

PURSuing OLD CASES OF ABUSE IS AN INJUSTICE

Church-suing lawyers celebrated the holidays with a boatload of new cases, all in the name of justice. In reality, more injustice than justice will be rendered. The steeple-chasers are jumping on the bandwagon effect of the Pennsylvania grand jury report that was issued in 2018.

A comprehensive news story by the Associated Press details how 15 states have enacted legislation to suspend the statute of limitations to allow the pursuit of old cases of sexual abuse. Why is this unjust? Here are seven good reasons, beginning with Pennsylvania.

Grand jury reports are rarely made public, and with good reason: grand jury members hear only one side of the story—defendants have no voice—and there is no cross examination of witnesses. So the likelihood that an indictment will be granted is quite good. It is because the scales of justice are weighted so heavily against the defendant that Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro should have followed established legal practice and not have released the grand jury report. That was injustice #1. The rights of accused priests were summarily ignored.

Injustice #2 was the initial seating of the grand jury. If established legal practice had been followed from the beginning, there would have been no state grand jury investigation. The entire process began when Shapiro's predecessor, Kathleen Kane (who was subsequently sent to prison for leaking grand jury reports, etc.) fielded a request from Cambria County District Attorney Kathleen Callihan to conduct a statewide investigation of the Catholic Church.

What Callihan did was unusual. When she learned of a case of

sexual abuse dating back to the 1990s committed by Brother Stephen Baker at a Catholic high school in Altoona-Johnstown, she could have commenced her own probe. Instead, she pitched it to Kane. Would she have pitched one case of sexual abuse that took place in a public school decades ago to Kane, or would she have pursued it herself? More important, her office did not nail Baker—his bishop did. It was Bishop Mark Bartchak who told Callihan about him. Had he kept his mouth shut and handled the matter internally—the way almost every other institution in the United States did in the past *and still does today*—there would have been no grand jury.

Injustice #3 is the wave of lawsuits that are engulfing the Church across the nation; it is estimated that more than 5,000 new cases will be pursued, costing the Church more than \$4 billion. If Bishop Bartchak had not contacted the local authorities, and if they did not give the case over to the chief law enforcement in the state, and if he did not release the grand jury report, there would have been no tidal wave of state grand juries launched against the Catholic Church. In other words, the Church is being sabotaged because Bishop Bartchak, unlike others, did what he was supposed to do.

The suspension of the statute of limitations is injustice #4. This is a fundamental 5th Amendment right of due process, one that organizations that are as disparate as the Catholic League and the ACLU can agree on. How can a defendant have his rights protected in cases that extend back decades? Were there any witnesses in the first place? If there were, are they still alive? How accurate is their recall? Moreover, there is a really good chance that the accused priest is dead.

Injustice #5 is the cherry picking that is going on. Most of the lawsuits that have been filed target the Catholic Church. Why is this? For the same reason why most of the billboards and radio advertisements seeking clients cite the Catholic Church and not the public schools or other religions.

Fighting the public school bureaucracy takes time and its records on miscreant employees are not as detailed as those kept by the Church. Most religious bodies do not have a centralized structure, nor do they have established record keeping protocols the way the Catholic Church does. This makes it difficult to probe them. In other words, the Church is a much easier target. Just as important, there is a clique of Church-hating lawyers who will do anything they can to destroy it.

Injustice # 6 is punishing the innocent: There are millions who depend on Church services, agencies, and institutions for their welfare. By diverting Church funds to pay for the legal fees of cases involving dead or laicized priests, many of the needy will be deprived of the care they need.

Injustice #7 is the failure to make the guilty pay. How is justice served when those who should pay for their offenses will never be prosecuted? To wit: only two of the 301 priests (and others) named in the Pennsylvania grand jury report have been prosecuted.

This is a scam. There will be lots of money exchanged—the lawyers will cream a third of the loot right off the top—but little in the way of justice will be achieved. By any measure, this is not a defensible outcome.

WHY DOES CNN HATE THE CATHOLIC CHURCH?

In the more than 26 years Bill Donohue has spent at the Catholic League, never has he read a more irresponsible, and just plain dumb, report on clergy sexual abuse in the Catholic

Church until he read the CNN Interactive report, "Pedophile Priests Operated at this California School for Decades." It was featured on the front page of CNN's website.

To begin with the title is inaccurate: none of the molesting priests in the story are pedophiles—all are homosexuals. How does Donohue know this? Because every one of these alleged victims was a teenager at a high school. Quite frankly, CNN is involved in a cover-up. It wants to deflect attention away from homosexual priests, who account for the lion's share (80 percent) of the abuse. Less than 5 percent of the abusers have been pedophiles.

As Donohue has said many times (just recently to NBC), the clergy abuse scandal is long over. In the last year we have data for, there were three substantiated cases of abuse made against over 50,000 members of the clergy. That comes to .006 percent, which proves his point.

CNN also proves his point: virtually all the cases it discusses occurred many decades ago, extending back to the 1950s.

Why is CNN doing a big story on old cases of Catholic clergy sexual abuse? Kids are being raped in the public schools all over the nation, and it is going on right now as we speak, so why did CNN not do a big story on that? And if the subject is pedophilia, why not probe Hollywood—it is rich with source material.

Why did CNN choose one Catholic high school out of the entire country to describe the offenses of sick homosexual priests who abused teenage boys decades ago? Because it could not find any new dirt, that's why.

The CNN story further maligns the Church when it offers a totally false quote from Patrick Wall, an angry ex-priest who can always be counted on to slam Catholicism. "Other religious institutes are reporting out lists of credibly accused,

they're saying who they are, when they knew about them, where did they work, everything else."

This is a bald-face lie. Which religions? Name them! There may be an occasional release of accused names from a few denominations, but no religion has outed more abusers than the Catholic Church. And where is the analogue to New York Archbishop Cardinal Timothy Dolan? He outed former cardinal Theodore McCarrick. What minister, rabbi, or imam can CNN name who has outed one of his own senior clergy members? They sure didn't do it at CBS or NBC.

It is embarrassing to note that CNN put five reporters on this non-story. They clearly spent too much time Googling and not enough time speaking to practicing Catholics. This explains why they write about the "Hierarchy of the Secular Clergy," an esoteric term used in some canonical texts; it draws distinctions between members of the clergy. But this is not the way Catholics speak about the hierarchy.

What the reporters were trying to get at, in their own obtuse way, was the distinction between diocesan priests and order priests. The former constitute two-thirds of all priests; the latter comprise the other third. The diocesan priests are under the authority of a bishop; religious order priests are not—they have their own hierarchy.

Why does this matter? Because it shows how clueless these reporters are. "The hierarchy of the Catholic Church that most people are familiar with is called the 'secular clergy.'" Really? Why don't one of these five reporters stand outside a Catholic church on a Sunday and ask the parishioners if they even heard of such a thing as the "secular clergy"?

To say CNN is not a religion-friendly media outlet is too kind. This kind of reporting—sifting through old stories looking for dirt on the Catholic Church while participating in a cover-up—smacks of hatred.

PA GRAND JURY REPORTS MAY BE ABOLISHED

The table has been set for grand jury reports in Pennsylvania to be abolished. That was the recommendation of the Investigating Grand Jury Task Force.

The panel was established in 2017, a year before Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro issued his discredited grand jury report on Catholic priests in the state. While the task force recommendation can do nothing to change what Shapiro did, it vindicates the position of the Catholic League.

Last year, we filed an amicus brief supporting the right of 11 priests, all of whom argued that if their names were made public on a list of accused clergy, it would violate their reputational rights under the state constitution. We won. On December 3, 2018, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled in a 6-1 decision that the grand jury report could not make public the names of the priests.

A grand jury report is not proof of anything. That is why it is common practice not to make public its findings. The accused do not have a chance to defend themselves and there is no cross examination of accusers or witnesses.

The Grand Jury Task Force recommended abolition of what it called a “deeply flawed” system. That system allows grand juries to issue reports that critically assess those who have not been criminally charged. Not only do prosecutors control the proceedings and evidence, the panel said, all they have to do is meet a “preponderance of evidence” standard; they noted that test “can be too effortlessly satisfied.”

Shapiro was hot under the collar when he learned of the report. He singled out the Catholic Church, made wild generalizations, and used his authority to smear the Church. He is a disgrace.

WCPO CHURCH PROBE SMACKS OF BIAS

The ABC affiliate in Cincinnati, WCPO, recently launched a three-month investigation into Ohio's Catholic dioceses and religious orders seeking to learn how they track priests and brothers who have been accused of sexually abusing minors.

The "I-team" did not investigate any other religious body in the state, nor did it launch a probe of any secular institutions. Yet it is precisely in the public sector where most of the sexual abuse is taking place.

What did it find? It compiled a list of 92 priests and religious brothers who were accused of sexual abuse by one source or another. From the interactive report online, we learned that 60 (65%) are dead.

In its four-part series, it offers a short anecdote of 16 priests and one brother. We did our own tally and here is what we found.

- 7 priests are dead
- 4 have been laicized
- 1 has been removed from ministry
- 1 is awaiting trial
- 1 has been permanently suspended
- 1 is on administrative leave

- 1 has an unknown status
- The one brother is dead

In other words, they are either dead or are inactive. If this were the conclusion of a probe of the public schools, it would be the end of the story. But because it is the Catholic Church that has been selectively put under the microscope, it isn't.

In fact, in the Overview, the report even admits that an indictment of a priest in August was the first time in nearly a decade—in the *Tri-State area*—that a member of the clergy has had an accusation made against him. It would be helpful to know how many public school teachers in the Tri-State area have been accused of sexual abuse in the last decade. But apparently the WCPO I-Team has little interest in finding out.

The report correctly notes that the Catholic Church isn't required by law to supervise priests who are no longer in ministry. What it should have said, to be more accurate, is that *no institution* is required by law to track, *never mind supervise*, any former employee who was terminated because of sexual misconduct. Not even at WCPO.

So what's the big deal? Shaming. Shaming the Catholic Church—that's what this contrived story is all about. Take, for example, how the report handles the case of Rev. Daniel Pater.

Pater was bounced five years ago by the Vatican for sexually abusing a teenager. But a month after he was fired, he took a job as the director of music for a small Episcopal Church in Lincoln Heights. WCPO finds this scandalous. Guess who it blames? The Catholic Church. Why didn't the Protestant church ask Pater about his background? Isn't it up to the prospective employer to do some digging? Since when does the burden fall on the organization that kicked the guy out? This is bunk.

What is driving this report is the desire to suspend the statute of limitations for these crimes, allowing alleged

victims to sue even if the offense occurred in the 1940s. And as we have seen in other states where this game is played, the law either does not apply to the public schools, or if it does the steeple-chasing attorneys have no interest in fighting the bureaucracy: they prefer to squeeze the Catholic Church, for reasons both financial and ideological.

It is the family where most sexual abuse of children takes place. Yet no one—not a single attorney—will publicly state that he is available to represent those women whose live-in boyfriend, or the stepfather, has raped their son or daughter. That's because the rapacious lawyers go after the big bucks, hoping to sink the Catholic Church.

"Some may accuse us of revisiting accusations from decades ago that were painful to Catholics," WCPO says. "But our motives are simple: to ensure that the public has more complete information on priests who have been credibly accused of child sexual abuse than local Catholic Church leaders had been willing to provide."

This is wholly unpersuasive. The predicate is false: The sexual abuse of minors is taking place right now in the public schools and universities, yet the reporters are not providing the public with "more complete information" on teachers and professors.

In December 2016, *USA Today* released a study of all 50 states grading them on how they handle sexual abuse in the public schools. On the measure of "Sharing misconduct information," the Ohio public schools received an "F." In 2017, AP studied the same issue and found that in Ohio, "The state education department did not collect information on sex assaults in schools."

In other words, the public schools in Ohio are an utter disgrace in handling this issue. If they don't collect information, and don't share whatever they know about their

molesting teachers, it stands to reason that they don't track, much less *supervise*, them.

Ohio's problem with sexual misconduct extends to the university level.

In 2018, it was reported that "Ohio University has more rapes and sexual assaults in general than similar schools in Ohio." This was the finding of Clery Act reports.

In 2019, AP noted that "An Ohio State team doctor [Dr. Richard Strauss] sexually abused at least 177 male students over nearly two decades, and numerous university officials got wind of what was going on but did little to stop him." The report, which was issued by the university, said that "Ohio State personnel knew of complaints and concerns about Strauss's conduct as early as 1979 but failed for years to investigate or take meaningful action."

There is plenty of rich material on sexual abuse in Ohio's public schools and public universities, never mind what is going on in the Tri-State area. The only thing lacking is the will, and the courage, to launch a probe.

NBC SURVEY OF CHURCH EMPLOYEES IS REVEALING

There have been many polls of Catholics, but until now there has not been a survey of those who work for the Catholic Church. NBC has filled that void.

Those who work for the Church are listed in the *Official Catholic Directory*. NBC Owned Television stations around the

nation distributed the survey to more than 32,000 employees listed in the volume, 2,700 of whom responded. It included nearly 500 priests and deacons, more than 280 religious sisters and brothers, along with nearly 1,900 lay employees, the majority of whom were women.

NBC was honest enough to admit that self-select surveys carry a bias that scientific sampling avoids. The latter allows for everyone in the population, or the universe which the sample generalizes about, to have an equal chance of being selected. However, in surveys of the kind NBC undertook, it is entirely acceptable to proceed this way, as long as the limitations are acknowledged.

The survey covers several issues: the sexual abuse scandal; married priests, ordaining women, same-sex marriage, and birth control; fidelity to core Church teachings; and an assessment of Pope Francis' positions on current issues. Of special interest to the Catholic League is the first issue.

Respondents were asked if sexual abuse is "still a major problem." Almost 4 in 10 (39%) said it is; 14% said it "is no longer a major problem"; and 46% said this was never more of a problem for the Catholic Church than it has been for other institutions involved in the care of minors. Nuns were the most alarmed, with 56% reporting that sexual abuse is still a major problem today.

NBC interviewed Bill Donohue for this survey on November 8. The reporter, Chris Glorioso, was very professional. There were no "gotcha" type questions or highly tendentious remarks.

Donohue was asked to comment on all of the issues mentioned, but the one NBC chose to report was his reaction to the response of Church employees to the sexual abuse scandal. Here is his answer as quoted in the transcript.

"This is a result of the poisoning of the public mind. Most of the bad guys, most of the priests who molested, are either

dead or they're out of ministry. That's not an opinion, that's a fact."

The basis for Donohue's comment are the annual reports on this issue published by the National Review Board of the bishops' conference. Over the past decade, the average number of credible accusations made against the clergy in the year in which the data were gathered averaged in the single digits. In the last report, of the 50,648 members of the clergy, .006 percent (three of them) had a substantiated accusation made against them. No institution in the nation where adults interact with minors can beat that number.

Why, then, are four in ten Catholics who work for the Church under the impression that the scandal is still ongoing? And why are nuns the most uninformed?

The "poisoning of the public mind" that Donohue refers to is a function of negative perceptions about the Church as promoted by grand jury and attorney general reports, the media, and the entertainment industry.

The government reports, particularly the Pennsylvania grand jury report, give the impression that the scandal is still ongoing even though most of the alleged offenses mentioned in those documents happened long ago; most of the molesters are in fact either dead or out of ministry. And remember, since no cross examination was allowed, these cases represent alleged crimes: they do not represent convictions.

The media have given much coverage to these reports, and while most stories usually have a line or two about these being old cases, the impression given is that not much has changed. Adding to the misperceptions are late-night talk show hosts who constantly ridicule priests as if they are all molesters. This is bigotry, plain and simple.

Why are nuns the most gullible? Some might say they are more sensitive to the victims than others are. Even if this were

true, the problem remains: nuns are the most likely to accept the contrived government reports (e.g., the public schools are never investigated for sexual abuse, even though that is where much of it occurs today), never mind the biased reporting and the skewed commentary that are attendant to them.

Half of all the Church respondents were 60 years of age or over, and it is no secret that many of them lean liberal-left (this is especially true of nuns), making them the most likely to be critical of the way the Church has handled the scandal. It appears they are less persuaded by the evidence, or are unaware of it, than others. Either way, this is troubling.

When asked about feeling comfortable allowing a child to go on an overnight retreat supervised by a member of the clergy or a person of trust in their parish or organization, roughly half of the Church employees said there was at least one chaperone with whom they would not feel comfortable. Yet 81 percent believe their parish or organization has handled the issue of abuse properly.

This is not surprising, nor is it problematic. Most Catholics have not had any personal experience dealing with a molesting priest, yet may be wary of allowing a young person to go on an overnight retreat. If this question were asked of non-Catholics in a slightly different way—"Would you feel comfortable allowing young people to go on an overnight camping trip with adult men from your community?"—it is likely that many would not feel comfortable, at least not with all of them.

When respondents were asked if they think media coverage of the scandal has been mostly fair, 64% said no. Diocesan priests were the most critical of the media.

The NBC survey shows that some in the media are still capable of being non-partisan. More should be.

WISCONSIN PUBLIC RADIO'S HIT JOB ON THE CHURCH

Why is the public paying for public radio? Have we a shortage of media outlets these days? That is the real question. For now, however, we must deal with their abuses.

Recently, Wisconsin Public Radio (WPR) ran a story on the Catholic Church that was much ado about nothing. It tried hard to find new instances of priestly sexual abuse and wound up with two, both of which are being contested in the courts. Indeed the first tale it rolls out is of a woman who says she was abused in 1965, but never said anything about it for decades, until, inexplicably, her memory was jogged.

Too bad the reporters are so incurious. Repressed memory is regarded by psychiatrists as an unreliable concept of no scientific value. Indeed, what they have found is that the more horrific the past experience is, the more likely the victim will never forget it.

The reason why WPR's story is almost exclusively on old cases of abuse is because the Catholic Church has long since cleaned up its act. It found, however, someone from Catholic circles to challenge this verity.

It quotes the head of the National Review Board, the body appointed by the bishops to issue annual reports on this issue, as indicating that this problem is still ongoing. Francesco Cesareo, commenting on the latest data, said, "These current allegations point to the reality that sexual abuse of minors by the clergy should not be considered by the bishops as a thing of the past or a distant memory."

One cannot fault WPR for quoting him—what he said feeds its narrative. But it speaks badly of both of them that they find this assessment persuasive. Cesareo noted that “the most recent audits uncovered 26 new allegations from current minors, three of which were substantiated and seven of which were unsubstantiated.”

He didn’t do the math, so we did. Of the 50,648 members of the clergy, .006 percent (three of them) had a substantiated accusation made against them. *There is no institution in the nation that can match that—not a single religious or secular entity has such a low percentage of accusations made against their current employees.* In other words, Cesareo’s dire conclusion is unwarranted and is indeed undercut by his own data. This should have been evident to WPR.

The data also implode the unsubstantiated observation by WPR that “parishioners continue to come forward with fresh accusations.” They manifestly do not—the data indicate just the opposite. What we are hearing about are old cases just now being resurrected.

It does not help WPR’s credibility to cite the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP), a rogue outfit (it is not an organization) that has consistently lied and whose leadership had been totally discredited.

WPR cites the Pennsylvania grand jury report which found “an estimated 300 priests who had abused about 1,000 children in six of the state’s eight Catholic dioceses.” This is factually wrong.

These cases, which extend back to World War II, are all based on *allegations*, not proven instances of abuse. Indeed, the accused, most of whom are dead or out of ministry, never had a chance to defend themselves, and, of course, none of the accusers were subjected to cross examination. In the end, only three priests were prosecuted.

WPR blithely notes that a proposed Clergy Mandatory Reporter Act would do away with the religious exemption afforded the confessional. "Some Catholics fear this will compromise the sanctity of the confessional," it says. Some? No practicing Catholic would ever say anything otherwise, and no priest would ever comply. Journalists, psychiatrists and lawyers all depend on confidentiality protections when they deal with their sources, patients, and clients. The priest-penitent relationship is no less serious.

If WPR were really interested in doing an exposé on the sexual abuse of minors—one that is going on in real time—it would do some digging into the Wisconsin public schools.

In December 2016, *USA Today* did an investigation of sexual abuse in the public schools, by state, and found that Wisconsin merited an "F" in "Sharing Misconduct Information." In other words, when molesting teachers are shipped off to some other school the new school is never apprised of what they are getting. It is so common in the public schools that it is called "passing the trash."

There is plenty of trash for WPR to probe. But first it must get over its fixation of digging up old dirt about the Catholic Church.

AP'S "INVESTIGATION" IS FARCICAL

The Associated Press (AP) says it conducted an "investigation" of the way Catholic dioceses determine whether an accusation of sexual abuse by a priest is credible or not. It says it probed the diocesan review boards and consulted grand jury and

state attorney general reports. On this basis it concluded that the review boards have failed.

It would be more accurate to say that AP has failed. It provided no data, just anecdotes. Where is the summary data combed from the diocesan review boards? Moreover, every anecdote that AP offers is critical of the Church. Did the reporters find no instances where the system worked well? How many were there? What criteria did they use to collect their information? Or did they simply report the most negative comments they could find?

Everyone has an opinion of his dentist. Some have good experiences and others do not. If we wanted to know how patients feel about their dentists we would want to interview a sample of them. Then we would offer a tally, broken down by how favorable their treatment was. That would be a real investigation.

This is not what AP did. It did not sample those who have gone before a diocesan review board to see how they rated their treatment. Which explains the lack of summary data.

When AP did an investigation of sexual abuse in the public schools in 2007, it published the evidence culled from its effort, and then peppered its probe with anecdotes. That is the way it is supposed to be done. But that is not what AP did in this report on the diocesan review boards. It did nothing but offer anecdotes, *all* of them negative.

If an investigation of dentists reported only the unfavorable accounts, would anyone conclude it was fair? That is why this AP investigation is farcical. There are many other holes in this report.

The report is critical of having defense attorneys who represent the Church on review boards. It suggests this could be a conflict of interest. It also objects to the boards operating in "secret," and that they go by different names.

Furthermore, it quotes those who were ill-treated by the board. Objections are also raised about having higher standards of proof for deceased priests accused of abuse.

If there is a single thread that is evident in all of these criticisms it is the assumption that the accusers are always right and that the Church should just accept what they say. *Nowhere in this report of 4630 words is there even a hint that accused priests have rights.* They are assumed to have none.

Sexual abuse does not take place in public, making determinations of guilt or innocence difficult. They are even more difficult when the alleged offense took place decades ago. They are next to impossible to resolve when the accused is dead. This never seems to cross the minds of the reporters.

Of course, the Church employs defense attorneys: the charges against the accused are serious and the accused has state and constitutional rights that must be observed. It is curious that neither AP, nor anyone else, ever raises conflict of interest issues with lawyers who make millions suing the Church, and who offer huge donations to professional victims' groups, who in turn provide the attorneys with new clients.

Does AP know of any institution in the nation, religious or secular, that conducts investigations of accused employees in public? Are they not *always* done behind closed doors? Why, then, the jab at the Church for operating in "secret"? We don't need any more stereotypes feeding the worst instincts of the Church's enemies. And, yes, dioceses vary in the way they name their review boards. Only those with an animus against the Church would ascribe malicious motive to this unremarkable practice.

AP's most extensive anecdote cites a middle-age man who was allegedly mistreated by the Church. But was he?

The review board in St. Petersburg, Florida ruled against him, saying it could not substantiate his story of being abused by

a priest. He's angry. So? Does he have a right to be? He complains that when he was questioned by the review board, the chairwoman interrupted him when he repeated himself. So what?

When he was asked to recall some specifics regarding the place of the alleged abuse and whether anyone else was there, he started to cry. So? Is this supposed to be proof that he is telling the truth? Why couldn't it be read as an admission that his tale was coming apart? We don't know. What we do know is that the accused can't defend himself—he's dead.

The AP report just assumes this alleged victim is telling the truth, providing zero evidence that the review board unjustly rejected his case.

If some review boards raise the bar on cases where the accused is deceased, asserting a higher level of proof, why is that unfair? Would it be fair to the priest's siblings, or his nephews and nieces, that their brother or uncle—who cannot defend himself—was found guilty without clearing a high bar?

Finally, offering as proof testimony taken from grand jury reports is absurd. Grand juries hear one side of the story—the side of the accuser—and none of them is subjected to cross examination. Therefore, what is typically reported are truths, half-truths, and lies. It would be like releasing only the testimony of the accused who claims he is innocent without ever disclosing the accuser's account. Everyone would see that as a game. It is also a game to focus on grand jury and state AG reports.

AP is capable of doing excellent work. This is not an example of it.

BLOOMBERG BOMBS ON KEY SOCIAL ISSUES

It was New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani who turned New York around after the disastrous administration of his predecessor, David Dinkins, and it is a credit to Michael Bloomberg that he continued the quality of life improvements instituted by Giuliani. But on two key social issues—abortion and religious liberty—the presidential candidate was a total bomb.

Bloomberg is one of the most radical pro-abortion politicians in American history. When he first ran for mayor of New York in 2001, he pledged to force everyone training to become an obstetrician or a gynecologist in a city hospital to learn how to perform an abortion. It was NARAL's New York City office that pushed him to accept this outrageous policy. Bloomberg issued an executive order on this issue, but in the end he allowed for moral and religious exemptions.

In 2012, the Susan G. Komen Foundation decided to stop funding Planned Parenthood. The pushback from the pro-abortion community was severe, and three days later it reversed its decision. But in that short interim, Bloomberg was so angry with what happened that he personally donated \$250,000 to Planned Parenthood. The previous year he came to bat for Planned Parenthood when Congress considered cutting \$75 million.

Bloomberg's passion for abortion allowed him to appropriate \$15 million from a civic facility revenue bond transaction that benefited Planned Parenthood. In 2012, the proceeds of the bond were used to finance the renovation of 104,000 square feet of space in the building that housed the abortion giant, supplying it with equipment and furnishing. The new national headquarters was publicly funded even though the Planned Parenthood Federation of America posted a budget of over \$1

billion in 2009-2010.

On religious liberty issues, Bloomberg's record was similarly awful.

He did not endear himself to Irish Catholics in 2005 when he said he wanted to march in the St. Patrick's Day Parade so he could pressure the organizers to allow homosexuals to march under their own banner. His press secretary explained his boss' reasoning by saying, "The mayor believes the best way to change an organization is to do so from within." So here we had an agent of the state—the chief executive of New York City—injecting himself into a religious event so he could promote a secular agenda that would undermine its cause.

The courts have long ruled that religious groups have a right to use public facilities, yet Bloomberg denied the right of an inner-city Christian church to hold religious services in a public school on Sundays, setting up a court challenge. He lost in federal district court in 2005, but his censorial effort was not lost on supporters of the Bronx Household of Faith.

Sometimes Bloomberg acts cowardly when confronted with religious liberty issues. He did so in 2007 when a midtown hotel agreed to display in its store-front window a 6-foot, 200-pound anatomically correct chocolate sculpture of Jesus during Holy Week. The Catholic League protested and public opinion forced the hotel to shut down the exhibit. But the best Bloomberg could do was to say the display should be ignored.

He was similarly agnostic when the owner of the Empire State Building refused to illuminate the building in blue-and-white to honor the centenary of Mother Teresa's birthday in 2010. The Catholic League assembled 3,500 protesters in the street outside the iconic building—the owner had previously recognized the 60th anniversary of Red China's genocidal

regime—but Bloomberg did not want to get involved. He simply said that the owner should “be consistent.”

In 2011, the Staten Island Ferry Terminals were bereft of holiday displays. Not only were religious symbols such as nativity scenes and menorahs banned, but Bloomberg approved the censoring of secular displays, such as Christmas trees, as well.

Bloomberg’s biggest insult to people of faith was the way he handled the 9/11 ceremonies on the tenth anniversary of the bombings. He banned the clergy, from all religions, from participating: He would not allow a priest, minister, rabbi, or imam to make a short statement. He made matters worse when he had the gall to say that “government shouldn’t be forcing” religion “down people’s throats.” But somehow it was okay for him to shove his secular values down the throats of the faithful.

He was also duplicitous. The same mayor who invoked separation of church and state to institute a gag rule on religious speech was already on record promoting the building of a mosque near Ground Zero. He was entirely understanding of the move by American Atheists to sue New York City over two steel beams shaped like a cross that were found in the debris of the Twin Towers disaster; the atheists objected when the cross was moved from St. Peter’s Catholic Church to its new home at the 9/11 Memorial.

Bloomberg’s policies on abortion and religious liberty are not known to most Americans. Now that he has set his sights on the White House, it is time his sordid legacy is widely known.

PELOSI DEFENSIVELY INVOKES HER RELIGION

As House Speaker Rep. Nancy Pelosi was leaving her press conference recently, reporter James Rosen asked her, “Do you hate the president, Madame Speaker?”

Pelosi was livid. She spun around and, pointing at Rosen, said, “I was raised in a Catholic house. We don’t hate anybody—not anybody in the world. So don’t accuse me of that.” Rosen replied that he never accused her of anything. Red hot with anger, she returned to the podium where she warned him, “don’t mess with me.”

Regarding President Trump, she labeled him a “cruel” man. She then went back to the well. “As a Catholic,” she said, “I resent you using the word hate in a sentence that addresses me.”

Whether Pelosi hates the president, or anyone else, is impossible to say, though labeling him “cruel” surely invites speculation.

What bothers many practicing Catholics is her selective invocation of her Catholic status. Here are a few examples.

- Pelosi is a champion of abortion rights, for any reason, and at any time of pregnancy, including instances when a baby can be killed who is 80 percent born. [Note: The U.S. bishops recently named “the threat of abortion” as the “preeminent priority” for Catholics.]
- Pelosi rejects the Church’s teachings on marriage, holding that two men can marry and raise a family (adopted children, of course) in a manner that is no different from the normal arrangement of a man and a woman.
- Pelosi works tirelessly to support bills like the Equality Act that would devastate religious liberty while also

undermining the Catholic Church.

- Pelosi will never support school vouchers for indigent minorities, consigning them to public schools that wealthy white people like her wouldn't set foot in.

Pelosi is such a rank hypocrite that she not only selectively, and defensively, wears her religion on her sleeve, she has the gall to call herself a "conservative Catholic."

She would be well advised either to stop rejecting Church teachings on core moral issues, or stop playing the Catholic card to justify her opposition to them.

WHITE DEMOCRATS HAVE A RELIGION PROBLEM

The Pew Research Center recently released a survey on religion's role in society. Of particular interest to the Catholic League are those Americans who are religion-friendly versus those who are not.

The majority of Americans believe that churches and religious organizations (a) do more good than harm (b) strengthen morality in society, and (c) mostly bring people together. That is a good sign. But this is not true of Democrats in general, and of white Democrats, in particular.

While a clear majority of Republicans (71%) believe religion does more good than harm, only 44% of Democrats believe this is true. Republicans are also more likely to see religion as an agent that strengthens morality (68%) versus only 41% of Democrats. Does religion mostly bring people together? Yes, say 65% of Republicans; just 39% of Democrats feel this way.

When broken down by race, it is clear that white Democrats differ sharply with black Democrats. Regarding the issue of religion doing more good than harm, 57% of blacks say this is true while only 39% of whites agree. The majority of blacks (52%) contend that religion strengthens morality in society and that it mostly brings people together. Just a third of whites think this way about these two issues (35% and 32%, respectively). Hispanics fell in between on these matters.

It is striking that a plurality of white Democrats see religion as mostly pushing people apart (36% feel this way as opposed to 32% who think religion brings people together). Only 21% of black Democrats maintain that religion mostly pushes people apart.

The relative hostility on the part of Democrats to religion—largely driven by whites—is not lost on the public. When asked if the Republican Party is generally friendly toward religion, 54% agreed but only 19% said the Democratic Party was.

Which professions are the most unfriendly to religion? University professors and news reporters and news media. It is hardly a secret that the vast majority of professors and reporters are Democrats and that they are not exactly known for being religion-friendly.

What makes this situation so sad is that throughout the twentieth century, up until the time of Reagan, the Democratic Party was the home for most Catholics. But given the Party's positions on abortion, marriage, religious liberty, and other moral issues, many Catholics have strayed, becoming either Republicans or independents.

Looks like the Dems have a religion problem, especially white Democrats.