

THE ANALYSIS OF A SMEAR

by Father Benedict J. Groeschel, C.F.R.

I have been expecting a smear attack from the anti-Catholic segment of the media for years, and on March 2, 2003, it came. The *Dallas Morning News*, which I had never heard of, carried an article by Brooks Egerton entitled, "Priest plays down abuse crisis while helping clergy keep jobs." The article began with a charge that I claimed that the sex-abuse scandal was "the stuff of fiction." The article went on to report that a New Jersey diocese criticized my part in cases involving priests accused of abuse, and Egerton even quoted one victim as saying that I had "failed a lot of victims."

Egerton also maintained that I had refused to be interviewed by him. In fact, he called my office twice while I was out on the road preaching. I did not refuse to be interviewed. In the case of a smear, you are between a rock and a hard place. It is common enough for the person called by an investigative reporter to become a victim. If you speak to one, prepare to have your remarks twisted, significantly abbreviated in a negative way, or simply turned against you. In this case I later learned a number of things about this investigative reporter that make me grateful to God that I was not at home when he called.

The trick in all this is that if you do not speak to the so-called investigative reporter, he will make you responsible for all inaccuracies in the article. If you do speak, you will be grossly misquoted. The heart of the smear is always a plain old-fashioned distortion, such as saying that I called the scandal a fiction.

A number of recent books and articles have been critical of the media. Ann Coulter's fascinating book *Slander* (Crown Publishers) and Bernard Goldberg's book *Bias* (Harper

Perennial) are very good examples of the severe criticism of the media. Several writers as different as Richard Neuhaus and Andrew Greeley, as ideologically diverse as George Weigel and Peter Steinfels, and also of course William Donohue, have criticized the media for their handling of the clergy sex crisis.

When the media are not biased, they are often just inept. I got a taste of this from a small New England newspaper, the *Metro News*. Covering a talk I gave, which was attended by nine hundred people, the reporter indicated that two hundred people were present. I said that in the case of the resignation of the late Archbishop Eugene Marino of Atlanta several years ago, I could testify that about 98 percent of what was reported in the media about him was not true. The *Metro News* correspondent reported that I had said that 98 percent of the accusations against clergy in the present scandal were untrue. Egerton must have known I did not say this, because he had read at least the first part of my book. If you don't believe me, read the book yourself (*From Scandal to Hope*, OSV 2002).

The victim I referred to above claimed that I had "failed a lot of victims," according to Egerton. The victim later admitted he had never read my book and got his information from Egerton, who based it on the *Metro News* article. This victim was apologetic and friendly when he learned the facts of the case.

If you find all this complicated, welcome to the world of smears. Distortions, sprinkled with partial truths, are stock-in-trade because the average reader gets tired of the whole thing, shrugs his shoulders, and decides that some of the charges must be true. This was the apparent reasoning of Josef Goebbels, Hitler's propagandist, who is reputed to have said, "Never tell a little lie; no one will believe it. Tell a big lie, and they will believe it."

Often those who are involved in smear tactics do some legitimate things. They tell a story, which the media are supposed to do, but they tell it in a way to suit themselves. It is absolutely amazing how the public is unprepared to think even for a moment that the media would not tell the truth. We all think that the media can be sued if they lie. What a denial of reality! It is actually very difficult and expensive to hold the media legally responsible, especially for half-truths and unbalanced reporting.

Obviously investigators, reporters, and their editors are partially motivated by their own causes and opinions. I am very clear in my book that the present scandal is about homosexual incidents with minors; it is not about pedophilia, which involves prepubescent children. I am critical of the "gay" influences in the churches, and I distinguish gays from those who experience same-sex attractions but who follow the commandments of God and do not try to induce others into a sinful lifestyle. It is interesting to note, for example, that the *Chicago Tribune* (12/9/85) reported that Egerton was in a dispute with the Big Brothers/Big Sisters in Wisconsin who had a homosexual-exclusion policy. Egerton is quoted as saying, "That is deeply offensive to me. I really like kids, but I'm not going into the closet to be a Big Brother."

The *Tribune* also reported several other gay activities Egerton was involved in. He was described as the assistant city editor of the *Dallas Morning News* and chairman of the Texas chapter of the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association in 1995. One should not be surprised that he may have a little bias against the Catholic Church, which, along with most other world religions, disapproves of homosexual acts and lifestyles.

It is part of the usual smear campaign to make extraneous charges to undermine the credibility of the individual. This is known as "getting the dirt" on someone. In his article Egerton had me living in a mansion. In fact, I have lived for

many years in a garage next to a retreat house. He also makes much of my not having a license as a psychologist. Many professors of psychology (I have been a professor for about forty years) do not get licenses, because they are not paid by insurance companies or other third parties. A license is required for such payment. I actually could charge individuals for my services even without a license, but I have never taken a single cent for my counseling and spiritual direction and never will.

In an original response I made on the friars' website (www.franciscanfriars.com), I said that I could not discuss the priests whose names Egerton mentioned in the *Dallas Morning News*. Apparently he obtained information on some of these cases from the public relations person of the Paterson (N.J.) Diocese. How and why did she ever give such information to an investigative reporter? At my insistence, the Paterson Diocese later issued a clarification, which was intended to shed light on the remarks Egerton quoted from the diocesan spokeswoman. The clarification proved inadequate, and the Paterson Diocese refused to send it to the *Dallas Morning News*, limiting it only to the local paper. It makes a juicy part of the smear if a reporter can change the quotations of a public representative who is injudicious enough to give the reporter information that can then be misconstrued.

Since the smear came out, I have obtained permission from the priests involved to indicate that I neither evaluated nor treated them. They were all in well-recognized treatment programs and obtained recommendations from a skilled staff of mental health professionals, including psychologists and psychiatrists. Only one of them was involved in a charge of the abuse of minors, and he is no longer in the priesthood. What I did was to arrange for these priests to receive therapy. The one involved with minors has not been accused of a similar charge since the original accusation in the mid-1980s and the treatment he received.

Smears spread. The *Philadelphia Inquirer*, to which I once gave an anti-Catholic Robey award (named for Robespierre) on television, reprinted Egerton's article, adding the original touch of an even worse headline ("Critic of media had a role in sex-abuse scandals"). I'm waiting for other papers to pick it up, particularly those I have identified publicly as having an anti-Catholic bias.

It's rare that one can do much legally with a smear, but at the insistence of friends of mine, who are well-known lawyers, I am looking into this possibility. You can do one of two things with a smear or unjust attack. You can lie down and play dead and hope that they won't notice you again, or you can come back at them. Most, if not all, of what they say is lies and distortions. Unfortunately, not to respond appears to give consent to what they say (silence gives consent, as the old legal adage has it), and I think such a policy has proved disastrous in the present clergy scandal situation.

I am deeply grateful to the Catholic League, especially to *Catalyst*, for their excellent defense of Catholicism and for their taking on all the smears possible. I expect other smears, and in fact I will be looking forward to them. They may even help the Church to be purified and spark reform. Since we Franciscan Friars of the Renewal are pro-life, pro-reform, and pro-Catholic, we'd better not be afraid. And there are blessings in being smeared. If it is for the sake of the Gospel, we will receive something much better than a plenary indulgence. Christ Himself has said:

"Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matt. 5:11-12).

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SOME PREJUDICES ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS

By Philip Jenkins

For readers of *Catalyst*, expressions of anti-Catholic bigotry scarcely come as a surprise. Over the years, we have come to expect that media treatments of the Church, its clergy and its faithful will be negative, if not highly offensive, and Catholic organizations try to confront the worst manifestations of prejudice. When such controversies erupt, the defenders of the various shows or productions commonly invoke a free speech defense. These productions are just legitimate commentary, we hear, so offended Catholics should just lighten up, and learn not to be hyper-sensitive. Sometimes, defenders just deny that the allegedly anti-Catholic works are anything like as hostile as they initially seem to be. All these arguments, though, miss one central point, namely that similarly controversial attacks would be tolerated against literally no other group, whether that group is religious, political or ethnic.

The issue should not be whether film X or art exhibit Y is deliberately intending to affront Catholics. We should rather ask whether comparable expressions would be allowed if they caused outrage or offense to any other group, whether or not that degree of offense seems reasonable or understandable to outsiders. If the answer is yes, that our society will indeed tolerate controversial or offensive presentations of other

groups—of Muslims and Jews, African-Americans and Latinos, Asian-Americans and Native Americans, gays and lesbians— then Catholics should not protest that they are being singled out for unfair treatment. If, however, controversy is out of bounds for these other groups—as it assuredly is—then we certainly should not lighten up, and the Catholic League is going to be in business for a very long time to come.

It is easy to illustrate the degree of public sensitivity to images or displays that affect other social or religious groups—but how many of us realize how far the law has gone in accommodating the presumed privilege against offense? Witness the legal attempts over the last two decades to regulate so-called “hate speech.” American courts have never accepted that speech should be wholly unrestricted, but since the 1980s, a variety of activists have pressed for expanded laws or codes that would limit or suppress speech directed against particular groups, against women, racial minorities and homosexuals. The most ambitious of these speech codes were implemented on college campuses. Though many such codes have been struck down by the courts, a substantial section of liberal opinion believes that stringent laws should restrict the right to criticize minorities and other interest groups.

But if these provisions had been upheld in the courts, what would they have meant for recent Catholic controversies? One typical university code defines hate speech “as any verbal speech, harassment, and/or printed statements which can provoke mental and/or emotional anguish for any member of the University community.” Nothing in the code demands evidence that the offended person is a normal, average character not over-sensitive to insult. According to the speech codes, the fact of “causing anguish” is sufficient. Since the various codes placed so much emphasis on the likelihood of causing offense, rather than the intent of the act or speech involved, the codes might well have criminalized art exhibits like, oh, just to take a fantastic example, a photograph of a crucifix

submerged in a jar of urine.

The element of "causing offense" is central to speech codes. At the University of Michigan a proposed code would have prohibited "any behavior, verbal or physical, that stigmatizes or victimizes an individual on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, creed, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, handicap, or Vietnam-era veteran status." "Stigmatization and victimization" are defined entirely by the subjective feelings of the groups who felt threatened. In 1992, the US Supreme Court upheld a local statute that prohibited the display of a symbol that one knows or has reason to know "arouses anger, alarm or resentment in others on the basis of race, color, creed, religion or gender." The implied reference is to a swastika or a burning cross, but as it is written, the criterion is that the symbol causes "anger, alarm or resentment" to some unspecified person. These were precisely the reactions of many Catholic believers who saw or read about the "Piss Christ" photograph, or the controversial displays at the Brooklyn Museum of Art.

Other recent laws have taken full account of religious sensibilities, at least where non-Catholics are concerned. Take for instance the treatment of Native American religions, and the presentation of displays that (rightly) outrage Native peoples. In years gone by, museums nonchalantly displayed Indian skeletons in a way that would be unconscionable for any community, but which was all the more offensive for Native peoples, with their keen sensitivity to the treatment of the dead. In 1990, Congress passed NAGPRA, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, which revolutionized the operation of American museums and galleries by requiring that all Indian remains and cultural artifacts should be repatriated to their tribal owners. As a matter of federal criminal law, NAGPRA established the principle that artistic and historical interests must be subordinate to the religious and cultural sensibilities of minority communities.

Even so, museums and cultural institutions have gone far beyond the letter of this strict law. They have systematically withdrawn or destroyed displays that might cause the slightest offense to Indian peoples, including such once-familiar displays as photographs of skeletons or grave-goods. In South-Western museums today, one commonly sees such images replaced with apologetic signs, which explain gaps in the exhibits in terms of new cultural sensitivities. Usually, museums state simply that the authorities of a given tribe have objected to an exhibit because it considers it hurtful or embarrassing, without even giving the grounds for this opinion, yet that is enough to warrant removal. When disputes arise, the viewpoint of the minority group must be treated as authoritative. Just imagine an even milder version of this legal principle being applied to starkly offensive images like those at the Brooklyn Museum of Art. If Native religion deserves respect and restraint on the part of commentators—as it assuredly does—why doesn't Catholicism merit similar safeguards?

Beyond the legal realm, time and again we see that media outlets exercise a powerful self-censorship that suppresses controversial or offensive images, whether or not that "offense" is intended: and again, this restraint applies to every group, except Catholics. Over the years, the film industry has learned to suppress images or themes that affect an ever-growing number of protected categories. The caution about African-Americans is understandable, given the racist horrors in films of bygone years, but the present degree of sensitivity is astounding. Recall last year's film "Barbershop," in which Black characters exchange disrespectful remarks about such heroic figures as Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, and more questionable characters like O. J. Simpson and Jesse Jackson. Though this was clearly not a racist attack, the outcry was ferocious: some things simply cannot be said in public. Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton led an intense campaign to delete these touchy references.

And other social groups have learned these lessons about self-censorship. Asian-Americans and Latinos have both made it clear that the once-familiar stereotypes will no longer be tolerated, and Hollywood takes their complaints to heart. By the early 1990s, too, gay groups had achieved a similar immunity. When, in 1998, the film "The Siege" offered a (prescient) view of New York City under assault by Arab terrorists, the producers thought it politic to work closely with Arab-American and Muslim groups in order to minimize charges of stereotyping and negative portrayals. Activists thought that any film depicting how "Arab terrorists methodically lay waste to Manhattan" was not only clearly fantastic in its own right, but also "reinforces historically damaging stereotypes." As everyone knew, Hollywood had a public responsibility not to encourage such labeling.

Yet no such qualms affect the making of films or television series that might offend America's sixty million Catholics. Any suggestion that the makers of such films should consult with Catholic authorities or interest groups would be dismissed as promoting censorship, and a grossly inappropriate religious interference with artistic self-expression. The fuss over whether a film like "Dogma" or "Stigmata" is intentionally anti-Catholic misses the point. The question is not why American studios release films that will annoy and offend Catholics, but why they do not more regularly deal with subject matter that would be equally uncomfortable or objectionable to other traditions or interest groups. If they did so, American films might be much more interesting, in addition to demonstrating a new consistency.

If works of art are to offend, they should do so on an equal opportunity basis. If we have to tolerate such atrocities as "Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All For You"—recently revived as a Showtime special—then why should we not have merry satires poking fun at secular icons like Matthew Shepard or Martin Luther King? If, on the other hand, it is ugly and

unacceptable even to contemplate an imaginary production of "Matthew Explains It All," poking fun at victims of gay-bashing, then why should we put up with Sister Mary? Some consistency, please.

Let me end with a suggestion. By all means, let the Catholic League continue to report offensive depictions of Catholics and their church. But to put these in perspective, always remember to record these many other controversies, in which other groups succeed in enforcing their right to be free from offense. Only then can Catholic-bashing be seen for what it is, America's last acceptable prejudice.

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THE CHURCH SCANDAL: FODDER FOR STATE MEDDLING

By William A. Donohue

The sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church is being used by state lawmakers to crack the wall of separation of church and state. Unless this is resisted by the hierarchy of the Church, state meddling in the internal workings of the Church will grow.

One of the more conspicuous examples is the willingness of some state legislators to undermine the confidentiality of the

confessional by revoking the traditional priest-penitent privilege. They say this must be done in order to protect children: by breaking the seal of the confessional, it is argued, priests would have to disclose information concerning the sexual abuse of minors. But this is a fatally flawed argument and it is being advanced by hypocrites.

There is no evidence to suggest that by ending the confidentiality of the confessional children will be protected. This is a red herring. To begin, let's put the issue into perspective.

A study by the *Washington Post* revealed that less than 1.5 percent of priests over the past 40 years have been accused of sexually molesting a minor. *The New York Times* did a study as well, covering the years 1950 to 2001: it put the figure at 1.8 percent. Currently, less than one percent of priests nationwide are under investigation. While one priest would be too many, it is important to remember that scholars who have studied this issue (Penn State's Philip Jenkins comes quickly to mind) have determined that the incidence of abuse by priests does not differ from that of the clergy of other religions, and may even be lower.

The overwhelming majority of those abused are postpubescent males—they are not children. Breaking the seal of the confessional could not have saved any of them; nor will it protect anyone in the future. Let's remember a few basic facts.

The seal of the confessional does not apply to the penitent. If someone confesses knowledge of abuse to a priest, there is nothing to stop him from contacting the authorities. Nor is there something that would prevent the priest from asking such a penitent to discuss this further in his office, thereby freeing the priest from his confessional vows. The priest could also withhold absolution until such time as the authorities were notified. In short, there are ways a priest

can fulfill his duties without sacrificing anyone.

Another problem with attempts to break the seal of the confessional is the grave implications it has for the First Amendment. Freedom of religion, and the establishment clause which keeps church and state separate, will not mean much if the state is permitted to encroach on the Church's doctrinal prerogatives. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is not something the state can be allowed to trespass upon without doing irreparable harm to Catholicism. It would be a violation of separation of church and state of grave magnitude, having wide implications for all religions. Nothing would be sacrosanct.

Then there is also the problem of unenforceability. How could the state possibly know whether a priest has learned of sexual abuse in the confessional? The priest is certainly not going to say. In the event the penitent calls the cops after revealing such knowledge, and the priest is questioned about what he knows, he could simply refuse to discuss anything he learned in the confessional. What are they going to do, put him in handcuffs? Will the police wire the confessional? All of this is nonsense.

Hypocrisy is fueling this issue as well. There is no push being made to end the attorney-client privilege, just the priest-penitent privilege. Yet are we to believe that lawyers learn less about the sexual abuse of minors in confidential discussions than do priests? Moreover, the public has little regard for lawyers as a group: a Harris survey in October, 2001 revealed that as a profession, attorneys have "hardly any prestige at all." They finished in a tie for last place with union leaders; doctors were first.

Another hypocritical element in this is the failure of the media to discuss why mandatory sexual abuse reporting bills are being held up in the states. It is not the fault of the bishops. It is the fault of Planned Parenthood and the ACLU.

Planned Parenthood staffers find out about cases of statutory rape on a regular basis, yet they report almost none of them. We know this to be true because a sting operation conducted by a pro-life group recently reported as much. The lobbying arm of Planned Parenthood, Family Planning Advocates, has been trying to ward off any bill that would blanket all professionals equally. What they want to do is keep the exemption for abortion providers while ending the exemption for the clergy. And their friends in the ACLU are working with them, providing legal cover.

Getting the priests is what this game is all about; it has nothing to do with protecting children. That it is being done without much of an uproar from Catholic circles is disturbing. A happy exception to this is Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, Archbishop of Washington.

When the Maryland legislature was contemplating a bill requiring priests to report cases of suspected child abuse learned in the confessional, Cardinal McCarrick rightly got his back up. He quickly denounced the bill and publicly stated that he would gladly go to jail before ever breaking the seal of the confessional. We immediately supported him, as did others. And the result? The bullies backed off and dropped the bill.

There is another lesson to be learned here. Not only was Cardinal McCarrick's leadership indispensable to this effort, it won the admiration of those not generally in our corner. For example, an editorial in the pages of the *Washington Post* took note of McCarrick's determination. "As one of the most responsible bishops during the sex abuse scandal," the editorial said, "the archbishop of Washington should be taken seriously when he takes such a passionate stand."

What this goes to show is that our side needs to do more than dialogue. Too often dialogue is a recipe for paralysis. There are some things so fundamental—like breaking the confessional

seal—that no amount of conversation is going to matter. What matters is playing hardball. That's what wins and that's what earns respect. There is no need to play dirty, but there is every reason to play to win.

Catholics need to check another abuse by lawmakers: far-ranging subpoenas of sensitive documents must end. For example, there is no doubt that some are using the scandal as a pretext to read internal Church memos, priest personnel files and the like. If there is something specific that is needed, that is one thing. But the mass collection of records is quite another. What is so obscene about this is that no other profession is being treated this way. Why not grab the files on members of the clergy from other religions as well? Why limit it to the clergy? Why not obtain the personnel files of teachers, psychologists, social workers, et al.?

Another way some states are playing fast and loose with the Catholic Church these days is by rescinding laws governing the statute of limitations as it applies to the abuse of a minor. It cannot be said too many times that this long-standing provision in law was formulated to protect the rights of the accused from those with fading memories. Moreover, witnesses may die or cannot be located. No one can really be safe from reckless charges if decades after an alleged offense occurred, the state is going to prosecute alleged offenders.

Impaneling grand juries is another game to watch. What is the purpose of establishing a grand jury knowing that the statute of limitations has run its course? This is what was done on Long Island. Suffolk County District Attorney Thomas Spota impaneled a grand jury knowing full well he could not produce one indictment.

What Spota did was a disgrace. He spent the taxpayers' money on a fishing expedition. He never cross-examined the witnesses, nor did he allow officials from the Diocese of Rockville Centre to testify. He refused to release the names

of the jurors and he deliberately leaked a copy of his report to the local newspaper, *Newsday*, before the Diocese of Rockville Centre had a chance to respond. And when I wrote to him asking him to support a bill in New York State that would cover abortion providers, as well as members of the clergy, he failed to respond.

Some of the attorneys involved in bringing the lawsuits against the dioceses are suspect players themselves. Jeffrey Anderson likes to sue the Catholic Church more than anyone in the nation. He aims high—he would like to bring down the Vatican and is not shy about using the infamous RICO law to do so. He has also made quite a living off of this: he has made an estimated \$20 million suing the Catholic Church.

None of this is to say that Church officials have always conducted themselves with honor. Some have not. But it is to say that Catholics would do well to keep their guard up during times like these. There is a lot to exploit at the moment and there is no shortage of mean-spirited persons ready to do so. The role of the Catholic League in all this is to come to the aid of the Church when it is under fire. We have been busy writing to state legislators about many of these issues. We have taken the opportunity to debate these issues on television and radio, informing the public what is at stake. For the most part, we have been received well.

Unless we beat back overly aggressive lawmakers and trial lawyers at this time, we will pay for it down the road. The scandal should never have happened, but it did. What should not be allowed to happen next is for the Church to be hammered by those who seek to meddle in the Church's internal affairs.

Daniel L. Dreisbach's Thomas Jefferson and the Wall of Separation Between Church and State

By Joseph A. P. De Feo

Justice Felix Frankfurter wrote, "A phrase begins life as a literary expression; its felicity leads to its lazy repetition; and repetition soon establishes it as a legal formula, indiscriminatingly used to express different and sometimes contradictory ideas." The foregoing lines represent an apt condensation of Professor Daniel L. Dreisbach's thesis in his book *Thomas Jefferson and the Separation between Church and State*. This slim volume consists of a relatively short essay on Jefferson's "wall of separation" metaphor, some primary sources, and a wealth of notes. Although Dreisbach calls the work merely a "sourcebook"—and it is an excellent one—it is hard for the reader to glance over the bare facts of the case without sincere and grave doubts about both the legitimacy and the desirability of the concept of a "wall of separation."

Unlike many other recent treatments of church-state relations, Dreisbach's study concentrates on the life of a metaphor—the "wall of separation between church and state"—and how it compares to the actual Constitutional law it is meant to represent. Thomas Jefferson used the phrase in 1802 in his response to the Danbury Baptist Association, which had written to the president to congratulate him on his electoral victory. He wrote, "...I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should 'make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,' thus

building a wall of separation between Church & State.”

Dreisbach makes the persuasive case that Jefferson wrote his famous letter to “hurl a brick” at his Federalist opponents, who had branded him an atheist in the bitter election of 1800; his pious tone and offer of prayer were meant to silence his foes: “I reciprocate your kind prayers for the protection and blessing of the common Father and Creator of man, and tender you for yourselves and your religious association, assurances of my high respect and esteem.”

Jefferson wrote also to appease some of his supporters—the Danbury Baptists, who voted Democratic-Republican and suffered under harsh regulation from the Congregationalist (and mostly Federalist) establishment in Connecticut. Connecticut in the early 19th century, like many states, had an established church. The state was firmly Congregational, with ministers on state salaries; dissenting religious groups, such as the Baptists, usually paid for the support of the established church, and did not enjoy the same privileges as Congregational ministers (e.g., for a time they could not even perform legal marriage ceremonies). This was perfectly legal, because the Constitution only prohibited the federal government from passing laws “respecting an establishment of religion”; and the Bill of Rights provides, through the tenth amendment, that, “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people.” The power to establish a state religion, then, though denied to the United States, was reserved to the individual states.

Jefferson’s acknowledgement of this federalist structure is evident in his conduct in office: he refused to proclaim federal days of prayer or fasting while president, breaking with the tradition of his predecessors; on the other hand, he drafted resolutions in support of such days of prayer while in the Virginia House of Burgesses and as governor of Virginia.

Jefferson, Dreisbach shows, held a jurisdictional view of the First Amendment.

It is clear from Jefferson's letter to the Danbury Baptists that he did hope in time to "see with sincere satisfaction the progress of those sentiments which tend to restore to man all his natural rights..."; he here referred to the eventual disestablishment of the various churches in the states, to match the federal government. But he would never have considered that the First Amendment could be used to do this, because he was committed both to federalism and to limited central government; he would have thought it a transgression for the federal government to stomp on the states' sovereignty.

Of course, a belief in disestablishment does not entail hostility to religion in government. Jefferson frequently showed his belief that the federal government is permitted to perform acts of hospitality toward religion without threatening the First Amendment. Not only did he ask listeners to join him in prayer in his second inaugural address; Dreisbach notes that he "personally encouraged and symbolically supported religion by attending public church services in the Capitol," in January of 1802 and with some frequency thereafter. He also negotiated a treaty with the Kaskaskia Indians designating federal moneys to pay for the construction of a Catholic church and the salary of a Catholic priest. His notion of a "law respecting the establishment of religion" was obviously more robust than the stark image of the "wall of separation."

Despite Jefferson's nuanced thought on the relationship between church and state, jurists have seized on one phrase in his letter, presenting a caricature of Jefferson's views to promote their secularization of the U.S. government—which Dreisbach suggests Jefferson might have found objectionable.

The metaphor is not truly analogous to the Constitutional

arrangement of church and state. The wall of separation presupposes that government and religion are wholly distinct and can be divided as though by a physical structure. A strict wall would eliminate practices that even supporters of strict separation now take for granted: for instance, military chaplains and tax exemptions for religious organizations. And it would be outrageous to ask legislators to leave their religion at home—not to mention harmful; the Bible is not *Mein Kampf*, although the ACLU and Americans United for the Separation of Church and State might sooner allow the latter than the former to be read in Congress. The wall also tends to undermine the proper idea of freedom of religion, which should be like freedom of the press: the free press is protected from government interference. Banning the press from the public square would be viewed as an outrage; not so with religion.

What is more puzzling than the continual historical distortion of Jefferson's views is the fact that they matter at all in this debate. Jefferson's metaphor has become a canonized gloss on the First Amendment, despite the man's noticeable absence from this country during both the Constitutional Convention and the debate on the Bill of Rights during the First Federal Congress (he was the U.S. Minister to France); not to mention the fact that Jefferson was never on the Supreme Court. And there is no evidence that the phrase to which so much attention is now paid, was ever again uttered or written by Jefferson after he penned it in 1802.

Dreisbach attributes the phrase's continuing power partly to the unique advantages of metaphor in legal analysis. Metaphors liven up legal language, provide concrete images of the abstract, and engage the reader, causing him to make comparisons between the metaphor and that which it represents; all of which make the concept more memorable.

But this does not fully explain the wide currency of Jefferson's wall. To tell the whole story, one would have to take into account societal developments in the late nineteenth

and early twentieth centuries (namely, the increasing numbers of Catholic immigrants and the matching waves of nativist sentiment) as well as the biographies and psychologies of key proponents of the wall (for example, Justice Hugo L. Black's membership in the Ku Klux Klan and abiding anti-Catholicism). Dreisbach makes only passing mention of these factors, since he has limited the structure of his work to that of a legal sourcebook; nonetheless, any picture of the metaphor's life-span without these details lacks depth.

A major shortcoming of the use of metaphor in legal analysis is that a metaphor, in equating two distinct objects, can easily lend itself to faulty comparisons. For instance, a wall restricts parties on both sides; but the First Amendment was meant to restrict only the federal government. When Justice Hugo Black in his decision in the 1947 *Everson v. Board of Education* case called Jefferson's wall the definitive interpretation of the First Amendment, he capitalized on the image, declaring, "That wall must be kept high and impregnable." This is an even greater broadening of the First Amendment's scope. Dreisbach notes that some have called a high and impregnable wall a "wall of spite," and that good neighbors would prefer a low New England stone wall, at which neighbors can meet and speak. An amicus brief filed in *Everson* warned against turning the wall of separation into an iron curtain. Others have suggested the images of a wall with doors or guarded gaps, like the Great Wall of China; a barbed wire fence; and even a prison wall. The fact that all of these conceptions of the wall with their conflicting legal corollaries can be (and are) drawn from Jefferson's wall demonstrates how problematic the metaphor is.

Different readings of the wall metaphor result in an inconsistent array of decisions dealing with church and state: confusion over school vouchers, prayer or crèches in public schools, the tune "God Bless America," the words "Under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance, etc. More often than not, the

metaphor's ambiguity has made it an easy cudgel to be used by radical secularists and other unprincipled partisans to promote their political agendas. It should be unsurprising that then-Justice Rehnquist in 1985 said of the wall of separation: "[It] is a metaphor based on bad history, a metaphor which has proved useless as a guide to judging. It should be frankly and explicitly abandoned."

Professor Dreisbach takes great pains to present an impartial study. He even concludes with an even-handed presentation of arguments for and against the "wall of separation." Despite his mostly descriptive tenor, the facts of the matter tend to highlight what is prescriptive: nothing short of a serious reconsideration of the metaphor as a condensation of Constitutional law.

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A "MORAL" CRUSADE AGAINST CATHOLICISM Daniel Goldhagen's Unsavory Treatment of the Wartime Church

By Bronwen Catherine McShea

Daniel J. Goldhagen's latest book, *A Moral Reckoning: The Role of the Catholic Church in the Holocaust and its Unfulfilled Duty of Repair*, purports to be a much-needed "moral

philosophical" contribution to a troubled field of scholarship. Standing on the shoulders of other critics of Pope Pius XII's wartime Church—James Carroll, Garry Wills, David Kertzer, to name a few—Goldhagen calls upon all Catholics to own up to the deep-seated antisemitism in their Church's past which he calls "a necessary cause" of the Holocaust.

As Goldhagen's "inquiry" proceeds, it becomes increasingly clear that his program for "moral reckoning" has less to do with the historical record of Catholic involvement in the Holocaust, criminal or otherwise, than it does with the author's opinion of Catholicism itself—that it is inherently flawed, and must be reformed out of all recognition.

At first Goldhagen focuses his attention on the hypocrisy of a Church whose wartime leaders preached "love and goodness" but failed in many instances to exhibit Christ-like heroism in defense of innocent Jews. In his excitement over what he considers an insightful use of the Catholic "sins of omission" concept, Goldhagen allows its definition to balloon to the point where he faults the Church for failing "to tend to the souls of the mass murderers and of the other persecutors of Jews." One wonders what Goldhagen pictured in his mind when writing such a line: a toddling Hitler and Goebbels in kindergarten, given less tender, loving care by their nuns and priests than they deserved? Does Goldhagen honestly believe the Church was in a position to reach and reform all those who chose the demonic descent into Nazism?

The integrity of Goldhagen's arguments seem less a priority than taking swipes at the Church wherever he can. How else can we explain his frequent demands that the Church be held to the highest of standards—to live Christian love and goodness to perfection—and his simultaneous suggestions that the very faith which is the lifeblood of such love and goodness should be rejected? For indeed, while he asks the question, "What would Jesus have done," his contention that he is only

concerned for Catholics to strive more fully in their faith quickly breaks down as soon as his program for a Catholic "moral reckoning" takes shape. Catholics, he proposes, to do right by the Jews, must effectively cease to be Catholics—must abandon their Scriptures, their Pope, and even the Cross itself.

"The Catholic Church has a Bible problem," writes Goldhagen matter-of-factly in the latter part of the book. "The antisemitism of the Bible is not incidental to it but constitutive of its story of Jesus' life and death and of its messages about God and humanity." Adding that "the structure of the Gospels in particular is antisemitic," Goldhagen proposes that the Pope and all those who teach the Catholic faith must teach as "falsehoods" some 80 "antisemitic" passages in Matthew, 40 in Mark, 60 in Luke, 130 in John, 140 in Acts, and so on. He then begs the question whether it would not also be just to demand that the Church expunge these several hundred passages from the Christian Scriptures.

Goldhagen defines as "antisemitic" any passage in the Bible which in any way implicates Jews in the death of Christ, or which in any way suggests that Christianity has superceded Judaism as the faith of God's people. Apparently, we are supposed to reject as "null and void" the Gospels accounts of Judas's betrayal of his Lord, Christ's mockery of a trial before the Sanhedrin and His being handed over to the Roman authorities, and the crowds of men and women who cheered for Christ's death sentence. Also, Goldhagen explicitly says that the phrase "New Testament" is itself offensive to Jews, as it implies the Old has been superceded or fulfilled by Christ's divine mission. His suggestion to Rome for righting this offense? It must declare and teach every last Catholic that Christianity has in no way superceded Judaism, and it must "renounce the Church's position that the Catholic Church is universal."

For it was fervent belief in the universality of the Church,

Goldhagen argues, which animated Christian persecutions of Jews in the past, and made Europe's soil fertile for the Holocaust. Likewise, it was the Catholic identification of their Pope as the divinely-appointed leader of all Christians which encouraged them in "imperial aspirations" that were deadly for many Jews. Goldhagen's recipe for "moral reckoning" in this area is for Catholics, first, to renounce the doctrine of papal infallibility, and to acknowledge that its "authoritarian structure and culture, undergirded by the infallibility doctrine, is inherently dishonest." Second, the Church must "cease to be a political institution" and abdicate its rule over the Vatican city state. Additionally, the Church must stop its missions around the world, as missions are, in Goldhagen's opinion, inherently "political" ventures designed to forward the Pope's ultimate aim of acquiring "suzerainty" over all mankind. Lastly, this depoliticized Catholic Church must at every opportunity support and advocate for the interests of the state of Israel—this, Goldhagen believes, is the proper way of repaying a modicum of the debt Catholics owe the Jewish people.

It is perhaps when discussing the "political" nature of the Catholic Church where Goldhagen strays into his most offensive diatribes. "Seen from the outside, and certainly from the vantage point of a political scientist," he writes, "Catholic doctrine, theology, and liturgy looks, historically and even today, more like the ideology of an imperial power, sometimes an antagonistic power, than a mere set of beliefs about God." And an "antagonistic power," of course, must be fended off by a society concerned for its well-being generally and the well-being of its Jews specifically. It is quite remarkable that Goldhagen feels so free to attack Catholic "doctrine, theology, and liturgy" in a book that is ostensibly about the Church's comportment during the Nazi era. It is in such diatribes where Goldhagen shows his hand as a bigot whose concern is to actively undermine a faith he detests, rather than simply to seek justice for Jews in a manner appropriate

to one who professes allegiance to the ideals of a pluralistic society.

At the heart of Catholic theology is the Crucifixion—the redemptive death of the God-man Christ, who was born of a Jewish virgin. The Crucifixion symbolizes many things for Catholics (not least the supernatural, self-sacrificing love and goodness Goldhagen reminds Catholics to imitate), but among them is the tragedy foretold in the Old Testament that the Messiah would be rejected by many of his own nation—the necessary, painful tragedy of the New Israel’s birth amidst the Old. Goldhagen, as a Jew, has every right as a free man to reject all such teachings about the Crucifixion, and every right to state his own belief in their error in a scholarly text on the subject. Yet he goes farther than this: he makes the inflammatory suggestion that the Cross, historically seen as “an antisemitic symbol and weapon,” is “all too likely to provoke further antipathy toward Jews.” Elsewhere in the book Goldhagen describes any such provocation as veritably criminal in light of the horrors endured by the Jewish people in the last century, and that the Church must take every step possible to avoid even “planting the seed” of antisemitism in any human heart.

We are left to conclude—though Goldhagen is not bold enough to state it outright—that Goldhagen sees it as a duty, or at least a welcome idea, for Catholic leaders to remove the Cross from their churches—inside as well as out. If he can call for the expurgation of Catholic Holy Writ, surely he is capable of calling for the removal of all Catholic sacred symbols from any wall, any steeple, if those symbols give any kind of encouragement to antisemitism.

Goldhagen, for all his moral outrage at one of the most criminal treatments of any religious group or people known to history, openly encourages the suppression of Catholic teachings, Catholic symbols, and even Catholic autonomy from the world’s political powers as it is entailed by the

existence of the Vatican city state. How such a posture can benefit the cause of greater tolerance of, and accommodation for, any religious community is a great mystery which Goldhagen does not even attempt to answer in his fustian "moral philosophical inquiry."

After reading *A Moral Reckoning*, it is very easy to see why Rabbi David Rosen, international director of interreligious affairs at the American Jewish Committee, a year ago criticized Goldhagen for his "unconcealed antagonism against the Catholic Church." Rosen is among many Jews who are embarrassed and angered by Goldhagen's imprudent, vicious posture against Catholics. Goldhagen is upsetting and retarding the already stormy (though recently fruitful) efforts by Jews and Catholics to arrive at better understanding of each other's communities. Jews and Catholics alike rightly regard Goldhagen's brand of "scholarship" as poison to productive dialogue and genuine moral philosophical inquiry.

The lukewarm to negative reviews the book has elicited from the critics have been its one saving grace. Even *New York Times* critic Geoffrey Wheatcroft threw up his hands at the close of his review and asked how Goldhagen "can in good faith plead with the church to abandon the very doctrines that define it." Nevertheless, such critiques have not prevented the editors of the *Times* and other newspapers from naming *A Moral Reckoning* one of the "best books" of 2002. That the organs of the popular press react with such knee-jerk favorability to any book—no matter its merits—which attacks the Catholic Church is perhaps the most important lesson to be drawn from Goldhagen's efforts. In a way, Goldhagen ought to be thanked for reminding us yet again that unabashed anti-Catholicism is alive and well both in the press and in the academy.

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CATHOLICS CAN BE PROUD OF THE WARTIME RECORD OF POPE PIUS XII

By Kenneth D. Whitehead

When a scholarly journal, *The Political Science Reviewer*, asked me to do an in-depth review-article on the major books that have recently come out about the Pope Pius XII controversy, I was at first not too eager to get involved. The Pius XII controversy seems to go on and on, with no resolution in sight. The anti-Pius authors, in particular, seem to pay little attention to the facts that have been brought forward concerning the true role of the wartime pontiff; they keep going back to the same old accusations against the pope, regardless of whether they have been answered or not: Pope Pius XII did not do enough to help the Jews during the Holocaust, they say, even though Adolf Hitler had made it clear that he intended to exterminate the Jews (along with some other victims, it needs to be added!). In particular, according to them, Pius XII failed to “speak out” forcefully to denounce the evil and criminal plans of Hitler and the Nazis (as if merely “speaking out” could have deterred Hitler!).

Of course, able people have not failed to come forward to defend the reputation of the wartime pope, often citing the abundant testimony of wartime Jewish leaders which demonstrate that Pius XII was one of the best friends the European Jews had. This is hardly the view of the average person today,

however, owing to the incessant negative publicity about the wartime pope. And the defenders of Pius XII have never quite been able to make their case effectively or attract as much attention as his accusers. The latter enjoy the prestige of having their books published by mainstream New York publishing houses and by university presses—which then promptly get major attention from such publications as *Time* or *Newsweek* or the *New York Times Book Review*—while the latter, the pro-Pius authors, have to turn to small religious publishing houses if they expect their books to see the light of day at all. Nor are the pro-Pius books found on the shelves of public libraries or in bookstores as readily as the anti-Pius books are. The odds have thus regularly been against the defenders of Pius XII ever getting a full and fair hearing to make their case.

Thinking about this, I decided that I should take a serious look at both the recent anti-Pius and pro-Pius books, and try to reach some conclusions about which of them make the stronger case. The academic and professional political scientists who read *The Political Science Reviewer* were surely not committed to any particular viewpoint on the issue, I thought, and were probably honestly interested in what the true facts of the case might be. The whole thing was worth a try. So I decided to plow through the ten major Pius XII books, pro and con, published over the past four years, and to try to provide a serious, scholarly account of just what the continuing Pius XII controversy was all about; what was being said about it on both sides; why the controversy keeps going on and on; and how, in my opinion, the whole question should ultimately be judged.

The results of my efforts became a long review-article of more than 100 pages bearing the title, “The Pope Pius XII Controversy.” It was published in the 2002 issue (Volume XXXI) of *The Political Science Reviewer*, and will now also be available [on the website of the Catholic League](#) for those

interested in going into this subject in more detail.

The ten books I read included: *Pius XII and the Second World War* by Fr. Pierre Blet, S.J.; *Hitler's Pope* by John Cornwell; *The Popes Against the Jews* by David Kertzer; *Pope Pius XII: Architect for Peace* by Sr. Margherita Marchione; *The Defamation of Pius XII* by Ralph McInerny; *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust, 1930-1965* by Michael Phayer; *Hitler, the War, and the Pope* by Ronald J. Rychlak; *Pius XII and the Holocaust* by José M. Sánchez; *Papal Sin* by Garry Wills; and *Under His Very Windows: The Vatican and the Holocaust* by Susan Zucotti.

Regardless of how they try to bill themselves as more or less scholarly works, five of these books are nevertheless frankly anti-Pius (Cornwell, Kertzer, Phayer, Wills, and Zucotti); four of them are just as frankly pro-Pius (Blet, Marchione, McInerny, and Rychlak); and only one of them attempts—not, however, with completely satisfactory results—to be neutral and above the fray (Sánchez). It was a chore to read through all of them, but now that I have done so, I can speak pretty confidently about what we are dealing with in this particular controversy. We are dealing with what one of the authors, Ralph McInerny, in his title, calls the defamation of Pius XII. Those who so doggedly continue to go after a Roman pontiff more than forty years after his death—and long after all of the essential facts of the case have been put on the record, and do not prove the case against him—are driven by an ideology that really has little to do with the real wartime record of Pius XII, and a great deal to do with discrediting both the man and the Catholic Church he led. Some of the pro-Pius authors understand this. Obviously, I cannot prove it completely here in this short summary, though; readers are referred to the complete review-article on the Catholic League's website; but what I can say is that the anti-Catholic bias in the anti-Pius books approaches the pathological.

Some of the anti-Pius books, such as those of Michael Phayer

and Susan Zucotti, appear to be very serious and scholarly; they are heavily footnoted and they carefully cite various sources; in this respect, they do not immediately seem to resemble the books of disaffected Catholics such as John Cornwell and Garry Wills, which are little better than vulgar polemics. In the end, though, I was obliged to conclude that all of the anti-Pius books are defective in one especially serious, if not fatal, respect: namely, they all rest upon an indefensible view of how the writing of history should be done. Before they get down to any historical facts at all, they start out with the firm premise or presupposition that Pope Pius XII simply should have “spoken out” against Hitler. Even in the wartime conditions that prevailed, they think he should have loudly denounced the Holocaust that was taking place in Nazi-occupied Europe. They rarely credit or even mention all that the Vatican did do to help wartime victims; nor do they recognize any special conditions or constraints that Pius XII might have been under—for example, that the Vatican was surrounded throughout the greater part of the war by hostile Fascist and Nazi regimes able to occupy the pope’s tiny enclave in a matter of hours, as they more than once threatened to do.

If the pope by “speaking out” had called upon Catholics in Nazi-occupied Europe to try to oppose Hitler’s juggernaut, anyone responding to such a call would have incurred instant arrest, deportation to a concentration camp, and probable swift execution in the conditions that prevailed under the Nazis. While the Church does canonize martyrs, she does not call upon Catholics to court certain martyrdom. None of this registers with the anti-Pius writers, however; they still write simply on the basis of what they think the pope should have done. But to write history on this basis is not to write history in the true sense at all. History is the record of what did happen, not what somebody thinks should have happened. Good history hopefully includes the historian’s educated judgment of how and why things happened as they did.

Still the historian has to stick to what did happen, not what he thinks should have happened.

All of the anti-Pius books fail this simple test; and hence not one of them is history in the true sense but rather is special pleading for a pre-established point of view.

The pro-Pius books, on the other hand, do all try to establish and honestly explain what did happen. My conclusion is that you can rely on the accounts that the various defenders of Pius XII provide. The true fact is that Catholics can be proud of the wartime record of Pope Pius XII. In particular, as I remark in my long review-article, in the light of the case made in detail by Ronald J. Rychlak in his *Hitler, the War, and the Pope*, "the case against Pius XII set forth by the anti-Pius writers is simply untenable."

In view of the importance of the subject—and of the fact that the Pius XII controversy does just seem to go on and on—I am pleased that the Catholic League is willing to reproduce my complete review-article on its website. Go to www.catholicleague.org to get the complete story about how the various pro-Pius and anti-Pius authors have treated the Pius XII controversy. Then go to the books themselves. It is vital to be properly informed about this continuing controversy in which the Catholic Church herself is being attacked in the person of her great wartime pontiff.

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THE PEDIGREE OF AN AMERICAN DOCTRINE

Philip Hamburger's *Separation of Church and State*

By Joseph A.P. DeFeo

In defending school choice or God in the Pledge of Allegiance, it is too easy to find oneself on the wrong side of the “wall of separation” between church and state. But as Professor Philip Hamburger reveals in his timely and well-researched tome, *Separation of Church and State*, few know the secret history of this American doctrine.

The phrase “separation of church and state” was employed most famously by President Thomas Jefferson in his letter to the Danbury Baptist Association in 1802; he asserted that the principle was established by the First Amendment. According to the “separation myth,” there is a straight line from Jefferson’s letter to Justice Hugo L. Black’s 1947 decision in *Everson v. Board of Education*, in which the “wall of separation” became official constitutional law. But Hamburger shows that the real truth is rarely pure and never simple.

Far from being the intention of the Founders, the idea of separation of church and state began as a slur. Though the First Amendment guaranteed religious freedom and prohibited the federal establishment of any church, the states were free under the Constitution to have officially supported churches. Most states had established churches with ministers receiving state salaries. Dissenters, members of religions that were not officially sanctioned, had often to pay taxes to support the ministers of the established churches; these often urged disestablishment. In a gross caricature of the dissenting

position, establishment ministers accused dissenters of attempting to separate church and state, undermining the foundations of the state. Far from it, the dissenters railed against the union of church and state, which they associated with Catholic Europe and Anglican England, while maintaining that there existed an important sociological connection between religion and government. They believed that religion provided a moral foundation for government, which should govern in a manner consistent with Christianity while not tampering with religious freedom. The antiestablishment position was to restrain government, but not churches. There was, in other words, a complex middle ground between union and separation of church and state; but heated rhetoric and wild accusations made it difficult to see.

Interestingly enough, the letter Jefferson sent to the Danbury Baptists was nearly forgotten. The Baptists who received the letter had been pressing merely for disestablishment of the Congregational church in Connecticut. But in Jefferson's letter they got more than they bargained for; perhaps conscious of their delicate position and not wanting to espouse anything so radical as to expose them to public backlash, they demurred and never advertised that President Jefferson supported them. For decades afterward, dissenters who did not want a union of church and state still wanted some elements of religion reflected in government, such as prosecution for blasphemy and obscenity, the appointment of government chaplains, and presidential proclamation of fast days and days of thanksgiving (something Jefferson steadfastly refused to do).

Although the separation myth treats the separation as an established principle since the passing of the Bill of Rights, the evidence shows otherwise. Various parties proposed amendments to the Constitution to secure the separation of church and state, since the First Amendment clearly was not sufficient to do so. After attempts to amend the Constitution,

champions of separation adopted a new tactic: historical revision. They declared that separation had been implied by the First Amendment all along, and that everyone knew it.

The idea of separation only gradually lost its status as a slur in American politics. Democratic-Republicans pressed for a version of it in the election of 1800, both to silence largely Federalist establishment clergy who assailed Jefferson for his ungodliness, and to attract the votes of dissenting clergy. Although many thought the language of separation extreme, an interesting reversal occurred. The idea gained ground among dissenting Protestants, who wanted both disestablishment and a further check on the more organized established churches. The dissenters offered a particularly Protestant and increasingly anticlerical reading of "separation of church and state," in contradistinction to "separation of religion and state." Organized, hierarchical churches (such as the Catholic and Episcopalian churches) would be restrained from influencing the regime, while the private judgement of individual Protestants would be incorporated into government.

This interpretation of separation caused a sordid turn in the development of separation. Hamburger deftly details the reconceptualization of what it meant to be American in the 19th century. The glorification of egalitarianism, individualism, and mental independence from authority and superstition ushered in an expanded anticlericalism. No longer was it merely a non-conforming Protestant ideal to reject the clergies of the hierarchical churches; it became an American value. To this day, Hamburger remarks, groups supporting separation of church and state rely on the implicit characterization of their opposition as "un-American."

In the 19th century an increasing specialization was encouraged, calling for clergy to stick to their business of saving souls while governors would do the governing. This set limits on the functions of the clergy, calling for them not to

preach on political matters as though there were areas where God did not matter. It tended to create a sphere of government impenetrable to religion; governors would have to leave their religion at home.

These cultural changes accompanied shifting immigration patterns that brought in increasing numbers of Irish and German Catholics. These immigrants with their foreign religion provided an easy target: the hierarchy with foreign ties, rigid claims of authority, and apparent superstition to boot. In addition, Protestants viewed Catholics as enslaved by their clergy and lacking individual judgement. This represented the very antithesis of the newly reformulated Protestant American ideal. Separation of church and state became a separation of *the Church* and state. Fears of "Romish" ambitions in the government of the United States gave the move for separation extra momentum. Generic anti-clericalism erupted into anti-Catholicism. What had once been a struggle among various brands of Protestantism became a convenient vent for anti-Catholic and nativist fears, and lent some unity to American Protestantism in the process.

Hamburger notes that the extent of the connection between anti-Catholicism and the growth of the ideal of separation of church and state has been expunged from the separation myth. But the facts are undeniable—and not without irony. Among various proposed safeguards of religious liberty were loyalty tests and oaths for Catholics, barring them from office or voting, and even a proposed constitutional amendment that would sever the American Catholic Church from Rome. Public monies were denied to Catholic schools from the 1840s onward, although it was granted to the public schools, which taught Protestant doctrine. The difference, the reasoning went, was that public monies could not be used to educate children according to the dictates of the Catholic Church, although it could be used to educate children according to the dictates of the majority of individual Protestant consciences.

Many nativist and racist organizations naturally saw a way to limit the power of Catholics in promoting separation. The Ku Klux Klan included a promise to uphold separation in its membership oaths, and campaigned heavily against the Catholic Church and for separation. Even the man who finally made separation official federal law, Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black, was a prominent Klansman.

Other groups that supported separation were the secularists. They and other non-Christians wished to eliminate the Protestant interpretation of the First Amendment and instead sever government connections to all religion whatsoever. With their help, separation ultimately grew from a restraint placed only on the government to a restraint applied discriminatorily to a few churches, to a restraint replaced on all churches. By the time this evolution occurred, Hamburger comments, it was too late for the Protestants who opened this door to do anything about it.

Despite the almost irresistible opportunities for irony provided by his material, Hamburger's tone is sober. He points out that the idea of separation has prevented clearly constitutional transactions between church and state, has worked to restrain rather than protect religion, and has become an instrument for enforcing "a majority's oddly conformist demands for individual independence and strangely dogmatic rejections of authority." Although skeptical of the wall of separation's ultimate value, Hamburger concentrates more on history than polemics.

Hamburger does not concentrate heavily on more recent applications of the separation principle. The fact that it is still used in a less-than-scrupulous manner supports his case. Separation supporters wink at candidates canvassing for votes in black churches while they scream bloody inquisition over the Catholic Church's opposition to abortion. And the principle of separation is not even applied consistently against the Catholic Church: although her position on abortion

is met with cries of violation of the separation of church and state, her stance on social justice and the pope's position on the death penalty are quoted without qualms.

In his effort to remove some of the whitewash slapped over the history books, Professor Hamburger is moderate and exacting. He identifies a conspicuous gap in the scholarship of American religious freedom scholarship, and fills it ably.

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CALLING GARRY'S BLUFF: Why I Am A Catholic Insults the "People of God"

By Bronwen Catherine McShea

Garry Wills is devoted to the so-called "spirit of Vatican II," which he claims was hijacked by a backward-looking papacy. He wrote *Why I Am A Catholic* (Houghton Mifflin, 2002) to flesh out his differences with Rome, and to offer hope to "conscientious" Catholics that "reformation" is in the wings, that the true spirit of the Council will rise again.

Wills presents himself as a kind of oracle for this Vatican II "spirit." He envisions an empowered laity, unencumbered by Roman assertions of authority or "petty" concerns about orthodoxy and obedience, and cheerfully building up the

“people of God.” It is a vision of outreach, of a glorious harvest of Christ-like understanding, tolerance, and love. In writing his book, Wills purports to be following the Vatican II way, witnessing to his faith as a layman, offering his pen and public influence as God’s instruments for touching hearts.

It is time to call Wills’s bluff. For all of his posturing, the example he sets is not one of genuine outreach, tolerance, or love. He willfully mistreats the Church’s scriptural and historical foundations, undermining Catholic claims that often prove decisive in winning converts from other traditions. And he indulges unjustly and uncharitably his distaste for fellow Catholics who, in remaining faithful to Roman teachings on a host of subjects, offer a fighting strength to the “people of God” against the pitfalls of the modern age—among them the enervating materialism and moral relativism that find commonplace expression through our culture’s sexual fixations.

A former Jesuit seminarian, Wills deals with the Scriptural foundations of the papacy with a carelessness to make even the most anti-papal Protestant cringe. Looking askance at Matthew 16, where Simon is renamed “the Rock,” Wills wonders whether Christ was only “teasing Peter when he called him ‘Rocky,’ *ab opposito*, as when one calls a not-so bright person Einstein.”

Yes, that’s right: Wills reduces a most solemn moment in the Gospel to a humorous interlude. He portrays Saint Peter—the man who identified Jesus of Nazareth as “the Son of the living God” *before* Christ acknowledged as much to any man—as a hopeless buffoon who “invariably takes the wrong action.”

Peter is denied his saintly dignity in Wills’s narrative in order to undermine the ancient principle that the successors to the Roman See are uniquely authorized by Christ to shepherd His people until the Second Coming. Wills replaces this principle with incoherent remarks about how the papacy—while always “indispensable”—can somehow keep the Church unified around the mysteries of the Apostles’ Creed without the power

to arbitrate definitively on the innumerable disputes arising from the faith and its application in the world. This papacy would represent with infirm affability Wills's rarefied view of Church unity while being unable to instruct the faithful on the Creed, the sacraments, or morality with any degree of clarity.

Wills wants to have his cake and eat it too, and the weakness of his position is apparent to any attentive reader. Protestant converts to the Church, especially, can tell us how important Rome's unique claims to authority have been to their spiritual walk. They and the many non-Catholics who respect Rome's ancient and eminently rigorous tradition despite deep disagreements with it can only be disappointed by Wills's cavalier dismissal of papal authority alongside his non-Scriptural, essentially sentimental explanations for the papacy's continued existence.

Along with his flippant readings of Scripture, Wills the historian abuses his professional discipline to write a most tendentious, whirlwind account of Roman corruption, error, and folly throughout the millennia—again in order to undermine Vatican claims to authority. One of the more remarkable occasions of this is where he portrays King Henry VIII of England as a “loyal son of the Church” whose hand was forced by the incompetence of Pope Clement VII, who refused to condone the dumping of Queen Catherine for her vivacious and fecund lady-in-waiting, Anne Boleyn.

Yes, that's right: Wills lauds a tyrant king whose axe fell not only on two of his six wives, but also on Saints Thomas More and John Fisher, and a number of other “papists” who rejected Henry's revolutionary claims to be “Supreme Head of the Church of England.” This is the same Henry whose minions confiscated monastic lands all over England, looted Catholic sanctuaries, and desecrated the shrine of Saint Thomas of Canterbury.

Wills leaves out these facts of Henry's reign for the simple reason that he wants to take a cheap shot at a pope who ruled against a divorce. He continues along in this unscholarly fashion, remarkably, by blaming the persecution of English Catholics after Henry's reformation on the political interference of *popes* who gave them permission to resist a regime that oppressed them. Offering not a word on the messy English marriage of religion and politics responsible for dreadful persecutions, Wills claims that "the papacy's political ties to governments opposed to England robbed Catholics of their presumption of loyalty." He goes so far as to fault sainted martyrs of the Church for their "treason." According to Wills's formula for good Church and State relations, English and Irish Catholics should have just taken it on the chin when their masters arrested priests for saying Mass and sent all those presumptuous papists to the scaffold.

Wills desires a similar passivity from the "people of God" today in the face of cultural norms directly opposed to what the Church has always taught about the sacraments, the Mother of Christ, and just about all matters sexual. He insults fellow Catholics on points of particular sensitivity: the concept of Transubstantiation in the Blessed Sacrament, and the sinless nature of the Blessed Mother and her miraculous appearances around the world. He yawns at the Aristotelian arguments about "substance" used for centuries by the Church to describe the miracle of the Mass, suggesting the concept of Transubstantiation was one of the many "petty" developments at the reforming Council of Trent. And he sneers at "the Marian zealots" who uphold Mary's perpetual virginity against the tired protestations of amateur Scripture scholars, and who—with Pope John Paul II—believe in the "superstitious" "Fatima nonsense."

Furthermore, Wills calls Vatican teachings on holy matrimony and ordination "silly," suggesting that those who disagree are not "conscientious" Catholics like himself, but rather are

trying to bring the Church back to the “dark days” preceding Vatican II. He accuses those who consider artificial contraception to be in any way immoral of “stubborn clinging to a discredited position” (leaving out, of course, by whom and in what way the position was discredited). He dismisses as “weird” the hope that a renewal of the culture of celibacy would help solve the shortage of priests. Without offering any thorough, reasoned counter-arguments, he sums up all the Vatican teachings concerning sexuality—the definition of holy matrimony, the Scripturally based prohibition on divorce and female ordination, natural law arguments against homosexuality, contraception—as “dishonest, naïve, or stupid on their face.”

Yes, that’s right: the tolerant, understanding, liberal devotee of the “spirit of Vatican II” can hardly *mention* those who disagree with him without resorting to *ad hominem* assaults on their intelligence and character. At a time when our scandal-ridden Church is starving for charitable aid from her sons of influence and means, Garry Wills opts to expose fellow Catholics to great shame and ridicule and to increase the splinters between himself and all who adhere to the finer points of Roman teaching. His vindictive tone makes his calls to “the good will” engendered by Vatican II seem like so much hypocrisy and grandstanding.

The “people of God” can do without Wills’s instructions on insulting one another. And they deserve far better than the sort of faith he offers them—a faith that encourages their weaknesses, a faith so indulgent toward the moral relativism, the blinding naturalism, materialism, and sexual obsessions of our age. Wills wants millions of believers to sit by and ignore *their* consciences as liberal activists spread the Gospel of the Condom, the Gospel of the Priestess and Less-than-Immaculate Mary, and the Gospel of Divorce and Gay Unions throughout the world. Does he really believe that any of this would strengthen a Church so sorely in need of otherworldly

virtues like restraint and self-denial? An academic with a Jesuit education under his belt should know better. Except for a sentimental attachment to rosary beads and an emasculated papacy, the Catholic Church according to Wills would be indistinguishable from our faltering secular society, with a dogmatic integrity and spiritual stamina to match it.

Wills audaciously equates his cause of reform to that of the medieval monastics and the conciliarists of the past few centuries. His is but a “lover’s quarrel” with the hierarchy of the Church, he says. Yet the greatest revelation from the pages of *Why I Am A Catholic* is that Wills needs to exercise far greater charity and humility in his personal crusade for “reformation.” To this end, he might reread the texts of his beloved Vatican II and the writings of his favorite authors, St. Augustine, John Cardinal Newman, and G.K. Chesterton, who receive considerable mention in his book. Surely along with the many one-liners that can be quoted out of context to gratify Wills’s self-righteous agenda are pages and pages that speak to a far different “spirit” than the one he purports to know so intimately.

When Garry Wills matures further in his faith, he should write another book about it. In the meantime, let us wait with patient hope that the “people of God” will one day begin to benefit from the fruits of Wills’s “conscientious” labor.

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INSIDE THE BELLY OF THE BEAST

Catholic Studies at Public Colleges and Universities

By Joseph A. Varacalli, Ph.D.

Today, institutions of higher education are major generators of socially dominant ideas, images, and fashions. As sociologists might say, they are major “agents of socialization.” Empirically speaking, public higher education is almost exclusively—at least in the humanities and social sciences—an agent for the promotion of politically left-wing secular thought.

It should come as little surprise that any philosophy or worldview like Catholicism that qualifies or limits an uncontested understanding of individualism—that, in essence, concurs with John Paul II’s claim in *Veritatis Splendor* that any legitimate exercise of freedom must be oriented to objective truth and sound morality—is going to be subject to prejudice and discrimination within a public higher educational system characterized by a secular monopoly. That no other institution in contemporary American society is subject to the same degree of sustained hostility and rejection as is the case with the Catholic Church can actually be viewed as a sort of backhanded compliment.

Some of the anti-Catholic prejudice and discrimination encountered on the public college campus will be blatant and obvious and others will be less so. All students will be subject, from time to time, to some sort of anti-Catholic bigotry on a campus-wide basis, much of it of a crude and shameless nature. Perusing through the annual *Reports on Anti-Catholicism* published by the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights makes this perfectly clear. The annual reports

are replete with examples that, through various campus venues, blaspheme, mock, denigrate, and distort all aspects of the Catholic faith: plays (e.g. "Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All For You," "Corpus Christi"); art exhibits; student newspaper editorials, stories, cartoons; radio programming; and college-wide lectures, forums, and conferences.

Regarding many humanities and social science classrooms, students may well encounter many outrageously false and slanderous historical claims made against the Church and the Catholic population. They may hear the claims that Pope Pius XII conspired with the Nazis to murder Jews; that Christopher Columbus was primarily responsible for the genocide of native American Indian groups; that ethnic working-class Catholic "hard-hats" are naturally bigots and racists; that the Bishops of Catholic America want to "impose their (male) morality" on women denying them their alleged "right" to abort children within the womb; and that "homophobic" orthodox Catholics are responsible for the deaths of those AIDS victims who contracted the disease engaging in homosexual activity.

Students may very well encounter the argument that a Catholic-inspired Western civilization is a generator of cultural death. There is also the likelihood of important Catholic (and Christian and other religious) thinkers being under-represented, not represented or distorted in much of the literature that students are expected to master. Reference here can be made to the important content analysis of school textbooks conducted by New York University psychologist Paul Vitz. Even when the official educational philosophy of a public college is supposedly inclusive "multiculturalism," there is an excellent chance that there will be no distinctively Catholic contribution to the curriculum due to, variously, the alleged implications of the "separation of church and state," ignorance of the Catholic intellectual and moral contribution, or simply, outright bigotry. (In many Catholic colleges, the "new" Catholic studies programs

intended to keep Catholicism alive on campus will very possibly be staffed by the same type of progressive Catholic scholars who were responsible for the internal secularization of the college in the first place).

There are many ways by which the Catholic tradition contributes to the legitimate calling of the academy. For one thing, the universal thrust of the Catholic sensibility breeds within its faithful adherents a sense of obligation to pursue the truth courageously in a non-politically correct manner and to be fair-minded and even-handed to the student body and others in one's dealing in the academic community, regardless of philosophical commitment. Secondly, Catholic scholarship serves as an important corrective to overly narrow and specialized research and teaching, advocating what might be termed a "realistic interdisciplinary" approach encouraging honest intellectual exchanges between and among the natural sciences, social sciences, humanities (including, prominently, philosophy), and theology.

Thirdly, this correction to over-specialization also entails a movement toward a hierarchal integration which restores philosophy to its proper "command post" position in the scholarly enterprise. Fourthly, in "spanning the ages," Catholicism's memory brings with it the insights of many cultures and historical ages and, as such, helps one to escape the "tyranny of the present" and, conversely, to appreciate the fact that tradition can be dynamic and relevant to the modern age. Fifthly and finally, Catholic social thought brings to the academic plate a host of important natural law concepts (e.g. subsidiarity, solidarity, personalism, the universal purpose of goods) and philosophical anthropological claims regarding the inherent nature, freedom, and responsibility of human beings as social creatures.

It is precisely because it is vitally important for American civilization that Catholics bring the insights of their intellectual and moral heritage to the public square, that I

established a Center for Catholic Studies at Nassau Community College of the State University of New York system of higher education (NCC is the largest community college in the nation). Culturally, for one thing, the official educational philosophy of the College had been for some time that of multiculturalism. Structurally, this had led to the creation of academic programs, in varying degrees of comprehensiveness and complexity, in African-American studies, women's studies, Jewish studies, Italian American studies, and Latino studies, to name the most prominent examples.

There were some college trustees who I believed (correctly) would be receptive to my proposal. I was also a tenured, full professor, with all the security and freedom that such a status entails, and also with a long list of publications and other accomplishments in the areas of Catholic studies and the sociology of religion. I believed that there would be some professors, non-Catholics included, in the college with the courage and integrity to support the idea and assist its implementation. Again, this was a useful assumption. I had at least one strong supporter on the State-wide S.U.N.Y. Board of Trustees. Another secular university, the University of Illinois at Chicago, was also starting up a Catholic studies program, making my proposal a tad less "startling."

Despite grumbling from some faculty and some initial ambivalence from key administrators (in fairness, understandable, given the radicalness of my proposal vis-à-vis the reigning norms of the secular academy), the NCC Center for Catholic Studies was established during the Fall, 2000 semester with myself appointed as Director. The previous summer was spent in fruitful meetings with the Academic Vice-President in which it was agreed that the purpose of the Center was academic and intellectual and concerned with demonstrating how the tradition of Catholic social thought could contribute to the scholarly activities of the college, including debates concerning public and social policy.

Conversely put, it was agreed that the Center was not intended to be an agent for evangelization and its focus was not to be catechetical in nature. Furthermore, it was agreed that, while the College would selectively subsidize the Center's activities, the intent was that the Center would come close to financial self-sufficiency.

Two years later and having withstood a challenge made by a "separation of Church and state" group to the Chancellor of the State University of New York, the NCC Center for Catholic Studies is doing better than most, including myself, could have reasonably expected. As of June, 2002, the Center had raised over \$22,000, spending approximately half that amount to pay for a host of academic activities open to all, and most of which are free of any charge, taking place on the campus. The Center has sponsored two major conferences, both attracting an audience in excess of two hundred participants.

Another major accomplishment was the sponsoring of a debate on school choice that attracted a group of well over one hundred and that has been frequently aired on the public access educational channel of the local Cable Vision television network. The Center has also offered a Friday afternoon seminar on "Aspects of Catholic Social Thought;" a "Club Hour" series of lectures geared specifically to the student body; a series of non-credit Continuing Education courses and lectures (the only Center activities requiring a fee, and a modest one at that); two rounds of interviews on a radio program that I host, "The Catholic Alternative" which is aired on the college radio station as well as a series of evening lectures.

I have no sure sense of what the future will hold for the NCC Center for Catholic Studies. So much depends on events and developments outside of my control—in the College, surrounding community, in the Church and society-at-large, and with my family obligations and other personal issues and concerns. What I do know is that the Center's activities—humble as they surely have been to date—have served Nassau Community College,

the student body, and the outside community well. Perhaps ultimately the greatest legacy will be that the very existence of the Center inspires other Catholic scholars in public colleges and universities to start their own Catholic studies centers and programs where, perhaps, they can do even more extensive good for academia and society.

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OF STEREOTYPES AND HEROES

by

Dr. Richard C. Lukas

Nowhere is the politicization of history and its practitioners more evident than in the recent writings of a number of historians of the Holocaust era. The temptations of glitz, glamour and money seem to have influenced some historians to sensationalize their subjects to get noticed by the media.

Instead of writing history as it really is—filled with complexity and nuance—these historians offer us morality plays. They consist of monocausal interpretations of complicated subjects with the lines of good and evil sharply etched. Too often they allow their biases, prejudices and personal histories to blemish the integrity of their craft.

Today it is intellectually acceptable to target certain individuals and groups for the death of five to six million Jews. Pope Pius XII, once widely praised by Jewish leaders and

communities, has now become the most conspicuous target of a number of pope bashers, who have created a quasi-historical genre of their own. The writings of John Cornwell and David Kertzer are distinguished by their obsession to depict the Papacy in the worst possible light. In his highly publicized tome, *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, Daniel Goldhagen wants us to believe that ever since the nineteenth century, the German nation wanted to eliminate the Jews. According to this bizarre interpretation, Hitler was almost an incidental chapter in the history of the Holocaust. Is it now historically acceptable to place collective responsibility on the entire German people that was once employed by anti-Semites against the Jews? It is the same Goldhagen who was allowed by the editors of the *New Republic* to write an article that suggests there is a moral equivalence between the Roman Catholic Church and the Nazi party. Theologian Michael Novak perceptively observed:

"The reason Goldhagen is quite guilty of the charge of anti-Catholicism lies in the breadth and passion of the smears he spreads across a broad history, the distortion and hysteria of his tone, the extremity of his rage and the lack of proportion in his judgments."

No people have been more viciously stereotyped than the Poles. Forgetting that the Poles were Hitler's first victims and that the Nazi-established killing laboratory in Poland would later be used against the Jews and other groups, writers have sought to stereotype the Poles as a nation of willing collaborators with the Nazis in the genocide of the Jews. Despite the fact that Poland ranks first among the nations of the world which rendered help to the Jews during the Holocaust, the Polish role in aiding Jews has been largely ignored or denigrated.

A highly-touted book, *Neighbors*, by Jan T. Gross, claims that Polish Catholics in the village of Jedwabne in northeastern Poland were entirely responsible for killing their Jewish neighbors while the Germans allegedly remained passive bystanders. Even though relations between the two groups had

been good before the war, Gross presents a tableau of hundreds of Catholic Poles mindlessly slaughtering Jews because now, quite suddenly, they despised them and lusted after their property.

Gross, who is a Jewish sociologist, never proves his claim. He prefers to rely on questionable evidence and fails to investigate German archives to substantiate his grave allegation. Despite the fact that Neighbors raised more questions than it answered, it is testimony to the enduring power of the stereotype that the National Book Foundation nominated the book for an award.

There is strong evidence, which Gross denies, that the Germans, not the Poles, were the organizers and major executors of the massacre. Only a few Poles, a small criminal element, were involved in the crime. In an interview published in *Inside the Vatican*, Dr. Tomasz Strzembosz, Poland's leading authority on the history of eastern Poland, described Gross's book as "a journalistic work, written without [a] serious scientific basis."

It isn't too surprising that books that sensationalize and distort serious and controversial subjects receive uncritical acceptance by members of the popular media who themselves have internalized the stereotypes of particular individuals and groups. Even respected university publishers have been complicit in printing volumes which do not meet the rigors of historical scholarship and are more akin to propaganda than history.

What we have is the worst kind of revisionism, which treats history like a loose-leaf notebook. Historians remove the pages which disagree with their opinions and substitute those which support their views. Much of the historiography of the Holocaust era reveals a kind of Gresham's law where bad history drives out good history, making it difficult for even professional historians to determine where sensationalism,

propaganda and matyrology ends and history begins. History becomes a major casualty and the integrity of the historical profession is seriously compromised.

There are criminals in every society, including our own. No people have a monopoly on good; no people have a monopoly on evil. Do we further the interests of history by defining a nation by its worst elements? Historians have succeeded in unearthing the evils of the Holocaust era. But they have been far less conscientious and resourceful in revealing to us the thousands of heroes and heroines in all countries of German-occupied Europe who took enormous risks in helping others during the Nazi era.

Many years ago, Rabbi Harold Schulweis remarked that we need heroes and heroines, these exemplars of good, to teach us and our children about goodness. We need them as a counterweight to the evil of Nazism and what it perpetrated upon Jews and gentiles. Historian Istvan Deak echoed the same sentiments in the pages of the New York Review of Books, "We ought to celebrate, more than ever, such heroes, whether Polish saviors of Jews, Jewish ghetto fighters, Bulgarian bishops and politicians, Jehovah's Witnesses, or Polish guerillas, who stood up for their beliefs and died fighting the worst tyrannies in modern history." Historians need to ask themselves today why are the names of Bormann, Himmler, Heydrich, Goebbels and other Nazis universally known and reviled while most of the names of the Christian saviors of Jews have been forgotten?

Among the hundreds of thousands of men and women who should be celebrated for their courage and goodness is Irena Sendler, an extraordinary Polish Catholic woman, who did not have the benefit of the diplomatic position of a Raoul Wallenberg or the financial resources of an Oskar Schindler.

After the Germans forced the Jews of the Polish capital into the Warsaw Ghetto, Sendler brought food, money and medicine to

the Jewish people. Wearing an armband with the Star of David to show her solidarity with Warsaw's Jews, she obtained documents from the city's social welfare department to enable her to move freely within the ghetto without interference from the Germans and Jewish police. Approximately 3,000 Jews received help from Sendler.

Even more remarkable and dangerous was Sendler's work for Żegota, a unique clandestine organization, organized in December, 1942, which assisted thousands of Jews who fled the Ghetto to avoid being transported to the German death camps. Risking automatic execution if they were caught by the Germans, Żegota operatives found shelter, provided food and medical assistance and gave forged documents to Jews under their care.

The primary focus of Żegota's work was to save as many Jewish children as possible. Żegota officials recognized that Irena Sendler was the best qualified person for the daunting task. This fearless woman was largely responsible for saving the lives of 2,600 Jewish children.

Sendler, who had several close calls in her ceaseless efforts to avoid the Gestapo, was finally arrested in October, 1943. Confined to the infamous Pawiak Prison where she was brutally tortured, Sendler expected to be shot by the Germans. But thanks to a well-placed bribe by a Żegota official to a Gestapo officer, Sendler's life was spared. After her release from prison, Sendler lived like the Jewish children she has rescued—in hiding. Still wearing the scars of her beatings by the Germans, the elderly Sendler lives today in obscurity in Warsaw. She deserves her historian and her Spielberg to tell the world her compelling story of sacrifice, courage and goodness.

In time the extremist, sensationalist accounts of Pope Pius XII, the Catholic Church and the Poles during World War II will be winnowed out and more credible interpretations will

remain to explain their respective places in modern history. Perhaps a younger generation of historians will discover the rich resources, as yet largely untapped, of the good people who stood up for their beliefs against totalitarianism and celebrate their remarkable lives.

We will finally get what we should have had all along—history that is custom fit in an off-the-rack world.

Dr. Richard C. Lukas is a retired professor of history. He has taught at universities in Florida, Ohio, and Tennessee and is the author of seven books.

His book, *The Forgotten Holocaust*, went through several editions, including a Polish one, and is now considered a classic. His *Did the Children Cry?* won the *Janusz Korczak Literary Award*, sponsored by the *Anti-Defamation League* and the *Kosciuszko Foundation*.

Both volumes, published by Hippocrene, are available in paperback.