

HOW CATHOLIC ARE CONGRESSIONAL CATHOLICS?

In the 117th Congress, Catholics comprise 29% of the seats, the largest of any religious affiliation. Moreover, both the Speaker of the House and the president identify as Catholic. But just how Catholic are these Catholics?

We reviewed the scorecard of incumbent representatives and senators as tallied by National Right to Life and NARAL, the two most authoritative sources measuring congressional support for the right to life and the right to abortion, respectively, in the nation. For newly elected members, we consulted their stated record on this subject when they were candidates. Here is what we found.

There are 77 Democrats in the House of Representatives, who claim a Catholic identity, 71 of whom have a perfect pro-abortion record, and many of the newly elected members made supporting abortion a key part of their campaigns. Of the 57 Republicans who claim a Catholic identity, 37 have a perfect pro-life voting record; six have a mostly pro-life record; 12 newly elected members espouse a pro-life record; and one, a former Democrat, has a pro-abortion record.

This means that 95% of the Catholic House Democrats are pro-abortion and 98% of the Catholic House Republicans are pro-life (it remains to be seen whether the new Republican Representative from New Jersey, Jeff Van Drew, will flip on abortion and become pro-life).

In the Senate, there are 14 Catholic Democrats, 11 of whom have a perfect pro-abortion record (two have a perfect pro-life record). Of the 11 Catholic Republicans, 9 have a perfect pro-life record; one is more pro-life than pro-abortion; and one is pro-abortion.

This means that 79% of Catholic Senate Democrats are pro-abortion and 91% of Catholic Senate Republicans are pro-life.

Some argue that a congressman's record on social justice issues is a more accurate gauge of his Catholicity. The problem with that contention is that it is much more difficult to make comparisons on such matters. To wit: Catholics who favor more government welfare programs contend that their position is better aligned with Church teachings, yet Catholics who oppose more government dependency maintain that they are more faithful to the Church's teachings on the poor. Climate change is another issue that is difficult to score.

Ultimately, whether one is a "good Catholic" depends on factors of a more intimate nature. But it is not wrong to suggest that elected Catholic officials who maintain a decidedly pro-abortion voting record are an embarrassment to Catholics. They most certainly are. After all, the right to life is the most foundational of our natural rights. This is not an observation—it is a fact of life.

BIDEN STIFFS THE POPE

On November 12, Pope Francis called President-elect Joe Biden to congratulate him on his electoral victory. He surely thought that the incoming president would make Catholics proud to have one of their own in the White House. One wonders what the Holy Father now thinks of Biden.

On January 28, the White House announced that Biden will issue an executive order that rescinds the Mexico City Policy, the rule that bars U.S. foreign aid to international non-profit organizations that provide for abortion or abortion counseling. This policy was first implemented by President

Ronald Reagan in 1984 and has been revoked or reinstated by Democratic and Republican administrations, respectively, since that time.

Biden will also ask the Department of Health and Human Services to begin the process of rescinding the Trump administration's Title X family planning rule; among other things, it denies funds to Planned Parenthood and other abortion mills.

This is not the first time that Biden has departed from Church teachings on life. On January 22, the 48th anniversary of the Supreme Court's decision to legalize abortion, Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris heralded the ruling, saying they were "committed to codifying Roe v. Wade."

In response, Kansas City Archbishop Joseph Naumann, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee (USCCB) on Pro-Life Activities, said, "It is deeply disturbing and tragic that any President would praise and commit to codifying a Supreme Court ruling that denies unborn children their most basic human and civil right, the right to life, under the euphemistic disguise of health services."

Biden has a real problem with the most basic moral teachings of his professed religion.

On January 20th, his first day in office, Biden issued an executive order allowing males who claim to be female the right to compete with females in high school and college sports; they can also use the same shower facilities.

The chairman of five bishops' committees, led by Cardinal Timothy Dolan, chairman of the USCCB's Committee on Religious Liberty, responded by saying this decision "threatens to infringe the rights of people who recognize the truth of sexual differences or who uphold the institution of lifelong marriage between one man and one woman."

A few days later, Biden issued an executive order repealing President Trump's ban on transgender persons from serving in the military. He provided no evidence that women who claim to be male will have no effect on real men in their living arrangements and daily operations.

According to Pope Francis, Biden's policies on transgender persons are not simply in violation of Church teachings—they are the work of Satan. "Gender ideology is demonic!" The pope made that remark to emphasize that gender theory fails to recognize "the order of creation." Indeed, he even went so far as to say that "gender ideology" was reminiscent of "the educational policies of Hitler."

Biden's choice of January 28 to announce his pro-abortion executive orders makes him look like a rogue Catholic. This day was the National Prayer Vigil for Life. This USCCB event took place at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC.

On Biden's first day in office, White House press secretary Jen Psaki was asked by a reporter for EWTN about the president's plans to overturn the pro-life policies of his predecessor. "I will take the opportunity to remind all of you that he is a devout Catholic."

Looks like this "devout Catholic" has no problem stiffing the pope.

THAI CATHOLIC ICE DETAINEE

RETURNS HOME

Pornchai Moontri is finally back in his home country of Thailand. In December, we asked our email subscribers to sign a White House petition requesting that he be released from the custody of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Our supporters responded with vigor and we quickly learned that the Thailand embassy was contacted by ICE indicating that his case was being taken seriously.

Then came the delays. Due to bureaucratic bungling, Pornchai did not arrive in Bangkok until February 9.

Father Gordon MacRae, a victim of judicial injustice, got to know Pornchai in a New Hampshire prison. They became friends and Pornchai even converted to Catholicism.

Father MacRae was kind enough to mention the Catholic League's role in helping to expedite Pornchai's case. But he is the real hero.

Beyondthesestonewalls.com is where Father MacRae posts his work. Please check it out. Had it not been for his determination, Pornchai's fate would have been quite different.

Thanks to everyone who supported us in this effort.

HOW THE RULING CLASS FUELED THE CAPITOL RIOT

Any investigation of the Capitol riot on January 6 must start by asking what provoked these men and women to act. While

thousands showed up, roughly 200 of them managed to enter the Capitol. That small portion of Trump supporters must be held accountable, but we can't get to the bottom of this until we understand why most of the crowd—the non-violent ones—were there in the first place.

What fueled the anger of this mob were many things, among them being the passive reaction of the ruling class to the wave of violence that encapsulated American cities in 2020. The police were told to stand down and prosecutors refused to hold the rioters accountable. When Americans saw their flags being burned, cops attacked, stores looted, and police stations set on fire—with no pushback—they knew the anarchists were winning. What they witnessed was a total collapse of authority.

It was worse than this. Mobs took sledgehammers to statues of American icons, and trashed historic landmarks. The anarchists, most of whom were white, took great delight in sticking it to the American people. Religious symbols were also targeted. Catholic churches, schools and graveyards were vandalized, and statues of saints were toppled. All of this was done with impunity, week after week, month after month.

The decision by Democrats in urban areas to allow their cities to be destroyed by Antifa and Black Lives Matter protesters must be investigated. City mayors, city councils and city prosecutors—along with their counterparts at the state level—must be held accountable for their role in fanning the flames. They set the stage for January 6. Did they really think there would be no pushback?

Democrats act as though the origin of the Capitol riot rests with Trump and his supporters. But choosing to focus exclusively on the rioters is myopic. It would be like focusing exclusively on the black rioters of the 1960s without ever addressing the social and economic conditions that inspired them to act. If the reason why blacks rioted in the

1960s was in response to long-standing grievances, why is it so implausible to believe that the Capitol riot was in response to long-standing grievances in the white working class community?

One part of the probe must explain why the white working class has been demonized by the ruling class. To be specific, those who work in the media, the entertainment industry, colleges and universities, Big Tech and Wall Street have long exhibited an animus against these Trump supporters. We need to get to the origins of their pathology.

The ruling class shares a strong anti-Christian bias. Throwing around terms like Christian Nationalism are designed to marginalize Christian voters, suggesting they are engaged in some kind of conspiracy to take over the nation. This is all madness, but it is a madness embraced by pundits and the media.

Many of the working class are veterans, and are proudly patriotic. But patriotism is seen as provincial by elites, if not worse. Of course, most of those in the ruling class have never served a day in their life. Many are embarrassed by their country, which is why smashing American symbols and burning the American flag doesn't bother them.

The working class is acutely aware of how the ruling class sees them. When they are called "Nazis" by TV commentators, and when their president is compared to Osama bin Laden by Democratic congressmen, it incenses them. That few in authority call out these lunatics for their lies is just as bad.

What really gets under the skin of blue-collar workers is the sight of white privileged men and women joining Antifa and Black Lives Matter protesters in burning down our cities. To cite one example, it is nauseating to watch young white brats, at least half of whom are women, leave their tony Brooklyn

neighborhoods so they can take over bridges and tie up traffic. None had a permit to protest and none practiced social distancing norms.

To sum up, the root cause of white working class fury is traceable to how the Left destroyed our cities while the ruling class looked away; this is still going on in Oregon and Washington. The fact is that leading Democrats in major urban areas nurtured a year-long culture of violence, and it was this reality that played a major role in enticing Trump supporters to swing into action. Moreover, not once in the four days of the Democratic National Convention did anyone even make reference to the anarchists.

The sooner we get on with a serious investigation—not the kind of political farce being considered—the sooner we can prevent the kind of mayhem that took place on January 6 from ever happening again.

LARRY FLYNT WAS NO FREE SPEECH HERO

The Associated Press, USA Today and the Los Angeles Times label porn king Larry Flynt a “free-speech champion.” Reuters, USNews and Yahoo remember him as a “free-speech activist.” They are wrong. Flynt, who died at 78, was no friend of free speech.

Freedom of speech, which is enshrined in the First Amendment, was never meant by the Founders to be an end in itself. It was meant to be a means to an end, the end being the good society. Without robust political speech, where different points of view could be weighed, the prospects of achieving life,

liberty and the pursuit of happiness would be diminished. Flynt spent his entire life exploiting free speech, not exercising it.

Madison, who wrote the First Amendment, would not regard Flynt as a free speech hero. He wisely observed that “liberty may be endangered by the abuses of liberty as well as the abuses of power.” Flynt was a master of abusing liberty.

The prospects for the good society are not advanced when naked women are depicted upside down being shoved into a meat grinder. Flynt’s pride and joy, Hustler, opined, “Prime. Last All Meat Issue. Grade ‘A’ Pink.”

Hustler went beyond its porn competitors by offering the most dehumanizing photos imaginable, including botched abortions. The New York Times offers many examples.

Pictures of women being raped and tortured, being subjected to bestiality, nailed to a cross, bagged like a deer and bound to a luggage rack—these were all featured in Hustler. The editors knew what they were doing. Showing women crawling at the end of a leash sent an unmistakable message to sick men. To put on its cover a photo of a woman’s head in a gift box is not a demonstration of free speech; rather, it is an example of its perversion.

Flynt was not only the enemy of women—he was the enemy of children. Barely Legal is one of his porn sites that appeals to disturbed men. He even had a character, “Chester the Molester,” who regularly appeared in Hustler cartoons as a pedophile.

What is striking about all the pundits celebrating the free-speech heroics of Flynt is that it is occurring at the same time that his admirers are championing the cancel culture. What they want cancelled is not child pornography: They want to censor political speech, the very heart of the free speech provision in the First Amendment.

The New York Times ran a column recently by Nicholas Kristof titled, "Can We Put Fox News on Trial With Trump?" Similarly, it published a news story, "How Right-Wing Radio Stoked Anger Before the Capitol Riot." No one beats Max Boot at the Washington Post. His article, "Sadly, Fox News Can't Be Impeached," is a clarion call for censorship.

Here's the bottom line. According to the conventional wisdom, as outlined by today's deep thinkers, a free society should not tolerate Rush Limbaugh but it should celebrate Larry Flynt. That is about as good a measure there is to prove how morally debased we have become.

MAOIST ROOTS OF DEPROGRAMMING

We live in a time of unparalleled attacks on free speech, emanating from establishment sources, including the media. One might think that the media, which does not exist without freedom of speech, would be reflexively opposed to censorship, but not anymore. In many cases, those who work in the media are leading the charge to silence what it sees as its opposition.

Calls to deprogram Trump supporters is now one of the most popular strategies for silencing any organization that has praised President Trump's record. Everyone from Katie Couric to Eugene Robinson of the Washington Post is calling for deprogramming.

The roots of deprogramming are found in Maoism. Once Mao Zedong seized power in 1949, he moved quickly to launch the first of his "thought control" campaigns. Everyone from intellectuals to housewives were chosen for "self-education and ideological remoulding of the liberated people."

Under Mao, “thought reform” reached a level the world had never seen before. It was a U.S. foreign correspondent, Edward Hunter, who in 1951 wrote a book, “Brainwashing in Red China,” that detailed the workings of “thought reform.” Ten years later, American professor of psychiatry Robert Jay Lifton wrote, “Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism.” It became a classic.

Lifton fingered two key elements of “thought reform.” The first was “confession, the exposure and renunciation of the past and present ‘evil.’” The second was “re-education,” or the “remaking of a man in the Communist image.” To cite one example, young Chinese students had to confess how wrong they were to respect their parents—they were forced to denounce them. That set the stage for their re-education.

Do people like Katie Couric have any idea what they are promoting when they call for deprogramming? Do they know that there is nothing more totalitarian than having government send in agents to police our mind? This is something that should alarm every American, regardless of their political affiliation.

HIGH COURT NIXES CHURCH RESTRICTIONS

On February 5, the U.S. Supreme Court dealt a blow to church restrictions in California. The justices ruled that the ban on all indoor services was at odds with the treatment afforded retail stores: the latter were permitted to operate at 25 to 50 percent capacity.

“When a State so obviously targets religion for differential

treatment,” wrote Justice Neil Gorsuch, “our job becomes much clearer.”

The high court allowed a ban on singing [which could allegedly spread the virus]. Yet as Gorsuch noted, Hollywood is allowed to “film a singing competition.” Different strokes for different folks?

If public health were the sole issue, then we should expect equal treatment of secular and religious institutions. But this has not been the case throughout much of the country. This accounts for the slew of lawsuits.

Fortunately, President Trump chose three justices who are religion friendly: Brett Kavanaugh, Neil Gorsuch and Amy Coney Barrett.

BEN & JERRY’S/KAEPERNICK ARE DISABLING BLACKS

There is no racial or ethnic group in American history that has made significant socio-economic success without first believing in their ability to do so. Most of them faced bias and discrimination at one time or another—some more than others—but all of them overcame adversity by plugging away, refusing to let the forces of bigotry get the best of them.

That is why it is obscene to see the so-called allies of African Americans sell them a narrative that effectively immobilizes them, leaving them wallowing in victimhood.

Ben & Jerry’s, the ice cream company owned by two left-wing radicals, recently paired with Colin Kaepernick, the failed

quarterback turned activist, to promote the most destructive environment imaginable for African Americans to negotiate. If they intentionally sought to disable blacks, they could not do a better job than their recently launched endeavor.

Over the winter, there was a huge billboard sponsored by Ben & Jerry's outside Penn Station. It sported a big portrait of Kaepernick with his fist clenched featuring the inscription "I Know My Rights" in large letters.

This is a marketing strategy for a new Ben & Jerry's dessert, one that feeds into Kaepernick's Know Your Rights Camp project; the latter makes available online for purchase such items as "I Know My Rights" t-shirts, socks, hoodies, wind jackets, track pants and handbags.

Now contrast that message with the one offered by Catholic schools in the inner city. Those students succeed in large part because they are not coddled, not indoctrinated into a cult of victimhood. Indeed, much is demanded of them, and most rise to the occasion.

The worst thing we can do to black students is to convince them of their inefficacy, or their inability to take command of their lives. It is psychologically debilitating. That is what Ben & Jerry's and Kaepernick are doing. By instructing black youth to focus exclusively on their rights, saying not a word about responsibilities—either to themselves or society—they are enfeebling them, rendering them hopeless.

Beating up on whitey may yield ephemeral pleasure, but it is no prescription for success. When George Floyd was killed, the ice cream makers and the retired athlete jumped on the bandwagon, arguing that what happened was the result of systemic racism and white supremacy. Both called for the police to be defunded; Kaepernick called for the prisons to be emptied as well.

It is not easy to see how Kaepernick's Know Your Rights Camp

is to succeed by adopting these proposals. Included in his "10-Point System" are such goals as "You Have the Right to be Safe" and "You Have the Right to be Alive." He needs to go into Chicago on a weekend night, bullhorn in hand, and tell the black community that these outcomes can best be achieved by getting rid of cops and jails.

Ian Rowe is a black scholar at the American Enterprise Institute who for the last decade ran a network of public charter schools in the South Bronx and the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Recently he wrote an article that nicely sums up why minority students succeed or fail.

"The American dream is premised on the idea that a young person can become an agent of her or his own destiny. This can only happen if vital mediating institutions like strong families, schools and faith-based organizations demand excellence, and shape the character of this rising generation to build self-sufficiency and resilience."

Furthermore, Rowe notes that "a growing number of young people are being led to believe that structural barriers around race, class and gender have rigged the system against them, and that they are powerless to compete at the highest level because of immutable characteristics like their race."

He is absolutely right. And for this outrageous condition we can thank the likes of Ben & Jerry's and Colin Kaepernick. Ultimately, they and their ilk are doing far more damage to African Americans than the Klan could ever hope for.

AP UPSET THAT CATHOLIC CHURCH GOT PPP FUNDS

Nancy Pelosi's husband, who has a net worth of \$120 million, co-owns a company that received a Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loan; he and his wife are worth \$202 million. The Los Angeles Lakers, which are worth \$4.4 billion, received PPP funding as well; they gave back the \$4.6 million loan after being publicly embarrassed. Lucrative Hollywood law firms also raked in PPP funds.

None of this is of any interest to the Associated Press (AP). On February 4, it continued its obsession with the Catholic Church by running a lengthy piece on this subject (it ran another barn burner in July on the same subject).

What exactly did AP find that upset it so much? It learned that 112 Catholic dioceses collected \$1.5 billion in PPP loans; it estimates that if all the dioceses shared their financial statements the figure would be about double that amount. It contends that given the resources of the Catholic Church in the United States, this money was too generous.

Of course, the case could be made that the money was not generous enough.

Due to restrictions on church attendance occasioned by the coronavirus pandemic, donations to parishes have taken a serious hit. Catholic schools have been especially hit hard—over 200 have closed—as many parents have found it difficult to pay tuition expenses. Moreover, many of those who work for the dioceses have had to be laid off, and wage cuts had to be made for others. AP makes brief mention of these hardships but still insists that the Church received too much money.

AP claims that the Catholic Church is sitting on \$10 billion

in total assets. How does it come up with such a figure? It estimates real estate properties owned by the Church, as well as funds held by charitable foundations. It also includes "funding that dioceses had opted to designate for special purposes instead of general expenses; excess cash that parishes and their affiliates deposit with their diocese's savings and loan; and lines of credit dioceses typically have with outside banks."

It is striking to note that AP did not do the same computation for other religions. The reason we don't know ballpark estimates of the total holdings of Protestant churches, synagogues, mosques, temples and other religious institutions is because the AP has no interest in conducting such a probe. It is singularly focused on the Catholic Church.

Did the Church need the PPP funds? Not according to AP. How does it know? It quotes Fr. James Connell, a retired administrator who worked in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. "Was it want or need?" Connell said. "Need must be present, not simply want." If that isn't lame enough, consider who Connell is.

He is a long-time Church dissident who co-founded Catholic Whistleblowers in 2013, a tiny group of malcontents that sought to out priests who abused minors. Perversely, Connell was charged several years earlier with covering up for the worst American molester in the history of the Catholic Church, Fr. Lawrence Murphy. Yet AP considers him to be a trusted source.

AP never bothers to tell its readers that the Catholic Church is the nation's largest non-government supplier of social services. The Church serves millions of people in need, many of whom are not Catholic. It operates schools, hospitals, foster care agencies, homeless shelters, orphanages and the like, never turning away anyone for lack of funds. An honest article on the Church's PPP loans would dig deep into this

story.

Last July, AP ran its first story on this issue. Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Archbishop of New York, made an interesting observation at that time that is relevant to AP's latest story. "Nationally," he wrote, "the Small Business Administration [SBA] approved over 88,000 loans to religious organizations, supporting more than 1 million jobs. Why then focus solely on the Catholic Church, unless the reporters had some animus towards the Church (which we suspect they do)?"

It is not as though AP could not find data on other religions. The Detroit Free Press published a story on July 10, 2020—the same day the initial AP story ran—that was rich with evidence.

"Michigan Churches, Synagogues, Mosques Get Millions in Federal PPP Loans" detailed exactly how much various religious organizations received. Unlike AP's story, it never tried to tar the Catholic Church. This begs the question: If this local paper had access to data on other religions, why did AP choose not to report it?

Under the Trump administration, houses of worship hit hard with Covid-19 were treated by the SBA the same way secular institutions were. It is this policy of non-discrimination that bothers AP the most. Lest we forget, the SBA's PPP was included in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. It was unanimously passed in the Senate and was approved via a voice vote, without opposition, in the House.

AP is no longer the respected national wire service it once was. No wonder the majority of the American people no longer trust the media.

BISHOPS BESET BY BIDEN

A few weeks after the election, the head of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), Archbishop José Gomez, indicated that the bishops are already beset by Biden. If Biden were a Protestant, it would not complicate matters for the bishops, but he is a baptized Catholic.

Gomez said there were some policies, such as immigration, where Biden's "faith commitments will move him to support some good policies." But there are other issues, such as abortion, which Gomez stressed is "our preeminent priority," where Biden deviates sharply from Catholic teachings. To deal with this dilemma, Gomez appointed Detroit Archbishop Allen Vigneron to head a working task force; he will coordinate efforts among the various USCCB committees.

Among Biden's top priorities is to codify into law the Supreme Court ruling in *Roe v. Wade*. In other words, Biden wants to lock in the right of a woman to abort her child at any moment of pregnancy, for any reason whatsoever, thus blunting any future court challenges.

Biden explained his stance in 2019 saying that he "personally" agrees that life begins at conception. Thus, he said, he was in agreement with the "doctrine of my church." He failed to note that the consequences of his decision as a public official on a matter that ineluctably impacts the public cannot logically be seen as a personal one.

Biden also wants to get rid of the Hyde Amendment, thus forcing taxpayers to pay for abortions. Biden was a supporter of the Hyde Amendment when it was introduced in the 1970s, and stayed the course right up until June 2019. That was when—two months after he announced he was going to run for president—he flipped sides.

Gomez said at the bishops' conference that these policies are

going to create “confusion among the faithful about what the Church actually teaches on these questions.” How could it not?

The confusion that Gomez mentioned is heightened when we learn of a Catholic elementary school in Baltimore that is accommodating a third-grade girl in her fictional quest to identify as a boy. It is not just Biden that is contradicting Church teachings. Biden, by the way, announced at a town hall event that “on day one” he would ease all restrictions on “transitioning” to the opposite sex.

If this isn’t enough to deal with, Gomez also cited Biden’s interest in restoring the Health and Human Services mandate that requires employers, including Catholic non-profits, to pay for abortion-inducing drugs in their healthcare plans. To put it differently, the “devout Catholic” wants to force the Little Sisters of the Poor to pay for these life-ending drugs.