Nature

In this episode of “Catholic League Report” Catholic League President Bill Donohue and Policy Analyst Sean Leigh discuss attempts by gay and left-wing activists to attack Father’s Day and how these are really attacks on human nature.

To watch, click [here](#).

ATTACKS ON FATHERHOOD ARE ATTACKS ON NATURE

Bill Donohue

Attacking men, especially white, Christian, heterosexual men, is a popular sport enjoyed by left-wing pundits and activists. This is driven home every Father's Day. Normal people do not get exercised over this special day, but these folks do.

In New York State, there is a bill, supported by Democrats, to replace "father" with "non-gestating parent," and to call a "putative" father, meaning a deadbeat dad, "an alleged parent."

Why the adoption of "neutral" terms? Who is offended by calling fathers "fathers"? Radical gays and radical feminists object. They have long been at war with nature so this bill does not surprise. But why?

Radical gays, especially those who claim to be "married," object that terms like "father" and "mother" are exclusionary, leaving people like them out of familial conversations and governmental policies. They are right about that. But it is not men—it is nature—that has excluded them. To be blunt, nature has determined that people of the same sex cannot reproduce. That was part of God's design.

The problem for radical gays is that they do not believe in human nature: they think everything that exists is a "social construct." But male and female genital organs are not a

“social construct”—they are an anatomical reality. Gays can carp all they want, but nature exists and they cannot change what it has ordained. It is a fight they cannot win. God has seen to that, and it is useless to try to defeat Him.

Radical feminists deplore “patriarchy.” But there is a reason why it is universal: men are predisposed, as a function of nature, to rule. How so? Sociologist Steven Goldberg, who wrote a classical book on this subject, found that male dominance can be explained by hormonal factors such as the higher levels of testosterone that males have. As he noted, “*the hormonal renders the social inevitable* (italics in the original).”

Radical feminists like to point out that Goldberg’s thesis was contradicted by anthropologist Margaret Mead. Wrong. “Nowhere do I suggest that I have found any material which disproves the existence of sex differences.” She even went so far as to say, “It is true, as Professor Goldberg points out, that all claims so glibly made about societies ruled by women are nonsense. We have no reason to believe that they ever existed.”

In other words, radical gays and radical feminists can beat up on men, and especially fathers, all they want. But in the end, fatherhood is real and exclusionary, and so is patriarchy. The radicals may not like it, but most women throughout history have never had a problem with any of this. It’s only those with a fanciful ideological agenda who bitch about it.

Happy Father’s Day!

Catholic League Report: Media Cover For Biden's Bigoted FBI

In this episode of "Catholic League Report" Catholic League President Bill Donohue and Policy Analyst Sean Leigh discuss the cover-up by the mainstream media of the news that the Trump administration fired several agents who dealt with the anti-Catholic Richmond memo.

To watch, click [here](#).

MEDIA COVER FOR BIDEN'S BIGOTED FBI

[Bill Donohue](#)

It is well known that the FBI under President Biden operated an anti-Catholic cell group within the Agency. Yet some in the media, especially the Associated Press, MSNOW and the *New York Times*, are trying hard to exonerate the FBI spy ring.

The most egregious attempt to cover-up for Biden's FBI was committed by MSNOW and the *Times*: they focused their remarks on the Justice Department's inspector general report. MSNOW said the report found "no evidence of anti-Catholic bias or malicious intent." Similarly, the *Times* said the report showed "no evidence of malicious intent."

These media outlets are referring to Inspector General Michael Horowitz's conclusion that the probe of Catholics "lacked sufficient evidence" to establish a relationship between the extremists and Radical Traditionalist Catholic ideology, but

“there was no evidence of malice.”

Had they not been so incurious they would have dug deeper and raised reasonable questions. I did. I addressed this issue in my letter of March 24, 2025 to Rep. Jim Jordan, Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee.

*“This begs the question: Why did the Analysts think there was a relationship in the first place? It is one thing to concede that there are racial and ethnic extremists in every religious **and** secular organization; it is quite another to assume a nexus between a mainstream religious organization and violence, especially when the grounds for making such an assumption are spurious.”*

It is important to note that the idea that the FBI was only interested in extremist elements within the Catholic community was proven false—the FBI targeted what it admitted were “mainline” Catholics. FBI Director Christopher Wray said he was “appalled” to learn of this. Similarly, Attorney General Merrick Garland said he was “aghast” at this news.

It is also important to note that Biden’s FBI called Catholics “domestic terrorists” if they are “pro-life,” “pro-family,” and believe there are only two sexes. In other words, practicing Catholics are considered “domestic terrorists.” This at a time when true domestic terrorists, such as Antifa, were given a pass.

If malice was not evident in the FBI witch-hunt against practicing Catholics, what would the media call a large-scale spy operation that was based on just one person? Not only that, what if the one person had no affiliation with the group under scrutiny? That’s what happened under Biden’s FBI. I also addressed this aspect in my letter to Jordan.

The Horowitz report admitted that the entire probe was based on *one* person, Defendant A. That’s right—there was no Defendant B. Not only that, he did not even belong to the

Catholic Church; he belonged to some splinter, break-a-way group.

To top things off, the report said that “he had been on the radar ‘as an unstable, dangerous individual’ before ‘any association with any Catholic related entity whatsoever.’” It added that “there was no evidence that Defendant A was being radicalized at the church he attended.”

As I said at the time, “That being the case, why was it necessary to investigate his fellow churchgoers? Since when does the FBI conduct an investigation of a world religion on the basis of one miscreant, who was not a member of it, and whom they admit was not radicalized by it?”

The media never addressed any of these matters.

If the Trump FBI was spying on Muslims on the basis of one crazy person who wasn't even a Muslim, the media would be all over it. Moreover, they would find it risible to conclude that malice was not in play. But when the victims are Catholics, that's a different story. Nice to know whose side they are on.

Catholic League Report: Who Are These People Called “Progressive”?

In this episode of “Catholic League Report” Catholic League President Bill Donohue and Policy Analyst Sean Leigh discuss a growing number of so-called “progressives” running for office as Democrats who are increasingly calling for anarchy as well

as the destruction of America and traditional values.

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WHY ARE THESE PEOPLE CALLED “PROGRESSIVES”?

[Bill Donohue](#)

So-called progressives are expected to deliver progress, but these days most of those who describe themselves as such are more likely to deliver anarchy.

Darializa Avila Chevalier wants to unseat Democrat incumbent Rep. Adriano Espaillat, a New York congressman. She says “A world without borders—just like a world without prisons or police—is possible, necessary, and the only moral way forward.”

She wants taxpayer-funded abortion, an end to support for Israel, legalized prostitution, and the right of males to shower with females. She also hates America, saying it is a “f***ing disgrace.” She won the backing of New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani.

Maureen Galindo recently ran unsuccessfully in the Democrat runoff primary for a congressional seat in Texas. She said we need to imprison Zionists and castrate Jewish men.

New Jersey Rep. LaMonica McIver recently won 87 percent of the vote in her reelection bid for Congress, despite the fact—or because of it—she recently assaulted a law enforcement

officer; she is facing up to 17 years in prison.

Graham Platner is running for Senate in Maine. He calls himself a communist, wears a Nazi tattoo, admits to taking cocaine while serving in the Marines, is accused by multiple women of sexually assaulting them, likes to masturbate in port o Johns, sides with Hamas, calls Jesus a "zombie," and labels Our Blessed Mother a "skank."

Chris Rabb won the Democratic primary for a congressional seat in a Philadelphia district. He is an advocate of sex-reassignment surgery for children, is rabidly pro-abortion, wants to abolish Columbus Day, hates Israel, supports national grocery stores, says corporate CEOs "should fry," and has campaigned with Hasan Piker (who says "America deserved 9/11").

James Talarico is running for Senate in Texas. He claims to be a "deeply religious" Christian who supports genital mutilation, chemical castration and puberty blockers for disturbed young people, says there are six sexes (he now says there are two), wants to allow sexually explicit material—but not the Ten Commandments—in the schools, and says abortion-on-demand should be legal, claiming God gave the Virgin Mary the right to abort Jesus.

When I was in the Air Force, I had a chance to shake hands with presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy. He was campaigning in northern California in 1968; shortly thereafter he was assassinated in Los Angeles. He was known as a "progressive."

It is a sure bet that Kennedy would have absolutely nothing to do with those who call themselves "progressives" today. Indeed, he would be revolted by their behavior and their policies.

Catholic League Report: “Pride Month” Losing Steam

In this episode of “Catholic League Report” Catholic League President Bill Donohue and Policy Analyst Sean Leigh discuss the recent decline in public support surrounding the celebration of “Pride Month” and how there are many examples of states, cities, and organizations using June as a way to support traditional family values.

To watch, click [here](#).