

VANCE'S CATHOLICISM UNDER FIRE

This is the article that appeared in the September 2024 edition of Catalyst, our monthly journal. The date that prints out reflects the day that it was uploaded to our website. For a more accurate date of when the article was first published, check out the news release, [here](#).

It didn't take long. J.D. Vance, Donald Trump's pick to be his vice president, is a convert to Catholicism, and already that is a source of anger among the haters. He is being dubbed an "integralist" and a "Christian nationalist." Our interest has less to do with Vance than it does the nature of attacks on Catholics of a traditional stripe.

Anthea Butler teaches at the University of Pennsylvania and is a regular guest on MSNBC. The religion professor contends that God is "a white racist." She claims Vance is "aligned with what is called Catholic integralism, the belief that Christians can use a 'soft power' approach to exert influence over society." She cites his opposition to killing babies in the womb as one such example of what she means.

Jack Jenkins is the national reporter for the Religion News Service. He also believes Vance is guilty of Catholic "integralism." He is unhappy with Vance for not answering questions about "his own thoughts regarding Catholic integralism."

What is Catholic integralism? That was the title of an article by Steven P. Millies in 2019. It's an old idea, he says, one that seeks "the integration of religious authority and political power."

So who are these "integralists" who want a theocracy? To prove his point he says "Pope Francis remains a head of state today." He is also upset with Catholic writer Sohrab Ahmari

for saying we need to “fight the culture war with the aim of defeating the enemy.” That makes him an “integralist.”

Kevin Augustyn authored an article on this subject for Discourse magazine that is even better. “This ideology is growing, vibrant and influential, but it is inherently illiberal and dangerous to American democracy.” He says the believers maintain that it is wrong to separate church and state. So who are they? He does not say. He quotes none of them.

He also claims that “some integralists” are committed to a “totalitarian vision that justifies such things as the disenfranchisement of women, Jews, atheists and indeed all non-Catholics; the persecution of heretics and sexual minorities; the kidnapping of secretly baptized children; and the abolition of religious toleration even for other Christians.”

These “integralists” sound like maniacs. So who are they? He does not say. He quotes none of them.

Justin Dyer is executive director of the Civitas Institute and a professor of government at the University of Texas at Austin. He wrote a piece for the *Washington Post* last year on “the logic of integralism” that is precious.

He says Catholic integralists believe in lots of weird things. “Nothing is truly private” and “there is no private life or private conscience.” So who are they? He does not say. He quotes none of them.

These writers would have us believe that this is the way Vance thinks. But no one seems to be able to come up with anything he has said that sustains this charge. In fact, what Vance has said is true and admirable.

“My views on public policy and what the optimal state should look like are pretty aligned with Catholic social teaching.

That was one of the things that drew me to the Catholic Church. I saw a real overlap between what I would like to see and what the Catholic Church would like to see.”

If that makes him an “integralist,” we need more of them. We hasten to add that some of the books Bill Donohue has authored were specifically written to give sustenance to what Vance believes. Guess that makes Donohue an “integralist” as well, though he didn’t know it until now.

Christian nationalism is the big bogeyman for Christian bashers. So we knew someone would charge Vance as being a devotee. The first to do so is a U.S. Senator, Chris Murphy from Connecticut. He says Vance was picked “to help shape this transition away from democratic norms, this transition to a white, patriarchal, Christian-dominated nation.”

So what did Vance say to merit this accusation? He does not say. He quotes nothing he ever said.

So who is Sen. Murphy? He grew up in a congregational church and now admits he rarely goes to church. He blames his children and his schedule. He says he is “not a regular churchgoer these days, in part because of kids. In part because of a busy schedule.”

His “busy schedule” has earned him an “F” lifetime rating on life issues from Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America. His lust for abortion extends to infanticide: he has consistently voted against efforts to protect children who are born alive after failed abortions. Planned Parenthood consistently gives him a rating of 100%. He also earned a 100% rating from the Human Rights Campaign, the big anti-science and anti-women LGBT group.

As we said at the beginning, these attacks are not merely aimed at Vance—they are aimed at all traditional Catholics. These haters want to demonize us and drive us out of the public square. But they are in over their heads—our side is

growing and getting bolder. We will make sure of that.

WALZ'S POLICIES ON RELIGION AND SEXUALITY

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Democratic candidate for president, Vice President Kamala Harris, has chosen Minnesota Governor Tim Walz to be her vice presidential pick. His policies on religious liberty and sexual issues mirror hers.

In 2024, Walz approved legislation that would protect religious liberty in Minnesota's Human Rights Law. However, this was done after a 2023 bill that he signed into law that stripped them of their protections. The 2023 law caused an uproar across the state and forced Walz and the Democrats to retreat. The Catholic Conference of Minnesota was heavily invested in passing the 2024 law.

In 2023, Walz signed a bill into law that specifically excluded Christian universities with statements of faith from Minnesota's Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) program. This program allows high school students to enroll at local colleges at no cost to them; they can receive both high school and college credits. This law was struck down in the courts after a Christian family sued Walz. The case was Loe v. Walz. No friend of religious liberty would ever have banned Christians from this program.

During the Covid-19 lockdowns, Walz banned houses of worship

from having gatherings of larger than 10 people. After the heads of Minnesota's Catholic and Lutheran churches said they would reopen May 26, 2020, Walz quickly changed his position and allowed the churches to reopen. He had previously allowed retail stores, casinos, bars and restaurants to open at 50 percent capacity, and he okayed the opening of the Mall of America. The hard line he took for houses of worship smacked of an anti-religious bias.

Walz's position on abortion is consistent with that of Harris'. He not only has no record of opposing an abortion for any reason—or at any time during pregnancy—he is so radical that in May 2023 he signed a funding bill that repealed Minnesota's protection for babies born following a botched abortion. In other words, he legalized selective infanticide.

On January 31, 2023, Walz enshrined the "right" to abortion and other reproductive health care measures into Minnesota statutes. This law was designed to protect abortion in the state from future Supreme Court decisions.

When it comes to transgenderism—the anti-science movement that promotes the right of males and females (including minors) to switch their sex—the Biden-Harris team is the most radical administration in American history. Walz is on board, 100 percent.

On April 27, 2023, he signed a law that banned "conversion therapy." House File 16 "prohibits mental health practitioners or mental health professionals from providing conversion therapy to vulnerable adults and clients under age 18."

In other words, Walz wants to stop teenage girls (80 percent of those who "transition" to the other sex are females) from having the right to correct the mistake they made—often aided and abetted by corrupt therapists and medical professionals—in attempting to change their sex. These exploited young people want to "detransition" back to their father-determined sex,

but Walz wants to take this right away from them.

On April 27, 2023, Walz signed a law that turned Minnesota into a transgender sanctuary state. House File 146 “prevents state courts or officials from complying with child removal requests, extraditions, arrests, or subpoenas related to gender-affirming health care that a person receives in Minnesota.”

In other words, this law gives state courts temporary emergency jurisdiction over any child in Minnesota who has “been unable to obtain gender-affirming health care.” If a child runs away, and moves to a state to receive “gender-affirming care,” Minnesota would not return the child to his parents under this law. Similarly, in a custody battle, a parent could take the child to Minnesota for “gender-affirming care” and the out-of-state parent would have no recourse in Minnesota’s courts.

Tim Walz is no friend of religious liberty, the rights of the unborn, and the welfare of young people. There will be no tension between him and Harris on any of these issues.

HARVARD TURNS THE PAGE

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Harvard University’s decision to officially refrain from taking public policy positions is not only commendable, it is a model for virtually every institution of higher learning.

Indeed, it should be adopted by every entity not specifically

founded as an advocacy organization. This would include corporations as well as umbrella groups representing such professionals as actors, athletes, doctors, nurses, teachers, and all those whose line of work has nothing to do with advocating for one cause or another.

In short, if a company sells shoes, it should sell shoes and refrain from making partisan public statements.

The Harvard report rightly notes that “if the university and its leaders become accustomed to issuing official statements about matters beyond the core function of the university, they will inevitably come under pressure to do so from multiple, competing sides on nearly every imaginable issue of the day.” When this happens, it notes, it “runs the risk of alienating some members of the community by expressing implicit solidarity with others.”

Well said.

IS HARRIS SUFFERING FROM BLACK GUILT?

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Utopians throughout the ages have dreamed of an egalitarian society where everyone is equal. Add Kamala Harris to the list. But given her entitled background, it makes us doubt her sincerity.

When she was running for president in 2020, Harris said in a

video that “There’s a big difference between ‘equality’ and ‘equity.’” She is right about that, but her interpretation of what these terms mean is deeply flawed. She thinks, as do all those on the Left these days, that equity means equal outcomes. It does not. It means fairness. Equality means sameness.

No matter, the most important thing Harris said in her video was, “Equitable treatment means we all end up at the same place.” In the real world, her idea explodes.

Let’s say everyone is given the same salary. Now we achieved the “equitable” society Harris wants—we all end up at the same place. No one has any more than anyone else. But for how long?

What if Jones sees a portrait that Smith has drawn and wants to buy it. What if others observe what is happening and want to compete with Jones to buy the portrait? After the bidding war is over and Jones wins, Smith is richer than everyone else. Bingo—inequality rears its ugly head again.

The only way to ensure this doesn’t happen is to deny all the Joneses the freedom to spend their money the way they want, thus making sure everyone remains at the same place. In other words, the quest for an egalitarian society *can never succeed and always winds up oppressing the masses.*

In a track meet, all runners start at the same spot. But they don’t finish at the same spot. We can, and should, do what we can to ensure that everyone who wants to compete should have an equal opportunity to do so, but we should never jimmy the race to force all runners to cross the finish line at the same time.

It is strange that Harris would even want such a society. She is the product of black privilege. Her late mother, Shyamala, was raised in a caste society in India where upward mobility does not exist. She occupied the top tier—she was a member of the Brahmins. Critical race theorists label them oppressors.

She boasted about it. “In Indian society, we go by birth. We are Brahmins, that is the top caste. Please do not confuse this with class, which is only about money. For Brahmins, the bloodline is the most important. My family, named Gopalan, goes back more than 1,000 years.”

It would be hard to find a more full-throated celebration of inequality than this.

What about Kamala’s dad, Donald Harris? He traces his ancestry to slavemasters. The Stanford University professor of economics, who has accused his daughter of smearing his Jamaican ancestors by saying they are a bunch of potheads, admitted in 2018 that his grandmother was a descendant of Hamilton Brown. He was a plantation and slave owner in northern Jamaica. He owned scores of slaves, most of whom were brought from Africa, which has a long history of slavery.

Given her pedigree, this raises the question: Is Kamala suffering from black guilt? More important, however, is why anyone running for president of the United States would want to craft a society where everyone ends up in the same place. Not only is that impossible, attempts to do so yield totalitarian results.

CATHOLIC COLLEGES RECEIVING CATALYST

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We have chosen more than a dozen Catholic colleges and

universities to receive boxes of *Catalyst*, starting with the September issue; they will continue to receive our journal through the end of the year. We hope to entice these young people to join the Catholic League.

The schools selected for the mailing are the following:

Ave Maria University (Ave Maria, Florida)

Belmont Abbey College (Belmont, North Carolina)

Benedictine College (Atchison, Kansas)

The Catholic University of America (Washington, D.C.)

Christendom College (Front Royal, Virginia)

Franciscan University of Steubenville (Steubenville, Ohio)

John Paul the Great Catholic University (Escondido, California)

Thomas Aquinas College (Santa Paula, California and Northfield, MA)

The Thomas More College of Liberal Arts (Merrimack, New Hampshire)

University of Dallas (Irving, Texas)

University of Mary (Bismarck, North Dakota)

University of St. Thomas Houston (Houston, Texas)

Walsh University, (North Canton, Ohio)

Wyoming Catholic College (Lander, Wyoming)

DISNEY FILM WINS ANOTHER “BEST DOCUMENTARY”

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Over the summer, the Catholic League's documentary, "Walt's Disenchanted Kingdom," won "Best Documentary" at the International Film Market. This brings to nine the number of awards we won. We had four wins, four nominations, and one honorable mention.

In addition to winning "Best Documentary" at the International Film Market, we won that award at the L.A. International Short Film Festival. We were nominated for "Best Documentary" at the Perth Christian Film Festival (Australia), the Prisma Film Festival (Rome, Italy), and the Arizona Faith and Family Film Festival.

The film has been seen by millions of people, at home and abroad. It is available on Amazon and several other platforms.

Disney has been rocked by criticism coming from many quarters about some of its fare, and we sure had something to do with that outcome. We were the only organization to make a documentary detailing its departure from the days of Walt Disney. He never authorized films and events that tried to sexualize children.

If you haven't seen the film, please see our website and click on "Videos" for information.

BUTTIGIEG SAYS ABORTION MAKES MEN FREE

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Vice President aspirant and Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg said recently that not only does abortion liberate women, “men are also more free in a country where we have a president who stands up for things like access to abortion care. Men are more free.”

Buttigieg, who contends that he is married to a man, is right about that. Abortion does in fact make men free. They are free from their fatherly duties, thus allowing them to prey on women—in the name of liberating them—while appearing to be on their side. It’s a dream come true.

In an article by Judith Blake in *Science*, published in 1971, two years before abortion was legalized in *Roe v. Wade*, she found that college-educated men were the strongest supporters of legal abortion. Indeed, little has changed since then.

When Bill Donohue taught a course on Family Relations at La Roche College in Pittsburgh, he asked his students, most of whom were nursing students, to explain why single men have always been the greatest champions of a woman’s “right to choose”? Is it because they have long been closet feminists? Or is there something else going on? The women knew exactly what was going on. Reckless men love abortion.

In a 2022 article published by Business Insider, it found that the majority of young men (and young women) were supportive of abortion rights but that older men (those over 50) were the least supportive. This makes sense. Reckless older men have less of a vested interest in abortion, but reckless younger men see it as freeing them from their responsibilities. It allows them to tell their pregnant girlfriend to find an abortion clinic and liberate themselves of their baby; ever obliging, she can even charge it to his credit card. It’s a win-win. For him.

Survey after survey shows that public support for abortion declines markedly the later into pregnancy a woman is; there is very little support for late-term abortions and partial-

birth abortions. Buttigieg disagrees. His enthusiasm for abortion rights knows no limits.

On "The View," Meghan McCain asked Buttigieg in 2020 "exactly [what] your line is" about when to draw the line on abortion. He said "it shouldn't be up to a government official to draw the line. It should be up to the woman who's confronted." McCain pressed him, asking if he was okay with infanticide. His answer was disingenuous. "Does anybody seriously think that's what these cases are about?" She responded, "I think that people care about that, yes."

Similarly, the year before, Chris Wallace on "Fox News," said to Buttigieg, "So just to be clear. You're saying that you would be okay with a woman well into her third trimester deciding to abort her pregnancy?" To which he said, "Look, these hypotheticals are usually set up in order to provoke a strong emotional..." Wallace retorted, "It's not hypothetical. There are 6,000 women a year who get abortions in the third trimester." He answered, "That's right, representing less than one percent of cases."

In other words, Buttigieg disagrees with almost everyone. He is in the tiny minority who believe abortion should be legal in virtually every instance, regardless of how late into pregnancy it is. He can't even condemn infanticide. This explains why he is opposed to legislation that makes it illegal to provide medical care to an infant who survives an abortion. It doesn't get more radical than this.

Notice, too, that when Wallace said that 6,000 women a year get an abortion in the third trimester that Buttigieg erased their humanity by citing a statistic. That's the way extremists think: they don't see the faces of women or their unborn babies—they dissolve them to a stat.

Buttigieg does not want to make abortion "safe, legal and rare." His idea of male and female liberation is to make it as

frequent as can be. He is way out there.

FBI MUST RELEASE “NASHVILLE MANIFESTO”

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The following letter by Catholic League president Bill Donohue to Rep. James Comer, Chairman of the Committee on Oversight and Accountability, explains why he wants the FBI to authorize the release of the “Nashville Manifesto” kept by mass murderer Audrey Hale.

June 17, 2024

Hon. James Comer
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Accountability
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-6143

Dear Chairman Comer:

As president of the nation’s largest Catholic civil rights organization, it is my job to combat anti-Catholicism. I am writing to you because you are in a position to inquire why the FBI is stopping the public release of documents pertaining to the mass shooting in Nashville, Tennessee on March 27, 2023. That is when a 28-year-old female, Audrey Hale, shot and killed three children and three adults at Covenant School.

Hale, who falsely identified as a male, kept a journal, more commonly known as the Nashville manifesto. Nashville Police Chief John Drake said after the shootings that “There’s some belief that there was some resentment for having to go to that school.”

Covenant is a Christian school. The police said that the school and the church were both targeted. Hale once attended the school and reportedly disparaged her parents for not supporting her “transition.”

On April 24, 2023, I issued a news release asking, “So where’s the manifesto? Who’s holding it back? What’s driving this decision?” Tennessee Rep. Tim Burchett said at that time that it was the FBI that was holding it back. He was right.

We now know that it was the FBI’s Behavioral Analysis Unit that “strongly discourage[d]” the Metro Nashville Police Department from releasing the manifesto. It said it represents a “legacy token” that could be exploited by other mass murderers.

I am a sociologist who has taught courses on criminology and written extensively about it. Moreover, in my role as a Catholic civil rights leader, I have investigated, and written about, the extent to which a strong anti-Christian animus is prevalent among transgender persons.

Accordingly, it is imperative that Christians learn if Hale’s offenses were in any way driven by hatred against them. The police have admitted that she planned her attack “over a period of months.” Indeed, they said her crimes were “calculated and planned.” Given that she gave great thought to what she was planning, it would be instructive to know what she had to say about Christians. Moreover, the Daily Wire recently obtained selections from her journal entry that expressly show a strong hostility to Christianity.

As I pointed out last year, the FBI elite have had their

reputations sullied by probing innocent traditional Catholics. “Given this situation,” I said, “are we to believe that if a crazed Catholic were to blow up an abortion clinic, killing six people, and law enforcement found a manifesto detailing his motive, that the FBI would censor its release? Or would it be more likely to make it public?”

Please do what you can to have the FBI release Hale’s manifesto. Christians should not be kept in the dark, especially when the contents of her journal may reveal information that is threatening to them.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.
President

cc: Rep. Tim Burchett
Rep. Jim Jordan, Chairman, House Committee on the Judiciary

LOOK WHO’S A “DOMESTIC THREAT”?

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Bill Donohue sent the following letter to Department of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas:

June 25, 2024

Hon. Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary of Homeland Security

Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

It was recently reported that internal files from the "Homeland Intelligence Experts Group" were made public, and although the Group is now defunct, the contents of the second batch of documents secured by America First Legal are disturbing. This advisory panel was under your watch, which explains why I am writing to you.

The Group included former CIA director John Brennan and former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper. They indicated that when seeking national security information, when all else fails the Department of Homeland Security should look for "indicators of extremists and terrorism."

"If you ask researchers to dive into indicators of extremists and terrorism, they might indicate being in the military or religious. This being identified as an indicator suggests we should be more worried about these. We need the space to talk about it honestly."

The Group then added a third indicator of domestic terrorism, saying, "Most of the Domestic Terrorism threat now comes from supporters of the former president," meaning supporters of Donald Trump.

I know this group has since been disbanded, but the documents that were collected are extant. It is important that all documents pertaining to this issue be made public. What is your Department doing with these records? Have they been given over to some other committee or advisory group? Where is the evidence that being in the military, being religious and being a supporter of Donald Trump is a threat to national security?

I ask these questions because according to these criteria, I check all three boxes.

- On August 28, 1970 I was honorably discharged from the United States Air Force.
- On July 1, 1993 I began my tenure as president of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization.
- On February 13, 2016 Donald Trump tweeted, "Nice column [in Newsmax] by Bill Donahue, head of Catholic League. He's a blue collar New Yorker and gets it." In a second tweet, he said, "A very big thank you to Bill Donohue, head of The Catholic League, for the wonderful interview on CNN and article in Newsmax! Great insight."

This begs the question: Am I on a watch list? My family, friends and Catholic League members would like to know if I may be considered a domestic terrorist.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.
President

PROBING CATHOLIC-RUN INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOLS

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On June 14, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) issued a report on boarding schools for Native American children, some of which were run by the Catholic

Church. From 1869 to the 1960s, the government removed thousands of these children from tribal lands and placed them in boarding schools. The express purpose was to assimilate them into American society.

There were more than 500 of these schools, more than 80 of which (16 percent) were Catholic-run. According to an investigation by the *Washington Post* (WaPo) at least 122 priests, sisters and brothers who were assigned to these schools were later accused of sexually abusing these children.

The report by the USCCB and the report issued by the *Washington Post* agree on some matters but differ on others. The bishops' report includes an apology for inflicting a "history of trauma" on Native Americans, but the findings of the newspaper's probe are much more critical.

The WaPo report was based on interviews with more than two dozen Indian boarding school attendees who claimed they were abused physically, sexually or emotionally in these boarding schools, three-fourths of which were run by the government. Oral histories, court documents, lawsuits, diaries, correspondence and the like were examined.

WaPo says it relied on information taken from the ProPublica database. This is the same organization that was mentioned by Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito when he was setup by a left-wing woman posing as a conservative; she surreptitiously taped him. He named ProPublica as the source of the hit jobs, mentioning their efforts to smear his Catholic colleague, Clarence Thomas.

Bill Donohue has had his own problems with ProPublica. In 2020, it issued a report, jointly done with the *Houston Chronicle*, that contended that the Catholic Church did not keep tabs on priests that it threw out of the priesthood. Guilty as charged! As he said at the time, neither does the media or any other organization. So what? Perhaps ProPublica expects the Church to stalk its dismissed employees.

But for the sake of argument, let's say the methodology is acceptable. What exactly did WaPo find? Serious questions are extant.

The report cites a Department of Interior report from 2022 that investigated conditions in government-run boarding schools; it did not probe the ones operated by the Catholic Church. That report mentioned the word "Catholic" twice, both times in passing, having nothing to do with abuse.

More important, the timeline of the investigation under review extends back to 1869, so the kind of record keeping that lends itself to conclusive results is simply impossible. The WaPo report, which claims "pervasive" abuse in Catholic-run boarding schools, readily confesses that "lists of accused priests are inconsistent and incomplete, and many survivors have not come forward. Others are aging and in poor health, or, like their abusers, have died."

Instead of admitting that this is a clear shortcoming, the journalists conclude this means that "the extent of the abuse was probably far worse." Really? Let's face it—they could have come to a very different conclusion. Precisely because the record-keeping was found wanting, it is hard to know the truth. It is even possible that good data would reveal how small this problem was. But such considerations would have gotten in the way of their narrative.

WaPo cites Rev. Mike Carson, who worked on this issue for the bishops, and he "also noted a likely dearth of records." Similarly, Interior Secretary Deb Haaland acknowledges that given the situation, "I doubt that you could find a lot of Catholic records or federal government records about abuse and neglect toward the students." Even in cases where, for example, the Jesuits kept tabs on alleged cases of abuse, WaPo quotes them as saying the list "does not imply the claims are true and correct or that the accused individual has been found guilty of a crime or liable for civil claims."

There are other problems that should have given the journalists pause. In several parts of the report, they admit that the alleged victims whom they spoke to “kept secret” what happened. That being the case, how can Church officials be blamed? Indeed, after detailing one case of alleged abuse, they write that “It is unclear whether church officials were aware of the abuse at St. Mary’s at the time.”

Then there is the issue of the accused denying that they committed the offense. For instance, Sr. Sigfrieda Hettinger denied in 2015 that she abused a boy decades ago. “I loved them all. I never hurt them at all. I never touched them at all.” She died in 2016 at age 87. Was she telling the truth or lying? We don’t know. But in such cases, fairness dictates that we have to assume she was innocent.

There is another issue that needs to be addressed, one that is not discussed by the WaPo authors. They cite a Jesuit priest, Rev. Edmund J. Robinson, who was a serial offender. Could it be that a small number of priests were responsible for a disproportionate number of cases?

We know from the John Jay studies on this issue nationwide that between 1950 and 2002, 149 priests (3.3 percent) who had more than ten allegations of abuse were responsible for abusing 2,960 victims, thus accounting for 26 percent of all the allegations. As Donohue said in his book, *The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse: Clarifying the Facts and the Causes*, this means that “a very small percentage of accused priests are responsible for a substantial percentage of the allegations.”

The same may be true in the case of the Indian boarding school story.

Moreover, WaPo journalists offer no comment on something that should have concerned them. Why is it that when the federal government commissioned a study of this issue in 1928, this report “chastised the schools for the mistreatment and

malnourishment of students,” but never said a word about physical or sexual abuse? Was it a cover up? Or was there nothing to report? It seems plausible that a probe that took notice of “mistreatment” would have cited serious cases of abuse.

The credibility of the WaPo authors is seriously undermined by their decision to cite the Catholic Church’s legacy of abuse in Canadian boarding schools for indigenous peoples. That story has positively been proven to be a hoax. It does not help their cause to say that Pope Francis apologized for what happened—he did so before the story was proven false.

In 2021, the Catholic Church was accused of creating “mass graves” for indigenous children in the residential schools. But it didn’t take long before it was totally debunked. In 2022, Jacques Rouillard, professor emeritus in the Department of History at the University of Montreal, questioned, “After seven months of recrimination and denunciation, where are the remains of the children buried in the Kamloops Indian Residential School?”

A second round of accusations emerged in the summer of 2023 when excavations of the “mass grave” began. In August, the *National Post* reported that “No evidence of human remains has been found during the excavation of a Catholic church basement on the site of a former Manitoba residential school.” Again, the body count was zero.

There is also the matter of the scope of the WaPo investigation. Why didn’t they investigate the boarding schools run by the government? After all, they operated most of them. Are they content to rely on the Department of Interior study? Similarly, they mention that several Protestant denominations also operated these schools. Why were none of them probed?

As Donohue has pointed out many times, wherever adults

regularly interact with minors, unfortunately we find abuse. So why is it that time and again, the public schools get a pass, Hollywood gets a pass, etc.? Why is it always the Catholic Church that is the source of investigation? Isn't this religious profiling? And wouldn't that suggest that bigotry is at work?

By contrast, the USCCB report has two mentions of "violence" and six mentions of "abuse," but none have anything to do with wrongdoing on the part of the Church.

The bishops' report rightfully cites heroes such as Dominican Fr. Bartolomé de Las Casas, the sixteenth century defender of human rights for Indians, and St. Junípero Serra, the eighteenth century missionary who was canonized by Pope Francis for his courage in calling out colonizers for their mistreatment of Native Americans.

There is not a single person, from any other religion, who did more to champion the rights of Indians than these two priests.

The bishops' report does not sanitize anything. It admits that many Native Americans feel abandoned by the Church, citing a "lack of understanding of their unique cultural needs." Hence, the apology. But the report also notes the "joy," as well as the "sorrow," that so many experienced. It also makes note of the many wonderful priests and nuns who did yeoman work among indigenous Catholics.

The motive to assimilate Native Americans was noble, though looking back at it from today's vantage point it may seem overbearing. But it is important to acknowledge, as the bishops' report does, that in places like Alaska, "many Church-run boarding schools were created to shelter youth who were orphaned during epidemics or whose parents were experiencing illness or dire poverty and could not care for them."

Moreover, "Many Native alumni of those boarding schools who

are still living today express gratitude for the care and educational opportunities they received from the men and women religious who administered mission schools." Similarly, it bears noting that many of these indigenous peoples "willingly embraced the Gospel when missionaries offered it to them."

In fact, many tribes "requested Catholic missionaries." Let's also not forget that "Many early Indigenous converts to Catholicism faced persecution and even martyrdom for their belief, either within their own communities or from others outside their communities."

We shouldn't have to rely on Catholic sources to highlight the great work done by the missionaries. This is a matter of history, not religion. But the animus against the Church today is palpable, especially in elite quarters.

It is important that the truth be told. The WaPo report contains some disturbing information, and undoubtedly instances of abuse occurred. But when the data are incomplete, it's time to tap the brakes and not come to condemnatory conclusions.

The issue of abuse must also be put in context. If corporal punishment was commonplace at the time, why should we be horrified to learn that it existed in Catholic institutions? It must also be asked how common was abuse within the Native American community? Not to ask questions like these reveals a bias, thus further undercutting the credibility of those pointing fingers.

The Senate Indian Affairs Committee is interested in having a federal commission do a more thorough investigation of the assimilative policies of Indian boarding schools. If they do so, they need to raise issues that seem to have escaped the WaPo journalists, as well as many others. That would include this committee.