

# SATANISTS LOVE ABORTION

A recent article in the *Los Angeles Times* about The Satanic Temple said the organization “describes itself as a political activism group that promotes certain beliefs such as free will and political tolerance.” Satanists believe in free will and political tolerance? That inspired Donohue to check out their website.

What he found was surprising: The Satanic Temple is obsessed with abortion. Its mission statement says it offers “legal protection against laws that unscientifically restrict women’s reproductive autonomy.” So critical is abortion to these Satanists that they have a “Religious Rights Reproductive Rights Campaign”: it advocates on behalf of the so-called religious rights of Satanists to campaign for abortion.

The Satanic Temple has a list of legal restrictions on abortion that it finds objectionable: they range from ultrasound tests that allow the mother to hear the heartbeat of her baby to mandatory waiting periods. They also seek to undermine crisis pregnancy centers. So zealous are the Satanists in their quest for abortion rights that they oppose burial rights for the remains of children who have been aborted. To say they love abortion is hardly a stretch.

Donohue decided to engage The Satanic Temple on this issue.

Here is the email exchange:

Q: “I’m curious. Why is abortion such a big issue for Satanists?” [Nov. 13]

A: “It isn’t abortion per se, it is personal freedom.” [Nov. 13]

Q: “But if the personal freedom of a woman to have an abortion results in the wholesale denial of personal freedom for her

baby, how is that a victory for liberty?" [Nov. 15]

A: "Because it isn't a baby." [Nov. 15]

So there you have it. A pregnant woman who, unless interrupted naturally or unnaturally, will give birth to a baby is not carrying a baby.

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## STEPHEN HAWKING'S SIMPLISTIC ATHEISM

*Brief Answers to Big Questions* is Stephen Hawking's last book. His family finished the manuscript that he started, launching the book six months after the famous physicist died. The media hullabaloo over the book centers mostly on his professed atheism. CNN shouted Hawking's conclusion, "There is no God," calling it a "bombshell."

It is hardly a "bombshell" to learn that a celebrated atheist was an atheist. Hawking never declared himself a religious man, though his atheism was always shaky. Just last year, in a book about him by Kitty Ferguson, he was asked why there is a universe. "If I knew that," he answered, "then I would know everything important." He added, "then we would know the mind of God."

Now we are told that in his new book, at the end of his life, he was more sure of his atheist convictions. "Do I have faith? We are each free to believe what we want," Hawking said, "and it's my view that the simplest explanation is that there is no God...No one created the universe and no one directs our fate. This leads to a profound realisation: there is probably no heaven and afterlife either." Probably. Which means there may

be.

Why did Hawking hedge? And why would a brilliant man who supposedly understands elements of the universe that are too complex and difficult for most of us to understand settle the question of God's existence by choosing "the simplest explanation" available?

Would it not be just as simple to adopt Pascal's answer to the wager he proffered? The wager entailed the consequences of believing in God versus not believing. The 17th century French philosopher said it was wiser to err on the side of caution. "If you gain, you gain all; if you lose, you lose nothing."

A popular reconstruction of Pascal's wager goes like this: "If I believe in God and life after death and you do not, and if there is no God, we both lose when we die. However, if there is a God, you still lose and I gain everything."

This is clearly one of the "simplest" alternatives to Hawking's position. It also has the merit of being more persuasive—to lose the wager is to lose it all.

It is fascinating to learn that while Hawking cannot conceive of a personal God, and doubts there is life after death, he believes in life in outer space. In *Brief Answers to Big Questions*, he confesses his belief in aliens. Great. But for a guy who insists on scientific evidence for everything else, where is the proof?

Why would Hawking believe in aliens? In the book by Ferguson, he says, "We are such insignificant creatures on a minor planet of a very average star in the outer suburbs of one of a hundred thousand million galaxies." He is *entitled* to believe that human beings are "insignificant creatures," but he has no empirical evidence to support it.

It would have helped had Hawking identified who the significant creatures are and where they live. But he never

did. More important, why is it rational for him to believe in aliens but irrational for us to believe in God?

Where Hawking fails, as do all atheists, is in responding to the central issue involving the origin of the universe. Saint John Paul II said it best. "Every scientific hypothesis about the origin of the world, such as the one that says that there is a basic atom from which the whole of the physical universe is derived," he said in a 1981 Vatican conference on cosmology, "leaves unanswered the problem concerning the beginning of the universe. By itself, science cannot resolve this problem...."

How much of Hawking's atheism was a function of his disability (he suffered from Lou Gehrig's disease for most of his adult life) is uncertain, but in his last book he makes this an issue. "For centuries," he said, "it was believed that disabled people like me were living under a curse that was inflicted by God. I prefer to think that everything can be explained another way, by the laws of nature."

It is true that in the ancient world it was believed that the disabled must have done something wrong to merit their condition. But Hawking should have updated his readings.

Jesus healed the sick, the blind, the lame—everyone in need of help—and the religion he founded does not abandon the disabled. On the contrary, it tends to their suffering. Christians have had a phenomenal record treating the handicapped of every malady, mental and physical alike. So to invoke centuries-old beliefs (many born of paganism for that matter) as a way of indicting religion today is simply wrong.

Christians believe in mysteries, and so did Hawking, albeit of a different kind. Pascal believed in mysteries as well, but he was much more rational than Hawking.

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# PHONY OUTCRY AT NBC OVER MEGYN KELLY

Megyn Kelly was obviously not dropped by NBC because all the executives and hosts who work there are opposed to bigotry. In fact, many of them like it. Indeed, they have been promoting it for decades.

But the tolerant ones are not equal opportunity bigots. They are careful not to offend African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, illegal aliens, Indians, Jews, Muslims, homosexuals, et al. But when it comes to priests, NBC loves to make sweeping condemnations against them, feeding every negative stereotype there is.

No other demographic group is relentlessly treated with derision, mocked in ways that range from below the belt to the positively obscene. Here is a small sample.

Let's start with Al Roker. He called Kelly's "blackface" remarks "ignorant and racist."

In 2000, Roker had a book published about parenting, Don't Make Me Stop This Car. He made the rounds on TV shows saying that his wife used a fertility drug, perganol, one he claimed was made by a company that was a subsidiary of the Vatican.

Before getting to his "joke," it should be known that the weatherman had his facts wrong: Serono, the fertility-drug maker, was never a subsidiary of the Vatican. At one time, the Vatican owned shares in the company, but it sold them in 1970, thirty years before Roker's book was published.

More to the point, on June 16, 2000, Roker told Larry King

that perganol is extracted from a hormone, FHS, which he contended was obtained from the urine of “menopausal nuns” who live in the Vatican [note: it was actually collected from 110,000 postmenopausal women volunteers in Europe and Latin America]. He told King that the drug was “expensive stuff,” adding that “it was cheaper to adopt a nun, you know, and just have her pee in a cup.” Roker made similar cracks on other shows.

Kelly never made a cheap joke about blacks. But Roker did about nuns. Yet she is the “ignorant” bigot, not him.

Jay Leno made a career out of bashing priests. His “jokes” are too numerous to recount here, but here are a few examples.

A news story about a priest who stole church money for male escorts led Leno to quip, “Why buy the escort when the altar boys are free?” [July 7, 2010]

When told that a priest was calling for a boycott, Leno said, “Well, maybe he was just calling for a boy on a cot.” [May 14, 2010]

In his monologue, Leno commented, “And according to a New York Times poll, 54% of people feel that the Vatican is out of touch with Catholics. The other 46% are young Catholics who feel they’re way too much in touch. Way too much in touch.” [May 10, 2010]

Here’s another monologue remark. “According to a new report on teenage sex by researchers, 4% of teenagers lost their virginity in a car, and 56% lost it in their homes. When they heard this, child development experts said it might help if teenagers talked to someone like their teacher or a priest, which is how the other 40% lost it.” [February 26, 2008]

Here’s a really sick one. “In fact this Harry Potter book is so popular a lot of L.A. priests are now using it as bait.” [July 23, 2007]

This is another gem. Leno discusses a priest who accidentally drove his car into a restaurant. "Thank God it was not Chuck E. Cheese." [June 21, 2007]

This one is hard to beat. Leno comments on a news story about the bishops holding a meeting at the Fairmont Hotel in Dallas. "They wanted to hold it at the Ramada Inn because at Ramadas, the kids stay free." [June 17, 2002]

Many more of Leno's "jokes" could be listed, but this suffices to make the point: NBC adored his bigotry, cheering him on as he portrayed all priests as pedophiles. [Fact: Less than 5% of molesting priests were pedophiles—most were homosexuals—but NBC executives do not want to go there. They are very protective of homosexuals.]

Seth Meyers went beyond Leno by trashing the Eucharist. In one egregious instance, he stuffed his mouth with what he pretended was the Communion wafer, mocking Catholics at the same time. [October 29, 2014]

Meyers said that a Spanish hotel, inspired by Fifty Shades of Grey, was delaying its opening because it was too close to a Catholic church. "We don't want to be next to all those creepy perverts," he said. [August 6, 2014]

Recently, Meyers "joked" with one of his writers, Jenny Hagel, saying, "The Vatican recently refused to host an international women's day conference because one of the speakers was a lesbian." Hagel responded, "...and because they're too busy hosting a 2000-year-long pedophile convention." [October 4, 2018]

NBC's new show, "You, Me and the Apocalypse," wasted no time attacking priests this year. The character, Father Jude, played devil's advocate for priests being considered for sainthood. He said, "My job is to prove they felt up kids." [February 1, 2018]

To this could be added obscene portrayals of Catholic priests on shows such as “Law and Order,” “The Blacklist,” and “Committed” (it defiled the Eucharist). Then there are the sick remarks made on MSNBC by the likes of Keith Olbermann and Lawrence O’Donnell.

*NBC executives should be honest and admit that they were looking for a way to get rid of Kelly and seized upon her “blackface” Halloween story to do so. They should also admit that they lie when they say they are opposed to bigotry in all of its manifestations. They clearly are not.*

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## **IRELAND’S “MASS GRAVE” HOAX REVISITED**

The “mass grave” hoax is back. The Irish government is planning to exhume the remains of babies allegedly buried in a mass grave in Tuam, Ireland. According to the *New York Times*, Ireland’s Minister for Children, Katherine Zappone, is leading this campaign. The so-called mass grave is on the grounds of the Bon Secours Mother and Baby Home in the County Galway town of Tuam.

The *Times* reports that this story began in 2014 when “a local amateur historian, Catherine Corless, said she had found death certificates for 796 children who died in the home from 1925 to 1961—but whose burial places were not officially recorded.”

There are several factual errors in this news story by Ed O’Loughlin. He has a history of distorting the record.

Earlier this year O’Loughlin referred to Corless as a “dogged local historian” who made headline news when “she published



evidence" that nearly 800 children had died in the Tuam home, and that the remains of "some" were found in the septic tank. (Our emphasis.)

As Bill Donohue has noted several times before, the "mass grave" story is a cruel myth promoted by those whose agenda it is to smear the Catholic Church.

The myth began when Corless published a 2012 article titled, "The Home," in the Journal of the Old Tuam Society. In it, Corless made no mention of any "mass grave." If anything, she offered evidence that contradicts what she later claimed.

Here is what Corless said: "A few local boys [in 1975] came upon a sort of crypt in the ground, and on peering in they saw several small skulls." She mentioned there was a "little graveyard." That is not the makings of a mass grave.

The primary source for her "mass grave" thesis is Barry Sweeney. When he was 10, he and a friend stumbled on a hole with skeletons in it. In 2014, he was asked by the *Irish Times* to comment on Corless' claim that there are "800 skeletons down that hole." He said, "Nothing like that." How many? "About 20," he said. He later told the New York Times there were "maybe 15 to 20 small skeletons." Is O'Loughlin aware of this? It was printed in the newspaper that employs him.

Corless herself admitted in 2014 that she learned from local residents that the Tuam graveyard outside the Home was dotted with "tiny markers there." There were "bits of stones left to indicate graves." Those "tiny markers" suggest this was a cillin graveyard, or a graveyard for children. A "mass grave" is not dotted with "tiny markers" or "bits of stones." Yet Corless has been able to get away with these contradictory explanations.

In a 2014 news story by Douglas Dalby of the *New York Times*, he says of Corless' account that she "*surmised* that the children's bodies were interred in a septic tank behind the

home.” (Our italic.) His verb is accurate. To surmise is to guess—it is proof of nothing.

As for Corless, she is neither an “amateur historian” nor a “local historian.” She is not a historian—local, regional, or national. She doesn’t even have an undergraduate degree. She is a typist.

Furthermore, last year, when Zappone released her second Interim Report on this subject, she never used the term “mass grave,” or implied anything like it. So why is she so dogged about this issue?

She now says it is important to “demonstrate our compassion and commitment to work towards justice, truth and healing for what happened in our past and, most especially, for those who were previously abandoned.” She should instead worry about the wellbeing of children in Ireland today, beginning with child abuse in the womb.

Zappone’s alleged interest in protecting the welfare of children would be more persuasive were it not for her rabid pro-abortion record. She is an activist, not a health minister. “Married” to her girlfriend, an ex-nun, she is part of the effort to besmirch the historical record of Irish nuns. Yet were it not for the care these nuns gave to abandoned children, they would have died in the street. *No one else wanted them in the early part of the last century.*

Just as in the United States, pro-abortion and pro-gay activists seek to discredit the Catholic Church, thus making it easier for them to succeed. To accomplish their agenda, they are prepared to lie about the Church’s past so as to marginalize its voice today.

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# LET ACTIVISTS DIG IRELAND'S "MASS GRAVE"

Catherine Corless is the typist responsible for floating the "mass grave" hoax in Tuam, Ireland. She is back in the news, this time for blasting the Bon Secours sisters for not forking up enough cash to pay for an exhumation of an alleged "mass grave" of children's remains she says exists on the grounds of the sisters' Mother and Baby Home. Ireland's Minister of Children, Katherine Zappone, is behind the effort to see what is buried in the grounds.

The nuns have offered to pay almost \$3 million toward the digging, an amount that Corless predictably says is too "meager." She says the sisters have "private hospitals all over the place" and should pay much more.

In other words, the typist wants to drain money from the sick and dying today to pay for her wild goose chase about an incident that allegedly took place a hundred years ago.

The nuns should pay nothing. Let the activists like Corless in Ireland, and the Church-bashing activists in the United States like Irish Central, pony up first, then rip the Irish taxpayers for the remainder.

For two reasons, this will never happen: the nuns are too humble, and those who hate the Church—they hate its teachings on sexuality—simply want to soak it. These people are not motivated by justice for children—they are motivated by revenge. That is a sin, though in their eyes it is a virtue.

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# CATHOLIC LEAGUE AMICUS CURIAE BRIEF

*The following is an excerpt from the motion to accept the Catholic League amicus curiae brief. The league was represented by Kathleen Gallagher, Devin Winklosky, and Russell Giancola of Porter Wright Morris & Arthur LLP from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.*

The Catholic League has a unique perspective on the issues in this case and its brief would assist the Court in its consideration of the pending questions. Specifically, the Catholic League request to file the accompanying *amicus* brief to address (a) the damage the grand jury reports may cause to specifically-targeted religious institutions and their members, (b) the potential for the misuse of the grand jury process by government officials with unchecked executive power, and (c) the need for reform to Pennsylvania's investigating grand jury process.

This case presents issues of vital, immediate, and increasing concern to the Roman Catholic Community. In 2016, the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General convened the Fortieth Statewide Investigating Grand Jury to examine alleged sexual abuse of minors by clergy in the Catholic Church in six dioceses across the Commonwealth. Notably, the Attorney General excluded all other religions, private non-sectarian institutions, and public sector entities from the Grand Jury's inquiry, choosing to single-out and focus solely on the Roman Catholic Church.

Unquestionably, child sex abuse should be investigated and rooted out; the question remains, however, as to why the use of the Statewide Investigating Grand Jury – a formidable government tool with broad powers – was deliberately limited to investigating only Catholic entities. Such government

sanctioned religion-based targeting is alarming for many reasons, foremost because it violates the rights of Catholics under the Pennsylvania and United States Constitutions.

On August 14, 2018, an Interim-Redacted Report ("Report") of the Grand Jury was issued. The recent and dramatic public release of this Report, the circumstances surrounding its release, the subsequent extra-judicial statements of the Attorney General publicly condemning the Catholic Church and named individuals, and the resulting intense and continuing negative media attention targeted exclusively at the Catholic Church raise significant issues directly affecting the reputation of the Catholic Church and its members.

Even before the Report was released, the Attorney General knew of flaws in the Report, but chose to ignore them, opting instead for sensationalism at the expense of innocent citizens. For example, the Report states that "[i]n the late 1980s, the victim confronted [Charles J.] Ruffenach regarding the abuse. Ruffenach denied the allegations." This statement is demonstrably false as Charles J. Ruffenach died in 1980.

Likewise, the Report contains an allegation of abuse by George Wilt that purportedly occurred in 1961 at St. Bernard Parish. This allegation, too, is false – Wilt was not assigned to St. Bernard until 1968. The Report also contains an allegation of abuse claiming to have occurred over 65 years ago based on nothing more than a hearsay phone call from a victim's spouse to the Diocese of Greensburg. The caller could not recall the priest's name and could only provide the name of the parish. Based solely on a list of priests assigned to the parish around the time, and without further explanation or investigation, the Report names two priests as perpetrators. The Attorney General took no action to verify the veracity of these allegations; he simply presumed that the false or grossly speculative accounts were true and publicized them accordingly.

One may forgive an investigative mistake by the grand jury of lay people, but the refusal by the Attorney General to acknowledge or correct critical errors affecting the truthfulness of a grand jury report and the reputations of innocent citizens is highly problematic. Such conduct constitutes either wanton indifference to justice or deliberate tactics calculated to malign the Catholic Church.

The Attorney General was alerted to additional flaws in the Report, but chose to ignore them as well. At least one passage claimed that Cardinal Wuerl wrote the phrase “circle of secrecy” on a document, but this was demonstrably false and the apparent product of poor investigative and analytical work: it was not Cardinal Wuerl’s handwriting. This misattribution was twice brought to the attention of both the Senior Deputy Attorney General and the Attorney General before the Report’s release. But they refused to correct the record. Again, the refusal by the Attorney General to acknowledge or correct a critical error specifically brought to his attention demonstrates his goal was not to produce an accurate report but a negative one. He took an oath to uphold the Constitution but has ignored its protections based on context.

These regrettable circumstances are compounded by the Attorney’s General’s relentless public statements targeting the Catholic faith. At his carefully orchestrated press conference following its release, Attorney General Shapiro stated he would help provide a “full picture of what transpired in the shadows over the decades” and asserted that the Catholic Church had a “pattern” of conduct that entailed “abuse, den[ial] and cover-up.” He stated to the public that “Church leaders in every one of the six dioceses handled complaints of sexual abuse the same way for decades – by covering it up.” The Attorney General has also tweeted about a “systematic cover-up” of abuse and misconduct by “leaders of the Church.”

Later, on separate occasions, the Attorney General publicly

claimed that both Cardinal Wuerl and Bishop Zubik were “not telling the truth,” although the basis for this claim is unknown; whether it is his personal opinion or the opinion of grand jurors, neither are established fact. He also accused Bishop Trautman of knowing about and covering up the abuse by a priest who has been criminally charged, but the Commonwealth’s own presentment against the alleged offender makes clear that Bishop Trautman had no knowledge of any abuse while the accused priest was in ministry.

These statements are not presented as the opinion of lay jurors. Instead, Attorney General Shapiro has presented them as a reliable and accurate portrayal of the facts and conclusive determinations of guilt, despite his knowledge of their potential inaccuracy and questionable veracity. Indeed, the entire Report has been treated as fact, directly contrary to the Attorney General’s characterization of its content as “lay opinions” to this Court.

The Attorney General’s public statements about the content of the Report apply a different and unfair standard of justice to members of the Catholic clergy, encouraging the public and the media to rush to judgment and accept his accusations and conclusions without more. As a result, they have been convicted of crimes for which they have never been charged and without the vital Constitutional safeguards afforded other citizens—without a fair trial, without jurors hearing evidence or defenses to the allegations lodged against them, and without facts being proved beyond a reasonable doubt.

Not one of the accused priests had the chance to test the veracity of these allegations before the Report’s release, yet due to the Attorney General’s comments, all of them were condemned in the eyes of the public. Some members attempted to rectify this problem through appropriate legal means, but prior to and following the release of the Report, Attorney General Shapiro publicly shamed and intimidated individual Catholics and their lawyers who were seeking to litigate their

rights under the Pennsylvania and United States Constitutions. Such tactics are inappropriate for any officer of the court, but are particularly troubling coming from the chief law enforcement officer of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This attack on due process and the rule of law should be of grave concern to this Court and all citizens of Pennsylvania.

The Report, and especially the extra-judicial statements of the Attorney General regarding the Report, constitute a targeted public condemnation of the Catholic Church and countless named individuals. And the Catholic Church has faced profound negative consequences as a result: Protesters have organized around Catholic churches and clergy members' homes; clergy have been physically attacked; a school that bore a distinguished Cardinal's name has been defaced; national media outlets have decried the Catholic Church and its clergy members, calling for their resignations; and other states' attorneys-general are launching similar Catholic-targeted investigations, including New York, New Jersey, Illinois, Missouri, Nebraska, and New Mexico.

All of these consequences rely on one premise, the presumed guilt of those identified in the Report. A premise not proven, but promoted by the Attorney General. And all of this, in turn, is the result of the flawed Statewide Investigating Grand Jury process that is currently before this Court.

The process is flawed in numerous ways. Among other things, the grand jury was convened outside of the applicable statutory parameters; the Report was proffered not only as an investigative tool, but explicitly as a form of "recourse;" and the Report was publicized absent any due process. Most states do not allow grand jury reports to be publicized without some minimal due process to verify the report's veracity. Ultimately, the current process facilitates convictions without indictments.

This flawed process provides the Office of Attorney General



and Attorney General Josh Shapiro free reign to continue to present the Report as a conclusive adjudication of facts. With the grand jury dissolved and the supervising judge dismissed, there is no check on the Attorney General's conduct. Without oversight, the Attorney General can continue his media campaign singling out and degrading the Catholic Church without constraint. As a result of this faulty system, the underlying court orders in the pending cases fail to constrain the proper use of the Report, enabling an ongoing violation of the Catholic Church's constitutional right to reputation.

The Catholic League seeks to assist this Court by highlighting the significant adverse impact of the grand jury process, the release of the Report, and the related conduct of the Pennsylvania Attorney General to the fundamental rights of Catholics in Pennsylvania. The Attorney General has intentionally singled-out the Catholic Church and made repeated inflammatory and misleading official public statements regarding the Catholic Church, and his misuse of the Report has had a profound negative impact on the Catholic Church's constitutionally protected right to reputation. At issue is whether the Commonwealth may lawfully use investigating grand juries in such a manner to target and disparage a particular religious organization.

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## **PA ATTORNEY GENERAL'S DEFENSIVE REACTION**

On September 21, attorneys for the Catholic League filed an Application for Leave *amicus curiae* brief in the Western District of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania regarding the political machinations of the state's attorney general, Josh

Shapiro. His decision to target the Catholic Church in a grand jury investigation of the sexual abuse of minors—giving a pass to all other private and public institutions—warranted the filing. Shapiro's defensive reaction to the brief is problematic on several levels.

An article in the September 23 edition of *The Morning Call*, an Allentown newspaper, says that Shapiro's spokesman, Joe Grace, is contending that the attorney general's office investigates "child sexual abuse and all sexual abuse wherever they find it in Pennsylvania, without fear or favor."

In fact, Shapiro's office has not conducted a grand jury investigation of the clergy of any religion, save for Catholicism. Nor has he launched a probe of the public schools. No one can maintain that sexual abuse does not exist in any of these entities.

According to the reporter, Christine Schiavo, the attorney general's office argues that it has filed charges against "a police chief, a deputy coroner and seven Lackawanna County prison guards, and has secured the convictions of Penn State officials" related to the investigation of Jerry Sandusky, the former assistant football coach who was convicted in 2012 for sexually assaulting 10 boys.

In any of these cases, did Shapiro tell the defendants they should give up their rights to defend themselves? Did he say that their right to present a defense was evidence of their guilt or an attempt to cover-up their guilt? Or does he just tell this to priests? Why were there no press conferences attendant to any of these cases? Why does he save his grandstanding for the Catholic community?

Regarding the prison guards, why didn't Shapiro launch a grand jury investigation into every prison in the state? How could he possibly know if other prison guards were assaulting prisoners without a probe? He didn't have to go after six

Catholic dioceses because of an offender at one Catholic high school, but he did. Why? Why the double standard?

The Penn State University matter is laughable. The grand jury investigation of Penn State began in 2009 under Attorney General Tom Corbett. It concluded on November 4, 2011 when the report was released. Shapiro had nothing to do with any of it—he took office on January 17, 2017.

If this is the best Shapiro can do, it is a pitiful showing. This is hardly the end of this issue. Bet on it.

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## **REP. ROZZI'S CONFLICT OF INTEREST?**

Pennsylvania State Rep. Mark Rozzi should recuse himself or abstain from voting on any future bills that would amend the statute of limitations on the sexual abuse of minors.

Rozzi claims he was sexually abused by a priest, now deceased (whom he never reported or told anyone about at the time) when he was 13. If Pennsylvania law is revised to allow a two-year lookback so that alleged victims can resurrect old claims, Rozzi would be in a position to reap a substantial paycheck.

Now it may be that Rozzi's motives are pure and his efforts at amending the law have nothing to do with ingratiating himself. Still, there is the appearance of impropriety, and that alone demands that he not participate in any more of these proceedings.

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# OPEN LETTER TO PENNSYLVANIA SENATORS

Dear Pennsylvania Senators:

Now that the House has passed a bill providing a two-year window for alleged victims of sexual abuse to come forward, it is time the Senate amend it to be inclusive. The current bill discriminates against private institutions such as the Catholic Church.

The amendment by Rep. Mark Rozzi is an outrage. It codifies inequality and injustice by allowing for disparate treatment of the public schools. If the standard of conduct for waivers of sovereign immunity is gross negligence, why is the bar set lower for Catholic schools? If the public schools are entitled to a cap on damages, why are Catholic schools not afforded the same treatment? Is the goal to bankrupt Catholic schools, while protecting public schools?

Jenn Kocher, spokeswoman for Sen. Majority Leader Jake Corman, astutely notes that a child abused by a doctor in the public sector would have to prove a higher degree of negligence than would a child abused by a doctor in private practice. "We believe abuse is abuse," she said. So do we. There are no moral grounds for disparate treatment.

Please amend the bill to make it inclusive, in every aspect, of public entities. No institution should receive preferential treatment.

Sincerely,  
William A. Donohue, Ph.D.  
President

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# POPE PRAISES CARDINAL WUERL

**Bill Donohue**

Pope Francis has accepted the resignation of Cardinal Donald Wuerl, the Archbishop of Washington. Ever since a Pennsylvania grand jury report was released in August, Wuerl has been under considerable pressure to resign.

In his letter accepting Wuerl's resignation, Pope Francis commented favorably on his service to the Church. "You have sufficient elements to 'justify' your actions and distinguish between what it means to cover up crimes or not to deal with problems, and to commit some mistakes. However, your nobility has led you not to choose this way of defense. Of this, I am proud and thank you."

Every word of the pope's statement is true.

When Cardinal Wuerl was Bishop of Pittsburgh, he was among the first bishops in the nation to institute a Diocesan Review Board to assess charges of clergy sexual abuse. In his 18 year tenure there, 19 new cases of alleged abuse were brought to his attention, and in 18 of them he quickly dismissed the priest from ministry.

Soon after being named Bishop of Pittsburgh, Wuerl removed Father Anthony Cippola from ministry. Cippola appealed to the Congregation for Clergy, but it sided with Wuerl. The accused priest then appealed to the Vatican Signatura, the Vatican's high court. He won. But then Wuerl stunned Rome by refusing to accept him back in ministry. On a second review, the Signatura agreed with Wuerl's assessment and Cippola was laicized.

What Wuerl did took courage, but he gets little credit for it.

Instead, his critics focus on some aspects of the Pennsylvania grand jury report.

Like all newly appointed bishops, Wuerl inherited some cases that had not been fully adjudicated. Taking the advice of therapists who said they had successfully treated the offending priests, Wuerl gave them a second chance. In a few cases, it is obvious that the treatment failed, thus marring Wuerl's record. As always, no one blamed the "experts" for overselling their expertise.

This explains why the Holy Father said there were "sufficient elements to 'justify'" Wuerl's decisions. The pope is also right to note that Wuerl did not "cover up crimes" or refuse to "deal with problems." That view is supported by Nicholas Cafardi, who sat on the bishops' first National Review Board in 2002.

Cafardi, who is a Pittsburgh civil and canon lawyer, said that during Wuerl's time in Pittsburgh, he "never failed to react to a complaint of child sexual abuse." The same is true of Cardinal Wuerl's 12 year tenure as Archbishop of Washington.

Wuerl's spokesman, Edward McFadden, says that "not a single priest of the Archdiocese of Washington has faced a credible claim, and there is not today a single priest in ministry in Washington who has faced a credible claim."

Some argue that Cardinal Wuerl should be held accountable for the behavior of Theodore McCarrick, his predecessor in Washington. But Wuerl had no authority over McCarrick when he was abusing seminarians in New Jersey. Moreover, to blame Wuerl for McCarrick's refusal to abide by restrictions placed on him by Rome is similarly misplaced: No one at the Vatican ever asked Wuerl to be McCarrick's policeman.

The pressure on Wuerl to resign came partly from the left, but mostly from the right. Right-wing activist groups, along with normally level-headed conservative Catholic writers and

pundits—this includes some priests—have led the way. The former are vindictive and lie with abandon. The latter approach this issue the way some in the “#MeToo” movement have acted.

We just went through an ugly chapter in American history where totally unsubstantiated charges were made against Brett Kavanaugh. Yet the allegations are believed by millions of Americans, all of whom are angry about women being abused. So is every normal American. But when anger becomes a substitute for reason, it is easy to lump allegations together, tying them into a knot of supposed truths. This is a gross injustice. Indeed, it is pernicious.

This is what Wuerl has had to endure as well. He has become the scapegoat for Catholic conservative purists who are angry about the abuse scandal. Others are angry as well, but they do not approach this subject with childlike innocence. To be explicit, those who are familiar with the complex issues that the bishops have faced, and who do not insist that today's standards be used to judge decades-old cases, have a more mature understanding of the problem.

This is not an excuse for bishops who have acted irresponsibly from beginning to end. But most of the really bad apples, whether they be enabling bishops or molesting priests, are either dead or out of ministry. It's about time everyone acknowledged this verity and stopped looking for any bishop to scalp.

These carping conservatives love to take wide swipes at the hierarchy, patting themselves on the back for being so right. But purists are a problem in all institutions, and it matters not a whit what side they are on. Mr. Clean exists only in their heads.

Kudos to Pope Francis for being so kind to Cardinal Donald Wuerl.