

RELIGIOUS RIGHTS THRIVE IN IOWA

This is the article that appeared in the April 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](#).

The Iowa Senate has passed a bill protecting religious liberty. Every Republican voted for it and every Democrat voted against it. The vote was 31-16.

The bill is based on the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) that was signed into law in 1993 by President Bill Clinton. It prioritizes religious liberty, meaning that if the government is going to encroach on First Amendment rights, it had better have a “compelling” reason for doing so.

The law defines religious liberty as an exercise that is “substantially motivated by one’s sincerely held religious belief, whether or not the exercise is compulsory or central to a larger system of religious belief.” This means that if someone believes his religious rights are being “substantially burdened,” he can take his case to the courts.

The Democrats believe that religious liberty should be a subordinate right to LGBT rights. They claim that religious rights should not be privileged and that the state RFRA law will be used to discriminate against LGBT people. They are historically wrong, and their current fears are based more on conjecture than reality.

As law professor Patrick Garry observes, “Textually, the Constitution provides greater protection for religious practices than for any secular-belief-related activities.” Similarly, there is nothing in our legal history that would afford greater protection for LGBT rights than religious

liberty. This does not mean that religious rights are absolute—no right is. But it does mean that religious liberty must be awarded “favored treatment” when it conflicts with other rights. That was the conclusion reached by the Supreme Court in a religious liberty 2015 case.

We’ve had a federal RFRA for over 30 years, and many state RFRA laws since then. Where are the horror stories that the Democrats are talking about? Where are LGBT people being persecuted? Who’s doing it?

Not only is this nonsense, it is those with sincerely held religious beliefs who are the ones having their fundamental rights being eviscerated these days. Perversely, it is LGBT activists who are largely responsible for this condition.

FEDS HOSTILE TO RELIGION; REBUKE WARRANTED

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On three occasions in the first two months of this year, we have been mobilized to respond to a series of decisions made by elites in the federal government that are hostile to religion in general, and to Catholics, in particular. This is unprecedented.

On January 19, Bill Donohue sent a letter to Rep. Jim Jordan, Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, regarding decisions reached by Noah Bishoff, the former Director of the Office of Stakeholder Integration and Engagement in the Strategic

Operations Division of the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN).

Under his tutelage, FinCEN investigators asked financial institutions to provide them with customer transactions of an "extremist" nature. Such terms such as "MAGA" were flagged as problematic. Of interest to the Catholic League was earmarking "the purchasing of books (including religious texts)" that might meet the test of "extremism."

Donohue asked Jordan, "which kinds of religious books were of interest to Bishoff's team of investigators? For example, those written by orthodox Catholics, or those written by Catholic bashers? I doubt it was the latter."

On February 6, Donohue wrote to Rep. Chip Roy, Chairman of the House Security Committee, asking him to keep the pressure on the Biden administration's Justice Department for selectively targeting non-violent pro-life protesters for violating the FACE Act, while letting violent abortion-rights protesters skate.

This becomes especially important given the admission of FBI Director Christopher Wray last November that 70% of FACE offenses have been committed by abortion-rights activists. Moreover, we know from Associate Attorney General Vanita Gupta that pro-lifers are being disproportionately targeted. We also know why: the Biden administration is angry that the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*.

On February 15, Donohue wrote to FBI Director Christopher Wray asking him to settle the issue of the agency spying on Catholics. Wray was supposed to have answered several questions, posed by U.S. Senators, about this issue but did not reply on time.

We have been actively engaged in this FBI issue dating back to February of last year. That is why we treated this as the most serious of the three matters. Donohue's letter is on p. 5.

We are well aware that most federal employees are good men and women who are doing their best to serve the public. But we are also well aware of too many recent examples where the elites in charge have either failed themselves to act in a just manner, or have allowed those below them to do so.

Anti-Catholicism, stemming from any source, must be taken seriously. But when it emanates from the federal government—it is alarming.

GOV. ABBOTT MADE IMMIGRATION #1 ISSUE

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Whether one agrees with Texas Gov. Greg Abbott's decision to bus illegal aliens to sanctuary cities around the country or not, it is indisputable that he is responsible for making immigration the Number One issue in the nation. His gambit was sociologically brilliant. He turned what was perceived by most Americans to be a regional issue into a national one.

What Abbott did was right out of the playbook of the Left's favorite radical, Saul Alinsky. In his book, *Rules for Radicals*, Alinsky listed 13 tactics for activists. Abbott cites two of them.

The fourth rule is "*Make the enemy live up to their own book of rules*. You can kill them with this, for they can no more obey their own rules than the Christian church can live up to Christianity." By busing migrants to sanctuary cities—making

the “compassionate” ones experience what it is like for Texans to put up with the illegals—Abbott called their bluff. Now they are up in arms.

The eighth rule is “*Keep the pressure on*, with different tactics and actions, and utilize all events of the period for your purpose.” Abbott has not only been relentless in shipping migrants to liberal cities, he has quickened the pace. He has also spread his goodwill around, from east to west, showing his penchant for diversity and inclusion.

We prepared a report on exactly how Abbott rolled out “Operation Lone Star.” Here is a quick synopsis. [The full report is available online.]

It was in April 2022 that he began transporting the migrants. At that time, approximately 200 were sent to Washington, D.C.; by the end of January 2024, the number topped 12,500. Since August 2022, over 37,500 had made their way to New York City; since August 2022, more than 31,200 have been shipped to Chicago; since November 2022, over 3,400 have been bused to Philadelphia; since May 2023, more than 16,000 had been sent to Denver; and since June 2023, over 1,500 were put on buses destined for Los Angeles.

Abbott has now bused over 100,000 to sanctuary cities. In December, illegal aliens came in record numbers—over 300,000 crashed our southern border.

The data prove that Abbott’s policy is working.

We looked at surveys conducted by the Harvard CAPS-Harris Poll examining the top three most pressing issues facing the nation, beginning with the start of “Operation Lone Star.”

April 2022

1. Price/Inflation: 33 percent
2. Economy and Jobs: 28 percent

3. Immigration: 22 percent

Approximately 200 migrants had been relocated by that time.

October 2022

1. Price/Inflation: 37 percent
2. Economy and Jobs: 29 percent
3. Immigration: 23 percent

Over 12,700 migrants had been relocated by that time.

April 2023

1. Price/Inflation: 34 percent
2. Economy and Jobs: 25 percent
3. Immigration: 24 percent

Over 19,040 migrants had been relocated by May 2023 (Texas did not provide data for April 2023).

October 2023

1. Price/Inflation: 32 percent
2. Immigration: 27 percent
3. Economy and Jobs: 24 percent

Over 58,900 migrants had been relocated by that time.

January 2024

1. Immigration: 35 percent
2. Price/Inflation: 32 percent
3. Economy and Jobs: 25 percent

Over 102,100 migrants had been relocated by that time.

The AP-NORC polls found similar outcomes.

2022

1. Economy, general: 31 percent

2. Inflation: 30 percent
3. Immigration: 27 percent

2023

1. Immigration: 35 percent
2. Inflation: 30 percent
3. Economy, general: 24 percent

The evidence is clear: There is a direct line between the expansion of Abbott's busing and the nation's intolerance for illegal aliens. Had he not done so, this would still be regarded as a regional issue, and those who live along the border would be its only victims.

Some say it is cruel to bus migrants to cities around the country. We think it is cruel to make Texans pay for the policy prescriptions of those who never suffer the consequences of their own ideas.

It is repulsive to hear Abbott's critics say that those who support his policy are anti-immigration. Those who enter legally are welcome.

Our one complaint with Abbott is that he didn't exclusively choose to bus the illegals to the wealthiest and most liberal neighborhoods in the country. Only when those who live in places like Beverly Hills and East Hampton feel the pinch of their politics will matters change.

FBI ASKED TO SETTLE CATHOLIC

PROBE

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Catholic League president Bill Donohue wrote to FBI Director Christopher Wray about his apparent refusal to settle the agency's investigation of mainline Catholics.

February 15, 2024

The Honorable Christopher A. Wray
Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation
935 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20535-0001

Dear Director Wray:

On January 31, 2024, the Ranking Member of the Senate Budget Committee, Charles Grassley, and Judiciary Committee Ranking Member, Lindsey Graham, and several other senators, wrote to you regarding the FBI's probe of Catholics as outlined in the Richmond memo. You were to answer their questions by February 14, but apparently that has not been done.

This issue has been festering for a year. It was in February 2023 that the public learned of a startling memo produced by the Richmond Field Office: it revealed an investigation of traditional Catholics. On February 9, 2023, I made public the concerns of the Catholic League. "What's next? Will it be a war on Catholics who are orthodox?"

My hunch was proven right. The FBI subsequently said that "mainline Catholic parishes" and "local diocesan leadership" were selected for investigation.

On April 11, 2023, I wrote to you asking to make public those documents related to this issue. On July 24, July 26, August 10, September 21 and December 6, I wrote to the Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, Rep. Jim Jordan, asking to get to the bottom of this issue.

It is vitally important that you answer the questions posed by the senators in their letter of January 31. They asked many serious questions that are of interest to Catholics nationwide.

For instance, they wanted to know why “the FBI permanently deleted critical records related to the memo.” They asked why the FBI relied on the Southern Poverty Law Center for information in its probe of Catholics; I asked Rep. Jordan to address the same question.

This is not a subject we will ever abandon. Catholics have every right to know what is going on at the FBI and why they have been spied on, without just cause. Not only are First Amendment religious liberty issues at stake, so is the legitimacy of the FBI.

I implore you to cooperate with those government officials who have contacted you about this issue. Hopefully we can settle this matter once and for all.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.
President

cc: Sen. Charles Grassley
Sen. Lindsey Graham
Rep. Jim Jordan

ARE CHRISTIANS A “PRIVILEGED” GROUP?

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Bill Donohue sent the following letter to the Chief Diversity Officer at The Johns Hopkins University wanting to see the evidence that Christians constitute a “privileged” group.

January 29, 2024

Dr. Sherita H. Golden
Chief Diversity Officer
The Johns Hopkins University
2024 E. Monument Street, Ste. 2-600
Baltimore, MD 21205

Dear Dr. Golden:

You recently posted a piece in the university’s “Monthly Diversity Digest” listing various demographic groups which, you claim, enjoy a “privileged” position in American society. They include “whites, Christians, males, and heterosexuals.”

I am aware that a spokesman for Johns Hopkins Medicine addressed the ensuing controversy and that you have since retracted your comments. That is all fine and good, but there is one demographic group that you mentioned that is of particular interest to me, namely, Christians.

I would like to know how you determined that Christians are a “privileged” group. As a sociologist and the president of the nation’s largest Catholic civil rights organization, I am concerned that if your assessment is wrong, it could have far-reaching consequences for Christians.

In a survey done by the Pew Research Center on the income of various religious groups, it listed 15 Christian ones. Only two of them—those who belong to the Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)—have a family income above that of atheists and agnostics. (The two wealthiest religious groups are Jewish and Hindu.)

Those who earn less than atheists and agnostics, but who are nonetheless above the median income, belong to the following groups: Orthodox Christian, United Church of Christ, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, United Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church in America, and Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

Those who earn below the median income, and are considerably less well off than atheists and agnostics, belong to the following groups: Catholic, Churches of Christ, Southern Baptist Convention, Assemblies of God, American Baptist Churches USA, Church of God in Christ and National Baptist Convention.

The data do not support your conviction that Christians are a “privileged group.” But they do indicate that atheists and agnostics qualify as such. Could you explain why they were not listed as “privileged” groups but Christians were?

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.
President

cc: Ronald J. Daniels, President, The Johns Hopkins University
Louis J. Forster, Chairman, Board of Trustees

MS. MAGAZINE'S BIGOTED SCREED

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The reason Bill Donohue wrote *The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse: Clarifying the Facts and the Causes* was to debunk all the distortions and outright lies about this issue. He is proud that not one critic has been able to show where he misstated anything (it contains over 800 endnotes).

Not only has no one been able to challenge Donohue's account, when several liberal experts on this issue were asked to debate him on a Fox News podcast, all refused to do so. That speaks volumes.

Yet there are those who continue to parrot the conventional moonshine on this issue. The latest to do so is Carrie N. Baker, a Smith College professor.

Baker wrote her screed for Ms. magazine, where she is a contributing editor. She states her conclusion right at the start. "The Catholic Church's clergy sexual abuse scandals, combined with its efforts to control women's reproductive choices by banning abortion and attacking contraception, expose a troubling pattern of sexual sociopathology."

She is to be commended for putting her cards on the table. Now we know exactly where she is coming from.

Baker offers as evidence three items: the 2006 documentary *Deliver Us From Evil*; the movie *Spotlight*; and the 2018 Pennsylvania grand jury report. Also, she wants us to believe that clergy sexual abuse is ongoing and that a victims' group, SNAP, is courageously fighting back.

When *Deliver Us From Evil* debuted, Donohue said that if the

writer-director, Amy Berg, had confined herself to the offenses of one predatory priest, Oliver O'Grady, she would have distanced herself from the criticism she rightly received for making sweeping generalizations about priests. That's called bigotry. As it turned out, her real target was not O'Grady, it was the Catholic Church.

To her credit, Berg subsequently decided to expose the way Hollywood predators manipulated, intimidated and raped aspiring child actors. But her documentary, *An Open Secret*, was turned down by one Hollywood studio after another. Surprise, surprise. Years later it opened in a few cities.

Spotlight was the story of the *Boston Globe's* team that won a Pulitzer Prize for exposing the sexual abuse scandal in the Boston archdiocese. When the newspaper's series was published in 2002, Donohue said that "The *Boston Globe*, the *Boston Herald*, and the *New York Times* covered the story with professionalism." He was quoted on the front page of the *Times* saying, "I am not the church's water boy. I am not here to defend the indefensible."

Nine years later Donohue said it was apparent there were two scandals related to this issue. Scandal I was internal—"the church-driven scandal." Scandal II was external—"the result of indefensible cherry-picking of old cases by rapacious lawyers and vindictive victims' groups. They were aided and abetted by activists, the media, and Hollywood."

The movie, *Spotlight*, which won an Oscar for best picture, was an example of Scandal II. It was not the film that was objectionable, it was the incredibly vicious comments made about the Catholic Church by producers, script writers and actors.

What made their remarks so outrageous was the fact that nine of those associated with the movie had worked for Harvey Weinstein, yet when his sexual misconduct was made public,

eight said nothing about his sexual abuse and all nine refused to indict Hollywood the way they did the Catholic Church.

In another example of hypocrisy, after the *Boston Globe* did a story in 2018 on bishops who allegedly failed to deal adequately with clergy abuse, Donohue spent several weeks exchanging email correspondence with the editor and his staff asking to see the evidence. He was denied. Denied by the same people who condemned the bishops for lacking transparency.

The Pennsylvania grand jury report was a PR stunt pulled by the state's attorney general (and now governor), Josh Shapiro. Almost all of the accused priests he named were either dead or thrown out of the priesthood. No wonder Shapiro was able to prosecute only two of them. None of the living was allowed to testify in court about his case, but we succeeded in hiring lawyers to defend eleven of the priests who had their reputations ruined. We sued and won, 6-1, in the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

The latest data on clergy sexual abuse, released last year, showed that .013 percent of the clergy had a substantiated allegation made against him by a minor for offenses in the past year. In short, the scandal has been over for about a half century; the timeline was the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s. Most of the abusers (8-in-10) were homosexuals, not pedophiles, and 149 priests were responsible for 26% of the allegations.

Finally, SNAP has long been moribund. It died after its chief was raked over the coals by prosecutors in 2017—David Clohessy was shown to be a fraud. After he was outed as a rogue by a transgender employee, Gretchen Rachel Hammond, he quit. Hammond verified everything Donohue had been saying about SNAP for years.

All that is left of SNAP is a website. It is a shell group comprised of a few people with a phone number and an email

address—it has no office address.

Baker failed to lay a glove on the Catholic Church. Quite frankly, she is out of her league on this subject.

ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL DEFILED

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At a funeral service on February 15 at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City, men dressed as women and women dressed as men turned out to honor Cecilia Gentili. Gentili is a man who falsely claimed to be a woman. He was an illegal alien, a drug addict, prostitute, trans activist and atheist.

At the service, many of those in attendance dressed as hookers, danced in the aisles, sang "Ave Cecilia" when "Ave Maria" was sung, and shouted, "St. Cecilia, Mother Of All Whores."

The presiding priest, Fr. Edward Dougherty, falsely declared Gentili to be a woman, referring to him as "our sister." Fr. James Martin, an LGBT advocate, was delighted with the event, saying the trans activists are "as much a part of the church as anyone else."

Many are wondering how this profane service could have happened. It happened because it was held under false pretenses. The person who made the arrangements, who goes by the name Ceyeye Doroshov, said, "I kept it under wraps."

The Pastor of St. Patrick's, the Very Reverend Enrique Salvo, said, "The Cathedral only knew that family and friends were requesting a funeral Mass for a Catholic, and had no idea our welcome and prayer would be degraded in such a sacrilegious and deceptive way."

Cardinal Timothy Dolan, the Archbishop of New York, authorized a Mass of Reparation in the wake of this vile event.

Radio and TV coverage in New York was scant on what actually happened, focusing more on comments from the family of the man. They accuse the Catholic Church of hypocrisy. It would be more accurate to say that those who support defiling St. Patrick's Cathedral are rank anti-Catholic bigots who look, talk, and act like deranged men and women.

MICHIGAN PROBE OF PRIESTS IS A SCAM

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Imagine if a state attorney general decided to investigate violent crimes that have been committed over a half-century ago, especially cold cases, hoping to prosecute as many as possible. Imagine if it dragged on for years, costing the taxpayers a small fortune, yielding practically nothing. To top it off, imagine if the probe were limited only to African Americans.

This would be labeled racial profiling. Indeed, it would be called a scam.

Why, then, is it okay to probe Catholic priests—and no one else—looking to nail as many of them as possible for sexual abuse offenses extending back decades?

This is what has been happening in many states, beginning with the now discredited 2018 Pennsylvania grand jury report released by Josh Shapiro, then the state's attorney general and now its governor. The latest scam involves Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel.

In 2018, under Nessel's predecessor, Bill Schuette, it was announced that all seven Michigan dioceses would be subjected to an investigation into the sexual abuse of minors; she took over in 2019.

On January 8, Nessel released a report on the Diocese of Gaylord; in 2022 she released a probe of the Diocese of Marquette. Both turned out to be fishing expeditions, done to smear Catholics.

The investigation of the Gaylord diocese reviewed documents dating back to 1950, when Harry Truman was president. It found that there were "credible"—not substantiated—charges against 26 priests and two deacons.

Of the 28, 16 are dead, two are retired, and one is still active; no charges have been brought against any of the three because the alleged offenses involved adults. Consistent with what Bill Donohue uncovered, Nessel said the "vast majority" of these offenses occurred before 2002, the year when the bishops' conference adopted new reforms.

Nessel also failed in her probe of the Marquette diocese. Of the 44 priests who were named in the report, extending back to 1950, 32 were "known or presumed to be dead." Moreover, only 6 of the 44 cases had been substantiated by the diocese.

According to one Michigan media outlet, SooLeader, to date the investigation of the Michigan Catholic dioceses has turned up

220 boxes of paper documents and more than 3.5 million digital documents. Only in 11 cases throughout the entire state have criminal charges been brought, resulting in nine convictions. None of the 11 cases involved the clergy from the Gaylord diocese.

The list of the 11 cases makes clear that three of the victims were male. The sex of the others is not identified. This sleight of hand is typical—it amounts to a cover up of the role which homosexual priests have played in the clergy sexual abuse scandal.

We know from the John Jay studies on this subject that more than 80 percent of all the sexual abuse of minors was at the hands of homosexual priests; only a very small percentage of the cases had anything to do with pedophilia. The most common victim was a postpubescent male.

What makes this so outrageous is that Michigan has a serious problem with sexual abuse in the public schools. In 2016, *USA Today* released a report on this subject, covering all 50 states: Michigan public schools received an “F” in their handling of sexual abuse.

Three years later Donohue wrote to Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer, and the entire state legislature, asking for an investigation of sexual abuse in the public schools. No one was interested in taking on the public school establishment, and the unions that fund the Democrats.

Religious profiling, like racial profiling, is morally reprehensible. Covering up the identity of sexual abusers is also offensive. Thanks to Dana Nessel, both are alive and well in Michigan.

CONFUSION REIGNS OVER SAME-SEX BLESSINGS

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Last December, Pope Francis gave priests permission to bless homosexual couples. It immediately triggered a blowback of massive proportions. But some loved it. Among the happiest are Catholic dissidents, members of the clergy, religious, and laity who have long rejected the Church's teachings on women and sexuality.

We issued a report detailing the comments that these people made in support of this change. Catholics for Choice—the anti-Catholic pro-abortion letterhead funded by wealthy individuals and foundations—acknowledged that “some priests have been secretly blessing same-sex unions for years.” They noted, with delight, that they can now do so publicly.

They were right. Fr. James Martin, a LGBT advocate, said he was delighted to bless a gay couple in a living room, saying, “It was really nice to be able to do that publicly.” Thus did he tacitly admit that he had been doing so all along.

The confusion that stories like this have generated is considerable.

There has been widespread opposition by the African Catholic clergy to this decision. Bishops and priests in the United States, France, Eastern Europe, and many other parts of the world have also expressed their misgivings.

Earlier in the year, it was reported that an American Catholic priest blessed a same-sex couple in a church, something the pope's declaration did not permit. The question that Catholics

need answered is whether the Vatican is willing and able to deal with situations like that in Kentucky which appear to run afoul of its intentions.

Fr. Richard Watson offered the blessing to a lesbian couple at Saint Paul Catholic Church in Lexington, Kentucky on New Year's Eve; the couple claim to have been civilly "married" for 22 years. Had the blessing taken place in the home of the couple, it would not have drawn much attention. But it took place in a church, and the priest was wearing a rainbow stole. The Vatican document on this issue clearly states that it is not acceptable to allow "any type of liturgical rite or blessing similar to a liturgical rite," citing the "confusion" it would incur.

The situation in Lexington should come as no surprise. After the Vatican declaration on same-sex blessings was issued, Fr. Watson pledged to open his doors to everyone, "no matter their circumstances." Yet the Vatican statement is replete with qualifications, citing many circumstances where the blessing would not be appropriate.

The director of the gay, lesbian and transgender ministry of the Diocese of Lexington, "JR" Zerkowski, also heralded the new directive. In 2021, Bill Donohue wrote to his boss, Bishop John Stowe, asking whether he agreed with Zerkowski about his publicly stated support for the Equality Act, legislation that has been slammed by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops for its anti-Catholic provisions. He did not reply.

In a statement released October 25, 2023, Donohue mentioned that Pope Francis thanked Zerkowski for his work. He pointedly questioned whether the pope knew of his association with extremist groups who reject Church teachings. Donohue addressed another issue as well. "Does he [the pope] know that under the tutelage of Zerkowski that his ministry draped an image of Our Blessed Mother in a gay pride flag, posting it online, calling Jesus' mother the 'Mother of Pride'?"

In other words, it was to be expected that, given its history, the Diocese of Lexington would put its own spin on the recent same-sex marriage directive. It was also to be expected that the confusion that this statement would engender would begin as soon as it was released.

In March 2021, the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith posed this question: "Does the Church have the power to give the blessing to unions of persons of the same sex?" It replied, "Negative." It said that it "declares illicit any form of blessing that tends to acknowledge their unions as such." To make its point crystal clear, it said that God "does not and cannot bless sin."

On December 2023, the *New York Times*, citing the latest document, ran a headline, "Gay Catholics Hear History: 'God Bless You.'"

The author of the document, and the head of the Dicastery (previously the Congregation) for the Doctrine of the Faith, Cardinal Victor Manuel Fernández, said on December 18 that this was his only statement on this issue—"no further responses should be expected."

On January 4, 2024, Fernández issued another response, seeking to clarify his comments of December 18. Now Catholics learned that the original statement was not "heretical."

Catholics from Kentucky to Kenya are supposed to believe in the same Church teachings, but given the confusion over same-sex blessings, this is in jeopardy. What makes this issue so important is that the Catholic Church is losing members in the United States while it is booming in Africa. Indeed, more than half of all the people who joined the Catholic Church worldwide in 2021 came from Africa.

If Africa is the future of the Church, the disillusionment that African Catholics are currently experiencing should be one of the most pressing issues facing the entire Catholic

Church today.

BIDEN FINDS AN EXECUTION HE LIKES

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When Joe Biden was running for president in 2020, he pledged that no one—no matter how heinous the crime—should ever be executed. Instead, the guilty should “serve life sentences without probation or parole.”

Merrick Garland was Attorney General for just a few months before he declared a moratorium on the death penalty. He and the president announced that they would seek to abolish capital punishment once and for all.

On January 12, 2024, Biden and Garland changed their mind. They finally found an execution they like. It is not hard to figure out why they pivoted. It has everything to do with race.

In the last three years that Biden has been president, there have been nearly 2,000 mass shootings. But never once did Garland authorize the death penalty. So the question is, why did Biden and Garland make an exception for Payton Gendron?

The reason they want Gendron dead is because they see in him something that transcends his persona—he is seen as fodder for virtue signaling. Quite simply, they are discriminating against him because he is a white man who killed blacks, and

they want to show blacks that they won't stand for it.

Black people kill black people with stunning frequency, yet such stories are given short shrift by the media, and politicians fail to say a word about it. But when a white person, such as Gendron, kills black people, he's a suitable candidate for execution. If black lives really mattered as much as white lives, then the race of the killer wouldn't matter. But it does.

Gendron is a self-confessed white racist who killed 10 black persons at a Buffalo supermarket in 2022 when he was 18. New York State does not allow the death penalty but the Department of Justice can override this in hate crime cases. They did so in this case.

Biden wants Gendron executed because he wants the public to know that he won't tolerate white supremacy. That's what he told a black congregation in South Carolina on January 8. He called white supremacy a "poison" that is infecting America. Just last spring he told a black audience at Howard University that "the most dangerous terrorist threat" to America is white supremacy.

One likely reason why Biden is pursuing the death penalty in this case is because he wants to shore up his base with black voters. It is slipping badly, especially among young blacks. His approval rating with blacks under the age of 50 is 32 percent.

When Garland addressed the death penalty for Gendron, he said, "The Justice Department fully recognizes the threat that white supremacist violence poses to the safety of the American people and American democracy." This is a ruse.

Crime data show that in almost 90 percent of the cases where a black person has been murdered, the killer was black. Whites are responsible for 8 percent of blacks who are murdered; the figure is double (16 percent) for whites killed by blacks. In

other words, the greatest domestic threat to black people today stems from black people, not white supremacists.

Further proof that Biden and Garland have a racial motive in treating Gendron differently can be seen in their treatment of the El Paso mass killer. In 2019, Patrick Wood

Crusius killed 23 people in a Wal-Mart racist rampage. It has been described as the deadliest attack on Hispanics in American history.

Crusius received 90 consecutive life sentences. Why didn't Garland pursue the death penalty? Don't 23 dead Latinos count as much as 10 dead African Americans?

If Gendron had been the leader of some white supremacist group, but was otherwise regarded as fairly normal, he would fit the profile of someone who might be a candidate for unusually harsh treatment. But such is not the case.

Like so many mass shooters, Gendron was a classic loner. He was not in charge of any group, white supremacist or otherwise; nor did he belong to a white racist organization. His father was an alcoholic and a long-time drug addict; his chronic substance abuse resulted in the demise of two marriages.

Gendron was such a freak that he wore a hazmat suit to class. After he threatened a shooting at his high school, he was sent for a mental health evaluation.

He was fascinated by violence, even to the point of bragging how he killed a feral cat. First he stabbed it, then he smashed its head on concrete. He finished it by cutting off the cat's head with a hatchet.

This is a sick man. Normal people do not act this way.

Make no mistake, his horrific crimes demand that he be put away for life.

But given what we know about his disturbed upbringing and his mental state, why are such factors being discounted? If he were just another screwed up young man, with no racist background, everyone knows that Biden and Garland would not be seeking the death penalty.

Looking at the world through a racist lens—which is what Biden and Garland are doing—inevitably results in disparate treatment. It's obvious that they are exploiting the Gendron case for political purposes.