

# SEAN HANNITY DEAD WRONG ON CLERGY ABUSE

[Bill Donohue](#)

I have known Sean Hannity for years, and he is a good guy. But I cannot allow our friendship to get in the way of my job. He made comments on his April 16 Fox News show about the clergy sexual abuse scandal that are dead wrong. Apparently, he also offended Catholics on his radio show this week.

Sean started out by saying he was raised Catholic, went to Catholic schools and attended a seminary high school. He said he broke away from the Catholic Church because of the clergy sexual abuse scandal. That is his business. But it is my business to correct the record when misstatements of fact abound about this subject.

Sean said, "I left the Catholic Church in large part because of institutionalized corruption. And it was at the parish level to the bishop level, cardinals, all the way to Rome. And you know, the very top scandals, terrible behavior, frankly, went not only unchecked, but they never fully corrected it or dealt with it. And others at the Vatican have totally lost sight of the true meaning of the bible and its teachings."

His sweeping statements do not hold up under scrutiny.

There was a scandal in the Catholic Church, but its heyday ended approximately a half-century ago. Most of the offenses took place between the mid-1960s and the mid-1980s. How widespread was it at its height? The *Washington Post* published a survey in 2002 showing that less than 1.5 percent of the estimated sixty thousand or more men who served in the Catholic clergy were accused of the sexual abuse of minors. A *New York Times* survey reported that 1.8 percent of all priests ordained between 1950 and 2001 were accused of sexually

abusing minors.

The John Jay College of Criminal Justice issued a study in 2004 that found that in the period 1950-2002, 4 percent of the Catholic clergy were accused of sexually molesting minors. It also found that 149 priests, or 3.5 percent, who had more than ten allegations of abuse were responsible for 26 percent of all the allegations. In other words, of the 4,393 priests who had an accusation made against them between 1950 and 2002 (not all of which were substantiated), a mere 149 of them accounted for more than a quarter of the allegations.

This is a far cry from what Sean would have us believe. A more egregious error is assuming that nothing has changed.

Data from the last year that we have reliable information on, July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024, show that of the 48,176 members of the clergy, exactly two had a substantiated accusation made against him during this period. This means that a whopping 0.004 percent of priests had a substantiated case of sexual abuse made against them by a minor.

Unfortunately, in any institution where adults regularly interact with minors, sexual misconduct is a problem. But there is no institution in American society today, religious or secular, that has *less of a problem with the sexual abuse of minors than the Catholic Church*. To imply otherwise is irresponsible.

We know that 81 percent of the victims were male, and that 78 percent were postpubescent, meaning that the lion's share of the abuse was committed by homosexuals (3.8 percent were pedophiles). Of course, don't expect the media to report these facts, including Fox News, which is part of the cover-up.

I wrote a book on this subject in 2021, [\*The Truth About Clergy Sexual Abuse: Clarifying the Facts and the Causes\*](#). When it was released, I was asked to sit for an interview at Fox News. The executives who run the cable TV station said that my book was

so controversial (I bet none of them read it) that they would only agree to a debate between me and someone else. Not surprisingly, every notable liberal Catholic turned down the debate. So it never aired. Would that not be called “institutionalized corruption,” Sean?

Most priests, at every level, are good men and they do not deserve to be spoken about with derision. The scandal should never have happened, but it is totally unfair to generalize from the few to the collective, regardless of the demographic.

If Sean wants to debate me, he can give me a call. He has my work and home numbers.

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## **BRIAN KILMEADE DEAD WRONG ON PIUS XII**

[Bill Donohue](#)

On April 16, on “Fox & Friends,” Brian Kilmeade was critical of Pope Leo XIV, and in the course of his remarks he said the following: “Historically, Pope Pius XII did nothing knowing, documents show that 6 million Jews were being slaughtered. The Vatican knew about it, did nothing, signed a deal with the Nazis not to invade.”

Shaking his head in agreement was Rich Lowry, editor-in-chief of National Review.

Besides the incredibly dumb remark about the Vatican deciding not to invade—invade with what?—Kilmeade knows nothing about

this subject. He is dead wrong. Apparently, Lowry is just as clueless.

The Vatican archives show concretely that the debate is over. Pope Pius XII did more to save Jews than any other world figure. Here is a quick summary of his heroics taken from my book, *Why Catholicism Matters*.

1940

- In the December 23, 1940 issue of *Time* magazine, Albert Einstein was quoted as saying, "Being a lover of freedom, when the Nazi revolution came to Germany, I looked to the universities to defend it, but the universities were immediately silenced. Then I looked to the great editors of the newspapers, but they, like the universities, were silenced in a few short weeks....Only the Church stood squarely across the path of Hitler's campaign for suppressing the truth."

1941

- In its Christmas Day editorial, the *New York Times* said, "The voice of Pius XII is a lonely voice in the silence and darkness enveloping Europe this Christmas."

1942

- In its Christmas Day editorial, the *New York Times* wrote, "No Christmas sermon reaches a larger congregation than the message Pope Pius XII addresses to a war-torn world this season."

1943

- Hitler's biographer, John Toland, said, "The Church, under the Pope's guidance, had already saved the lives of more Jews than all other churches, religious institutions, and rescue organizations combined, and was presently hiding thousands of Jews in monasteries,

convents, and Vatican City itself.”

- Speaking about events in 1943, Sir Martin Gilbert, perhaps the foremost historian of the Holocaust, noted that “the test for Pacelli was when the Gestapo came to Rome in 1943 to round up Jews. And the Catholic Church, on his direct authority, immediately dispersed as many Jews as they could.”
- In 1943, the World Jewish Congress thanked the pope for persuading Italian authorities to remove 20,000 Jewish refugees from internment camps in Northern Italy.
- On July 25, 1943, Hitler began his plan to kidnap the “Jew-loving” pope.

#### 1944

- Jewish scholar Jeno Levai describes what happened in the spring of 1944 in Hungary. “Over 20,000 passports had been issued by the papal Nuncio—on the average of 500 a day.”

#### 1945

- Anton Zolli, the Chief Rabbi in Rome, converted to Catholicism. He explained why in his book, *Why I Became a Catholic*. “No hero in history has commanded such an army; none is more militant, more fought against, none more heroic than that conducted by Pius XII in the name of Christian Charity.” He chose the name Eugenio (after Eugenio Pacelli, Pius XII) as his baptismal name.

#### 1958

- When the pope died, Golda Meir, Israel’s foreign minister (she would later become prime minister), telegraphed the Vatican saying, “When fearful martyrdom came to our people in the decade of Nazi terror, the voice of the Pope was raised for the victims. The life of our times was enriched by a voice speaking out on the great moral truths above the tumult of daily conflict.

We mourn a great servant of peace.”

- Among the Jewish organizations that praised the pope were the following: Anti-Defamation League, the Synagogue Council of America, the Rabbinical Council of America, the New York Board of Rabbis, the American Jewish Committee, the World Jewish Congress, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and the National Council of Jewish Women.

Former Israeli diplomat and author Pinchas Lapid estimated that approximately 860,000 Jewish lives were saved by Pope Pius XII. One thing is certain: no leader, religious or secular, did more to save Jews than Pope Pius XII. He is more than a “Righteous Gentile”—he deserves to be made a saint.

If Kilmeade knew anything about the critics of Pius XII, he would know that many have had to walk back their accusations.

In 2017, the BBC announced the results of an internal probe of the war record of Pope Pius XII. It said it was wrong to characterize him as being “silent” during the Holocaust. In 1999, the author of *Hitler’s Pope*, John Cornwell, admitted that he was wrong in making this assessment, and retracted his charge that the pope supported Hitler.

Catholic League board of advisors, University of Mississippi law professor Ronald Rychlak, has also written voluminously about the yeoman efforts of Pius XII during the Holocaust. Gary Krupp, a Jewish student of this subject, who was once critical of the pope, has a drove of documents on his website, Pave the Way Foundation, that detail the great work of this wartime pope.

Kilmeade is a talking head—he is not an historian. He is way out of his league on this subject.

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Hatred Day.”

Alexa Avilés

She has no record of supporting religious liberty legislation.

Chi A. Ossé

He has made vile anti-Italian comments. He has also posted tweets bragging how he “Knocked over one of those Jesus worshippers on the subway this morning.”

Tiffany L. Cabán

She has made racist statements attacking white people and has no record of supporting religious liberty legislation.

Kayla Santosuosso

She has denounced anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim acts.

A number of activists have also weighed in, taking Mamdani’s side. The the most prominent is Gustavo Gordillo, Co-Chairman of the New York City Democratic Socialists of America. He is known for his anti-American and anti-Israel remarks.

Last year, he spoke at an anti-Israel rally saying, “They make figures like Hamas and, quote unquote, terrorists into effective enemies,” and, “The terror comes from the capitalists and their pawns...The terror comes from the fascist governments and their ICE squads.”

It is not surprising to learn that most of Mamdani’s anti-religion supporters are imbued with hate. They are very much like him.

As for the mayor, his opposition to protecting houses of worship might be different if it were mosques, and not synagogues and churches, that are being targeted. But that is not the case. It is Christian churches that are being invaded, and it is Jewish people going to synagogues that are being

harassed.

Mamdani's reluctance to sign or veto this legislation is telling. But it is what we have come to expect of him.

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## TRT World's "The Newsmakers"

Bill Donohue discusses the clash between President Trump and Pope Leo on TRT World's "The Newsmakers." To watch, click [here](#).

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## Catholic Connection

*Bill Donohue spends 3 segments talking over world news from a Catholic perspective, including his thoughts Pope Leo, President Trump and more. To listen, click [here](#).*

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## CATHOLIC NY GOV. PUNISHES NUNS

[Bill Donohue](#)

New York Governor Kathy Hochul is being sued by nuns because they will not call their trans patients "they," and they will

not put those of the opposite sex in the same room in their care facilities. Hochul identifies as Catholic.

The Dominican Sisters of Hawthorne operate a Westchester facility that serves the sick and dying. Their specialty is treating cancer patients who cannot afford care, providing housing, meals, nursing, and palliative treatment. Their home serves low-income men and women, who, without their help, would lack hospice services.

The nuns take in patients with no financial resources. They rely entirely on charitable donations and their own labor. Many of these patients are uninsured, homeless or abandoned. The nuns provide medical treatment, daily companionship, meals and a stable living environment. And people of all faiths, or none at all, are welcome.

But none of this matters to Gov. Hochul. She is determined to shove the radical LGBTQ agenda down their throats. She would rather close their facility, throwing their patients to the curb, before she would allow the sisters to honor their religious tenets. To be specific, unless these nuns allow men who falsely claim to be a woman the right to access a women's bathroom, and refer to them as "she" and "her," they will have to go out of business.

Hochul's punishment does not apply to the Church of Christ, Scientist. They are entitled to a religious exemption. If the nuns do not ratify Hochul's discriminatory policy, they will be fined \$2,000 for the first violation, \$5,000 for repeat offenses and \$10,000 or one year in prison for "willful violations." The sisters can be punished even if "no element of evil motive" is extant. The nuns are being represented by the Catholic Benefits Association.

What Hochul is doing is malicious and anti-Catholic. Indeed, she is one who is exhibiting evil intent, not the nuns. She is the professed enemy of the sick and dying.

Contact her communications chief: [Scott.Ritter@exec.ny.gov](mailto:Scott.Ritter@exec.ny.gov)

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# HYPING PENTAGON-VATICAN FEUD

[Bill Donohue](#)

Fact checking is a non-stop business at the Catholic League, and we are proud of our record. Michael McDonald, our director of communications, uncovered some aspects of an alleged war between the Pentagon and the Vatican that sets the record straight.

It was recently reported that the Department of War threatened the Vatican with military action. It was a bogus story, but it made the rounds on the Internet.

There are two culpable sources: the Free Press and Christopher Hale. The Free Press has done some fine reporting, so this is more of an anomaly. Hale is a left-wing Catholic whose ethics is on a par with his fidelity to Church teachings. Once the story was debunked, Hale was still sticking to his guns; the Free Press backed off.

On April 8, the Free Press reported on an allegedly tense and confrontational meeting between representatives from the Vatican and Trump administration officials. The meeting quickly became hostile, so said the anonymous sources cited for the article. Allegedly, the Papal Nuncio to the United States was given “a bitter lecture warning that the United States has the military power to do whatever it wants—and that the Church had better take its side.”

The Free Press noted that “As tensions escalated, one U.S. official went so far as to invoke the Avignon Papacy, the

period in the 1300s when the French Crown leveraged its military power to dominate the papal authority.” The reporter said this came from anonymous sources. He is the author of numerous articles that pit the Vatican and the Department of War against each other.

Hale claims on his blog that unnamed Vatican officials told him they “saw the reference to an Avignon Papacy as a threat to use military force against the Holy See.” He is so radical that even the far-left and anti-Catholic *National Catholic Reporter* notes that Hale’s activities on his blog are “partisan wish-casting” in a crude effort “to co-opt the papacy to fit into a progressive political agenda.”

On April 9, the Department of War issued a statement claiming that the portrayal of the meeting with the Papal Nuncio is “inaccurate.” The spokesman said the reporting has been “highly exaggerated and distorted,” insisting that “the meeting between the Pentagon and Vatican officials was a respectful and reasonable discussion.”

Further, United States Ambassador to the Holy See Brian Burch spoke with the Papal Nuncio who also “confirmed the recent media characterizations of his meeting...are fabrications and were just invented.” The ambassador also quoted him saying the meeting “was frank and cordial,” and that there was no mention of the Avignon Papacy.

These new revelations generated more interest, and several outlets ran stories featuring statements that corrected the fabricated narrative put forward by Hale. These outlets included the *Washington Post*, the *Hill* and Forbes.

Even the hardcore ideologues at the New Republic and the Daily Beast ran a news story on the meeting referencing the Department of War and Vatican statements, distancing themselves from Hale.

Still working frantically to protect his narrative, Hale took

to X to post a link to the *Washington Post's* coverage of the meeting. In the post, Hale quoted unnamed Vatican officials who described the meeting as “highly unusual” and “raising eyebrows” in the Holy See.

Approximately a half hour later, in which time he presumably read the article and discovered it was a rebuke of his own version of events, Hale meekly noted, “The Vatican and Trump Administration statements portray the encounter as far more mild than the news of the meeting was first reported this week by the Free Press.”

This was Hale’s attempt to downplay his part in ginning up this alleged controversy by placing the blame squarely on the Free Press. We have known for years that he is not to be trusted, and this episode simply confirms our assessment.

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## **POPE AND PRESIDENT CLASH**

[Bill Donohue](#)

Pope Leo XIV and President Trump have had their differences before, but now they are at a serious juncture. After weeks of the pope criticizing the president over the war on Iran, Trump hit back on Truth Social saying the pope was “WEAK on Crime, and terrible on Foreign Policy.”

Trump’s recent threats to Iran were stark. “A whole civilisation will die tonight, never to be brought back again.” He said he would target bridges and power plants, thus endangering the lives of innocents. Those reckless comments triggered rebukes worldwide, from the U.N. to the Vatican.

The U.N. secretary general responded by saying Trump’s remarks

were “deeply troubled statements suggesting that entire civilian populations or civilisations may be made to bear the consequences of political and military decisions. There is no military objective that justifies the wholesale destruction of a society’s infrastructure or the deliberate infliction of suffering on civilian populations.”

The Holy Father was just as strong in his denunciation of Trump’s statement, calling it “totally unacceptable.” He added that to attack infrastructure was a “sign of the hatred, the division, the destruction human beings are capable of, and we all want to work for peace.”

Both the U.N. secretary general and the pope said that if Trump went through with his threats, it would be considered a war crime under international law.

Pope Leo’s desire for peace is understandable. Less understandable was his sweeping statement on March 1 claiming that peace is achieved “only” through “dialogue.” That is simply not true. Historically, war has frequently resulted in peace, an outcome that comes about when dialogue fails. That is why the Catholic Church is not a pacifist religion—it understands the necessity of “just wars.”

Trump’s comment that the pope is weak on crime is no doubt in reference to the pontiff’s criticisms of mass deportations. The U.S. bishops have also been vocal in denouncing the Trump administration on this issue. Cardinal Blase Cupich, Archbishop of Chicago, recently said that “it’s very clear the American people are saying, ‘We really didn’t vote for this.’”

In fact, the American people did vote for mass deportations: Trump made this one of his key issues. Moreover, virtually every survey taken on this subject reveals that a majority of Americans approve mass deportations. They do so because they oppose the Biden policy of deliberately allowing 20 million illegal aliens to crash our borders, about which Catholics—55

percent of whom voted for Trump—heard very little from their leaders, either in Rome or at home.

Trump does not help his case by posing as Jesus blessing a bedridden man; he released this Truth Social picture after he criticized Leo. It is offensive and immature.

There will no doubt be occasions where the pope and the president will continue to make public their disagreements. But there are so many other issues, such as religious liberty, where the two share a common interest. Let's pray the latter prove to be controlling.

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## **New York Sun: Immigration, Iran War Test MAGA Catholics' Tolerance of Papal Authority**

*“Late on Good Friday, a Defense Department official offered an explanation: the chaplain’s office priest was out of town. Officials did not say whether the traditional Good Friday service was planned and then canceled or never scheduled at all.*

*‘There are no Masses on Good Friday in the Catholic Church – ever,’ President of the Catholic League, William Donohue, told the Sun, downplaying the episode’s significance. ‘So, this is much ado about nothing.’” [READ MORE HERE](#)*

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# WHAT IS A RELIGION?

[Kyle Nazareth](#)

Over the past decade, the U.S. Supreme Court has significantly expanded religious liberty, restoring religion's rightful place in the public square. In response, irreligious groups have moved to exploit this advance by turning religious freedom protections into a weapon against authentic religion. Their sacrilegious strategy is slowly succeeding. This raises a fundamental, largely unanswered question: What exactly counts as "religion"?

The Satanic Temple (TST) is a nontheistic political activist organization that rejects the supernatural. It treats Satan as a metaphorical "Eternal Rebel," a symbol of opposition to arbitrary authority and the right to question sacred laws. The Catholic League has documented TST's heinous radicalism firsthand: the group opened what it called "the world's first religious abortion clinic," staged a "Satanic BDSM Babies" stunt, and poured blood over a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

TST has filed numerous lawsuits invoking First Amendment Free Exercise and Establishment Clause claims to challenge abortion restrictions, demand "After School Satan" clubs in public schools, and install occult statues on government property.

Recently, in one of these occult statue cases, an Arkansas federal district court struck down a state law permitting a Ten Commandments monument on the grounds of the state Capitol. The court held that the law violated the Establishment Clause and the Fourteenth Amendment Equal Protection rights of TST, among other plaintiffs, explicitly recognizing TST as a religion and ruling that "TST was prevented from competing with Christianity on an equal footing for placement of its [occult] monument on State Capitol grounds."

The ruling comes just weeks after two related victories.

In *Stinson v. Fayetteville School District No. 1*, a federal judge permanently blocked an Arkansas law requiring the Ten Commandments to be displayed in public schools and libraries, citing Free Exercise violations on behalf of atheist, agnostic, and non-religious parent plaintiffs.

And in *Anonymous Plaintiff 1 v. Individual Members of the Medical Licensing Board of Indiana*, a state court permanently blocked enforcement of Indiana's abortion ban because it violated the plaintiffs' rights under the state's Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA). The plaintiffs claimed a "supernatural force...larger than any individual person" compelled them to seek abortions; the court explicitly deemed these "personal religious and spiritual beliefs."

Why are irreligious groups succeeding in inverting the First Amendment and perverting religious liberty?

As legal analyst Frank DeVito documented in "The Original Meaning of Religion," the U.S. Supreme Court has had a decades-long doctrinal drift in its definition of religion. The Constitution never defines religion; the First Amendment simply bars laws "respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

In *United States v. Ballard* (1944), the Court began subjectivizing religion by prioritizing the "sincerity" of belief over its truth or traditional content. *Torcaso v. Watkins* (1961) gestured towards extending constitutional protections to non-theistic systems such as Buddhism, Taoism, Ethical Culture, and Secular Humanism. *United States v. Seeger* (1965) and *Welsh v. United States* (1970) went further, granting religious exemptions to beliefs that were "purely ethical or moral," rooted in "history and sociology" rather than theology. *Wisconsin v. Yoder* (1972) tried to draw a line between philosophical and religious convictions, but the dam

had already broken.

DeVito further observes that most modern court decisions address only whether a belief system resembles a religion, not whether it actually is one. But take, for example, theistic Satanism, which worships Satan as a literal deity and steals consecrated hosts from Catholic masses to use in satanic black masses that mock Christ. Even if theistic Satanism may function like a religion, it is not one substantively, in any correct sense of the term.

In discussing whether Satanism could qualify as a protected religion, a Seventh Circuit judge wrote, “We should not lightly conclude that because of its content, Satanism is to be denied the full protections of the First Amendment. . . . Basically, therefore, we ought to give the Devil his due.” Rebellion against God is not religion; the devil is not due the same constitutional protection as Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.

Conservative religious advocates are starting to push back against the secular paradigm by articulating an objective definition of religion. In *McCutchan v. Nicholson*, a Texas district court ruled in July 2025 that a secular humanist group seeking to officiate marriages “is not a religious organization or a religion under the First Amendment.” That decision is now on appeal before the Fifth Circuit, where the Becket Fund, a religious liberty law firm, filed an amicus brief urging the court to return to the original, Founding era meaning of religion as articulated by James Madison: “the duty which we owe to our Creator and the manner of discharging it.”

The Fifth Circuit and the Supreme Court should adopt Madison’s historic definition of religion. What hangs in the balance is not merely a legal definition but the integrity of religious liberty itself. The First Amendment must protect authentic religion, not become a tool for dismantling it. Because if everything is a religion, then nothing is.