

ANTI-CATHOLIC SPAWNS VIOLENCE

INVECTIVE

The recent spate of Catholic churches that have been vandalized, as well as the bombing of pro-life crisis pregnancy centers (many of which are run by Catholics), are not a coincidence. Nor is the attempted murder of Brett Kavanaugh, the Catholic Supreme Court Justice. They reflect a deep-seated animus against the right of orthodox Catholics to participate in public life.

When Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg was on the high court, she was joined by Stephen Breyer and Elena Kagan. All three are Jewish. No one complained, nor should they have, about the fact that Jews are roughly 2 percent of the population yet they made up a third of the Supreme Court. But when Catholics are overrepresented—six of the Justices are Catholic (they are a little less than a quarter of the population)—that's a different story.

Those who have spoken critically about the number of Catholics on the Supreme Court include some notable activists and pundits.

- Americans United for Separation of Church and State president Rachel Laser saw the draft opinion on *Roe v. Wade* authored by Catholic Justice Samuel Alito as something nefarious. "They attempt to impose one religious viewpoint on all of us," Laser said. Referring to the Catholics on the bench as "religious extremists," she accused them of trying "to destroy our democracy and force all of us to live by their narrow beliefs."
- Ron Grossman of the Chicago Tribune sounded the alarms by noting that "if canon law becomes U.S. law, we will be perilously close to having a state religion."
- Boston Globe columnist Joan Vennochi wrote that "The ultra-

conservative bloc on the court includes Justice Neil Gorsuch and four of six Catholic justices.”

- New York Times columnist Maureen Dowd observes that “Catholic doctrine may be shaping (or misshaping) the freedom and the future of millions of women, and men. There is a corona of religious fervor around the court, a churchly ethos that threatens to turn our whole country upside down.”

- Jamie Manson, the head of the pro-abortion and anti-Catholic letterhead, Catholics for Choice, noted that there are “five radically anti-choice Catholics on this court.” She attributed this to a long campaign coordinated by “U.S. Catholic Bishops” and “very wealthy right-wing Catholics.”

- Eleanor Clift at the Daily Beast opined that we are “on the cusp of a decision that cements a theological view of abortion.”

- American Atheists said that Justice Alito’s ruling means that “White Christian Nationalism is a clear and existential threat.”

- Another atheist organization, the Freedom From Religion Foundation, says “Alito is one of six justices on the nine-member high court who are Roman Catholic,” noting that “Religion, as always, is at the heart of this attack against a fundamental right.”

- Frances Kissling, the former head of Catholics for Choice, complains that “the decision was, in essence, written by five Catholic lawyers who accept the most conservative version of Catholicism on abortion and who have applied it to secular American law.”

- In the Los Angeles Times, Sheila Briggs claims that “As the devastating effects on women’s lives become visible after the Supreme Court’s judgment, Catholics are going to feel increasing shame over what their church has done.”

- Bette Midler came out of retirement to complain about all those Catholics on the high court. “Does that scream ‘diversity of opinion’ or ‘ability to be objective and fair’ to you given the historical #Roman Catholic antipathy to abortion?”

These activists and pundits have helped to poison the public mind, suggesting that it is patently unfair to have so many Catholics on the high court. They have driven a public narrative about Catholic judges that invites those who are already ill-disposed to Catholics to consider taking things into their own hands.