

# MICHIGAN OFFICIALS ASKED TO PROBE THE SCHOOLS

As we pointed out recently, perverts and rapists are preying on public school students in Michigan today, yet neither Governor Gretchen Whitmer nor Attorney General Dana Nessel are asking for an investigation of the schools. That's because they are too busy hounding the Catholic Church.

Nessel recently started an investigation of clergy sexual abuse, but not of ministers, rabbis, or imams—only Catholic priests—and Whitmer is asking state legislators for a \$2 million supplemental allocation to pay for the Catholic probe.

Why only Catholic priests? Was there some breaking news that priests are on a rampage molesting students? No. It is due to one thing: the Pennsylvania grand jury report released last year that detailed wholly unchallenged and unsubstantiated charges against priests, most of whom were dead or out of ministry.

Why was the Pennsylvania grand jury report launched? Not because of some pending crisis initiated by law enforcement or reporters. It began because one bishop turned in one high school faculty member who was accused of an offense in the 1990s.

Now ask yourself this question: If a school superintendent turned in a teacher for an old offense, would Pennsylvania's Attorney General launch an investigation of every public school in the state dating back to when Truman was president?

In any event, what does this have to do with Michigan? Nessel argues that if there were cases of abuse in Pennsylvania—dating back to World War II—then surely there must be cases in Michigan. Surely there are. Ditto for the public schools. So why aren't lawmakers being asked to

investigate them?

Does Michigan have a problem with public school students being sexually abused? Clearly it does. How do we know? Because in the 50-state analysis of this issue conducted by *USA Today*, published in 2016, Michigan was rated among the worst in the nation: It received a grade of “F.” Also, in 2017, CARE House ranked Michigan 6th in the nation in the number of cases of human trafficking.

Accordingly, Bill Donohue has written to Governor Whitmer and the entire state legislature asking for an investigation of sexual abuse in the public schools. If they decide to cherry pick the Catholic Church, they would be guilty of religious profiling. Moreover, the courts may see them as engaging in religious discrimination. Surely many Catholics, and non-Catholics, would.

The Catholic League takes this issue seriously. That is why we filed an amicus brief defending the rights of priests in Pennsylvania last year. We won, 6-1, in the Pennsylvania Supreme Court last December.

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## THE GULLIBLE GEORGE WILL

Opinion writers who opine about matters they are not well grounded in are a problem. George Will is such a man. A devout atheist, he takes the Catholic Church to task for offenses, real and contrived, relying heavily on the work of Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro, the man behind the discredited Pennsylvania grand jury report on the Church.

If Will took the time to read the grand jury report, which Bill Donohue did, and if he took the time to read the John Jay

reports on the issue of clergy abuse, which Donohue did, he would not appear so gullible.

Donohue debunked the grand jury report when it was released. One of the myths he addressed is taken up by Will. He begins his article by saying, “‘Horseplay,’ a term to denote child-rape, is, says Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro, part of a sinister glossary of euphemisms by which the Catholic Church’s bureaucracy obfuscates the church’s ‘pattern of abuse’ and conspiracy of silence.”

Will took Shapiro’s bait. First of all, most of the alleged victims were neither children nor were they raped: inappropriate touching of adolescents—which is indefensible—was the typical offense. So stop the hyperbole, Mr. Will.

Also, the word “horseplay” was not part of the lexicon of Church officials: it appears once in over 1300 pages of the report, and it was used to describe the behavior of a seminarian. Once again, Will fell for Shapiro’s ploy.

Don’t take Donohue’s word for it—read what Peter Steinfelds said about Shapiro’s grand jury report; he is a former religion reporter for the New York Times.

After reading the report, fact checking the accusations, and speaking to those familiar with the report, including people in Shapiro’s office, Steinfelds concluded that Shapiro’s most serious and sweeping indictments of the Church are “grossly misleading, irresponsible, inaccurate, and unjust.”

Don’t take Steinfelds’ word for it—consider what happened in December. That’s when the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled 6-1 in favor of eleven accused priests who claimed that releasing their names to the public would violate their reputational rights as guaranteed by the Pennsylvania Constitution. The Catholic League filed an amicus brief in this case.

The court ruled that the report contained “false, misleading, incorrect and unsupported accusations.”

Will needs to rewrite his article, rebutting what Donohue said, what Steinfelds wrote, and what the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled.

He should know better than to cite a grand jury report as the basis of his article. The priests named in the grand jury report were never afforded the right to challenge the accusations. That is because such reports are investigative, not evidentiary.

In 2015, after Will accused Pope Francis of standing against “modernity, rationality, science, and ultimately...open societies,” Donohue wrote the following about him: “He is an educated man, but his grasp of Catholicism is on a par with that of Bill Maher’s.” Looks like nothing has changed.

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## THIESSEN’S MISTAKE

*The following letter to the editor by Bill Donohue was published March 10 in the Washington Post:*

*Marc A. Thiessen’s call for Catholics to stop making donations to the bishops’ Lenten appeals was badly flawed [“Boycott the bishops,” op-ed, March 6]. Once Pope Francis asked the bishops to pitch matters such as the case of former cardinal Theodore McCarrick to Rome, it made any vote on this issue moot. It was unfair to suggest that Cardinal Gerhard Müller, former prefect of the Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, acted irresponsibly by deciding not to answer every victim’s letter: Those at the local level are best suited for this job.*

*Mr. Thiessen said “we are still learning new information from grand juries” about sexual abuse. He failed to note that what we are learning includes unsubstantiated cases from the past century. Many abusing priests are dead or out of the ministry. Moreover, the bishops have made great progress since U.S. bishops adopted reforms in 2002. For Mr. Thiessen not to acknowledge this verity seriously undermined his plea to boycott the bishops.*

The dust-up between Donohue and Thiessen was picked up by Catholic News Service. Both men stuck to their guns.

Thiessen said “the only way to get through to them [the bishops] is to withhold our money.” If the poor get hurt, he said, “there are other sources of funds they can tap into.”

Donohue said Thiessen “gives the reader no idea that the crisis in this country has been licked.” Furthermore, he said, “The damage was done to the church during the sexual revolution. The way his article is written...suggests that we are stuck in a time warp.”

In closing, Donohue noted that “A lot of the priests who were delinquent...they’re either dead or out of ministry....If we give off the idea that we have not made any progress, that is simply wrong.”

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## **ASSESSING GAY PRIESTS’ ROLE IN THE SCANDAL**

Prior to the February Vatican summit on clergy sexual abuse, Vatican observer Edwin Pentin wrote that it was “not clear” whether “the role of homosexuality in the abuse crisis” would

be addressed. It wasn't. And one thing is for sure: every effort to downplay the role of gays is being made.

A front-page story in the February 18 edition of the *New York Times* is typical of the way most of the media are covering this subject. "Studies repeatedly find there to be no connection between being gay and abusing children. Yet prominent bishops have singled out gay priests as the root of the problem, and right-wing media organizations attack what they have called the church's 'homosexual subculture,' 'lavender mafia,' or 'gay cabal.'"

Furthermore, Cardinal Blase Cupich, who was at the summit, says that while most of the problem is a result of "male on male" sex abuse, "homosexuality itself is not a cause." He says it can be explained as a matter of "opportunity and also a matter of poor training on the part of the people."

All of these statements can be challenged. First of all, not all studies have shown that there is no link between homosexuals and the sexual abuse of minors.

A good summary of the literature that shows the central role of homosexual priests in the abuse scandal can be found in an article by Brian W. Clowes and David L. Sonnier. The most recent research that challenges the conventional wisdom on this subject is the study by D. Paul Sullins, a sociologist who teaches at Catholic University of America. He found that the link between homosexual priests and sexual abuse was strong.

Let it be said emphatically that it is morally wrong to blame all gay priests or to bully someone who is gay, be he a priest or a plumber. It is also wrong to call on all gay priests to resign: such a sweeping recommendation is patently unfair to those gay priests who have never violated anyone.

However, it is not helpful to the cause of eradicating the problem of sexual abuse in the priesthood to dismiss a

conversation about the obvious. We can begin by talking honestly about who the victims are.

Notice that the *New York Times* says there is no connection between homosexuality and abusing “children.” This is a common way of framing the issue, and it is a deceitful one. Most of the victims were adolescents, not children. In other words, the problem is not pedophilia.

We know from one report after another, in both this country and abroad, that approximately 80 percent of the victims are both male *and* postpubescent. Ergo, the issue is homosexuality. This does not mean that homosexuality, per se, *causes* someone to be a predator (Cupich is technically right about that), but it does say that homosexuals are disproportionately represented in the sexual abuse of minors. We cannot ignore this reality.

The American Pediatric Association says that puberty begins at age 10 for boys. A study of more than 4,000 boys examined by a doctor, nationwide, also put the figure at age 10. The John Jay report on priestly sexual abuse found that less than 5 percent of the victims were prepubescent, meaning that pedophilia is not the problem.

The John Jay researchers try to protect homosexuals by saying that not all the men who had sex with adolescent males consider themselves to be homosexuals. But self-identification is not dispositive. If the gay priests thought they were giraffes, would the scholars conclude that the problem is bestiality?

It was the John Jay researchers who first floated the “opportunity” thesis that Cardinal Cupich picked up on. This idea is flawed. Predator priests hit on boys not because they were denied access to girls, but because they preferred males. More important, there is something patently unfair, as well as inaccurate, about this line of thinking.

It suggests that many priests are inclined to have sex with minors—and will choose the sex which offers them the greatest opportunity. There is no evidence to support this unjust indictment. Also, girl altar servers date back to 1983, after Canon law was changed. They became even more common in 1994 when Pope John Paul II ruled that girls can be altar servers.

If the “opportunity” thesis had any truth to it, we should have seen, over the past few decades, a spike in altar girls being sexually abused by priests, but this has not happened. Indeed, 80 percent of the victims are still male and postpubescent.

The notion that “poor training” is responsible for the scandal raises the obvious question: If all seminarians, straight and gay, were trained the same way (they were not segregated), then why didn’t the “poor training” that the heterosexuals experienced lead them to sexually abuse minors?

Finally, every honest observer who has examined this subject knows there is a homosexual subculture in the Church. Two months ago, Pope Francis said “homosexuality is fashionable and that mentality, in some way, also influences the life of the church.” Previously, he spoke about the “gay lobby” in the Church. Moreover, a 2016 decree on training for priests spoke about the “gay culture.” Also, it was Father Andrew Greeley who used the term “lavender mafia.”

Pope Francis is not a “right-winger,” and neither was Greeley.

We need to stop, once and for all, playing politics with this issue and face up to some tough realities.

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# CLERICALISM DOES NOT CAUSE SEXUAL ABUSE

It is popular in left-wing circles to adopt the Marxist vision of society, one which interprets social interaction purely on the basis of power. According to this perspective, society consists of power brokers and their subjects, and not much more. This is a very narrow lens, a myopic condition that blinds them to reality.

Applied to the clergy sexual abuse scandal, those on the Left, such as the *National Catholic Reporter* and Faith in Public Life, blame clericalism, or elitism, as the cause of the scandal.

An editorial in the February 20 *National Catholic Reporter* said clergy sexual abuse has “its roots deep in a clerical culture that valued secrecy, privilege and power over the welfare of child victims and their families.”

Similarly, John Gehring of Faith in Public Life (who is funded by atheist billionaire George Soros) says that “The root cause of this existential crisis for the church is clericalism, an insulated patriarchal culture where priests and bishops are viewed as a privileged class set apart.”

Father Hans Zollner, a Jesuit who helped to organize the bishops’ summit on sexual abuse, also believes that “abuse of power” is the cause of the scandal.

Clericalism, of course, has never provoked a single priest to abuse anyone. That is a function of sexual recklessness, a behavior more commonly exercised by homosexual priests than their heterosexual counterparts. In short, irresponsible decisions account for sexual molestation, not a mantle of power.

Think of it this way. If elitism caused sexual abuse, then those who occupy positions of power in the National Education Association (NEA) should be more likely to abuse minors than the teachers who occupy a subordinate position. But it is not the NEA executives, anymore than it is the bishops, who are sexually acting out, it is the teachers and the priests who serve under them.

Does this mean that clericalism plays no role in the scandal? No. There are two parties to this problem: the enabling bishops and the molesting priests.

Some of the former failed to act responsibly because they had a “bishop knows best” mentality, which is a form of clericalism. But that had nothing to do with the behavior of the abusers. Others listened to the therapists, many of whom were not supportive of the Church’s teachings on sexuality, and who therefore contributed to the problem. Their role in the scandal is still underreported and underrated.

The preoccupation with clericalism on the part of so-called progressive Catholics has more to do with their myopia, and their desire to divert attention away from homosexuality, than with a pursuit of the truth. No one should fall for their game.

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## **VACUOUS REPORT ON ABUSE ISSUED**

It would be hard to find a more vacuous document on the subject of clergy sexual abuse than the one released by the Leadership Roundtable; it was based on a summit held prior to the February Vatican meeting on this subject.

The most serious flaw in the report was the refusal to address the reasons why priestly sexual abuse occurs.

It was encouraging to read on p. 4 a section that addresses the "Twin Crises of Abuse and Leadership Failures." Just as encouraging was a section on p. 5 that discusses the "Root Causes" of these problems.

Regrettably, *absolutely nothing in the report even attempts to examine the root causes of sexual abuse*; only leadership failures are noted.

Yet on p. 4 it admits that "there are twin crises that need twin solutions." True. The scandal involves two parties: the enabling bishop and the molesting priest. Why didn't anyone associated with this report bother to question why only the former is discussed?

Three cardinals, Blase Cupich of Chicago, Joseph Tobin of Newark, and Sean O'Malley of Boston, participated in the summit. Surely someone, if not them, should have seen the gaping hole in this report.

The report follows the establishment-talking point, adopted by Rome, that puts the entire blame on the bishops, thus avoiding a discussion of the priest who acted out. This explains why clericalism is mentioned twelve times; there is no mention of gays or homosexuality.

Whatever role clericalism may have played with some bishops, it is of no explanatory value accounting for why a priest molested a postpubescent male. And since this describes 80 percent of the cases, why was there no discussion of the role played by homosexual priests?

Just as was true in the Vatican summit, there is a reluctance to come to grips with the overwhelming role played by homosexual priests in the sexual abuse scandal.

What do those associated with this report think Pope Francis meant when he took up the issue of a “gay lobby” in the Church?

What do they think Father Donald Cozzens meant when he said the priesthood risks becoming a “gay profession”?

What do they think Father Richard McBrien meant when he spoke about the “gay culture” in the Church?

What do they think Father Andrew Greeley meant when he wrote about the “Lavender Mafia” in the Church?

None of these men are known as die-hard conservatives. If they were honest enough to discuss the obvious, why aren’t those at the Leadership Roundtable?

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## **CLOSURE                      FOR                      COVINGTON CATHOLIC**

The innocent students at Covington Catholic High School have finally achieved closure. An investigative report, conducted by a private detective agency commissioned by the Diocese of Covington, has exonerated the students. Four investigators interviewed dozens of students and chaperones, and watched hundreds of hours of videos.

Just as we have been saying from the get-go, none of the students did anything wrong. They have been completely exonerated.

Indeed, Covington Bishop Roger J. Foys, who initially criticized the students before learning of new evidence from a second video, commended the boys, saying, “We should not have

allowed ourselves to be bullied and pressured into making a statement prematurely.”

It is worth recalling the invidious stereotypes that were quickly advanced by critics of the students. Not all the unfair critics were anti-Catholic bigots—some were Catholics who got sucked into this mad rush to judgment; some of them were also guilty of harboring stereotypes.

Here is a list of the most commonly cited false charges against the students:

- The fact that Covington was Catholic was cited by anti-Catholic bigots who argued that Catholic teaching was responsible for their hatred.
- White privilege was mentioned by self-hating whites as a causative factor that explained the students’ racism.
- Charges that the boys screamed “build that wall” at the Indian instigator were made by knee-jerk bullies—the investigation proves that no student chanted this refrain.
- Pro-abortion fanatics blamed the March for Life for having the Covington Catholic students participate.
- Violence against Nick Sandmann, the student who stood his ground against the Indian agitator, was encouraged by peaceniks.
- MAGA (Make America Great Again) hats worn by some of the students were seized upon by Trump haters as proof of their bigotry and intolerance.
- White racists, who always see Indians as victims and whites as victimizers, called the students racists. For the same reason, they also refused to condemn the black thugs who made many bigoted remarks.

Sandmann has filed a lawsuit against many public persons who defamed him. We wish him well.

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# MORE RIGHTS FOR THE SEXUALLY CONFUSED?

The Equality Act has been around for decades, under various names, but it always fails. It will again this year, even if it clears the House; Rep. Nancy Pelosi, the House Speaker, has said the legislation is a priority for the new Congress. If most Americans knew what it is really about, they would not support it.

This bill is not about equality—it is about trashing the free exercise of religion as guaranteed by the First Amendment. In effect, it would gut the constitutionally sound practice of awarding religious exemptions whenever there is a conflict between religious expression and the rights of homosexuals and the sexually confused (e.g., a man who thinks he is a woman, and vice versa).

The Equality Act has two major goals: (a) it would amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to ban discrimination against homosexuals and the sexually confused, and (b) it would undermine the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) of 1993 by allowing gay rights to trump religious rights.

The predicate of this legislation is that sexual orientation and gender identity are analogous to race and ethnicity, and are therefore deserving of the same protections afforded by the Civil Rights Act. However, that is based on a false assumption.

Sexual orientation speaks to behavior, and gender identity, in this context, refers to the sexually confused; by contrast, neither race nor ethnicity are a function of volition.

While no one can justify unequal treatment on the basis of ascribed characteristics such as race and ethnicity, justifying disparate treatment on the basis of achieved characteristics such as sexual orientation and gender identity can be justified in some instances.

For example, religiously devout parents may rightly object to having their children counseled by a woman who has acquired male genitalia. In normal times, this would not be controversial. Sadly, we live in abnormal times.

There is one very important aspect of the Equality Act that has been generally ignored, even by its critics: It would mean that homosexuals and the sexually confused would qualify for affirmative action.

Of course, the Equality Act says nothing of the kind. It is deceptive. In fact, it pulls the affirmative action trigger.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act explicitly prohibited preferential treatment on the basis of race. But administrative agencies and the courts did not interpret it that way, and instead saw it as a vehicle for affirmative action.

Hence, if African Americans qualify for preferential treatment because of the way the Civil Rights Act has been interpreted, then there is no stopping homosexuals and the sexually confused from qualifying were the Equality Act to pass.

This would mean that an employer who is a practicing Catholic, evangelical Christian, observant Jew, Muslim, or Mormon, would be expected to give preferential treatment to homosexuals and the sexually confused (save for small businessmen) when hiring.

We cannot allow the Pelosi rule—pass the bill and then we'll figure out what it means—to be operative. We already know what it would lead to, and that is not something most Americans

would ever support.

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# CUOMO CAN'T DEFEND HIS ABORTION LAW

Exactly three weeks after New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed his abortion law, which allows non-physicians to perform abortions up until the baby is born—and provides no criminal penalties for infanticide—he met with President Donald Trump. According to the White House, Trump “raised his concerns to Governor Cuomo about Democrats’ support of late-term abortions.”

When Cuomo was asked about this, he blamed Trump for promoting “division.”

In other words, Cuomo, who lit up the sky of New York in pink to celebrate killing children in and out of the womb, was totally unable to defend his barbaric law. If he had any guts, he would have told the president why it is important to praise his bloody law.

Perhaps most important, Cuomo is factually wrong to say that discussing his bill is divisive. There is nothing divisive about it. Every survey ever taken shows that the public has no stomach for late-term abortions, never mind infanticide. Even those who identify as pro-choice cannot stomach Cuomo’s law. So who’s left? What a class group of people they must be.

This is the biggest mistake Cuomo has ever made. He will never get over it, and neither will those Democrats who agree with him. One does not have to be a conservative to figure this out: CNN’s editor-at-large, Chris Cillizza, did in a post



titled, "How Democrats are Handing Donald Trump a Viable Path to a Second Term."

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## KAMALA HARRIS OPINES ON LIFE AND DEATH

Recently, Sen. Kamala Harris was asked by National Public Radio (NPR) about her position on the death penalty. She is against it. When pushed further, she stuck to her guns.

NPR: "For any crime?"

Harris: "Correct."

NPR: "Not even, I don't know, treason?"

Harris: "Not in the United States, no."

NPR: "There's nothing that rises to that level?"

Harris: "Not in the United States, no."

Last year, Harris addressed the issue of aborting a child right up until birth. Here is what she tweeted on January 29, 2018:

"Tonight, the Senate is voting on whether to impose a 20-week abortion ban. Women have the constitutional right to make their own decisions about their reproductive health. It shouldn't be infringed upon. Get out your bullhorns. Everyone should be shouting about this."

There we have it. Harris says that those who endanger the safety of all Americans by attempting a violent overthrow of the government, or spying on the military for a foreign enemy,

should have their lives spared, but innocent children who are moments from being born are not entitled to have their lives spared.

Harris is a declared candidate for president of the United States.