

# HOODWINKING THE PUBLIC

**Bill Donohue**

The pollsters were mostly wrong again on Election Day—in some cases by a huge margin—thus making a mockery of psephology, the statistical study of elections. It doesn't have to be this way: statistical models are not the problem; the problem is poor sampling. Unfortunately, much of the survey research done these days is not much better, often allowing the political bent of those conducting it to color the outcomes.

One of the most glaringly hyper-political surveys ever done was released in November by the Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI), in partnership with the Brookings Institution. “Competing Visions of America: An Evolving Identity or a Culture Under Attack?” is the title of this year's American Values Survey.

PRRI has a partisan record, so it is not surprising that it would conduct a flawed survey, though this one is by far its worst undertaking. On the other hand, the Brookings Institution has a good reputation, making this co-venture regrettable.

To be sure, there is much about this survey that is quite good, and helpful to sociologists like myself. But there are several aspects to it that are so indefensible as to discredit it.

The report was written in part by the CEO of PRRI, Robert P. Jones. He is not a sociologist; his Ph.D. is in religion. He is most well known for promoting the idea that white Christian men pose an existential threat to American democracy, feeding the left-wing trope that white supremacists are one of the nation's most pressing problems.

It is not until the latter part of the report that there is a

segment on this subject—Trump supporters are singled out for rebuke—but it is front- and-center in the marketing of the survey. Indeed, the first subject in the press release is titled, “Anti-Democratic Beliefs and Support for Political Violence on the Right.”

We just came off a year when left-wing violence almost destroyed Portland, Seattle, Minneapolis and other cities. The spike in crime that affected most big cities is at least partly the result of left-wing mayors and district attorneys taking a hands-off approach to crime, ordering cops to stand down. Meanwhile Antifa and Black Lives Matter killed dozens of innocent people, and trashed so many stores in cities like New York that it turned them into a ghost town for much of the year.

The report, however, has nothing to say about these events. It is only concerned about right-wing violence, which was miniscule compared to the degree of violence carried out by the left.

Survey researchers, like social scientists in general, are firmly situated on the left-wing side of the political spectrum. Many of the honest ones among them often suffer from ideological blinders: they are so used to thinking that their political leanings are an expression of reality (as opposed to a reflection of their bias), that they don't realize how tendentious their work is.

Take, for example, the report's treatment of the survey questions on abortion. Having read literally scores of surveys on this issue for several decades, it is clear that the only ones that are truly helpful are the ones that dig deep, offering respondents many different ways they can explain their position. In short, the more simplistic and brief the questions, the less enlightening they are.

This survey hones in on one question: Was *Roe v. Wade*, the

decision that legalized abortion, the right one? It found that 63% agree. What it didn't ask is more important.

Most Americans are conflicted on this subject. They do not want to make all abortions illegal, yet they do not like the current condition whereby all abortions are legal, regardless of the reasons for it, and at any time of gestation. They want restrictions. Most do not endorse abortions that are procured for matters of inconvenience, and the further along a woman is in her pregnancy, the less likely they are to support it.

This survey never gets to this level of discernment, and is therefore of limited utility.

Has God granted America a special role in human history? In 2013, 64% said yes, but today the figure has dropped to 44%. That is surely worth exploring. The report simply offers the findings, without drawing any conclusions. Fine. But the press release tells a different story. It says that those who answered affirmatively evince "Christian nationalist sympathies," citing Republicans as an example (68% of whom agree with the statement).

This is cruel and dishonest. Simply because someone believes that God granted our nation a special role in history does not make him a Christian nationalist, a term employed by Jones as roughly analogous to white supremacists. He's wrong. In fact, his own survey undercuts his narrative. What was not said in the press release, but is said in the report, is that 67% of black Protestants agree with the statement. Are they also white supremacists?

It says a lot about the bias that these authors harbor that they don't say a word about the black response in their press release. To do so would make mince meat of their argument that Republicans, most of whom are white, are the most likely to be Christian nationalists.

Perception does not always jive with reality, even if it

functions as such. In objective terms, there is less discrimination against African Americans today than at any time in American history. Gains in education and employment are stunning, approval of interracial marriage has never been higher, and a record number of blacks hold public office. Obama and Oprah are unusual, but their climb to the top is indicative that things have changed dramatically.

This has to be said because the report finds that only 42% of Americans agree that "We have made great progress in achieving true racial equality in the U.S." Why, given all the objective measures of racial progress, is the figure so low?

It is not hard to figure out. Over the past few years, the nation has been embroiled in one racial controversy after another, many of them dealing with police interactions with blacks. That the media have exploited these incidents—and in some cases seriously misrepresented what actually happened—cannot be denied, the effect of which is to feed the perception that the cause of racial equality is going backwards. This is irresponsible and dangerous.

One of the main factors accounting for the perception that racial discrimination is getting worse is the prevalence of critical race theory. The report's coverage of this issue smacks of politics.

The report offers data on what Americans think about this subject, which is helpful, but then it says, "Despite some high-profile flare-ups over this issue in the media," most Americans believe that students should be taught about the nation's "best achievements and worst mistakes."

This is a lousy segue. The latter has nothing to do with the former. Critical race theory teaches students that there are oppressors, namely white people, and the oppressed, namely black people. It makes judgments about people based on their skin pigmentation, not their individual attributes. In short,

it is a racist ideology, designed to drive a wedge between whites and blacks.

The report's section on the issue of race only gets more inaccurate when the subject of police reaction to black crime is discussed. It found that Democrats are significantly less likely to say that police killings of black men are isolated incidents than are Republicans, most of whom "trust far-right media outlets (91%) and Fox News (88%)." In other words, the more objective-minded Democrats, who no doubt watch such "politically neutral" stations as CNN, MSNBC and PBS (more about this shortly), are assumed by the report's authors to be right in concluding that police killings of blacks "are part of a broader pattern of how police treat Black Americans."

This perspective, however, does not square with reality.

Michael Tonry, a researcher whom no one would consider a conservative, came to a surprising conclusion in his book, *Malign Neglect*. "Racial differences in patterns of offending, not racial bias by police and other officials, are the principal reason that such greater proportions of blacks than whites are arrested, prosecuted, convicted, and imprisoned."

Robert Sampson and Janet Lauritsen, who have sterling liberal credentials, found that "large racial differences in criminal offending," not racism, explains why more blacks are in prison proportionately than whites for longer terms.

In 2016, Harvard professor Roland G. Fryer Jr. led a team of researchers to study this issue. They examined more than 1,000 police shootings in 10 major police departments in three states. "On the most extreme use of force—officer-involved shootings—we find no racial differences in either the raw data or when contextual factors are taken into account." The black economist admitted, "It is the most surprising result of my career."

In 2019, social scientists from Michigan State University and

Arizona State University reported on the results of their two-year study. "When adjusting for crime, we find no systemic evidence of anti-Black disparities in fatal shootings of unarmed citizens, or fatal shootings involving misidentification of harmless objects."

In other words, the Republicans came to the right conclusion, and the Democrats were wrong in their assessment of this issue. Could it be that Fox News and the "far-right" media outlets did a better job covering this matter than their competitors did?

Many other examples could be given, but what genuinely reveals the left-wing bent to this report is the way it treats media sources. Throughout the report it scores respondents who get their news from "Fox News" (cited 28 times) or "far-right" media outlets (asked 31 times). It never defines the latter. Nor does it ask about "left-wing" news sources.

The term "far-right" suggests fascist or Nazi-leaning. In the press release, we learn that the authors of this research believe that Newsmax and One America News are "far-right" sources! On p. 25 of the report, in footnote #10, it defines CNN, MSNBC and public television as examples of "mainstream news." Only someone living in a left-wing bubble thinks this way.

If CNN, MSNBC and PBS were labeled "far-left" in a survey, it would be written off as a right-wing study. It must also be said that, in keeping with the game plan, "mainstream" CNN hosted a show on the report, inviting its authors, including Jones, to appear, and the New York Times ran a story on one part of the report. That was the icing on the cake.

The funding for this dishonest research was largely made by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, with help from the Wilbur and Hilda Glenn Family Foundation and the Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock. The Glenn

Foundation appears not to be hyper-politicized, but the same is not true of the other two.

The Carnegie Corporation of New York makes grants to the Center for American Progress, Faith in Public Life, and the ACLU. All have an anti-Catholic record and receive money from George Soros. The Veatch Program gives to PRRI, Faith in Public Life, and Black Lives Matter.

In other words, left-wing foundations fund a report by a left-wing research company and the left-wing media give them a media splash. The public has been hoodwinked.

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## **INVENTING THE ENEMY**

Ideological foes sometimes find it necessary to exaggerate the threats posed by their adversaries. In some cases, they may sincerely believe the worst about their foes, and conclude that it is not unethical to engage in a little hyperbole. Or they may do so because they want to make money by ginning up their base, hoping to cash in on their false narrative. There are also times when they get so creative as to come close to inventing an enemy.

Two current examples of this propagandistic ploy can be seen in the writings of those who are issuing dire warnings about Christian nationalists and white supremacists. The former is a clear example of inventing the enemy, and the latter is a gross exaggeration. But this hasn't stopped left-wing authors and organizations from their bogeyman thesis.

Hardly a week goes by without some pundit claiming that the United States is being taken over by Christian nationalists. Accusations are being made that are completely without

foundation, and few in the media are taking them to task.

Proponents of this view like to point to the presence of a few Christian signs that were evident in the Jan. 6 Capitol riot. This has had almost no effect on most Americans, and with good reason: those who stormed the Capitol were men and women who came to express their anger at the American ruling class. It was not an exercise in Christian nationalism. But to those who distrust white Christian patriotic Americans, the signs were proof that Christian nationalists are on the march.

No one beats Samuel L. Perry, a sociologist at the University of Oklahoma. He said, "The Capitol Insurrection was as Christian nationalist as it gets." His baseless charge was endorsed by the likes of Thomas B. Edsall of the New York Times and Americans United for Separation of Church and State. Merely asserting that culpability belongs to Christian nationalists is all that matters these days. No proof is required.

Robert P. Jones is another author who is sold on the threat of Christian nationalists. Looking at the Capitol riot, he is convinced that "a significant number of the attackers on Jan. 6 were Christian nationalists and white supremacists." He said he spotted a Christian flag at the event, adding that "Many people may not be familiar with it." Good point: We took a poll of our Catholic League staff and no one had ever heard of it.

If the presence of a little-known Christian flag is enough to convince some activists and pundits that Jan. 6 was a Christian nationalist uprising, then it should follow that the burning of the American flag at Black Lives Matter and Antifa rallies—it happened regularly—is overwhelming proof of their anti-American agenda. They are the real threat to peace and safety, not Christian nationalists, whoever they are.

Author Katherine Stewart also maintains that Christian



nationalists are a menace to society. In March last year, she cited evidence that Christian nationalists are “running the country.” Her proof? A remark made by President Trump that “by Easter” the Covid crisis would ease. That was all the evidence she needed—his dropping of the “E-word.”

Andrew Whitehead is a sociologist at Indiana University-Perdue University Indianapolis who wrote a book on Christian nationalists with Samuel Perry. Two years ago he said that Christian nationalists “think you have to be Christian to be truly American.” He did not quote anyone to that effect. Quite frankly, as one who runs in Christian circles, I never heard anyone make such a stupid comment.

Perry and Whitehead are quite the dynamic duo. They argue that if someone believes the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution are divinely inspired documents, that proves they are Christian nationalists. The bar is obviously not set very high.

According to Perry, no one epitomizes the mind-set of Christian nationalism better than evangelical pastor Greg Locke. Edsall was so impressed by Perry’s observation that he cited Locke’s book, *This Means War*, as the definitive source of this dreaded movement.

Having never heard of Locke, I bought the book, which was published last year before the election, and searched in vain for anything Locke said about Christian nationalism. He never mentions the term. The best I could find was one throw-away sentence near the end of the book where he says, “When it comes to an election, you’d better be a Christian first and a Christian last.”

That was it. Most of the book is comprised of Protestant musings on the need for Christians to stand fast against challenges to our Judeo-Christian heritage. If this is supposed to be Exhibit A in the arsenal of those convinced that Christian nationalists are about to take over the nation,

they had better retire before more people find out about their fairy tales.

The lies about Christian nationalism have real-life consequences. Three months ago, Anthea Butler, who teaches religious and African studies at the University of Pennsylvania, accused white evangelicals of posing “an existential crisis to us all.” She said their ideas “may end up killing us all.” It is this kind of incendiary comment that should be challenged with regularity, but never is. That’s because Butler is black and white liberals don’t have the guts to confront her.

Just as unnerving is the spectacle of states bent on adopting a new curriculum wherein teaching the truth about our Judeo-Christian heritage is considered taboo.

In Florida, one of the items deemed problematic for 7th graders holds that students should “Recognize how Judeo-Christian values influenced America’s founding ideals and documents.” Also found objectionable is the requirement that “Students will recognize the influence of the Protestant work ethic on economic freedom and personal responsibility.”

Both of these declarations are indisputably true. The problem is with those who object to them, not those who applaud them.

Christian nationalism is not only a myth, it is a pernicious lie. We should be celebrating patriotic Americans who are Christian, not castigating them.

White supremacists do exist, but they are few in number and pose little danger to the Republic. This hasn’t stopped those with a left-wing agenda from inflating their power. Wild generalizations about white people are being made with regularity, and not simply by radical authors.

Let’s face it, white people, in general, have a difficult time defending themselves against racist comments. That’s too bad

because their reticence begets more attacks on them.

In his inaugural address, Joe Biden singled out white supremacy as a force to be reckoned with. He did not define what he meant by this term, nor did he offer any examples, though many reporters noted that he was referring to the January 6 Capitol riot.

David Horowitz, the former left-wing activist turned conservative, slammed Biden's remark as a "monstrous lie." The evidence supports him.

Are white people a threat to safety? The latest FBI statistics reveal that blacks, who are 12.5% of the population, comprise 58% of all murder arrests and 40% of all violent crimes. In New York City, whites are 33% of the population but account for only 2% of shootings. Blacks, who are 23% of the population, commit 75% of all shootings.

Christian Picciolini was a leader in the skinhead movement for a quarter century, so he should know who the white supremacists are. "It's the average American. It is our mechanics, it's our dentists, it's our teachers, lawyers, doctors, nurses and unfortunately that's the way it's turned into the last 30 years."

What is really unfortunate is the bigoted swipe at virtually every white person. If what he said were true, then, to take one index, we should expect that the rate of violent crimes committed by whites would be very high, but it isn't. That's because the "average American" is not a white supremacist.

New York Times columnist Charles Blow is also guilty of making wild generalizations. In his piece on August 16, he says that the latest census figures are "terrifying" for "white nationalists." He does not explain who these people are, nor does he provide a scintilla of evidence that the "white power acolytes"—whoever they are—are terrified about the census.

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL), which was founded to combat anti-Semitism, but has more recently evolved into a left-wing activist organization, is leading the way with charges of white supremacy killings. It offers as an example of white supremacist violence the shootings at a Parkland, Florida high school, the Tree of Life synagogue killings in Pittsburgh, the shootings at the Poway Chabad in California, and a violent attack at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas.

The ADL's analysis is sophomoric and misleading.

Nikolas Cruz, 22, killed 17 and wounded 17 others at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland in 2018. He had been expelled from the school for disciplinary reasons and was a known racist, but he was not active in white supremacist organizations. When he was jailed, he attacked an officer.

In 2018, Robert Bowers entered the Tree of Life Synagogue and yelled "All Jews must die" as he opened fire on the congregants. When the National Council of Jewish Women issued a statement about the deadliest attack on the Jewish community in American history, they cited his anti-Semitism but said not a word about him being a white supremacist.

The Poway synagogue shootings in 2019 were committed by John Earnest, a young man who hated Jews and Muslims. The San Diego ex-nurse, who killed one woman, had no criminal record and had no connection to any white supremacist group.

Patrick Crusius killed 22 people at a Walmart in El Paso in 2019. He said his targets were "Mexicans." He was known for his anti-Mexican rants and most of those whom he killed had Spanish surnames.

These four tragedies were the work of very sick men, all of whom were bigots. But if we are to call every white racist shooter a white supremacist—when there is no evidence of ties to any such group—then we are not dealing with reality. Klansmen are white supremacists, and they are not your

“average American.”

To be sure, there are violent white supremacists, but to slap the label “white supremacist” on every white bigoted thug is positively absurd. Those who do so are furthering a political agenda, and are not interested in telling the truth.

What is perhaps most disconcerting about this contrived scare-mongering about Christian nationalists and white supremacists is the relatively little attention given to Antifa and Black Lives Matter. They were responsible for over 600 riots last year, resulting in death and destruction. Yet we only hear about calls to investigate the Jan. 6 riot, and not these serial acts of violence. This is pure politics, having nothing to do with a sincere interest in law and order.

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## **PRESIDENT BIDEN’S POLICIES: DEPARTURES FROM CATHOLIC TEACHINGS**

- January 20, 2021 – Biden signed an executive order affirming that “children should be able to learn without worrying about whether they will be denied access to the restroom, the locker room, or school sports,” affirming his campaign promise to allow minors to use facilities and participate in high school sports opposite their biological sex. While campaigning, in response to a question from a parent of a transgender child, Biden said that there would be “zero discrimination” when it came to minors seeking to change their gender.

- January 20, 2021 – Biden issued an executive order requiring all federal agencies to implement the ruling in the Supreme

Court decision *Bostock v. Clayton County*, which treats sexual orientation and gender identity as protected classes. This is a grave injustice that erases the differences and complementary relationship between man and woman.

- January 22, 2021 – Biden issued a statement on the 48th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* describing the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision as a “foundational precedent” to which all judicial nominees should commit. Biden called for *Roe*’s codification.
- January 23, 2021 – The Department of Justice announced that it would repeal a Trump administration memo that blocked the enforcement of the *Bostock* ruling in federal law.
- January 25, 2021 – Biden signed an order that would allow transgender persons to serve in the Armed Forces. As part of the order, Biden urged the Defense Department to create a process that would allow individuals to change sexes while serving in the military.
- January 28, 2021 – Biden issued the “Memorandum on Protecting Women’s Health at Home and Abroad.” This memorandum revokes the Mexico City Policy, which is a U.S. government policy that requires foreign non-governmental organizations to certify that they will not “perform or actively promote abortion as a method of family planning.”
- January 28, 2021 – Biden instructed the Department of Health and Human Services to immediately move to consider rescinding the Trump administration rule blocking health care providers in the federally funded Title X family planning program from referring patients for abortions.
- January 28, 2021 – Biden ordered that the necessary steps be taken to resume funding to the United Nations Population Fund, which promotes family planning through abortion.
- January 28, 2021 – Biden directed United States Agency for

International Development and other United States government foreign assistance programs to ensure that adequate funds are being directed to support abortion rights.

- February 4, 2021 – Biden issued the “Memorandum on Advancing the Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Persons Around the World.” This will limit the ability of faith-based organizations to assist in foreign aid.

- February 4, 2021 – Biden signed an executive order allowing for non-married couples to be treated as married for the purposes of the refugee system in certain circumstances.

- February 25, 2021 – The House passed the Equality Act. Biden made enacting this legislation within his first 100 days in office a top legislative priority.

- The act would effectively gut the 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act, eviscerating important religious rights.

- State laws that protect religious liberty would be gutted.

- Freedom of speech, belief, and thought, as the U.S. Bishops have said, would be put “at risk.” When conscience rights are attacked, all liberties are jeopardized.

- Taxpayer-funded abortions would become a reality.

- The bishops stress that “Houses of worship and other religious spaces will be turned into places of ‘public accommodation.’”

- Adoption and foster care providers would have their rights stripped.

- Catholic hospitals would no longer be allowed to govern as Catholic facilities, threatening healthcare for everyone, especially the poor.

- Starting in kindergarten, students would be indoctrinated in the LGBT agenda.

- Parental rights would be decimated.

- Men who transition to female could compete in women’s sports, effectively working against the rights of women.

- Privacy rights would be a thing of the past. As has already happened, a man who thinks of himself as a woman would be

allowed to use the women's locker room.

- February 25, 2021 – Rachel Levine, a transgender born a biological male, was Biden's nomination for Assistant Secretary for HHS. When questioned about sex transitioning of minors during his confirmation hearing, Levine did not oppose the idea of allowing minors to receive hormone therapy and puberty blockers.

- March 4, 2021 – Biden supports the For the People Act (H.R. 1), a bill that calls into question the impartiality of those who have religious affiliations. The objectionable provision is directed at a person's suitability serving on a state's redistricting commission. It assumes that people of faith – but not atheists – are inclined to be partisan observers, thus coming dangerously close to invoking a “religious test.”

- March 11, 2021 – As part of Biden's American Rescue Plan Act, there was no language that reflects the longstanding, bi-partisan consensus policy to prohibit taxpayer dollars from funding abortions domestically and internationally. The policy was needed because this bill includes many general references to healthcare that, absent the express exclusion of abortion, have consistently been interpreted by federal courts not only to allow, but to compel, the provision of abortion without meaningful limit.

- March 18, 2021 – The Office of Population Affairs at HHS announced the Biden administration's plan to repeal the Trump-era Protect Life Rule governing Title X by the end of the year. This announcement was in direct response to President Biden's executive order issued on January 28.

- March 30, 2021 – Secretary of State Antony Blinken disbanded the “Commission on Unalienable Rights,” because it overemphasized religious liberty. Blinken would rather treat religious liberty as a coequal right, diminishing its status, freeing the State Department to promote LGBT and abortion



rights.

- March 31, 2021 – The Department of Defense released a statement affirming Biden’s executive order on transgender persons in the military stating that the Department will “provide a path for those in service for medical treatment, gender transition, and recognition in one’s self-identified gender.”
- April 13, 2021 – Under Biden, the Food and Drug Administration is no longer enforcing the “in-person dispensing requirement” for chemical abortion pills.
- April 13, 2021 – Under Biden, the USAID Middle East Bureau renamed the “Religious and Ethnic Communities Office” to “Equity and Diverse Communities in the Middle East and North Africa Office” to shift the Bureau’s focus away from protecting the rights of religious minorities in the Middle East and emphasize other groups such as LGBT.
- April 14, 2021 – HHS introduced the Title X changes outlined by Biden’s “Memorandum on Protecting Women’s Health at Home and Abroad.” Under these new rules, grantees would be required to refer for abortions, despite moral or religious objections, effectively banning otherwise pro-life grantees from participating.
- April 16, 2021 – Under Biden, the National Institute of Health removed restrictions on human fetal tissue research.
- April 20, 2021 – After a group of Catholic doctors and hospitals won a case over an HHS rule that would compel them to provide gender-transition surgeries, regardless of their conscientious beliefs, the Biden administration appealed to keep this mandate in place.
- April 22, 2021 – The Department of Housing and Urban Development announced changes to the Equal Access Rule, which would require participants in the Department’s Office of

Community Planning and Development programs to accommodate transgender persons based on their gender identity. This would compel Catholic shelters to house individuals of the opposite sex.

- April 25, 2021 – The DOJ issued a statement of interest in favor of a Georgia transgender prisoner who is suing the Georgia Department of Corrections for failing to house him based on his gender identity because Georgia does not want to house people of one biological sex with those of the other.

- May 10, 2021 – The Department of Health and Human Services announced that it would reinstate an Obama-era rule that would remove exemptions for religious and Catholic hospitals that refused to provide transgender services and procedures that go against their religious beliefs. The rule interpreted “sex discrimination” under Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act to include “gender identity.” This is a major blow to the religious liberty rights of Catholic doctors and hospitals. It would force doctors and hospitals to provide sex reassignment surgeries, even if these surgeries go against their religious beliefs, as well as cover these surgeries and procedures in their insurance policies.

- May 12, 2021 – HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra, who voted against a law that banned partial-birth abortion when he was a congressman, was asked if he would respect this law. He made it clear he would not. He justified this stance by falsely claiming that there is no such law. In 2003 Congress passed the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act and President George W. Bush signed it.

- May 17, 2021 – After the Supreme Court said it would take up a case involving Mississippi’s ban on abortion after 15 weeks, White House press secretary Jen Psaki informed reporters that Biden was “committed to codifying” Roe v. Wade no matter what the Court decides.

- May 28, 2021 – Biden released his budget proposal for FY2022, and it allocates money for abortions since it has no Hyde Amendment language. This is the first budget proposal since 1993 that does not include conscience protections to ensure federal funds are not used for abortions.
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## BIDEN ADMIN CLAIMS AMERICA IS RACIST

*Never before in American history has there been as many members of a presidential administration who have openly declared the United States to be a racist nation. Here is a sample from the Biden administration.*

**President Joe Biden:** “Systemic racism that is a stain our nation’s soul; the knee on the neck of justice for Black Americans; the profound fear and trauma, the pain, the exhaustion that Black and brown Americans experience every single day... this takes acknowledging and confronting, head on, systemic racism and the racial disparities that exist in policing and in our criminal justice system more broadly.”

**Vice President Kamala Harris:** “America has a long history of systemic racism. Black Americans – and Black men, in particular – have been treated, throughout the course of our history, as less than human.”

**Sec. Antony Blinken, Department of State:** “‘We believe that it is important for the United States to change its own image and to stop advancing its own democracy in the rest of the world,’ he said. ‘Many people within the United States actually have little confidence in the democracy of the United States.’”

**Sec. Janet Yellen, Department of the Treasury:** “The country is also facing a climate crisis, a crisis of systemic racism, and an economic crisis that has been building for fifty years... I believe economic policy can be a potent tool to improve society. We can – and should – use it to address inequality, racism, and climate change.”

**Sec. Lloyd Austin, Department of Defense:** “‘If confirmed, I will fight hard to stamp out sexual assault, to rid our ranks of racists and extremists, and to create a climate where everyone fit and willing has the opportunity to serve this country with dignity,’ Austin, 67, said at his confirmation hearing.” “‘The job of the Department of Defense is to keep America safe from our enemies. But we can’t do that if some of those enemies lie within our own ranks,’ Austin told the Senate Armed Services Committee.”

**AG Merrick Garland, Department of Justice:** “‘I think it is plain to me that there is discrimination and widespread disparate treatment of communities of color and other ethnic minorities in this country,’ Judge Garland says when asked to define systemic racism.”

**Sec. Deb Haaland, Department of the Interior:** “We must acknowledge the pain that African American communities across the nation and around the world are feeling during these turbulent times and commit ourselves to real progress.”

“Serious inequities exist in this country. We cannot continue with business as normal. We must tackle these issues and build a country where race doesn’t determine access to opportunity, justice, and accountability.”

**Sec. Tom Vilsack, Department of Agriculture:** “‘We’ll have an equity commission, which will begin the process of investigating all of the programs at USDA to make sure that we identify and root out any systemic racism that may exist in those programs,’ said Vilsack. ‘Now, the reality is that we’ve

not only had discrimination in the past but we've had the cumulative effect of that discrimination, which needs to be addressed.'"

**Sec. Gina Raimondo, Department of Commerce:** "Our work to dismantle systemic racism in Rhode Island did not start today and it will not end today, but we can rise together and make meaningful progress toward racial equity now."

"And the fact of the matter is, we know that lack of investment, particularly in public transportation, transit, water, housing, has hurt low-income folks and people of color the most. And it's time to finally rectify that systemic inequality and build back better and more equally."

**Sec. Marty Walsh, Department of Labor:** "You have to be very intentional about dealing with systemic racism. Systemic racism just didn't come in since May of last year. Systemic racism has been here forever, if you want to be honest about it. But we have a unique opportunity when we talk about recovering from covid-19 to be able to really focus on the issue of systemic racism, also inequality, gender inequality and all kinds of other types of inequality."

"White people shouldn't be afraid of the word white privilege. It can be a complicated conversation to have, but we can't run away from it."

**Sec. Xavier Becerra, Department of Health and Human Services:** "We must meet the challenge to further justice and equity. At HHS, I will do everything I can to tackle racism as a serious public health threat that affects our mental and physical well-being." "We at the Department of Health and Human Services stand with marginalized communities to provide support and do our part to ensure that health and well-being are treated as a right and our systems are actively furthering justice."

**Sec. Marcia Fudge, Department of Housing and Urban**

**Development:** “‘Black people have always been aware of systemic and institutional racism. COVID-19 just proved to the rest of the country that it exists.’”

**Sec. Pete Buttigieg, Department of Transportation:** “‘Black and brown neighborhoods have been disproportionately divided by highway projects or left isolated by the lack of adequate transit and transportation resources,’ Mr. Buttigieg tweeted in December. In an interview earlier this month, he reiterated that ‘there is racism physically built into some of our highways’ and said the infrastructure program includes money ‘specifically committed to reconnect some of the communities that were divided by these dollars.’”

**Sec. Jennifer Granholm, Department of Energy:** “Her voice wavered as she compared her own son to Martin. ‘I have a wonderful teenage son too and he wears hoodies and he carries his cellphone and he likes skittles and if this were my son, my God,’ she continued. ‘But let’s face it. This is not something that would happen to my son or many other sons. This happened because Trayvon was black.’”

**Sec. Miguel Cardona, Department of Education:** “Our country faces multiple crises – including a health pandemic & a pandemic of hate & racism that has been prevalent for centuries.”

**Sec. Denis McDonough, Department of Veteran Affairs:** “‘Confronting this question of racial inequity will be a fundamental part of my tenure here, not least because the president is demanding it,’

**Sec. Alejandro Mayorkas, Department of Homeland Security:** “DHS will continue to lawfully monitor threats posed by foreign terrorist organizations. But we also know that the threat posed by domestic violent extremism will remain persistent. We have witnessed an increase in domestic attacks, particularly by white-supremacist, anti-government and anti-authority

extremists. The majority of these attacks have targeted communities of color and other minority groups.”

**Shalanda Young, Acting Director of the Office of Management and Budget:** “America is confronting four compounding crises of unprecedented scope,” including “a national reckoning on racial inequity centuries in the making.”

**Office of Management and Budget:** “‘The moment has come for the nation to deal with systemic racism and to ensure the promise of America is finally and fully open to all – not just some – Americans.’”

**Susan Rice Domestic Policy Council chief:** “I’d say better late than never. You know, to serve an administration which has been racist to its core for the last three and a half years, from comparing the peaceful protesters at Charlottesville to white supremacists, calling white supremacists very fine people, all the way through to the recent weeks where the administration has disparaged the Black Lives Matter movement, disparaged the peaceful protesters, and basically made plain that they prefer to stand by a Confederate legacy than a modern America, it’s been an administration whose record on race is just disgraceful,” Rice said

“For too many American families, systemic racism and inequality in our economy, laws and institutions, still put the American Dream far out of reach,” she said.

**Michael S. Regan Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency:** “We must strengthen our state laws and regulations to be more inclusive of communities of color and tribal concerns before a location is chosen and well before a permit application is submitted. This process highlights the allegations of systemic racism that zoning and business-friendly regulations perpetuate against communities of color.”

**Linda Thomas-Greenfield United States Ambassador to the United Nations:** “I have seen for myself how the original sin of

slavery weaved white supremacy into our founding documents and principles.”

“Racism is the problem of the racist. And it is the problem of the society that produces the racist. And in today’s world, that is every society.”

**Isabel Guzman Administrator of the Small Business Administration:** “Systemic racism is a persistent roadblock for women and minority small business owners. This was true before the pandemic, and unfortunately, it’s even more true now.”

**Ron Klain White House Chief of Staff:** “We face four overlapping and compounding crises, including “a racial equity crisis.” “Much more will need to be done to... combat systemic racism and inequality.”

**Cecilia Rouse Chair of the Council of Economic Advisors:** “Racism in the justice system and discrimination in the labor market and health care system are not new, but the death of George Floyd and others at the hands of police, and the disparate impacts of Covid-19 and the economic crisis on black and brown communities have laid bare how racism permeates every facet of American life.”

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# DISNEY’S ANTI-BIAS CAMPAIGN EXCLUDES CATHOLICS

Bill Donohue

## *Introduction*

Disney is apologizing left and right for what it says are its bigoted portrayals of many groups. It is also scrubbing its



inventory clean of stereotypical depictions, offering disclaimers at the beginning of its movies. Yet its newly found sensitivity does not include Catholics, even though they have unquestionably been the most maligned of any demographic group.

Disney's concessions to the cancel culture began in 2016 when activists complained about a Halloween costume. They objected to the depiction of Maui, a well respected figure in Polynesian oral tradition; he was a character in the movie, "Moana." His costume was labeled akin to blackface. Disney immediately apologized and pulled this "offensive" costume, saying it wanted to "respect the culture of Pacific Islanders."

Last year, Disney put disclaimers on several of its movies. "The Jungle Book" was said to perpetuate a stereotype of African Americans; "Peter Pan" was branded offensive to Indians; "Swiss Family Robinson" was criticized for depicting pirates as a "stereotypical foreign menace"; "Dumbo" was cast as racist; "Aladdin" was condemned for being anti-Arab; "The Aristocats" were deemed anti-Asian because a cat played the piano with chopsticks; and "Lady and the Tramp" was pulled by Disney Plus for offering a "culturally insensitive portrayal of Italian-American chefs."

In February 2021, "The Muppet Show" was slammed for being racist. A warning was given to prospective viewers: the Muppet characters were designed to offer stereotypes of Native Americans, Arabs and East Asians. The disclaimer was a classic example of political correctness. "The program includes negative depictions and/or mistreatment of people or cultures. These stereotypes were wrong then and are wrong now."

If Disney really objected to "negative depictions" and "stereotypes," it would say something about the long list of "negative depictions" and stereotypical portrayals of priests that its movies and TV shows have featured for decades.

## *Movies*

In 1993, The Walt Disney Company bought Miramax, a leading movie distribution and production company, from Bob and Harvey Weinstein. The first attack on Catholics came that same year when Disney/Miramax released "Priest." It had so many negative depictions that not one of the five priests who starred in the movie was featured in a positive way. Every one of them was dysfunctional.

One of the priests had an affair with his housekeeper; another had sex with a male friend; one was a drunkard; the country priest was a madman; and the bishop was wicked. Disney wanted to open the movie on Good Friday but I stopped them. I took out an ad in the New York Times on April 10, 1995 asking, "What's Happening to Disney?"

In 1999, Disney and its distributor Miramax released "Dogma." The movie, which starred Ben Affleck and Matt Damon, was an irreverent look at Catholicism. It maintained that Joseph and Mary had sexual relations; Mary gave birth to a daughter who worked at an abortion clinic; God was played by Alanis Morissette; and a foul-mouthed 13th apostle was introduced. Reviewers noted its crude and obscene depictions.

"40 Days and 40 Nights" opened in 2002. It focused on a Catholic man who gave up sex for Lent but had his will tested by his girlfriend. One reviewer noted its "vulgar sex gags" and the Fort Worth Telegram commented on its opening during Lent, saying, "Pretty sensitive of Miramax to schedule a film mocking Lent during Lent, eh?" The "Catholic" themed film was rated R for "strong sexual content, nudity and language."

Later in 2002, "The Magdalene Sisters" was rolled out. It was a lying, vicious depiction of nuns who worked with wayward young women in Ireland. Reports issued by the Irish government found a very different picture of these nuns than what this movie afforded. The film's director, Peter Mullan, hated the

Catholic Church so much that he compared it to the murderous Taliban.

The following year, just in time for Christmas, "Bad Santa" hit the big screen. Santa was shown as a chain-smoking, drunken, foul-mouthed, suicidal, sexual predator who soils himself in Santa's chair. He is also depicted vomiting in alleys, having sex with a woman bartender in a car, and performing anal sex on a huge woman in a dressing room.

In 2006, "Black Christmas" was released. It showed the dark side of the Weinstains: their relentless effort to discredit this holy day was on full display. In fact, this film, which depicted a wacko who terrorizes college girls at Christmas, opened on Christmas Day.

### *Television*

In 1995, Disney bought Capital Cities/ABC; the combined company was named The Walt Disney Company. The first attack on Catholics came two years later when ABC released "Nothing Sacred." It featured a priest who was at war with the Catholic Church's sexual ethics. He questioned whether God exists, refused to counsel against abortion in the confessional, and openly denounced the Church's teachings on abortion, contraception, homosexuality and promiscuity, telling parishioners that he was tired of being a "sexual traffic cop."

The Catholic League conducted a year-long boycott of the show's sponsors. When "Nothing Sacred's" ratings started going downhill, Disney/ABC kept moving the show to different time slots to see if it could jack up the audience (while cutting shows that had higher ratings). This wasn't about money as much as it was ideology: Disney was hell bent on promoting propaganda against the Catholic Church. In the end, the Catholic League killed most of the sponsors and the show.

In 1998, the same year "Nothing Sacred" crashed, ABC aired

"That's Life" during Holy Week. It was one long assault on virtually every aspect of Catholicism.

The Church was condemned for its treatment of women [odd given that more women go to church and work for the Church than men], and for its teachings on abortion and homosexuality. Priests, of course, were depicted as molesters. Worst of all was a vicious mockery of the suffering and death of Jesus. "Imagine the blood comes spurting out of [his vein] like a hose. I mean, whack, whack, whack...."

Bill Maher was the star of "Politically Incorrect," a show that bashed the Catholic Church on a regular basis beginning in 1999. Maher, and his guests, became patently obscene in 2002, relentlessly assaulting Catholic sensibilities. Confession was mocked, the Immaculate Conception was the subject of vile remarks, Jesus was trashed, the Eucharist was demeaned, and priests were depicted as rapists.

In 2002, ABC ran the season premiere of "The Job." It depicted a detective dressed as a priest and a stripper dressed as a nun. The nun stripped in front of one of the male detectives as the other three watched. The nun also put her foot on the crotch of one of the male detectives while being interrogated; she did the same to a female detective. The confessional was denigrated in another scene.

"Pope Joan" never existed, but that didn't stop ABC Primetime in 2005 from pretending she might have. "On the Trail of Pope Joan," narrated by Diane Sawyer, focused on the alleged female pope from the 8th century. Sawyer relied on two discredited sources to float this lie. No serious scholar has ever validated this tale, but feminists pressing for female priests love to promote this myth.

We could fill a book with all the anti-Catholic comments made on "The View" over the years. The worst episodes took place in the 2000s, all with the blessings of Barbara Walters; she was

both a co-producer and a panelist. Joy Behar, Whoopi Goldberg, Rosie O'Donnell and Elisabeth Hasselbeck—all raised Catholic before they turned against the Church—offered non-stop attacks.

These mean-spirited women not only slandered priests with abandon, they ridiculed the Eucharist, subjected Baptism to scorn, mocked the Crucifixion, and said anti-Catholicism was justified. Had such invective been targeted at any one of the protected classes, they would have been run off the air. But because they concentrated exclusively on Catholics, they were received with open arms by Disney.

On June 12, 2007, I published an op-ed page ad in the New York Times, "What's Happened to Barbara Walters?" I took particular exception to Walter's tolerance for Rosie O'Donnell's incredibly bigoted remarks. The good news is that after this ad ran, the panelists began to cool their jets.

"The Real O'Neals," which debuted in 2016, featured a stereotypical Irish-Catholic family that was inspired by veteran anti-Catholic bigot, Dan Savage. In the first two episodes, an overzealous mother is shown abusing statues of the Virgin Mary: one was used to stop her son from having sex; the other was placed above the toilet as a reminder to put down the seat. Regarding the latter, one of the sons, who comes out as gay, flushed his girlfriend's unused condoms down the toilet under the watchful eye of the Virgin Mary.

On February 29, 2016, I published an op-ed page ad in the New York Times, "Shame on Disney-ABC," that questioned its decision to loosely base the show on Dan Savage, one of the producers. Savage, I pointed out, has made many filthy remarks about Jesus, Our Blessed Mother, and two popes. As I said in the ad, Savage's "maniacal hatred of Catholicism is so strong that it would be as though David Duke were hired to produce a show about African Americans." The show bombed after a few seasons.

In 2017, ABC aired its miniseries on the gay rights movement, "When We Rise." Its opening episode was an all-out assault on Catholics. Stereotypes about prudish nuns and equally prudish Catholic parents were featured.

The most vicious attack centered on a women's march in Boston. "We get beat up by the very cops that refuse to protect us," one character said, "in a city run by Catholic cops." So typical. There were no negative comments about "Jewish bankers" or "gay hairdressers" or "black criminals." Just corrupt Catholic cops.

"The Kids Are Alright" was aired on ABC in 2018. It depicted kids putting a microphone in the purse of their mother so they could hear what she said when going to confession. The skit proceeded to mock the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Disney owns 20th Century Fox and "Family Guy" is one of its shows. One portrayed priests as molesters, one trashed the Eucharist, and the other mocked both the Eucharist and Baptism.

### *Conclusion*

Disney gets good press by giving millions to "social justice" organizations that represent black, gay, and Asian interests. It has never contributed to, or consulted with, the Catholic League.

We are submitting this synopsis of Disney's anti-Catholic history to the Walt Disney Company Board of Directors, along with a note from me. If they can apologize to the Polynesians about "Moana," perhaps they can apologize to Catholics for decades of abuse.

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# BIDEN'S CURIOUS CATHOLIC CREDENTIALS

Bill Donohue

## *Obsessing Over Biden's Religion*

The obsession with President Biden's religion is everywhere apparent, especially among Democrats, liberal pundits, reporters and activists. They are working overtime to convince the public that he is a good Catholic.

On Biden's first day in office, White House press secretary Jen Psaki addressed his religion at a press conference. "I will just take the opportunity to remind all of you that he is a devout Catholic, and somebody who attends church regularly." "Devout Catholic." A lexis-nexis search reveals that this descriptive term has been used by the press hundreds of times in the last three months.

The day after Biden was inaugurated, the New York Times gushed that he is "perhaps the most religiously observant commander in chief in half a century." Usually, this newspaper is apprehensive, if not alarmed, about "religiously observant" public officials (especially Catholic ones), yet for some reason they made an exception for Biden.

Sister Carol Keehan is the former head of the Catholic Health Association. She says Biden is a "man who clearly loves his faith." To get an idea of what she considers to be a model Catholic, she recently showered Xavier Becerra with praise when he was grilled by a Senate committee over his nomination for Secretary of Health and Human Services. It does not bother her one iota that Becerra supports partial-birth abortions and is known for his never-ending crusades against the Little Sisters of the Poor.

Another Biden admirer is John Carr, co-director of a Catholic project at Georgetown University; he is a reliable liberal Catholic voice. He is impressed by the difference between Biden and his predecessor. "We're going from one of the least overtly religious presidents in modern times to one of the most overtly religious presidents in recent times."

If there is one thing that makes Biden "overtly religious," it is his habit of carrying a rosary. That puts a smile on the face of liberal Catholics like Father Tom Reese, a prominent Jesuit writer. "This is a guy who carries a rosary around in his pocket and talks about his faith." The media also love this story. This explains why there is so much chatter about Biden's rosary beads.

Let's concede that Biden is a rosary-carrying "devout Catholic." What does that have to do with his public policy decisions that are of interest to the Catholic Church?

Biden's lust for abortion rights, and his steadfast opposition to religious liberty legislation—as exemplified in his defense of the Equality Act—are uncontestable. In other words, if a "devout" Catholic doesn't connect the dots between his faith and his public policy decisions, how excited should Catholics be about him? And does this not explain why secularists adore this kind of Catholic?

At the individual level, Biden is the embodiment of what the privatization of religion means. In this view, religion is solely an interior exercise, having no public role to play. It must be said that there is nothing Catholic about such a position. Indeed, every pope in recent times, including Pope Francis, has spoken against this insular view. Catholicism, they contend, must have a robust presence in the public square.

Biden's privatized conception of religion is not a stunt—it is who he is.



The first time he publicly mentioned his rosary beads was in 1995, twenty-two years after he became U.S. Senator from Delaware. What he said at a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on religious freedom was classic Biden.

“I am one of those guys who’s never talked about my religion. I carry a thing called a rosary bead with me all the time—I say it all the time, I say it on the train—to me, it’s a comforting thing. I don’t suggest it to anybody else.”

He did not explain why, if the rosary beads meant so much to him, he did not want to “suggest it to anybody else.” Perhaps in his mind such a suggestion could be read as an imposition. But that wouldn’t explain his support for forcing nuns to pay for abortion-inducing drugs in their healthcare plans. That was not a suggestion—it was a mandate. It was also one that violated Catholic moral teachings.

It seems a little strange for a “devout Catholic” to keep private his religion. After all, Biden is not a monk—he has been a public office holder for 47 years. This accounts, however, for the fact that when he was running for president, the majority of the public had no idea he was Catholic. In September 2020, Newsweek released a poll showing that 56% were unaware that Biden was Catholic.

Biden’s long-time secretive Catholic status is a secret no more. Indeed his fans are now touting his “devout Catholic” status whenever they can. Given the president’s strong opposition to the life issues and religious liberty, they have little choice. It is precisely this kind of Catholic that the New York Times loves.

### *The Politics of Branding Biden a Catholic*

Everyone knew that Sen. Joe Lieberman was proudly Jewish, so there was no need to persuade the public of his religious status. Similarly, it is widely recognized that Sen. Mitt Romney is a practicing Mormon, therefore making moot attempts

to prove he is. President Biden is different. Not a day goes by without some commentators, usually left-wing Catholics, trying to convince the public that he is a model Catholic.

This is disingenuous. If Biden were a model Catholic, there would be no need to assure us that he is. Even his fans know he isn't, otherwise they wouldn't waste so much energy on this issue. What galvanizes them is their war with the bishops.

Los Angeles Archbishop José Gomez is president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). When Biden was elected, he congratulated him. However, when Biden was inaugurated, Gomez expressed concerns about the president's positions on various issues, explicitly wondering whether he "will advance moral evils."

Most bishops agreed with Gomez, but a few did not. Among the laity, those on the left were furious. Immediately, a campaign against the USCCB was launched by the National Catholic Reporter, a rogue Catholic publication.

On January 28, the Reporter asked the Vatican to investigate the USCCB for its alleged "staunch Republican support." On February 5, Faithful America, a George Soros creation, started a petition online in support of the Reporter's efforts. It will have no effect—the Vatican won't even acknowledge their game—but their intent matters greatly.

What's driving the campaign against the bishops?

Those on the Catholic left have an ideological interest in selling Biden to the public as a loyal son of the Church. Their goal is to undermine the authority of the bishops by promoting the false idea that the bishops do not have the last word on what constitutes a Catholic in good standing. They seek to persuade the public, especially Catholics, that it is perfectly acceptable to reject the Church's teachings on life, marriage, and religious liberty—the way Biden does—and still be a model Catholic.

One of their favorite tactics is to contend that Biden is more similar to Pope Francis than are the bishops. David Gibson, who directs an institute at Fordham University, claims that Biden is "more in line with the pope than the American bishops." That would surely come as news to priests who have denied Biden Communion.

Paul Elie, a Georgetown professor, says the pope and Biden have much in common. "Their informality, the fact that they were elected late in life, the fact that they seem to take issues as they come, listening, discerning and then acting." He fails to note that the pope and Biden have nothing in common when it comes to their fidelity to the Church's moral teachings. But that evidently matters less than their "informality."

Elie is more accurate when he gets to the heart of why it is necessary for Catholics like him to rescue Biden from his critics. "The hope is that the Biden Administration will invigorate American Catholicism, and vice versa." Translated this means that Catholic dissidents want the Biden brand of Catholicism to prove triumphant.

It angers Catholic malcontents that some criticize Biden's Catholic credentials. Julia Maloney, who works at the University of Michigan, gets incensed when she hears someone say that Biden is "Catholic in name only." Mark Silk, who is not Catholic, wants us Catholics to know that the president's pro-abortion record "doesn't necessarily make Biden a bad Catholic."

Sister Simone Campbell, the Democrats' favorite nun, is bolder than Silk. The star of "nuns on the bus" tries to bail out Biden by saying his views on abortion are "very developed." By that she means "he will not force his religious beliefs on the whole nation." Not exactly reassuring considering his desire to force his anti-Catholic beliefs on the Little Sisters of the Poor (as well as everyone else).

Joe Sweeney of the University of California at Davis says it is “incredibly offensive and absurd” to call into question Biden’s Catholicity simply because he has a “moderate approach to issues like abortion and same-sex marriage.” One wonders what positions Biden must take for Sweeney to label him an extremist. After all, Biden supports infanticide—babies killed in partial-birth abortions are 80% born—and he has officiated at gay weddings.

Jamie Manson, who heads an anti-Catholic organization, Catholics for Choice, says the majority of American Catholics agree with Biden on abortion. They do not. Practicing Catholics, as a recent survey disclosed, are pro-life by a 2-1 margin, and even non-practicing Catholics do not support late-term abortions.

The Catholic left has an uphill battle. Most people know that someone who identifies as Catholic yet rejects the Church’s teachings on abortion, gay marriage and the First Amendment cannot realistically be regarded as a loyal Catholic. The fact that these dissidents are working overtime to convince us that Biden is a Catholic in good standing is proof that he isn’t.

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# **BLACKS EXCEL IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

**Bill Donohue**

Catholic League members who received our February appeal will remember that I was not too happy when Ben & Jerry’s, the ice cream company owned by two left-wing radicals, and Colin Kaepernick, the failed quarterback turned left-wing activist, teamed together to push an invidious message: “I Know My

Rights.”

The one thing young men and women do not need to learn these days—this includes whites as well as blacks—is more chatter about their rights. They are consumed with their rights. What would be refreshing is a lesson on their responsibilities, i.e., their duties to themselves and others. That’s where Catholic schools have long excelled, especially with black students in the inner city.

Six black Catholics are formally candidates for sainthood. Here is a quick look at two of them and their ties to Catholic schools.

John Augustus Tolton was born a slave in Missouri in 1854. He was raised a Catholic by his mother, and despite his slave status, she instructed him, “John, boy, you’re free. Never forget the goodness of the Lord.”

Thanks to the intervention of an Irish priest, Fr. Peter McGirr, Tolton was allowed to attend St. Peter’s Catholic School, an all-white parish school in Quincy, Illinois. The priest baptized him and prepared him for Holy Communion. Tolton felt the presence of God and wanted to become a priest. However, no seminary would have him because he was black. Fr. McGirr did not give up and arranged for Tolton to pursue the priesthood in Rome. After six years of study, he became a priest in 1886, at the age of 31.

Tolton died in 1897 while on a retreat. He was America’s first black Catholic priest, a man who overcame great odds and gave his life to the poor, the sick and the hungry. Known as “Good Father Gus,” he is sure to become a saint.

Elizabeth Lange was born in Cuba, but she made her way to Baltimore in 1813. She used whatever resources she had to educate her fellow Caribbean immigrants, even while living as a black woman in a slave state. In 1828, Fr. James Hector Joubert asked her to start a school for girls of color; this

was done at the behest of Archbishop James Whitfield.

Elizabeth knew she was called by God to serve the Catholic Church. She founded a religious order and was first superior of the Oblate Sisters of Providence. Sister Mary Lange, as she was called, founded St. Frances Academy in 1828 and was Principal and Superior of St. Benedict's School in Fells Point, an historic Baltimore neighborhood, in 1857. She also founded an orphanage and a widow's home.

While Fr. Tolton and Sister Mary Lange may be among the most prominent black Catholics to leave their mark on Catholic schools, there are many more like them, not as well known, who also made valuable contributions.

What made Catholic schools so special to black Americans in the 19th century was their evangelizing appeal. Missionaries to North America evangelized the Indians, but did not seek to convert black slaves. Free blacks were evangelized, the most common venue being Catholic schools. Baltimore, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia and New Orleans were home to many Catholic schools that served a black student body.

In 1866, right after the Civil War, bishops gathered in Baltimore for the Second Plenary Council. They forthrightly addressed the plight of former slaves, pledging to use Catholic schools as the conduit to evangelization. New Catholic schools opened up during this period in Baltimore, Savannah, and St. Augustine.

In 1878, Father John Slattery, rector of St. Francis Xavier Church in Baltimore, argued that the only way to increase conversions among African Americans was through the black clergy. And the best way to do that, he said, was to expand the number of Catholic schools. While he had some success, he did not achieve as much as he had hoped. But things changed in the early part of the 20th century.

In 1914, Xavier Academy opened in New Orleans as a black

Catholic school; Blessed Katherine Drexel was responsible for garnering financial support. In the early 1930s, the school became a college. The success of Xavier University was a double-edge sword: it simultaneously provided black Catholics with a first-class educational experience while also allowing other Catholic colleges and universities to continue with their segregated ways. Desegregation of Catholic institutions of higher education, like so many other American entities, did not take place until after World War II.

A surge of African American elementary and secondary students in Catholic schools—both in the North and the South—took place between 1930 and 1960. It was these low-cost schools, staffed mostly by nuns, that helped create a positive “Black Catholic identity”; they were home to a new evangelization.

### *Academic Excellence in Inner-City Catholic Schools*

When I was honorably discharged from the U.S. Air Force in 1970, I had only one year of college under my belt. I stepped on the gas and two years later graduated from New York University. I then went to the New School for Social Research for my masters; I worked part-time as an athletic coach at an affluent Catholic school in New York City. When I only had a semester left before receiving my masters, I sought full-time employment.

I applied for jobs in accounting. That is what I was trained to do in the Air Force; I was computer literate. I was offered some good paying jobs but my heart wasn't in it. I did not want to be an accountant. Instead, I took a much lower paying job in a dangerous inner-city school, St. Lucy's in Spanish Harlem. I never regretted it. After getting my masters, I went back to NYU for my Ph.D. while working full-time at St. Lucy's. I later took a college teaching job in Pittsburgh, and received my Ph.D. in 1980.

I mention this because I saw first-hand the great good that

Catholic schools do in poor minority neighborhoods. My students were Puerto Rican and African American. Their mothers (fathers were absent) sent their children to St. Lucy's for four reasons: safety, discipline, academic excellence and religious instruction. They were not disappointed.

It is hard for middle-class white people to identify with some of these conditions. But inner-city schools are typically in high-crime neighborhoods. I had my share of run-ins with dangerous men, as well as gangs.

The public school across the street was so engulfed in violence that the City of New York had to close it. Meanwhile, St. Lucy's students, who lived in the same neighborhood, did well.

Don't believe the nonsense about Catholic schools in the ghetto being more self-selective, choosing students who are less likely to be a problem in the classroom. When I worked at St. Lucy's just the opposite was true: recalcitrant public school students were often "dumped" on Catholic schools. We did our best with them, which was invariably better than what the public schools did with them.

When I took over in 1993 as president of the Catholic League, New York Archbishop John Cardinal O'Connor was making an offer to New York City. Send me your lowest-performing 5 percent of students in the public schools, he said, and we'll put them in Catholic schools where they will succeed. City officials never responded.

We have known for decades that students from Catholic schools outclass their public school counterparts, and this is especially true of Catholic schools in the ghetto. In 1982, sociologist James Coleman and two other scholars published the results of their study comparing Catholic school students to those in the public schools: the former were one grade ahead of the latter in mathematics, reading and vocabulary. The



biggest difference was between Catholic and public school students in the inner city.

What accounted for the gap? Catholic schools maintain a more rigorous academic curriculum and insist on discipline in the classroom. Another major factor was the administration of education. Catholic schools had many fewer administrators; the public schools were top heavy with bureaucratic norms.

Even the public school establishment knows how superior Catholic schools are. In 1993, the New York State Department of Education issued a report on academic achievement in the public schools and Catholic schools. The difference was huge: Catholic students way outperformed public school students.

Does religion play a role in the academic success of Catholic schools students? Yes, a study published in 1999 by William H. Jeynes of the University of Chicago found that “very religious black and Hispanic students outperformed less religious students in academic achievement.” What makes this study so valuable is that it shows why charter public schools—which have learned a lot from Catholic schools—are still no substitute for Catholic schools, despite their success compared to traditional public schools.

In 2018, the National Center for Education Statistics released its 2017 National Assessment of Educational Progress results for reading and mathematics in grades four and eight. Catholic schools excelled, and not by a small degree: Catholic school students were much more proficient on every measure.

In 2018, the Thomas B. Fordham Institute published an important study showing the critical factor that school discipline plays in determining academic success.

Students in Catholic schools were less likely to be disruptive than those in other private schools or in public schools. They exhibited more self-control and were more likely to control their temper, respect others’ property, accept their fellow

students' ideas, and handle peer pressure. Self-discipline was a hallmark of Catholic schools. As with other studies, this one demonstrated the virtue of religious instruction in making for academic success.

Few things bother me more than hearing so-called progressives complain about racial inequality while steadfastly opposing school choice. No one who does not support charter schools and parochial schools as realistic options for minority students should be taken seriously as a champion of the poor.

Why don't we have school choice? Why does President Biden oppose it?

Sol Stern is a Jewish New Yorker who has done some of the best work on Catholic schools in the inner city. After examining all the reasons put forward by liberals why they oppose school choice, he concluded the number one reason was the power of the teachers' unions.

"It's hard to escape the conclusion that one of the most powerful reasons liberal opinion makers and policy makers ignore Catholic schools—and oppose government aid to them—is their alliance with the teachers' unions, which have poured hundreds of millions of dollars into the campaign coffers of liberal candidates around the country."

Stern wrote this in 1996. Matters have only gotten worse. His observations are a sorry commentary on the subject of academic achievement among minority students.

Catholic schools have done so much good, especially among young men who routinely fail in the public schools. They learn about their responsibilities, not their "rights." That is why they succeed, leaving the Ben & Jerry's and Colin Kaepernick crowd behind.

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# 2020 YEAR IN REVIEW

**Bill Donohue**

*The following is a shortened version of what is posted on our website.*

When I became president and CEO of the Catholic League in 1993, the lion's share of anti-Catholic bigotry stemmed from the entertainment industry and the media. Fast forward to today and we find that the primary source of anti-Catholicism is government.

In other words, we are regressing. It is one thing to be disparaged, even viciously so; it is quite another to be discriminated against.

The first serious discriminatory act of the year took place in Utah.

Utah Rep. Angela Romero, a Democrat, sponsored a bill that would have gutted the seal of confession. She said it was necessary because priests learn of the sexual abuse of minors in confession and do not report it to the authorities.

On January 13, I wrote Romero a letter asking her two questions. She maintained that sexual abusers confide to priests in the confessional about the nature of their crimes, and yet nothing ever comes of it. I asked her to identify just one perpetrator who ever made such a claim. She could not.

She could not answer my other question either. I wanted to know why she was seeking to breach the confidentiality of the priest-penitent privilege but showed zero interest in busting privileges afforded lawyer-client and psychologist-patient

relationships. Don't they learn of sexual abuse behind closed doors?

We asked our email subscribers to contact the Utah Speaker of the House, Rep. Brad Wilson, seeking his help in opposing this bill. He publicly said he did not support it. Rep. Romero huffed and puffed, saying she would go forward with her bill. In the end, she did not. Our supporters overwhelmed her fellow lawmakers with their objections.

New York Archbishop Cardinal Timothy Dolan was the target of one of the most unprincipled and well-orchestrated attacks against a bishop to surface in many years. His offense? He said nice things about President Donald Trump in a conference call.

We wasted no time taking on the bullies. From the National Catholic Reporter to the George Soros-funded Faith in Public Life, we identified and confronted Dolan's foes. They were not interested in disagreeing with him. No, they sought to shut him up. They failed.

On March 2, we received good news. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled that it would review a Superior Court decision in a case involving the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown. In 2019, we entered an amicus brief in defense of the diocese.

The question before the court was whether a grand jury could decide whether the statute of limitations starts at the time of the injury (which is typical) or, as the plaintiff sought in this case, at the time when she was awakened to the gravity of her alleged victimization.

Renee A. Rice said she was molested 40 years ago by a priest; he denies it outright. She further maintains that two bishops tried to cover it up, even though the diocese sent her a letter *10 years before her lawsuit*, encouraging her to come forward about her alleged abuse. Her attorneys said the clock determining the start of the statute of limitations should

begin in 2018, at the time of the grand jury report on clergy sexual abuse. That is when it occurred to her, they contended, that she was a victim.

When the case was formally taken up by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, we filed another amicus brief, represented once again by lawyers from the Jones Day firm in Pittsburgh. Oral arguments were heard on October 20.

One of the most left-wing radicals in Congress is Rep. Rashida Tlaib. On March 16, I wrote to Rep. Ted Deutch, head of the House Committee on Ethics, asking that the Committee issue a letter of reprimand to the Palestinian extremist.

The day before, Tlaib retweeted a post from activist David Hogg that read, "Don't let this administration address COVID-19 like our national gun violence epidemic. F\*\*k a National day of prayer, we need immediate comprehensive action." [Both tweets did not use asterisks.]

After Tlaib got bombarded with emails from our supporters, she tried to walk back her obscene assault. Message delivered.

Another left-wing extremist is Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC). I wrote to her on August 3rd when she lashed out, without provocation, at Father Damien, the 19th century priest who gave his life serving lepers on the Hawaiian island of Molokai. Referring to a statue of him in the U.S. Capitol, AOC said, "This is what patriarchy and white supremacist culture looks like!"

"Your remarks evince an offensive ethnocentrism," I said to the New York congresswoman. "You disrespected the people of Hawaii: It is they who hold Father Damien in high regard. You should be careful not to judge a people's culture and history through your own provincial lens."

Once again, our email subscribers chimed in, letting AOC know what they thought about her assault on this heroic priest.

In 2017, we came to the aid of Notre Dame Law School professor Amy Coney Barrett. She was nominated by President Trump for a seat on an appellate court. The outburst of anti-Catholicism that she experienced was a disgraceful moment in American history.

We are happy to report that our relentless defense of Barrett, and our effort to shame those who unjustly attacked her, paid off. We have evidence that our news releases on those who were maligning her were read by senate staffers. So when she was nominated to be on the Supreme Court in 2020, we were ready to do battle again.

Barrett handled herself well, disarming her critics with her brilliance and poise. We were only too happy to defend her once again on TV and radio, and in granting interviews to newspapers and internet sources.

The biggest story of the year outside of the presidential race was Covid-19. We never expected to be drawn into this health crisis, but we were.

The Catholic League was instrumental in a big victory that involved attempts to justify curtailment of the Eucharist; the abridgements were purportedly invoked because of public health concerns. At the end of May, Howard County Maryland Executive Calvin Bell announced that he was going to ban “the consumption of food or beverage of any kind before, during, or after religious services, including food or beverage that would typically be consumed as part of a religious service.” This would, in effect, ban the distribution of sacramental wine at Mass.

We immediately alerted our email subscribers, noting that this was an issue of monumental importance, one that should trigger a strong response from Catholics no matter where they lived. Our supporters came through, overwhelming County officials. I know this because I received a phone call from Scott Peterson,

spokesman for the County. He said he was “bombarded” with letters of protest. The ban was withdrawn.

The riots that swept the nation following the death of George Floyd, a black man who had a run-in with Minneapolis police, proved beyond a doubt that the expressed public health concerns of government authorities—social distancing must always be practiced—were politically expedient. No one who protested faced any penalty for flouting Covid-19 protocols. Yet church services were curtailed in the name of safety.

Left-wing activists throughout the country voiced their hatred of America by tearing down iconic statues on public property. Bibles were burned, churches were torched, schools were trashed, and Catholic graves were defaced. The vandals also destroyed statues of Saint Junípero Serra, leading us to ask the Marin County D.A. to prosecute the criminals to the full extent of the law. It kept the Catholic League busy seeking to answer the deluge of media calls. We detailed the damage that was done.

Our first victory of the year was won against a media outlet. It took place on January 3rd when we squeezed an apology from the CBS affiliate in St. Petersburg, Florida, WTSP. It falsely claimed that a Sarasota Catholic bishop had been charged with sexually abusing a child. The bishop was Protestant. We jumped on this issue immediately, and our protest resulted in an apology.

Trevor Noah’s “The Daily Show” (like Jon Stewart before him) is a hotbed of anti-Catholic bigotry. He got so bad in 2020 that it impelled us to contact the board of directors of ViacomCBS, the parent company of his Comedy Central show. Here is a sample of what I wrote on May 20. “Noah is cruel. You have a bigot in your employ. The evidence that is being forwarded to you [we provided extensive documentation of his attacks] is conclusive. You can do something about it. Please do.”

Did the memo to the board work? Noah certainly zipped it for the rest of the year.

Filipe Castro, a Texas A&M University professor, earned the ire of the Catholic League. He posted some of the most obscene and patently anti-Catholic comments on social media, and apparently was going to get away with it. We jumped on this issue, publishing his vicious assaults—they included physical threats against Catholics—sending our evidence to the media, university officials, the Board of Regents, the campus newspaper, the governor and his staff, the regional accrediting body, and various congressional and state lawmakers.

In November, with funds raised by our members, we were scheduled to have the American Association of Superintendents and Administrators send an eblast to its list of subscribers across the nation. The digital post, which I wrote, alerted superintendents to what is acceptable and what is not acceptable regarding Christmas celebrations in the schools.

It was titled, “No Need to Cancel Christmas.” We made the case that while Christianity cannot be promoted, that does not mean that schools are required to censor every expression of Christmas. “No federal court has ever ruled that Christmas must be censored in the schools.”

But then, at the last minute, the officials at this organization backed out of the deal. Of the six education organizations that we contacted, all but one either rejected our ad or did not get back to us (the one that agreed to go with it was a quarterly, making the timing impractical).

Two weeks before Christmas we scored an important victory. An upstate New York county government denied the local Knights of Columbus Council the right to display a nativity scene outside the office building. Our intervention led to it being displayed inside the building next to a menorah and Christmas



tree.

The year ended on a worrisome note. We had plenty of reasons to be concerned about the kinds of religious liberty policies that President Joe Biden might promote. After all, it was the Obama-Biden administration that gave us the Health and Human Services mandate forcing Catholic entities such as the Little Sisters of the Poor to pay for abortion-inducing drugs in their healthcare plan.

While President Trump alienated many people with his persona, he did more to protect and advance religious liberty than any president in American history. What Biden will do remains to be seen, but from what he has pledged to do—pushing for legislation that would roll back the religious exemptions afforded by Trump—the assault on religious liberty is likely to quicken.

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# ASSESSING “THE McCARRICK REPORT”

**Bill Donohue**

*This is my analysis of the “Report on the Holy See’s Institutional Knowledge and Decision-Making Related to Former Cardinal Theodore Edgar McCarrick,” or what is commonly known as “The McCarrick Report.” Much of what follows is a summary overview designed to spare readers the necessity of reading the 461-page document. It also includes my assessment of some key events.*

The “McCarrick Report” excels in providing abundant information about the ascent of Theodore McCarrick to the

highest ranks of the Catholic Church. No other study comes close to providing such rich material, much of it heretofore unknown to the public.

If there is one outstanding flaw, it was the refusal to interview Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò. This is especially unconscionable given that the Report mentions him 306 times, mostly to discredit him.[1] What makes this truly astonishing is that persons who were mentioned only a few times were interviewed. Thus, the decision not to interview Viganò was deliberate.

I never met Archbishop Viganò but I can attest to his integrity. In late 2015, after a notable Catholic contacted me about a bishop who refused to do anything about a rogue priest, I reached out to Viganò; at the time he was the Apostolic Nuncio to the U.S. He got right on it and acted responsibly. Indeed, he took my request to investigate this matter very seriously. This is important because he says the Report unfairly blames him for not investigating McCarrick, something which he vigorously denies.[2]

When I became president of the Catholic League in 1993, McCarrick was the Archbishop of Newark. At the time, our office was located in the Catholic Center at the Archdiocese of New York; Cardinal O'Connor was kind enough to move our office to the 20th floor, next to his office, so I got a chance to know him well.

I was only in the job for a few years when I received a call from McCarrick. I remember two salient comments he made. He was very kind, praising my work combating anti-Catholicism. But he also said something that rocked me: He said it was his desire to come across the Hudson and succeed Cardinal O'Connor as the next Archbishop of New York. Why, I thought, would he tell me this?

McCarrick's quest to assume this post apparently consumed him.

As we learned from the Report, while talking to two bishops in 1990, he “pounded the table and blurted out ‘I deserve New York.’”[3] His sense of entitlement was appalling.

It now becomes clear from reading the Report that one of McCarrick’s characterological weaknesses, present from the beginning, was his excessively ambitious nature. It was in 1968 that McCarrick, then a monsignor, was first considered for elevation to the episcopate. Those charged with assessing his credentials were impressed by his multiple skills, but “several informants expressed concern that McCarrick might be overly ‘ambitious.’”[4]

He was made Auxiliary Bishop in the Archdiocese of New York in 1977. Four years later, he was being considered to head a newly created diocese, the Diocese of Metuchen in New Jersey. He again impressed everyone. Yet there was a “sole concern,” that being his “obvious ambition to be promoted in the ecclesiastical hierarchy.”[5] He was a careerist, a priest whose quest for a red hat (to be a cardinal)—in one of the nation’s most prestigious dioceses—proved to be an unhealthy preoccupation.

The first signs of trouble became apparent in the 1980s. That is when his homosexual escapades became known. At least three of the four bishops in New Jersey at the time failed to act responsibly: they allowed him to continue his predatory behavior unchecked.

McCarrick’s penchant for seducing seminarians is well documented in the Report. His house in Sea Girt, down the Jersey Shore, was a favorite spot for him to lure these young men. He intentionally invited more men than he had beds for, and he did this with regularity. He didn’t just sleep with these young men: He either attempted to have sex with them, or succeeded in doing so.[6]

What McCarrick did was not simply wrong—it was evil.

Evil is a strong word. It should not be used promiscuously. In a book that I have written about this subject, *Disabling the Catholic Church: The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse* (to be published later next year by Ignatius Press), I make it clear that while the molesting priests—the vast majority of whom were homosexuals—were sick men, it would be inaccurate to label most of them evil. The same cannot be said of McCarrick. Let's be honest: Any bishop who would stain young men preparing for the priesthood has the hand of the Devil on him.

McCarrick had some help from other priests. For example, Monsignor Anthony Joseph Gambino, after listening to a priest who told him what McCarrick did to him, Gambino had the nerve to admonish him.[7] Just as disconcerting, after Archbishop Gabriel Montalvo, the Apostolic Nuncio, learned from Father Boniface Ramsey in 2000 about McCarrick's sexually abusive behavior at his beach house, sharing beds with seminarians, Montalvo never got back to him.[8]

After McCarrick was appointed Archbishop of Newark in 1986, Bishop Edward T. Hughes succeeded him as the Bishop of Metuchen. When a priest came to Hughes relaying how McCarrick abused him, he listened carefully but never got back to him.[9] In fact, he never said a word to anyone in the U.S. or Rome. Hughes did the same to every other priest who confided in him.[10]

McCarrick not only abused seminarians at his beach house, he preyed on them at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York. One of them told Hughes—to no avail—that McCarrick “tried to convince me that priests engaging in sexual activity with each other was normal and accepted in the United States, and particularly in that diocese.”[11] To the extent this is true, it is proof of the homosexual network in the Catholic Church in the 1980s.

What did Hughes do when he heard this? Amazingly, he told the priest “to forget about McCarrick's misconduct and to forgive

McCarrick 'for the good of the Church.'"[12] No one speaks this way simply to protect a fellow bishop. I have read too much about this issue to know that there was something else going on in Hughes' life that explains his response.

On January 25, 1990, soon after Bishop James McHugh was appointed to head the Diocese of Camden, he had dinner with three other priests: Monsignor Dominic Bottino, Newark Auxiliary Bishop John Smith, and a young cleric. In front of everyone, McCarrick started rubbing the crotch of the cleric. The young man froze while the others looked away. No one said a word.[13]

We know this because in 2018 Bottino finally admitted what happened. Neither bishop found what McCarrick did objectionable. In fact, McHugh even commended Bottino for the way he "handled" the incident.[14]

If the New Jersey bishops were delinquent, the Archbishop of New York proved to be meritorious. It was Cardinal John O'Connor, a man whom I worked with and greatly admired even before reading the Report, who had the courage to blow the whistle on McCarrick. Regrettably, he ran into opposition, both in the U.S. and in Rome.

In the early 1990s, Cardinal O'Connor started receiving anonymous complaints about McCarrick.[15] O'Connor knew McCarrick for many years, and he also knew how common it was to field all sorts of false complaints about priests, so he understandably passed the letters on to McCarrick. Then more letters of this sort reached O'Connor's desk. Also receiving copies was the Nuncio, Rev. Agostino Cacciavillan.[16] The Report notes that no investigation took place.[17] But things were only heating up.

In 1999, Cardinal O'Connor engaged the new Nuncio, Archbishop Gabriel Montalvo, in a conversation about McCarrick's suitability to succeed him as Archbishop of New York. O'Connor

warned him that there are “some elements of a moral nature that advised against” consideration of McCarrick’s candidacy.[18] Influencing O’Connor were psychiatric reports on one of McCarrick’s seminarian victims; a graphic account of McCarrick’s behavior was provided.[19]

At the same time that McCarrick was being considered for the New York archdiocese, he was being assessed as a candidate to assume the duties at two other dioceses. He received the support of several bishops, who rallied to his side. Washington Archbishop James Cardinal Hickey named McCarrick as his number one choice for promotion.[20] Cardinal Bernard Law, Archbishop of Boston, was also supportive of McCarrick’s candidacy, admitting, however, that “from time to time ‘a cloud’ appeared over McCarrick’s head regarding what he termed a ‘misplaced affection.’”[21] Others might call it sexual abuse.

O’Connor proved his chops when he wrote a six-page letter to Nuncio Montalvo; the letter was dated October 28, 1999.[22] It was so personal and confidential that the Archdiocese of New York does not have a copy of it.[23] But the Vatican does.

The case made against McCarrick was sober and convincing. O’Connor relied on the findings of Dr. Richard Fitzgibbons, a psychiatrist from Pennsylvania, and Monsignor James Cassidy, a psychologist from the Archdiocese of New York.[24] I did not know Cassidy (he died in 2015), but I have spoken to Fitzgibbons, and I am well aware of his outstanding work. I hold him in high regard. O’Connor did as well.

At the end of his letter, O’Connor said that he could not “in conscience, recommend His Excellency, Archbishop McCarrick for promotion to higher office...”[25] As we know, McCarrick had a wide network of allies, and they proved to be decisive, but not before McCarrick had a chance to weigh in against O’Connor.

On August 6, 2000, three months after O'Connor died, McCarrick wrote to Bishop Stanislaw Dziwisz, particular secretary to Pope John Paul II, addressing O'Connor's allegations against him.[26] McCarrick admitted that friends of his in the Curia came across O'Connor's letter and "tipped me off about it." [27]

McCarrick accused O'Connor of "deeply attacking my life as a bishop," saying he knew O'Connor "did not want me as his successor." [28] He was apparently clueless as to why. Worse, he lied when he said, "I have never had sexual relations with any person, male or female, young or old, cleric or lay, nor have I ever abused another person or treated them with disrespect." [29]

It is a source of great disappointment that Pope John Paul II believed McCarrick, not O'Connor. [30] Whether it was his experience in Poland of hearing malicious lies about priests, as some have suggested, or his being surrounded by dupes, it is not clear. Perhaps both. According to Archbishop Viganò, Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Secretary of State, was the one most responsible for convincing the pope to side with McCarrick. [31]

McCarrick did not succeed O'Connor but he was appointed Archbishop of Washington. He served from 2001 to 2006, without new accusations being made against him. [32] But he was confronted by Susan Gibbs, the archdiocese's communications director, and CNN reporter Connie Chung, about past allegations. He denied them all, admitting only to sharing beds with seminarians (as if this wasn't a problem in itself). [33]

On the eve of his 75th birthday, McCarrick submitted his required resignation to Pope Benedict XVI. Nuncio Montalvo wanted McCarrick to stay on for another two years, and Benedict agreed. [34] But then new information about McCarrick's homosexual advances came to the pope's attention,

and he quickly reversed his decision. McCarrick was told of the Holy Father's desire that he "immediately resign as Archbishop of Washington." [35] On May 16, 2006, Benedict accepted McCarrick's resignation. [36] His problems, however, were only beginning.

A month later, an attorney representing a priest who said McCarrick abused him met with Vatican officials. The priest described a fishing trip in upstate New York that took place in 1987. McCarrick invited him and two other priests to go with him. They had dinner and then went back to a local hotel to watch TV. Shortly after going to bed, the priest "rolled over and noticed the Archbishop and another priest having sex on another double bed. At that point the Archbishop noticed that I was looking and invited me to be 'next.' The other priest laughed and joked at the Archbishop's invitation for me to have sex with him." [37] Though shaken, he did not accept the invitation.

The priest subsequently offered more testimony about another incident. The Diocese of Metuchen reached a settlement with his claims in November 2006. [38]

More problems emerged when Richard Sipe, a former Benedictine monk and psychotherapist, sent a letter to Pope Benedict about McCarrick's sexual misconduct, providing a lot of information, including reports by Catholic journalist Matt Abbott. [39] Though Sipe's letter was posted on the internet, it received little attention by the media. Fortunately, it wasn't ignored in Rome.

In 2006, and again in 2008, Archbishop Viganò sent a memorandum to Pope Benedict XVI about what Sipe had said, and what he himself had learned about McCarrick. [40] The evidence of McCarrick's misconduct was mounting, becoming ever more difficult to deny, though some still tried to defend him. Among them was Cardinal Kevin Farrell, who lived with McCarrick for 6 years in Washington. He claims he never heard



of any wrongdoing, and indeed “never suspected, or ever had reason to suspect, any inappropriate conduct in Washington.”[41] That would make him unique.

McCarrick proved to be shameless. He was asked many times not to present himself in public and to quietly retire. As stubborn as he was self-serving, he blew everyone off. He even claimed victim status, contending that the proposed restrictions amounted to “persecution.”[42]

If there is one big mistake Benedict made, it was not laying down the law in writing.[43] When it comes to manipulative and self-absorbed people like McCarrick, the door must be shut firmly in their face, otherwise they will exploit any remaining opening.

This explains why McCarrick refused to abide by every request to curtail his public appearances—he saw the lack of teeth in the requests as evidence of their flatulence. He traveled all over the world under Benedict, and did so with greater ease under Pope Francis.[44]

When Pope Francis was elected in 2013, he said he never heard of any rumors related to McCarrick’s past sexual conduct. Similarly, he professed not to know of any restrictions on his travelling.[45] He said he assumed that allegations against McCarrick must have been without foundation, otherwise Pope John Paul II would have treated him differently.[46]

On June 23, 2013, Pope Francis agreed to meet with Archbishop Viganò; they met again on October 10. Five years later, on August 22, 2018, Viganò claimed that Pope Francis asked him about McCarrick during the June meeting. Viganò says he told him about “a dossier this thick” on McCarrick. “He corrupted generations of seminarians and priests and Pope Benedict ordered him to withdraw to a life of prayer and penance.” Viganò added that McCarrick had committed “crimes” and was a “serial predator.”[47] Viganò says he discussed McCarrick’s

exploits again at the October meeting.

According to the Report, Pope Francis “does not recollect what Viganò said about McCarrick during these two meetings.” In fact, he says he never knew a thing about McCarrick until the Archdiocese of New York revealed allegations against McCarrick in 2017.[48]

On June 8, 2017, the Archdiocese of New York received a complaint about McCarrick abusing a teenage male in the 1970s. Archbishop Timothy Cardinal Dolan had established an Independent Reconciliation and Compensation Program to deal with past cases of priestly sexual abuse, and it was this mechanism that proved to be McCarrick’s last straw. This was the first time anyone had heard of McCarrick abusing a minor.[49]

An investigation of this matter concluded that the allegations against McCarrick were “credible and substantiated.”[50] Following the archdiocese’s policies, Dolan recommended that the case be made public. That was done on June 20, 2018, and on July 28, Pope Francis accepted McCarrick’s resignation from the College of Cardinals.[51]

This sad chapter in the history of the Catholic Church in the U.S. is now over. Most of the sexual abuse took place between the mid-1960s and the mid-1980s. Media reports, however, continue to poison the public mind, having the public believe it is still ongoing. What they are reporting, in almost every instance, are past cases of abuse. Most of the bad guys are either dead or out of ministry.

Had the New Jersey bishops acted responsibly, McCarrick would not have been able to continue with his predatory behavior. How could this happen? Lurking behind all of this is the overwhelming presence of a homosexual network of priests, both in the U.S. and in Rome. They are very good at covering for their own. Until and unless this web of deceit and perversion

is owned up to—which it hasn’t—lay Catholics will continue to be wary of the hierarchy.

We should not forget the heroes. Pope Benedict XVI has written with great clarity and honesty about the “filth” in the Church. Significantly, he understands the social and cultural dynamics that brought about the scandal as well as anyone. This has angered so-called progressive Catholics.

Their interest is not in telling the truth. Their interest is in diverting attention away from the homosexual origins of the scandal. They, and their allies in the media, continue to talk about the “pedophilia” scandal, when the fact is it has been a homosexual scandal all along. When we fail in the diagnosis, we fail in combating the malady.

Cardinal O’Connor, as we have seen, proved to be heroic. He should be a role model for every priest, regardless of rank. Had it not been for another New York archbishop, Cardinal Dolan, McCarrick might have gotten away with it. How many other institutions in our society, secular as well as religious—many have been plagued with sexual abuse—have ever brought charges against one of their own offenders at the top rungs of their organization? There are none.

There will be much more written on this subject, but for now at least, we have in “The McCarrick Report” a much better understanding of how the breakdown in accountability happened. What still needs to be addressed is why it broke down, and what steps can be taken to make sure it never happens again. That is something I discuss in my new book.

### ***ENDNOTES***

1 Archbishop Vigano made this comment on the Nov. 12 episode of Raymond Arroyo’s EWTN show, “The World Over,” Nov. 12, 2020.

2 Ibid.

3 “The McCarrick Report,” p. 91.

- 4 Ibid., p. 23.
- 5 Ibid., p. 27.
- 6 Ibid., pp. 70-71.
- 7 Ibid., p. 73.
- 8 Ibid., p. 190.
- 9 Ibid., p. 76.
- 10 Ibid., p. 77.
- 11 Ibid., pp. 84-85.
- 12 Ibid., p. 87.
- 13 Ibid., p. 92.
- 14 Ibid., p. 93.
- 15 Ibid., pp. 95-99.
- 16 Ibid., pp. 101-10
- 17 Ibid., p. 111.
- 18 Ibid., p. 129.
- 19 Ibid., pp. 117-23.
- 20 Ibid., p. 130.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 Ibid., p. 131.
- 23 Ibid., p. 140.
- 24 Ibid., pp. 134, 137.
- 25 Ibid., 139.
- 26 Ibid., p. 169.
- 27 Ibid., p. 170.
- 28 Ibid., pp. 169-70.
- 29 Ibid., p. 170.
- 30 Ibid., pp. 173-74.
- 31 "The World Over," EWTN
- 32 "The McCarrick Report," p. 211.
- 33 Ibid., pp. 215-219.
- 34 Ibid., pp. 230-31.
- 35 Ibid., p. 232.
- 36 Ibid., p. 246.
- 37 Ibid., p. 251.
- 38 Ibid., p. 260.
- 39 Ibid., pp. 279-81.
- 40 Ibid., pp. 282-86.

- 41 Ibid., p. 290.
  - 42 Ibid., p. 308.
  - 43 Ibid., p. 298.
  - 44 Ibid., pp. 370-72.
  - 45 Ibid., p. 394.
  - 46 Ibid., pp. 401-02.
  - 47 Ibid., pp. 403-04.
  - 48 Ibid., pp. 404-05.
  - 49 Ibid., p. 433.
  - 50 Ibid., p. 434.
  - 51 Ibid., p. 435.
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# A LIFE IN POLITICS

**Mike McDonald**

From a young age, I wanted to get involved in politics. My earliest memories on the subject are from riding around in my father's pickup truck on my way home from Catholic preschool listening to Rush Limbaugh. At the time, I thought it was the coolest thing ever, and I knew I wanted to get involved in the political battles that I heard about on the radio.

For the past several years, I have had the opportunity to work in Congress and the Trump Administration. During that time, I had a lot of great experiences that allowed me to see firsthand how the system works.

One of the earliest lessons I learned was the importance of having a good team. I was an intern in a freshman office on Capitol Hill. The member had just won a special election, and midterms were looming. In less than a year, he had to make the case to voters that he was their man for the job. To make matters more interesting, the district was a swing district.

It was anyone's guess how the election would go.

While we were all very different people, the electoral sword of Damocles dangling over our heads pulled us all together. We worked great as a unit. The odds were long, but thanks to the siege mentality that quickly crept into our minds, we came together and succeeded.

I have been a part of several different teams in Washington since then, and I can think of only one that was better.

Though, I have also seen first-hand how a bad team can fail. In another office, the district was a rural GOP stronghold, and victory was guaranteed. The boss listened to you based on how long you were there but gave little credence to what you could do for the good of the team.

The other staffers all had radically differing views on what the office should be doing. I thought we should be doing our best to represent the people of our district, but other staffers wanted to use the office to advance their own careers. One wanted to become a staff director of his favorite committee, another wanted to do his time and become a lobbyist, still another was a leftist who wanted us to go against the wishes of the district because she knew better. There were ten people on that team, but we got less done in two years than I did as an intern in five months.

Ultimately, these experiences would culminate in one of my great rules for governing, "personnel is policy." Putting together a team, dedicated to a common purpose, can achieve more in Washington than a collection of policy wonks and fanatic partisans pulling in separate directions. To get anything done, requires the right personnel for the job. This is true for both their capability to do their job but also their ability to work together.

For the most part, I worked in speechwriting and communications. I always naturally gravitated towards working

in communications roles. I was fascinated as a child by talk radio. I was on the debate team in high school. I have always been blessed to be a good writer. All of those factors pushed me into communications, but what I genuinely love about this type of work is that it is about verbal battles for why your ideas are the best for the American people.

Growing up, it often appeared that working-middle class families, like mine, were not the focus of conversation, and I wanted to go into politics to help fight for policies that would make their lives better. I also had the good fortune of growing up in a home where the Church was the cornerstone of everything, and I wanted to make sure that Catholics had the ability to live their faith because America can only be great with a vocal moral-majority. I sincerely wanted to use political power to help people, and I learned quickly that communications must be paramount if you want to make a difference.

This led me to my second great rule, "communications is policy." Unless you actively engage the American people in a conversation explaining why your policies are best, your agenda is doomed to fail. You can only put into action your principles if you robustly defended them. Without dedicated communications work, you can have the best policies in the world, and they still will be dead on arrival.

A lot of people I have worked with in Washington consider communications to be unessential fluff. I have had chiefs of staff tell me that we do not need a communications strategy because we are a policy office. As a result, you have probably never even heard of those offices. I frequently got myself a lot of "stern talking to's" because I always argued that we could only do what we were sent to do in Washington by boldly explaining our position.

That probably comes down to the fact that a significant portion of the people in Washington have very little sense of

fighting for a cause they believe in. I can name only a few people that actually thought deeply about the philosophic questions of governing and how that impacted our ability to help the American people.

But for the most part, staffers fall into one of three camps. You have policy wonks that only care about advancing their special interests. You also have staffers that only are interested in their side beating the other side. Finally, you have a handful of politicians that can navigate the swamp based on the compass of winning the next election.

I never really fit into any of these camps. I could never fully embrace the hive-mind mentality of so many staffers that the only thing that mattered was beating the other team because our side was right and their side was going to burn for all eternity. A lot of the politicians were more interesting, but they only cared about winning elections and would never do anything with the authority that came from winning elections. They played too cautiously and were afraid of doing anything that might cost a vote. The policy wonks were the ones I understood the least. They could go on for hours about one specific issue, like labor policy regarding automated cars, and could not be bothered to think of anything else.

So, I ended up charting my own course in Washington. I did this by staying true to my principles, and always working hard to go the extra mile. I would stay late and go in on weekends. I would drop everything and travel across the country to go work on campaigns. I would always volunteer to be part of new working groups.

It is in volunteering for extra working groups that I had the opportunity to work on a lot of policies dealing with the intersection of faith and politics. I have always been passionate about my Catholicism, and in my own way I have tried to give back to the Church by ensuring Catholics could



be part of shaping public policy.

At my core, I passionately believe that for our nation to truly flourish the Catholic Church must have a strong presence in the public square and an active voice in our ongoing debates. The teachings of the Church are timeless, and they provide the first principles we need to succeed. However, for this to happen, Catholics need the freedom to live their faiths free from bias and other forms of overt or covert prejudice. As a result, I often found myself working on faith-based issues and religious outreach projects.

Many staffers in Washington treat faith-based policy as a bottom tier issue, but my genuine desire to advance the teachings of the Church and my willingness to take the jobs no one else wanted greatly helped me in my career. More importantly, battling to promote morality in the public square was perhaps the greatest reward of my time in Washington.

So even though I am not in government anymore, my fight for people like me and to champion causes near and dear to the Catholic Church continues. Fortunately, there are several key advantages to working at the Catholic League, and serving as our communications director, I am in a prime position to continue this battle.

First, the Catholic League is a much faster organization in terms of getting things done. In my short tenure here, the Catholic League has done more to try to influence the national conversation and public policy than I have at any one place in government.

In part, that is because we have a great team. Everyone deeply cares about our mission, and no one is actively working against us from inside. I have seen the deep state up close, and it is scary just how deep it truly is.

And unlike the deep state, the Catholic League does not have a byzantine bureaucratic network to negotiate. When I worked in

government, I would have to write correspondence and speeches about a month in advance to get everyone to approve them. As a result, these materials were less timely because they were a month past their prime. Instead of producing a message that would convey the boss's opinion on a given topic, every staffer would water down the writing to justify their particular policy positions, which, more often than not, were in direct competition with one another. For the deep state, communications work is not about talking directly to the American people. They are battlegrounds for policy decisions.

This meant I spent more time trying to navigate the approval process between competing staffers that were ostensibly on the same team, and less on fine tuning what we needed to say to a particular audience. Instead of crafting a message, I would frequently bounce back and forth between deep staters trying to find some sort of compromise. The amount of time I worked on writing was limited; working on getting approval of the message was the biggest part of the job.

At the Catholic League, we do not have that problem. When we see an issue, we target it immediately. There is no waiting for people to take a month to decide how they feel about the topic at hand. As a result, the days here are much busier, but always more rewarding.

In large part, that is because the Catholic League values the importance of a robust communications strategy. The team knows that unless we bring our issues to the people and enlist them to help in the fight, we cannot get anything done. We do that every day, and we accomplish a lot, which is good because I hate being bored.

So, my days are busier, the team is better, and there is a deeper appreciation for communications work, but my mission remains the same. I still want to be involved in the important fights about how best to improve the lives of average Americans, and the Catholic League has given me a great

opportunity to do that. In a lot of ways, I guess I still am that kid riding around in his father's truck listening to talk radio.