

# LOOK WHO'S BASHING COLUMBUS

*This is the article that appeared in the November 2023 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](#).*

We live in a time when some politicians think it is perfectly acceptable to allow a baby who survives a botched abortion to die unattended by medical staff. All across the nation, child abuse in the schools is rampant—we are telling young kids they can switch their sex as quickly as they can turn on a light switch, offering puberty blockers and chemical castration to get the job done. Moreover, they can do so behind the backs of their parents, with the approval of the National Education Association.

We have just come off a respiratory illness that killed over one million Americans and yet we are now legalizing marijuana—while continuing an “anti-cigarette” campaign in the schools. Students are now coming to school stoned. We are allowing, even enabling, people from other countries to crash our borders, bringing untold amounts of fentanyl with them.

Our cities are run by politicians who rescue cats and dogs from extremely cold weather while allowing mentally deranged human beings to freeze to death on the sidewalks, all in the name of civil liberties. Crime is out of control and there is no accountability for even violent crimes. The homeless defecate in the streets, harass passersby, and demand that their “rights” be protected.

And these same politicians—all of whom are liberal Democrats—have the audacity to pretend that they come to the table with their hands clean, insisting we either erase Columbus from history or demonize him, all the while romanticizing so-called indigenous peoples. It's enough to make any sane American who knows anything about history reach

for the vomit bag.

Native Americans did not originate in America: they migrated here from Asia. The idea that they lived in some kind of Garden of Eden—living peacefully—until the white boys showed up is pure poppycock. The fact is there is nothing noble about the “noble savage.” Indeed, he is more savage than noble.

Harvard professor Steven Pinker, who is not a victim of political correctness, describes what life was like throughout most of history.

“Cruelty as entertainment, human sacrifice to indulge superstition, slavery as a labor-saving device, conquest as the mission statement of government, genocide as a means of acquiring real estate, torture and mutilation as routine punishment, the death penalty for misdemeanors and differences of opinion, assassination as the mechanism of political succession, rape as the spoils of war, pogroms as outlets for frustration, homicide as the major form of conflict resolution—all were unexceptionable features of life for most of human history.”

What about indigenous peoples? Pinker concludes that they “were far more violent than our own.” He cites the work of noted anthropologists who learned of “population-wide rates of death in tribal warfare that dwarf those of modern times.” Bernard Bailyn, the famous Harvard historian agreed, saying, they did not live in a “terribly peaceful world.” In fact, “They were always involved in warfare.”

None of this is to excuse any wrongdoing by Europeans—many of them were just as vicious. But it is to say that we need to get over our childlike image of Native Americans and stop with the Columbus bashing. It makes no sense morally or historically, and this is doubly so for those who come to the table today with filthy hands.

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# IF WE CAN CHANGE OUR SEX, WHY NOT OUR RACE?

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NBC News recently did a story on people who claim to be able to change their race. This created a firestorm. Many of those who are quick to say we can change our sex (what they inaccurately call “gender”) are livid at the idea that we can change our race. But according to their own logic, they are clearly wrong.

If self-identity is dispositive for sex—that is precisely what gender ideology maintains—why not for race? In other words, if a male claims to be a female, why can’t someone of one race claim to be that of another, if all that matters is self-identification?

NBC’s experts claim there is a dramatic difference. Race, they say, is purely a social construct, having no basis in biology. But that is what gender ideology holds as well. So if both race and sex are purely social constructs, why can we change our sex but not our race? The logic implodes.

The fact is that sex is purely a biological concept whereas race has biological and social roots. Not to be confusing, but “gender” refers to socially learned roles that are appropriate for males and females; therefore, there is a social component to male-female differences.

Our sex is determined by nature. To be specific, the father determines the sex of the offspring. No one assigns our sex at

birth—it is recorded, and what is recorded has been evident from conception. Society has nothing to do with it. To put it differently, we cannot change our chromosomal characteristics. Nature can be stubborn.

Race is more complicated.

Author Toni Morrison has said, “There is no such thing as race. None. There is just a human race—scientifically, anthropologically. Racism is a construct, a social construct... it has a social function, racism.”

She is partly right: racism is a social construct. But to treat race as such is flatly wrong. Morrison has bought into the myth, prominent among the devotees of critical race theory, that race is a social construct created to maintain white supremacy.

Harvard professor Steven Pinker is no conservative, but he is an honest scholar whose writings are often attacked by those on the Left. For one, he does not buy into the false notion that human nature does not exist. He also doesn't buy the conventional wisdom on race. “To oppose racism,” he says, “you don't have to say ‘races don't exist.’”

Nicholas Wade is a former New York Times writer who has written a splendid book on genes and race. “By referring to anyone who explores the biological basis of race as a ‘scientific racist,’ and thus in essence demonizing them as racists, the academic left has managed to suppress almost all discussion of human differences.”

He takes sociologists to task for “incorrectly inferr[ing] that there is no biological basis for race, confirming their preference for regarding race as just a social construct.” He pointedly asks, “How did the academic world contrive to reach a position on race so far removed from reality and commonsense observation?”

Wade's last comment merits our attention. If race is purely a social construct, how do we explain that sickle cell anemia primarily affects black Americans? The CDC says that sickle cell disease is "a group of inherited blood cell disorders that primarily affects Black or African American persons." It says nothing about it being socially constructed.

Why are Asian Americans twice as likely to develop stomach cancer compared to Caucasians? Why do they have twice the incidence of liver cancer? Are we to believe that cancer is also a social construct?

Wade admits that "genetic differences from one race to another are slight and subtle," and he acknowledges that genes "can be overwhelmed by learned behaviors, or culture." But he cautions, "To say that genes explain everything about human social behavior would be as absurd as to assume that they explain nothing."

How many races are there? The numbers vary, but the strongest evidence points to three: Africans, East Asians and Caucasian. To back up what he says, Wade consults the findings of physical anthropologists, especially those who do forensics.

"Human skulls fall into three distinctive shapes, which reflect their owners' degree of ancestry in the three main races, Caucasian, East Asian and African. African skulls have rounder nose and eye cavities, and jaws that protrude forward, whereas Caucasians and East Asians have flatter faces. Caucasian skulls are longer, have larger chinbones and tear-shaped nose openings. East Asian skulls tend to be short and broad with wide cheekbones." Only an ideological zealot would claim that skulls are socially constructed.

There is something else going on here that bears discussion. Those who claim we can change our sex but not our race do so because it sustains their belief that our sexual identity is a fluid concept. Race plays no such role.

It is nonsense to say we can change our sex, any more than we can change our race. Those who argue otherwise are playing a game, one that is intellectually dishonest.

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## ORTHODOX V. HETERODOX REPORT

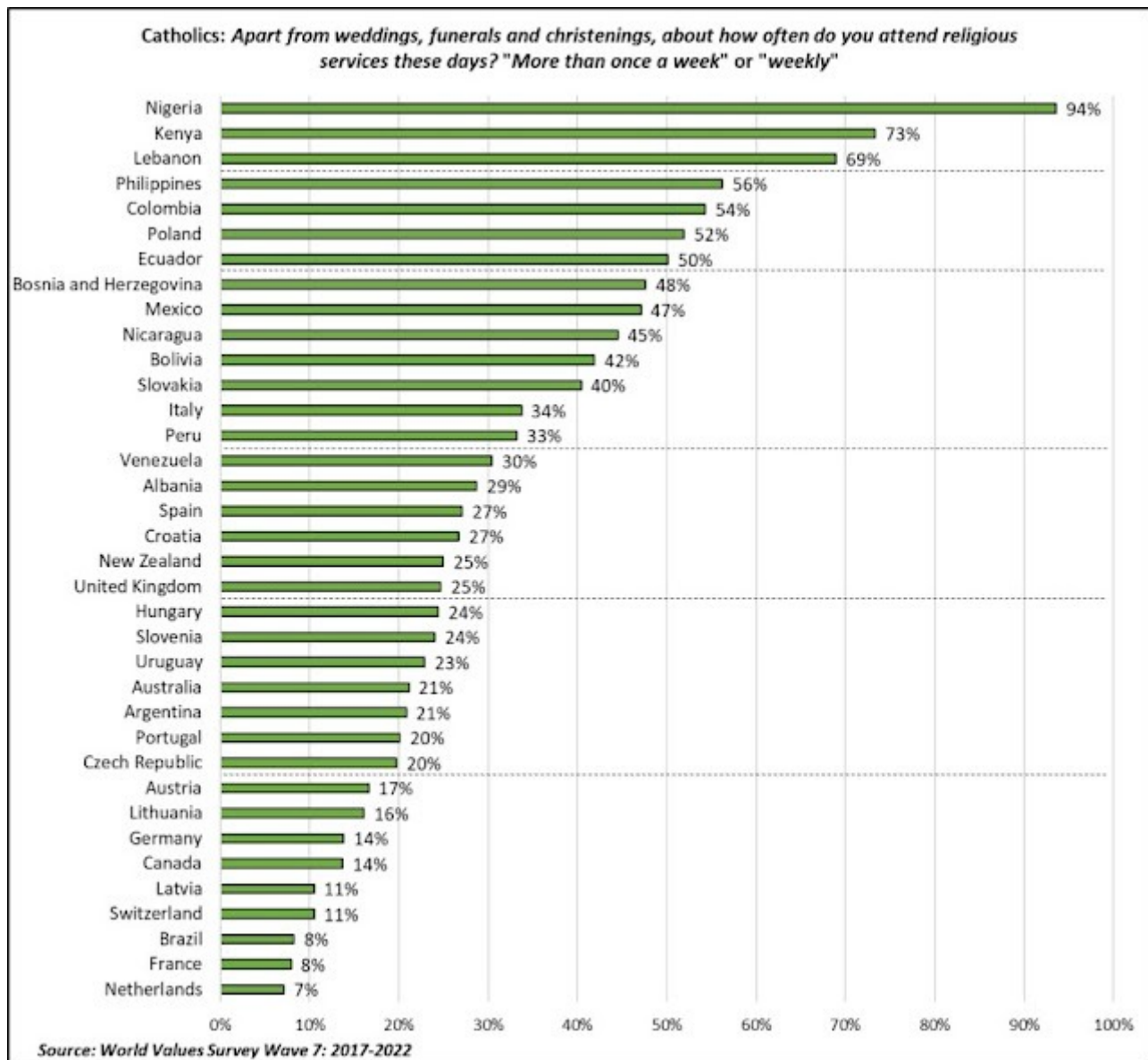
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*Time and again, commentators have observed that Catholic communities that adhere to the orthodoxies of the faith tend to flourish while those that embrace heterodoxies usually diminish. Below are several examples that highlight this trend.*

### Mass Attendance Globally

As seen on the chart below from the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), major discrepancies exist between how well Catholics attend Mass in different nations. A common explanation for this is more affluent societies tend to decline in religiosity. However, it should be noted that nations closer to the top of the list do better at observing orthodoxy, while those near the bottom are more inclined to embrace heterodoxy. In the following sections, select country profiles will demonstrate this point.





## Nigeria

Catholics in Nigeria face significant hardships that most Westerners can barely comprehend. Last year more Catholics were martyred for their faith in Nigeria than anywhere else in the world. Islamist militants, such as Boko Haram, the Islamic State's West African Province, and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, prey on Nigeria's Catholic population.

Yet, despite these grave conditions, the Catholic Church in Nigeria remains strong. While approximately 20 million people (roughly 13 percent of the population) are Catholic, church attendance among Catholics in Nigeria is 94 percent. This is the highest rate of Mass attendance in the world. The Catholic

Bishops' Conference of Nigeria is noted for its adherence to Catholic orthodoxy, and the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter, a more traditional Catholic society, flourishes in the African nation, as well. In the face of tremendous human suffering, the Church in Nigeria remains strong thanks to its faithfulness to Catholic teachings.

### Germany

In many ways the Catholic Church in Germany is the polar opposite of the Church in Nigeria. For instance, the Archdiocese of Cologne is the wealthiest Catholic diocese in the world not only because of its historic importance but also because of the German church taxes that provide a portion of people's income taxes to recognized religions with significant subsidies. For that matter, many German dioceses have significant wealth due to these subsidies.

Yet even with this strong financial base, the Catholic Church in Germany has rapidly declined. While CARA averages Mass attendance for German Catholics between 2017 to 2022 to be approximately 14 percent, local statistics indicate that in 2022 only 5.7 percent of Catholics were weekly in the pews.

In 2019, the Central Committee of German Catholics and the German bishops' conference began a collaborative effort known as "The Synodal Way." This provided a forum for activists with more heterodox views to promote making substantive changes to Church teachings. Throughout the process the heterodox advocates dominated the proceedings and called for more and more significant departures from Catholic traditions.

Ultimately, when the process concluded in March of 2023, "The Synodal Way" overwhelmingly endorsed measures changing Catholic practices on transgender ideology, accepting the ordination of women to the sacramental diaconate, approving the blessing of same-sex relationships, normalizing lay preaching, and asking Rome to reexamine the discipline of



priestly celibacy.

### Brazil

Following Vatican II, Latin America became a hotbed for liberation theology. As its name would suggest, liberation theology is a Christian theological approach emphasizing the liberation of the oppressed and downtrodden.

In practice, though, liberation theology replaces Catholic orthodoxy with strong Marxist overtones. As Friar Clodovis Boff, brother of renowned liberation theologian and former Catholic priest Leonardo Boff, warns in his new book, *The Crisis in the Catholic Church and Liberation Theology*, that adherents to this heterodoxy fall “into utilitarianism or functionalism in relation to the Word of God and to theology in general.” In other words, political and socio-economic concerns trump spiritual ones under a liberation theology interpretation.

For this reason, under St. John Paul II, the Vatican’s doctrinal office feared that the spread of liberation theology would cause irrevocable damage to the Church. Prior to becoming Pope Benedict XVI, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger regarded liberation theology as a “singular heresy” and a “fundamental threat” to Catholicism.

Like many other Latin American countries, the Church in Brazil embraced liberation theology. In the 1960s, it began to make major inroads among the Brazilian population. At the time, approximately 90 percent of the country was Catholic. However, after several decades of liberation theology, Catholic Brazilians now count for 51 percent of the total population. Further, less than one in ten (eight percent) of Brazil’s Catholics attend Mass weekly. This is one of the lowest levels of Mass attendance in the world.

### American Seminaries

As a general rule, the more orthodox an institution is the more seminarians it attracts. Conversely, the more heterodox an institution has become the fewer candidates for the priesthood will attend.

For instance, the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University and the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry are two prominent seminaries that are more heterodox in their nature. Respectively, in the 2022-2023 academic year, their enrollments were 34 and 32 seminarians. Out of all 39 seminaries in the country, these are the 29th and 30th highest attended.

However, more orthodox seminaries attract significantly more seminarians. Institutions such as Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Maryland, Notre Dame Seminary in Louisiana, St. John Vianney Theological Seminary in Colorado, St. Vincent de Paul Seminary in Florida, and St. Meinrad School of Theology in Indiana are all orthodox and in the 2022-2023 academic year all had over 100 seminarians in attendance.

### Sisters of Charity

Founded by St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in New York City, the Sisters of Charity were once a prominent order of nuns that worked to help the poor and promote the Catholic faith. However, over the last two centuries, the Sisters of Charity began to embrace heterodoxy.

Ultimately, this led to their numbers dwindling. According to the current congregation president Sister Donna Dodge, "in 21 years, no one entered and stayed." The median age of the sisters today is 83 years old, and there are 154 members left in the community. Demographic statistics indicate that they may have approximately 35 members left in the next 15 years. As a result, in April of 2023, the Sisters of Charity voted to stop accepting new members and embark on a "path to completion" of their mission.

This decline appears linked to the Sisters of Charity embracing heterodoxy. Several traditional orders of nuns have thrived while maintaining Catholic orthodoxy. For instance, the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist was founded in 1997. Yet in just over a quarter of a century, these more traditional sisters have grown to 150 members with an average age of 35 and the average age of women joining the order is 21. Similarly, the Franciscan Sisters of Renewal and the Sisters of Life, founded in 1988 and 1991 respectively, continue to grow and thrive attracting new, younger members while remaining steadfast in upholding the orthodoxy of the Catholic Church.

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## LOOKING FOR DIRT IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

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If you look hard enough to find dirt, you will probably succeed. We are all sinners. A more interesting issue is why some people and institutions are the constant targets of dirt digging while others get a pass. The latest example is an article published in the September 11 edition of *The Week* magazine.

Devika Rao's article, "The Catholic Church's Latest Scandals in the US," is inaccurate: the latest scandals are mostly old. Of the six stories dealing with sexual abuse, two go back to World War II, one is from a half-century ago, and the others are random acts of a few people. The author, whose specialty

is the environment and climate control, never explains why she decided to do this piece, nor does she draw any conclusions. She is content to simply recycle old stories.

Rao obviously has no interest in looking for fresh dirt in the public schools. If she had, she would report that from 2017 to 2018, there were approximately 15,000 incidents of reported rape or attempted rape in the public schools. For the same time period, there were over 14,000 reports of sexual assault other than rape.

Moreover, consider the number of complaints filed by the Defense of Freedom Institute (DFI), between 2010 and 2019, alleging instances of sexual violence against K-12 schools: they more than tripled. DFI, as reported in *City Journal*, found that when public school employees are investigated for sexual abuse, “many school districts are under no legal obligation to notify parents or even note the investigation in the employee’s personnel file.” Also, under collective bargaining agreements, they “often allow for scrubbing of personnel files.”

As Bill Donohue recounts in *The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse: Clarifying the Facts and the Causes*, sexual misconduct exists in every institution, secular and religious. Yet the media do not report on this with any degree of regularity, save for the Catholic Church.

Here’s some data about the Catholic clergy that Ms. Rao missed. Between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022, there were 16 allegations made by minors during that time, seven of which were substantiated. That means that of the 52,387 members of the clergy, .013 percent of them had a substantiated allegation made against him. In the first half of 2022, the number of allegations—*not allegations that have been substantiated*—was zero.

If Rao knows of any institution which has a better record than

this, she ought to write about it. It would be breaking news.

The reason the media do not report on this, preferring to rehash old dirt, is precisely to poison the public mind. They want to give the appearance that nothing has changed. What certainly hasn't changed is the anti-Catholic bias that permeates a large swath of the media.

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# NASHVILLE MURDERER'S MANIFESTO STILL SECRET

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As we began the new school year, seven months after a mass murder at a Christian school in Nashville, the manifesto of the killer has still not been released to the public.

On March 27, 2023, a 28-year-old female, Audrey Hale, who falsely claimed to be a male, shot and killed three children and three adults at a Christian school in Nashville, Tennessee. The transgender person had attended Covenant School and apparently expressed her disdain for it.

Metro Nashville Police Chief John Drake told the media at that time, "There's some belief that there was some resentment for having to go to that school." He was not speculating. We know that she was planning the attack "over a period of months." More important, she left behind a manifesto that sheds light on why she did what she did. But it has not been made public.

According to a spokesman for Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee, it is

the FBI and the Metro Nashville Police who are stopping the manifesto from being released. Tennessee Rep. Tim Burchett blames the FBI.

What's the reason for balking? The fear, as expressed by school officials, Covenant School parents, the media, and LGBT activists is that the public may learn the real reasons why Hale did what she did. In other words, if she made vicious anti-Christian remarks, they don't want to deal with the fallout.

School officials and the school's parents understandably want this issue behind them. But no such slack can be cut for the media and LGBT activists. Had Hale been a white supremacist, and the manifesto contained racist statements, is there anyone who doubts that it wouldn't have been released by now? Anti-Christian bigotry is no less invidious.

Metro Nashville Police Department Deputy Chief Mike Hagar has reviewed the unredacted version of the documents, as well as the redacted one, and he "does not believe" the release of the redacted papers would "impede the investigation." Then let's do it.

On August 26, a white racist shot and killed three black people in Jacksonville, Florida. We know all about his bigotry. So why are we still being kept in the dark about the anti-Christian bigotry of a transgender person?

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## CANADIAN "MASS GRAVE" STORY A

# HOAX?

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In 2014, Bill Donohue wrote a monograph, [Ireland's "Mass Grave" Hysteria](#), on claims that 800 bodies of children were found in a mass grave outside a former home run by nuns in Tuam, near Galway. It was all a hoax, just as he had suspected. There was no mass grave. The result: It made the anti-Catholic activists and journalists look like fools.

Two years ago, the Canadian government claimed that Indian children were buried in "mass graves" at residential schools established by the government and run, in part, by the Catholic Church. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau sounded the alarms and ordered the nation's flags to be flown at half mast; he pledged to spend \$40 billion to settle with those associated with the alleged victims.

Looks like Trudeau, and all the critics of the Catholic Church, were fooled. It is becoming increasingly apparent that this story is also a hoax. After 14 sites were excavated recently, not one mass grave has been found. Indeed, the body count is zero.

This story began in 2021 after claims about unmarked graves emerged. Immediately, pundits and activists speculated that the Catholic Church (which did not run the majority of the schools) was to blame for the deaths of thousands of indigenous children. Murray Sinclair, who was chosen to chair the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, opined that the number of corpses was in the range of 15,000-25,000. Now the attorney and member of the Peguis First Nation can't find even one.

When the Report was issued last year, it did not make claims about mass graves. Instead, it focused on the “cultural genocide” that the indigenous children experienced. After reading the Report, on August 2, 2022, Donohue titled his assessment, “The Genocide That Wasn’t.”

No sooner had the charge of “cultural genocide” been bandied about when it was shortened by Catholic critics to “genocide.” On p. 6 of the Report, it noted that “Despite the coercive measures that the government adopted, it failed to achieve its policy goals. Although Aboriginal peoples and cultures have been damaged, they continue to exist.” So much for the “cultural genocide” thesis—never mind the more serious charge of genocide.

Was there no violence at these residential schools?

In the 535-page Report, there were exactly two testimonials about killing. One was made by an indigenous woman who said she witnessed her older brother kill one of her other brothers when she was nine. The other was in reference to a killing that took place between 1980 and 2012. The residential schools were closed in 1969.

If the residential schools were guilty of genocide, surely the Report would’ve found instances of torture, if not whipping. We looked in vain to find such incidents. Oh, yes, there was one instance of whipping: it was committed by a government teacher in 1895.

Were the Catholic-run schools free of wrongdoing? Pretty much.

On p. 68 of the Report it says the missionaries opposed integrating the indigenous children into the public schools, but not for nefarious reasons. They did so because “1) teachers in public schools were not prepared to deal with Aboriginal students; 2) students in the public schools often expressed racist attitudes towards Aboriginal students; and 3) Aboriginal students felt acute embarrassment over their



impoverished conditions, particularly in terms of the quality of the clothing they wore and the food they ate.”

None of this was highlighted by the media, nor by Trudeau’s government.

Mass graves. Genocide. We saw those words thrown about with alacrity in Ireland a decade ago, and more recently in Canada. These false charges have stoked anti-Catholic sentiment in Ireland and have led to the burning of scores of Catholic churches in Canada. The consequences of bigotry can be severe, especially when promoted by the secular-minded members of the ruling class.

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## NEW INFO SHOWS ROME SAVED JEWS FROM NAZIS

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On September 7, new documentation found at the Pontifical Biblical Institute was unveiled at the Shoah Museum in Rome. The evidence shows that during the Nazi occupation in Rome, from September 1943 to June 1944, 100 women’s religious orders and 55 men’s religious congregations were responsible for sheltering more than 4,300 persons. Of that number, 3,600 have been identified by name, and 3,200 of them have been “conclusively identified as Jews.”

Many students of this ugly chapter in history are not shocked by the latest batch of documents (there is more to come). It is incontestable that thousands of Jews were hidden from the

Nazis in many of the Church's venues. Israeli diplomat and historian Pinchas Lapide estimated that, overall, the Catholic Church saved between 700,000 and 860,000 Jews. No other religion came close to matching this figure.

Despite this noble record, fair-minded scholars, such as University of Mississippi law professor Ronald Rychlak, have long argued that the Catholic Church has not gotten its due for the yeoman work it did during the Holocaust.

Sir Martin Gilbert, perhaps the foremost historian of the Holocaust, noted that Catholics were among the very first victims of the Nazis and that the Church responded by taking a tough stance against Hitler. The role of Pope Pius XII, he said, can best be assessed by what he did when the Gestapo entered Rome in 1943 to round up Jews. Gilbert wrote that "on his direct authority, [the Catholic Church] immediately dispersed as many Jews as they could."

Gilbert and Bill Donohue corresponded on this issue, and in 2001 Gilbert shared with him something he has never published before now.

After the *New York Times* praised Pius XII in 1942, the Reich Central Security Office was furious. "In a manner never known before," the Nazis said, "the Pope has repudiated the National Socialist New European Order... Here he is virtually accusing the German people of injustice towards the Jews and makes himself the mouthpiece of the Jewish war criminals."

So much for the canard that Pius XII was "Hitler's Pope." Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, Hitler had plans to assassinate the pope.

Even before this time, it was clear that the Catholic Church was doing what it could—without further angering the Nazis—to help Jews. In 1940, Albert Einstein said, "Only the Church stood squarely across the path of Hitler's campaign for suppressing the truth." Subsequently, *Time* magazine and the

*New York Times* also trumpeted the heroics of the Church.

Speaking of the *New York Times*, what exactly did it have to say about the Holocaust?

It ran only nine editorials criticizing the Nazis in the years 1941, 1942, and 1943 (three each year). Moreover, when the Nazis arrested a cousin of Arthur Sulzberger, the *Times* chief instructed his Berlin bureau chief to do “nothing.” Sulzberger said he didn’t want to antagonize the Nazis. The cousin, Louis Zinn, was so despondent that after he left prison he hanged himself.

Catholic-Jewish relations are strong today, and we can all be glad that resistance to religious persecution is a widely shared goal in the 21st century. The Holocaust may be unique, but hostility to religious liberty is increasing, both at home and abroad. Vigilance is always in order.

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## SCHOOL YEAR BEGINS WITH RELIGIOUS LAWSUITS

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The new school year began with lawsuits to ensure religious liberty.

In Colorado, the Archdiocese of Denver is suing the state over strictures in its new universal preschool program that would force Catholic schools to violate Catholic teachings. To be explicit, the archdiocese is saying that Colorado’s Department

of Early Childhood would mandate that Catholic preschools enroll "LGBTQ people." This cannot be done without violating Catholic teachings on marriage, the family and sexuality.

The archdiocese correctly argues that accepting the children of gay parents "is likely to lead to intractable conflicts" because the Church does not believe in same-sex marriage. The Church also rejects gender ideology, the idea that the sexes are interchangeable. Ergo, to accept students who have "transitioned" to the opposite sex is contradictory to its professed beliefs.

In short, Colorado's new preschool program does not provide for religious exemptions, and is therefore the subject of the lawsuit.

In California, Orthodox Jewish families are suing the state for excluding religious schools from public funding for young people with disabilities. The state's Education Code allows funding for "nonpublic, nonsectarian schools," but provides no money for religious schools. Three Orthodox Jewish families are suing, insisting that their disabled children have religious needs that cannot be met in traditional public or private schools.

Catholic parents who have children with disabilities are also at risk. At the federal level, Congress has long committed funds for the disabled, knowing that their needs require special attention. Those needs should not be exclusionary of religion.

The secular vision of morality, which is entertained by the ruling class, is intolerant of religious liberty. State officials know that the courts are much more religious friendly than they are, making these lawsuits unnecessary. It just goes to show the zealotry that imbues in them.

This is a never-ending battle for our First Amendment right to religious liberty.

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# WAS CHURCH “SILENT” DURING HOLOCAUST?

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The day after it was reported that new documents were found showing that the Catholic Church saved over 3,000 Jews during the Nazi occupation of Rome, the *New York Times* ran an article on this story noting that during this time Pope Pius XII “remained publicly silent.”

In other words, we are to believe that all those Jews who were saved by priests, nuns and lay people—which even the *Times* admits were in the “tens of thousands”—did so without ever heeding instructions from the Vatican. This is a remarkable conclusion: The “hyper-centralized” and “highly hierarchal” Vatican sat by idly without ever giving marching orders to the faithful. Perhaps they were just nice Catholic boys and girls.

But that is contradicted by the world’s foremost Holocaust scholar, Sir Martin Gilbert. His assessment led him to conclude that Catholics who sheltered Jews did so “on his [the pope’s] direct authority.”

If the pope was silent, then how could the *New York Times* have concluded at that time that he was *not silent*!

Here is what a *New York Times* editorial said on Christmas Day, 1941: “The voice of Pius XII is a lonely voice in the silence and darkness enveloping Europe this Christmas.”

Here is what a *New York Times* editorial said on Christmas Day,

1942: "This Christmas more than ever he [the pope] is a lonely voice crying out of the silence of a continent."

Now how can it be that those closest to the events at that time, such as the editorial board of the *New York Times* in the early 1940s, were wrong, and today's reporters for the newspaper are right?

To be sure, the pope was not screaming from the rooftops in public about Hitler. He was indeed concerned about antagonizing him. So were Jews at that time.

In 1942, Gerhard Riegner of the World Jewish Congress notified his colleagues in London and New York of an "alarming report" about plans to exterminate Jews. And what did they do? They failed to lobby on behalf of a bill by Rep. Emanuel Celler that would have eased restrictions on Jews emigrating from France to the United States.

This came after Kristallnacht, November 9-10, 1938, the "Night of Broken Glass," when the American Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee, B'nai B'rith, and the Jewish Labor Committee concluded that the best course of action was to do nothing. They said, "at least for the time being, nothing should be done." In addition, all of these Jewish organizations went on record saying that "there should be no parades, demonstrations, or protests by Jews."

When it was reported in 1942 that two million Jews had been killed in the Nazi extermination campaign, the *New York Times* placed the story on page ten surrounded by ads for Thanksgiving Day turkeys.

In 1943, Hitler's biographer, John Toland, said, "The Church, under the Pope's guidance, had already saved the lives of more Jews than all other churches, religious institutions, and rescue organizations combined, and was presently hiding thousands of Jews in monasteries, convents, and Vatican City itself."

[Note: All of the above information, and much more, can be found in Bill Donohue's book, *Why Catholicism Matters*, published by Image (Random House) in 2012; citations are provided for everything he said.]

Attempts to belittle the role of the Catholic Church during the Holocaust has long been a cottage industry. But with the release of more and more documents from the Vatican archives, it looks like the Church's worst critics are on the losing side of this argument.

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## PIUS XII: THE LATEST ATTEMPTED SMEAR

Ronald J. Rychlak

*In September, there was a rash of news stories saying new evidence shows that the Vatican knew about the Holocaust earlier than it admitted. We asked Professor Ron Rychlak to offer a response.*

The *New York Times* headline read, "Pope Pius XII Likely Knew of Holocaust, Newly Discovered Letter Suggests." CNN reported, "Wartime Pope Pius XII probably knew about Holocaust early on, letters show." Fox News said, "Wartime letter show Pope Pius XII may have known about Holocaust earlier than previously thought." On and on they went.

Giovanni Coco, an official with the Vatican archives, recently discovered a letter dated December 14, 1942. It had been written by an anti-Nazi German Jesuit priest, Father Lothar König, and it was addressed to Pius XII's personal secretary, Father Robert Leiber.

The letter, which is part of a set of archival papers set to be published in the near future, reported that an estimated 6,000 Jews and Poles were being killed every day at the Belzec concentration camp in what was then German-occupied Poland (today it's part of western Ukraine). König also referred to the operation of "blast furnaces" and made reference to the Auschwitz and Dachau camps.

That news outlets find this revelation significant is probably not surprising. The reporters have not studied the matters in detail. Author David Kertzer, however, has built a career critiquing the papacy. Nevertheless, he has been promoting the importance of this letter. He should know better.

As most scholars who work in this field know, the Vatican received reports of atrocities as early as 1941. This letter, dated December 14, 1942, came just three days before the Allied joint statement which said:

From all the occupied countries Jews are being transported in conditions of appalling horror and brutality to Eastern Europe. In Poland, which has been made the principal Nazi slaughterhouse, the ghettos established by the German invader are being systematically emptied of all Jews except a few highly skilled workers required for war industries. None of those taken away are ever heard of again.

Pius had been invited to join this statement, but he opted to make his own statement on Christmas Day.

Pius must have been shown the Allied statement well before it was released. Moreover, it is fair to assume that the pope received the December 14 letter after at least a short delay from when it was dated. In other words, the letter likely came after he had seen a draft of the Allied statement. Thus, it did not give him any new information about the atrocities.

On Christmas Day, less than two weeks after the date on the letter, Pius issued his own statement in which he spoke of



“hundreds of thousands who, without any fault on their part, sometimes only because of their nationality or race, have been consigned to death or gradual extinction.” The *New York Times* editorialized, “This Christmas more than ever he is a lonely voice crying out of the silence of a continent...”

Of course, Pius did not limit himself to words. In 1941, he provided the Allies with advance information about German troop movements, and as Mark Riebling explained in his book *Church of Spies: The Pope's Secret War Against Hitler*, Pius was connected to at least three plots to topple Hitler, starting just after he assumed the seat of Peter in late 1939 and continuing until at least the summer of 1944 with the bomb plot involving German military Col. Claus von Stauffenberg, portrayed by Tom Cruise in the motion picture *Valkyrie*.

One part of the December 1942 letter is left out of many news accounts. In it, Father König urged the Holy See to not make public what he was revealing in the letter because he feared for his own life and the lives of the others who had provided the intelligence. This is but one of several such messages that Pius had to take into account when he chose action and diplomacy over banging away at the bully pulpit.

That so many outlets have failed to report that part of the letter suggests that others either miss the importance of the message or they are intentionally downplaying a very serious threat. That's either poor history or dishonest journalism. We're entitled to better.

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