

# REMEMBERING GEORGE H.W. BUSH

During the 1988 presidential campaign, Bill Donohue was a Bradley Resident Scholar at The Heritage Foundation. His first book, *The Politics of the American Civil Liberties Union*, published in 1985, was the magnet that landed him the job.

It was also a time when Michael Dukakis, the Democratic nominee for president, loudly proclaimed that he was “a card-carrying member of the American Civil Liberties Union.” It didn’t take long before those working for Vice President George H.W. Bush contacted Donohue hoping to obtain inside information on the organization: Bush was running for president.

Donohue happily gave the Bush team what they wanted, and appeared on several talk-TV shows, notably “Crossfire,” defending Bush against his critics. The ACLU issue took off like a rocket. “It sometimes seems as though the election is more about the ACLU than anything else,” complained NBC anchor Tom Brokaw.

Before the first presidential debate, the Bush campaign asked Donohue to provide them with a list of some of the most controversial ACLU policies. He did, and Bush quickly mastered them (Donohue’s first of two books on the ACLU was an extension of his NYU Ph.D. dissertation on the organization; his other book, *Twilight of Liberty: The Legacy of the ACLU*, was published in 1994 and a new Afterword edition appeared in 2001).

During the debate, ABC anchor Peter Jennings asked candidate George Bush why he continued to make an issue out of Michael Dukakis’ membership in the ACLU. Here is what Bush said.

“I simply don’t want to see the ratings on movies—I don’t want my ten-year-old grandchild to go into an X-rated movie. I like those ratings systems. I don’t think they’re right to try to

take the tax exemption away from the Catholic Church. I don't want to see the kiddie pornographic laws repealed. I don't want to see under God come out from our currency. Now, these are all positions of the ACLU, and I don't agree with them."

The ACLU and the *New York Times* accused Bush of distorting the ACLU's record. They were wrong. Donohue supplied David Margolick of the *Times* with the evidence that he gave to the Bush campaign, taken straight from the ACLU's Policy Guide.

The ACLU was on record opposing the Motion Picture Association of America's movie rating system, even though this was a purely voluntary nongovernmental body. The ACLU Foundation and the New York Civil Liberties Union had filed an amicus brief in support of the Abortion Rights Mobilization to secure standing in its lawsuit seeking to strip the Catholic Church of its tax-exempt status.

The ACLU lost in a unanimous decision in the U.S. Supreme Court (*New York Ferber*, 1982) seeking to protect the production, sale, and distribution of child pornography. And its opposition to "In God We Trust" on coins was long-standing, a position that the founder of the ACLU, Roger Baldwin, told Donohue was "one of the more foolish statements" the organization ever made.

Looking back at this presidential campaign, Garry Wills noted how incendiary these cultural issues were. "The Bush campaign was able to exacerbate this struggle, calling on the advice of William A. Donohue, the sociologist who wrote the right wing's favorite book on the subject, *The Politics of the American Civil Liberties Union*. Donohue, for instance, gave the campaign the useful political charge that the ACLU would keep 'kiddie porn' legal."

"God bless President George H.W. Bush," Donohue said. "I am delighted to have played a small role in his life."

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# CARDINAL DINARDO DESERVES BETTER

When law enforcement agents act like bullies, justice is sundered. That's what happened last October in Michigan when police raided all seven Catholic dioceses—including the home of one bishop—in search of evidence of sexual abuse by the clergy.

In late November local police, the Texas Rangers, the local D.A.'s office, and other agencies raided the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, headed by Cardinal Daniel DiNardo. They were looking for evidence concerning Rev. Manuel La Rosa-Lopez; he has been accused of molesting two teenagers more than a quarter century ago. The priest says he is innocent of all charges.

The archdiocese says it is wrong to call it a "raid" because they were cooperating with law enforcement. But when dozens of cops and the Texas Rangers show up, unannounced, carrying boxes they expect to fill with documents, records, electronics, etc., what else should we call it? It is precisely because the archdiocese was cooperating with law enforcement that this mad search was so unnecessary.

How did the agents even know that the priest was accused of molesting two teenagers? The authorities found out because DiNardo notified them. That's how.

The archdiocese admitted it was still looking for more documents on the priest, and law enforcement appeared satisfied. So what made the alarms go off?

CBS had done a hit job on DiNardo the previous week, and this

surely played a role in getting the agents ginned up.

"We do believe, based on our research, that there will be a secret archive that will have information on this case," said J. Tyler Dunman of the special crimes unit for the Montgomery County District Attorney. "Secret archives"? They are what organizations such as CBS call confidential records, but it sounds more melodramatic to label them "secret archives."

Montgomery D.A. Brett Ligon said, "This is not a search warrant against the Catholic Church." So what is it? He disingenuously admitted, "We're going to go wherever the investigation requires us to go." In other words, they are using the accused priest as a pretext to raid the archdiocesan offices.

Why didn't the D.A. subpoena the records? Because that would not have accomplished their real goal—which is to go wherever the raid takes them.

There were hundreds of media stories on Cardinal DiNardo in the month of November, and many were critical. The treatment was often unfair, and leading the way was the CBS story.

Why DiNardo? The short answer—that he is chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the bishops were assembling in Baltimore in November for their biannual meeting—is incomplete. Why did the media go after Cardinal Donald Wuerl when the Pennsylvania grand jury report was issued in August (he previously served as Bishop of Pittsburgh)?

Wuerl was targeted because he was the most senior clergyman cited in the report. It did not matter that he had one of the best records of any bishop in the nation handling cases of sexual abuse—he was the biggest fish that the Church's foes could fry. That was certainly true of Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro; he was aided and abetted by the media. We knew at the time that the next target would be another senior prelate.

CBS began its story by reporting on La Rosa-Lopez. Here is what viewers were not told.

The alleged abuse of a teen male took place at the end of the last century. The alleged victim never said a word about it until August 2018. As soon as this case was reported to the archdiocese, officials contacted the Children's Protective Services. The next day an arrest warrant for the priest was issued, and he voluntarily turned himself in that evening.

Why didn't CBS tell its viewers this? By the way, DiNardo did not become Archbishop of Galveston-Houston until 2006.

The other alleged victim was a woman who claimed the priest kissed and fondled her when she was a teenager. She wrote about the priest in her diary, confessing that she was in a romantic relationship with him. When did this allegedly happen? In 2000. Curiously, she came forth with her story only days after the alleged first victim came forth with his old story.

Why didn't CBS tell its viewers this?

The CBS story focused mostly on two other priests, Rev. John Keller and Rev. Terence Brinkman.

CBS said that in 1998 Keller molested a 16-year-old male who reported it to the archdiocese four years later. Keller denied that the fondling ever happened. An archdiocesan lay review board investigated this case and could not substantiate the accusation.

The CBS story said that Brinkman allegedly sodomized a 12-year-old male in the 1970s. The priest denied this happened. The lay review board investigated and could not substantiate the accusation.

These two cases—one from more than 20 years ago and the other from over 30 years ago—were the only accusations ever made

against either priest during their 40 years of service to the archdiocese. Too bad CBS didn't report this.

It's also too bad that CBS didn't report that the archdiocese responded to more than 30 questions submitted by the network, yet, according to Church officials, "almost all of our responses [were] completely ignored by the CBS team."

Cardinal DiNardo deserves better. But in this sick environment, where priests are considered guilty before proven innocent—and high-ranking members of the clergy are seen as meriting even fewer rights—anything is possible. The public is being set up to believe the worst about the Catholic Church.

The bishops are under siege. What will the bullies think of next? They surely won't convene a grand jury probe of the public schools. Bet on it.

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## SEXUAL ABUSE EXTENDS BEYOND THE CHURCH

Sexual misconduct is a ubiquitous phenomenon, sparing no institution. Moreover, it is hardly unique to our age. Yet by reading news stories this would not be so evident. They would have us believe that the Catholic Church is the worst offender. There is no evidence to support this claim.

The *Philadelphia Inquirer* is a case in point.

Here is what it said in a recent editorial. "Yes, there have been sexual-abuse scandals at other institutions," it says, "including public schools, universities, other religious organizations, the media, politics, and Hollywood. But nowhere

has the abuse been as widespread and accountability so disregarded.”

How in the world could any newspaper, or for that matter any social scientist, make such a statement? Where are the comparative data?

For example, there is no national databank that collects and publishes sexual abuse by public school teachers or administrators. Worse, calls for such a repository always go unanswered: the educational establishment and the teachers’ unions see to that. And the media routinely give them a pass.

The only data we have on the public schools come from journalists at the Associated Press and *USA Today*. What they found, in 2007 and 2016, respectively, is astounding: sexual abuse of elementary and secondary students is widespread. Even more outrageous, accountability is lacking. “Passing the trash”—moving molesting teachers from one school district to another—is still going on (in the past, some bishops were guilty of moving offending priests to other parishes, but that is no longer tolerated).

Yes, we have seen universities implicated as well. Again, we don’t have a databank that records instances of sexual misconduct the way the Catholic Church does, but we know from one such school, Michigan State University, that there were 1,168 such reports that took place during the 2017-18 academic year; this was up from 718 the previous academic year.

Regarding other religious organizations, the collection of data on this subject is very spotty. Unlike a hierarchal institution like the Catholic Church, most religious institutions have no centralized mechanism that compiles evidence of sexual abuse. So we are left with anecdotal information.

Last year, the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* ran a front-page story on sexual abuse in non-Catholic religious organizations. “Some

people assume this is a Catholic problem,” said Pastor Jimmy Hinton, a Church of Christ minister from Somerset, Pennsylvania. “It’s not, not at all. There are plenty of Protestant and nondenominational churches that cover-up abuse and knowingly pass abusers from church to church, or quietly dismiss a known abuser and don’t bother to check up on the abuser and don’t know where they settled.”

Similarly, anyone who reads the Jewish newspapers knows that the sexual abuse of minors is a big problem, especially among Orthodox Jewish rabbis. The cover-up is incredible: they have their own rabbinical courts that try these cases, sidestepping the civil and criminal courts. If the Catholic Church held its own canonical courts—bypassing the authorities—it would be the lead story in every media outlet nationwide.

The *Philadelphia Inquirer* editorial mentions the media, as well it should. CBS, NBC, and Fox News, in particular, have been ravaged with serial abusers at the highest level, and nothing was done about it until recently.

Politics is cited as well. Where do we begin? There have been so many predators, and so little accountability by the leadership in the Republican and Democratic parties, it is mind-boggling.

Ditto for Hollywood. From Harvey Weinstein to Louis C.K., sexual misconduct has been rampant in Tinseltown for decades. We still don’t have a good accounting of all the kids who have been raped.

What about the medical profession? In 2016, the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* found that more than 2,400 doctors from every state have been sanctioned for sexually abusing their patients. But in more than half the cases, state medical boards, which oversee physician licenses, allowed more than half these doctors to keep their licenses, even in instances where the accusations were deemed to be true.



Why wasn't the tech sector mentioned? More than 20,000 Google workers staged a walkout across the globe on November 8 to protest the way it treats sexual misconduct. A senior executive received a \$90 million exit package *after he was credibly accused of sexual misconduct*. Forced arbitration, confidentiality agreements, and a general lack of transparency figured prominently in the protest.

But there will be no editorial in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* blasting these segments of society.

Nor will there be any nationwide push to demand that the Human Resources department in every organization in the nation be required to collect data on sexual offenses, or that a databank be established—especially in the public sector—to track accusations and their disposition.

Why the disinterest? This isn't about protecting the innocent—if that were true no institution would be spared intense scrutiny—it's about "getting the Church."

Why? Because the name of the game is to enervate the moral voice of the Catholic Church, paving the way for greater sexual freedom. This is clueless beyond belief: the emancipation of the id has never led to a greater exercise of liberty; rather, it has led to more sexual misconduct, the very problem the Church's critics say they want to check.

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## ILLINOIS AG REPORT REEKS OF POLITICS

On December 19, Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan released a report by her office on sexual abuse by the

Catholic clergy in Illinois. Before addressing her report, consider the backdrop to her investigation.

A few years ago, one teacher at a Northwestern Pennsylvania high school, Brother Stephen Baker, was reported to the authorities on grounds that he allegedly molested a minor in the 1990s. Who reported him? His bishop, Altoona-Johnstown Bishop Mark Bartchak.

What happened next? The Pennsylvania Attorney General, who is now in prison, launched a state-wide probe of six of the eight dioceses in the state. That was all it took—one old case to ignite a huge probe of nearly all Catholic dioceses in the state extending back to World War II.

Illinois Attorney General Madigan said it was that grand jury report that inspired her to launch her investigation. The Pennsylvania grand jury report was released in August. Which begs the question: Why didn't Madigan launch an investigation of the public schools throughout the state following revelations of a *Chicago Tribune* report on sexual abuse in Chicago? That report was released in June.

The *Chicago Tribune* found that there were 523 credible cases of rape and sexual abuse of Chicago students over the past decade. Even more astounding, in the last three months—between September and December—Chicago public school officials fielded 624 new complaints, including a teen track star who was allegedly raped 40 times by her coach. Worse again, these school officials “knew about these abuse cases and hid them from the public for eight years.”

Why didn't Illinois Attorney General Madigan insist on a probe of every public school in the state, dating back decades?

Kids are being raped by public school teachers right now in Illinois, but this does not concern her. There is no “Teacher Abuse Hotline” posted on her website, but there is a “Clergy Abuse Hotline.” Furthermore, we know that she is not

interested in cases of abuse committed by the clergy in all religions. Just one.

Catholics, and the public, are being led to believe that the Catholic Church owns this problem. It does not. It is widespread, but few prosecutors have any interest in examining current cases of sexual abuse in the public schools, never mind cases of abuse committed by the clergy in other religions. They are too busy uncovering decades-old cases of abuse committed by priests.

Regarding the Illinois Attorney General's report, there are many unanswered questions.

Why is the report being touted as an examination of alleged sexual abuse in Illinois, when that is only partly true? The Clergy Abuse Hotline allows callers to report instances outside the state, or, as the report says, "in Illinois and elsewhere."

Who called the Hotline? They were "survivors who were abused decades ago." Why are they not referred to as *alleged* survivors? Did they ever report their alleged offense? "Survivors informed the Office [of the Illinois Attorney General] that, at various times over the years, they reported the abuse they suffered to one of the Illinois Dioceses."

Did all of the alleged survivors register a complaint at the time of the offense, or just some? If some, how many? More important, there is no evidence that the Attorney General's office sought to verify any of these accusations. Yet it takes Church officials to task for disregarding allegations brought to their attention.

The report says that "The Illinois Dioceses often disregarded survivors' allegations by either not investigating the allegations, or finding reasons not to substantiate the allegations."

Perhaps some of the allegations were not found credible on the face of it (e.g., the accused priest wasn't even in the parish where his alleged offense occurred at that time). The report shows its true colors when it accuses Church officials of "*finding* reasons not to substantiate the allegations" (our italic.) Does the Attorney General's office have evidence that Church officials contrived their conclusions? If not, why the stab?

The report acknowledges that in some cases the alleged victim chose not to have his name made public (a not uncommon practice). In other cases, a criminal investigation was already underway. In still others, the clergy had fled the country. These are all plausible reasons why Church officials decided not to launch a probe. But the authors of the report do not see it that way, and act as though non-Church officials typically start probes in similar instances. This is nonsense.

Perhaps most unconvincing of all, the report concludes that "Based on its review, the Office believes that additional allegations should be deemed 'credible' or 'substantiated' by the Illinois Dioceses." On what grounds? On what basis does the Attorney General's office make such a determination? It provides not one iota of evidence to make such a claim.

To say it "believes" this to be true means nothing. What specific cases did it find that should have been deemed credible or substantiated by Church officials? In other words, can the Attorney General's office *substantiate its claim*?

Catholics, as we often say, are being played.

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# TWO NEWSPAPERS TARGET BISHOPS

The *Boston Globe* and the *Philadelphia Inquirer* published a 5400-word article on November 4 discussing how the bishops have handled sexual abuse matters since the Dallas norms were published on this subject in 2002.

The front-page story in the *Globe* shows a photo of four bishops: Bishop Robert Finn, Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, Archbishop John Nienstedt, and Bishop Richard Malone. It says all of them “resisted calls for transparency.” This is factually inaccurate: only McCarrick has done so.

Regarding Kansas City-St. Joseph Bishop Finn, who resigned in 2015, the article says, “He never alerted authorities about photos of young girls’ genitals stashed on a pastor’s laptop. He kept parishioners in the dark, letting the priest mingle with children and families.” It notes that he was found guilty (of a misdemeanor, it should be noted) for failing to report the priest’s suspected child abuse.

*Here is what the newspapers did not tell their readers.*

- In 2010, a computer technician found disturbing crotch-shot photos of girls fully clothed on the computer of Father Shawn Ratigan; there was one naked photo of a non-sexual nature.
- Even though there was no complainant, a police officer and an attorney were contacted by diocesan officials. They both agreed that the single naked photo did not constitute pornography.
- After Ratigan attempted suicide, he was evaluated by a psychiatrist—at the request of Finn. Ratigan was diagnosed as depressed, but not a pedophile.
- Finn put restrictions on Ratigan, which he broke. The diocese then contacted the authorities, though it had no legal mandate to do so.
- When it was found that Ratigan was again using a computer,

an examination revealed hundreds of offensive photos.

- The Vicar General, Msgr. Robert Murphy, then called the cops (Finn was out of town).
- A week later Ratigan was arrested.

On what basis do these two newspapers claim that Bishop Finn “resisted calls for transparency”? Had it not been for the diocese calling a police officer and an attorney, this case would not have gone forward. And had it not been for the diocese calling the cops when Ratigan failed to abide by the restrictions placed on him, no one would have known about him. The priest never touched or abused a child, though it is clear that he is a disturbed person.

The newspapers say that Minneapolis-St. Paul Archbishop John Nienstedt was warned in 2009 by canon lawyer Jennifer Haselberger not to promote Father Curtis Wehmeyer. In 2010, the priest abused two brothers, 12 and 14, during a camping trip. Haselberger quit in protest in 2013 and contacted the authorities. The archdiocese was subsequently charged with ignoring Wehmeyer’s sexual misconduct and Nienstedt stepped down.

*Here is what the newspapers did not tell their readers.*

- In 2004, three years after being ordained, Wehmeyer made sexually suggestive remarks to two men, 19 and 20, but they never complained. The archdiocese found out and sent the priest for counseling. Two years later he was found cruising in an area known for gay sex. Though neither of these instances involved breaking the law, they were the kind of red flags that concerned Haselberger.
- Regarding the abuse of the two boys in 2010, the mother of the boys told a priest about it in early June 2012. He urged her to call the cops. On June 14, she provided the details and was told to report it to the archdiocese. On June 19, she met with church officials and one of the boys was questioned. On June 20, the police were contacted. On June 21, the priest was

relieved of his duties. In September, the Ramsey County Attorney commended the archdiocese saying, “They did the right thing.”

On what basis do these two newspapers claim that Archbishop Nienstedt “resisted calls for transparency”? Furthermore, there is no report of Nienstedt voluntarily stepping down in 2014 when he was accused of touching a young man’s buttocks in 2009 while posing for a Confirmation picture. He was exonerated by the Ramsey County Attorney’s Office on March 11, 2014.

The newspapers say that Buffalo Bishop Malone covered up cases of abuse. They cite no examples, relying on allegations made against him by his former executive assistant, a person who has quickly turned into an activist.

“I’m a man who can make a mistake,” Malone is quoted as saying in the November 5 edition of the *Buffalo News*, “and that is what I did in two cases where we had allegations of misconduct by a priest with adults.” When asked about a New York State Attorney General probe, he said, “I’m glad that is happening. Absolutely, bring it on.” That doesn’t sound like someone who is “resisting calls for transparency.”

There are many other parts of the story as reported by the *Boston Globe* and *Philadelphia Inquirer* that deserve rebuttal, but for now let it be said that their account is incomplete, misleading, and in some cases, downright irresponsible.

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## POLLS, PERCEPTION, AND THE

# POPE

A poll by CBS of American Catholics reveals that Pope Francis is no longer receiving the high marks he once enjoyed, especially with regards to his handling of clergy sexual abuse. Three years ago, roughly half of Catholics thought he was doing a good job dealing with this issue, but now only 29% feel this way. It has even led about a quarter of Catholics to question whether they will remain in the Church.

These results are not good, but they are not as bad as they seem.

Current reports of past instances of sexual abuse have had no serious effect on 70% of Catholics (they are not contemplating leaving). The figure is even higher for those who regularly attend Mass; conversely, those who only occasionally attend Mass are the most prone to question whether they will remain in the Church.

Moreover, fully 10% of those polled say they never go to Church, yet their response to survey questions count as much as those who attend Mass more than once a week. Thus, these respondents skew the findings in a negative direction.

Perhaps the most revealing question and answer in the survey is the following: How serious a problem is sexual abuse of children by priests in the Catholic Church today?

|                      |     |
|----------------------|-----|
| Very serious         | 69% |
| Somewhat serious     | 21% |
| Not that serious     | 7%  |
| Don't know/No answer | 4%  |

If this question had been asked between the mid-1960s and the mid-1980s, the results would likely have been reverse: we would expect that approximately 7% would say there is a "very serious" problem, and roughly 69% would say it is "not that



serious.”

Here is the paradox: the timeline just cited is exactly the period when most of the sexual abuse of minors took place, but few were aware of it. It therefore had no real effect on Catholics. Today, there is almost no abuse taking place: in the last two years for which we have data, the average percent of the clergy found to have had a credible (not proven) accusation against them is .005%. Yet the alarms are going off now.

In 1928, sociologist W.I. Thomas provided insight into this phenomenon. “If men define situations as real,” he wrote, “they are real in their consequences.” Ergo, if Catholics perceive the issue of sexual abuse to be a big problem today—even though it is not—then it is.

The reason why Catholics believe there is a serious problem today has everything to do with media reports of sexual abuse. So as not to be misunderstood, the media are not to blame for reporting on the three most important reasons why so many Catholics (and obviously non-Catholics) have a false perception of reality: the McCarrick scandal, the Pennsylvania grand jury report on clergy abuse, and the resignation of Cardinal Donald Wuerl.

Most of Theodore McCarrick’s predatory behavior took place in the 1980s. The lion’s share of the predatory behavior reported in the Pennsylvania grand jury report took place in the last century. Cardinal Wuerl had a better record of handling this issue than most bishops and cardinals, but because he was the “big fish” cited in the report, he paid a price for a few bad judgments that he made in the last century.

As for the pope, his handling of the McCarrick scandal accounts for his low numbers.

Here is a question no one asks: Why did the media have something to report on in the first place?

Most Catholics, and most of the public as well, don't realize that the reason why we know about McCarrick is because of a reporting program instituted by Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Archbishop of New York. It was his program dealing with sexual abuse that inspired one of McCarrick's victims to come forward. Dolan acted on that accusation and the rest is history.

The Pennsylvania grand jury report was not launched because of a widespread problem of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church today. No, it was done because Pennsylvania Attorney General Kathleen Kane, awaiting jail time, decided to go after the Catholic Church and open a statewide investigation of past practices merely because of reports that one teacher at a Catholic high school in the northwestern part of the state had been an abuser.

This is why we contend that Catholics are being played.

Is there a single institution in the United States, religious or secular, that has conducted an internal review of sexual misconduct that comes even close to what the Catholic Church has done? Is there a prominent leader in any institution that has turned in one of his own leaders, the way Cardinal Dolan turned in McCarrick?

Why has Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro stood behind a grand jury report that is strewn with palpable lies and unsubstantiated accusations? Why did he single out the Catholic Church for a probe, destroying the reputation of innocent men (this, and other issues, is why the Catholic League filed a brief in the Pennsylvania Supreme Court)? Why has he shown no interest in pursuing the sexual abuse of minors that is going on right now in Pennsylvania public schools?

Why have the media shown little or no interest in pursuing sexual abuse of minors committed by anyone other than a

priest? This is disgraceful.

Perception may function as reality, as W.I. Thomas instructed, but misperceptions are not analogous to truth. Truth does not turn on interpretation.

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## WASHINGTON POST MAKES FALSE CLAIMS

In the first paragraph of the November 13 editorial in the Washington Post, it says that the sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church “raged unchecked for decades and, even after it was exposed in 2002 by the Boston Globe, has been met by the church hierarchy with denial, temporizing, stone walling and half-measures.” That is factually wrong.

Indeed, during this time span, no institution in America, religious or secular, has had less of a problem with the sexual abuse of minors than the Catholic Church.

Here are the data on the number of clergymen (priests and deacons) who have had a credible accusation (not substantiated) made against them during the year listed.

|      |    |
|------|----|
| 2004 | 22 |
| 2005 | 9  |
| 2006 | 14 |
| 2007 | 4  |
| 2008 | 10 |
| 2009 | 6  |
| 2010 | 7  |
| 2011 | 9  |
| 2012 | 6  |

|      |   |
|------|---|
| 2013 | 9 |
| 2014 | 6 |
| 2015 | 7 |
| 2016 | 2 |
| 2017 | 6 |

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Average: 8.36

Consider the most recent reports on this subject, covering the last two years for which we have data: .005 percent of the clergy have had a credible accusation made against them.

There is no basis in reality for the *Washington Post* to conclude that the Dallas norms adopted by the bishops in 2002 have not worked. Clearly they have. Here's why.

Review boards staffed by professionals in several fields are empowered to deal with accusations. Once an allegation is deemed credible (the bar is quite low) the accused must step aside pending an investigation. Moreover, virtually every person who works or volunteers for the Church must undergo training programs learning how to combat the sexual abuse of minors.

Also, many dioceses now have programs that invite alleged victims to come forward in pursuit of justice. It was just such a program that led Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Archbishop of New York, to turn in a sitting cardinal (McCarrick), as well as one of his auxiliary bishops. What institution can match these initiatives? Certainly not the public schools, about which we hear nothing from those who never stop bashing the Catholic Church.

There is much work to be done, but fair-minded assessments of the progress that has been made since the Dallas reforms would not concur with the misinformed editorial in the *Washington Post*.

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# PORTLAND LIBRARY HOSTS PERVERTS FOR KIDS

On October 23, a public library in Portland, Oregon hosted an event for children 2-6 years old that featured perverts and Catholic bashers. The venue was the Multnomah County Library.

“Drag Queen Storytime with the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence” was the name of the event. The “Sisters” have a long tradition of mocking nuns and bashing Catholicism; they are popular in San Francisco. Now they have set their sights on little kids.

Here is how the event was billed. “The library is proud to present an hour of kid-friendly drag! Join us for this special storytime featuring the fabulous Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, Sister Donna and Sister Olive, reading stories about inclusion and diversity, followed by a craft or dance party. For kids 2-6 years old with a favorite adult.”

This is one more example of some very disturbed people using sexuality as a means of getting to kids. That they used taxpayer dollars to advance their sickness is even less defensible.

By using the much-abused, and highly politicized, term “inclusion and diversity,” the drag queens tried to legitimize their behavior. But nothing can justify trying to sexualize children—even in a manner that is not perverse. The goal, of course, is to normalize sexual abnormalities, as well as anti-Catholic bigotry, two phenomena that deserve to be checked, not celebrated.

The library is to blame for not giving high profile to this

event. If they are proud of having perverts and bigots address kids, they should shout it from the rooftop. Cowards and sickos.

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# TRUMP FINALIZES CONSCIENCE RIGHTS

When giving the Commencement Address at the University of Notre Dame in 2009, President Barack Obama said, "Let's honor the conscience of those who disagree with abortion, and draft a sensible conscience clause." His administration never did. Worse, it sought to violate conscience rights of pro-life Americans.

When Donald Trump was running for president in 2016, he pledged to undo the damage that his predecessor did to conscience rights. Now he has made good on his promise. On November 7, his administration released final rules on conscience rights for Americans who object to paying for abortion-inducing drugs and contraceptives in their insurance plans. They will take effect two months from now.

President Trump had to undo the Health and Human Services mandate established by the Obama administration. That provision sought to force organizations such as the Little Sisters of the Poor to violate their conscience by paying for morally objectionable services in their health insurance plans.

Under the new rules, an exemption is being afforded "from the contraceptive coverage mandate to entities and individuals that object to services covered by the mandate on the basis of sincerely held religious beliefs." The rules are inclusive of

“nonprofit organizations, small businesses, and individuals that have non-religious moral convictions.”

Kudos to President Trump for affirming religious liberty and conscience rights.

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## **GOOD NIGHT AT THE POLLS FOR CHRISTIANS**

Election night was good for Christians. In two of the three states that had ballot initiatives protecting the rights of the unborn, they won: Alabama and West Virginia affirmed the right to life of children in the womb, and they also banned public funding of abortion; Oregon made it easier for a woman to abort her child.

Alabama voters affirmed religious liberty by ensuring that a person's religious beliefs will have no effect on his civil or political rights; they also voted to allow a display of the Ten Commandments on public property.

Pro-life candidates squared off against abortion-rights candidates in the 36 states that had gubernatorial races. In September, National Right to Life listed 26 of the races as the ones to watch. Our own tally found that the pro-life candidate won 17 of those races; 9 were won by the abortion-rights candidate.

This takes on more significance when we consider that Planned Parenthood launched its largest voter contact campaign for midterm elections in history.

NARAL told voters that abortion is a children's rights issue.

“The research is clear. Restricting abortion access doesn’t just harm women. It harms their children as well.” It also tweeted, “When women are denied abortions, it affects the lives of the kids they already have.”

NARAL is right about that, but for the wrong reason: it traumatizes children to learn that their mother aborted their prospective brother or sister—they realize that it could have been them!

Perhaps the best election news is the uptick in pro-life senators. President Trump will now have an easier time getting judges appointed who are not given to discovering rights that are nowhere mentioned in the Constitution.