

# BIAS EVIDENT IN ATTACKS ON HOUSES OF WORSHIP

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Vandals who attack houses of worship need to be punished to the fullest extent of the law. Sadly, this is often not the case. Almost as bad is the selective interest the media show in reporting these incidents.

Catholic League director of communications, Michael McDonald, did a study of houses of worship that have been vandalized in New York City this year. Catholic, Jewish, Muslim and Jehovah's Witnesses sacred spaces were attacked.

To read the report, click [here](#).

Jewish synagogues that were vandalized were given the most extensive coverage. The mosque incident received scant coverage, owing, no doubt, to the minimal damage that occurred. Catholic churches were the most likely to be targeted, but the reaction of the police and the media was suspect.

Arguably the most serious attack took place at St. Ann's Church in Staten Island in January when Mass was interrupted. This was a church invasion. Yet it was not investigated as a hate crime. We learned that the reason given was that the police determined that the offender was mentally unstable. But the man who rammed his car into the Chabad-Lubavitch World Headquarters in Crown Heights was also deemed mentally unstable, yet it was investigated as a hate crime.

Usually, when there is a spike in attacks on churches, synagogues or mosques, media coverage also increases; it suggests that something other than random acts of violence are involved. Yet in the case of the Catholic churches, the two

most recent incidents, both in July, garnered the least media coverage. This suggests a bias, or at least a laziness, in reporting, neither of which is acceptable.

Vandalizing any property is offensive, but an attack on a house of worship is worse—it symbolically represents a collective assault on people of faith. They need to be treated fairly, and seriously, by everyone.