

POPE FRANCIS, R.I.P.

William A. Donohue

Catholics around the globe are mourning the death of Pope Francis. He touched millions of the faithful, including non-Catholics and non-believers.

When Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio assumed the role of Pope Francis, his down-to-earth style captured the plaudits of Catholics and non-Catholics alike. It was his unscripted, and often spontaneous, manner of speaking that made him so authentic and appealing.

It also got him into trouble, especially when speaking to reporters aboard the papal plane following a trip overseas. On many occasions, following a chat with journalists, the Vatican press corps had to clarify what he meant. But no one criticized him for not speaking from the heart.

Unfortunately, the end of his pontificate was troubling. His approval of a Vatican document that allows priests to bless same-sex couples was met with widespread criticism. Indeed, it was so divisive that it seriously undid much of the goodwill he previously earned.

For the most part, the media treated Francis with kindness, though they did not always accurately report what he said. For example, his much publicized remark, "Who am I to judge?", was misquoted by the media. What he actually said was, "Who am I to judge him?" That is not a small difference. He made his comment in response to a question about a particular priest who had been accused of a sexual impropriety; it was not an endorsement of homosexuality.

It spoke well for Pope Francis that he rejected the practice of publishing the names of accused priests, something that is unheard of in every other institution. Regrettably, his

inability to see through the deceitful character of his friend and fellow Jesuit, Bishop Gustavo Zanchetta—he was sentenced to prison by an Argentine court for sexually abusing seminarians—revealed a serious blind spot, one that earlier emerged in his dealings with priestly sexual abuse in Chile. Zanchetta is still a bishop.

More recently, Pope Francis' passivity in dealing with accused serial predator Fr. Marko Rupnik, another friend and fellow Jesuit—he was charged with grave, and indeed sacrilegious, sexual offenses—was another serious error in judgment. Rupnik was finally dismissed from the Society of Jesus in June 2023. After he was excommunicated, he was reinstated! Inexplicably, the pope allowed him to remain a priest in good standing. In fact, he kept a picture of him in his office.

Worse, Pope Francis chose as one of his most senior advisors, Luxembourg Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich, a man whose passion for gay rights led him to say that the Church's opposition to gay sex is outdated. The pope knew this yet appointed him the "relator general" of the Church's "Synod on Synodality." The Synod, itself, proved to be a source of great consternation among many bishops.

The pope's strong defense of the rights of the unborn, and his condemnation of gender ideology, sat well with conservative Catholics. But they were not happy when he refused to honor questions regarding his apostolic exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia*; prominent prelates sought clarification on some doctrinal issues. The Holy Father was clearly more critical of conservative bishops than he was their liberal counterparts.

Even more significant, his attack on traditionalists, especially those who favor the Latin Mass, were frequent and lacking in nuance. Yet at the same time, Francis welcomed known Catholic dissidents, men and women who were previously condemned by officials in Rome and the United States for sabotaging the Church. His embrace of Sister Jeannine Gramick

was the most conspicuous example of this phenomenon.

Pope Francis often spoke about the need to decentralize the Church, yet he did more to centralize the power of the papacy than any of his predecessors in modern times.

He took away the right of bishops to approve new religious communities in their dioceses and changed canon law so he could fire bishops. His decision to essentially take control of the Pontifical Academy of Life, and the former John Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family, angered many in the U.S. He also took control of the Sovereign Order of Malta, ordering a new constitution and new senior officers.

On foreign affairs, Francis took a soft and conciliatory approach to the Chinese Communist regime, which sought to crush the Catholic Church. The arrest of Cardinal Zen, and the silence with which the Vatican greeted the news, did not sit well with many Catholics.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine was condemned by the Vatican, though the Holy Father's statement blaming NATO, and not Putin, was seen as an example of his alleged anti-Western, and anti-American, bias.

In November 2024, the pope stunned Catholics and Jews alike when he called for an international probe of Israel's decision to defend itself from Hamas terrorists; he inquired whether this constituted genocide.

The pope admitted that as a young man the person who did more to shape his thinking about politics was a communist atheist, Esther Ballestrino. She introduced him to prominent communist publications.

Pope Francis made his mark on the Church, much as John Paul II and Benedict XVI did. It remains to be seen whether his successor will hew more closely to his stance than that of his predecessors. May he rest in peace.

THE QUEERING OF AMERICA

William A. Donohue

On his first day in office, President Trump issued an executive order declaring there are only “two sexes, male and female.” It says a lot about our society that this even has to be said. This same phenomenon—denying the existence of human nature and Biology 101—exists throughout western civilization. At bottom, this is a war against God. It is a war the deniers cannot win.

Those promoting the fiction that there are an endless number of sexes, which they incorrectly call genders, are overwhelmingly rich, white, liberal, secularists with postgraduate degrees. No wonder it is their children who are the most likely to call themselves something other than male or female. (For more on this, see my book, *Cultural Meltdown: The Secular Roots of Our Moral Crisis*.)

The latest Gallup poll shows that 9.3 percent of Americans now identify as “LGBTQ+” persons. This is in stark contrast to what the Trump administration is doing. The National Park Service recently changed the Stonewall National Museum website to only refer to lesbian, gay and bisexual, hence the designation LGB.

This upset Kathy Hochul, the Catholic governor of New York; she said it was “cruel.” No matter, transgender people have been eliminated. To be frank, they never existed (sex is binary). Also, the “Q” is redundant and the “+” is plain dumb.

Gallup tells us that 1.4 percent of Americans say they are lesbians; 2.0 percent claim to be gay; 5.2 percent identify as bisexual; 1.3 percent believe they are transgender; there are

a few other odd categories. Among the so-called LGBTQ+ population, Gallup found that 56.3 percent identify as bisexual and 13.9 percent believe they are transgender.

Who are the most likely to claim they belong to this population? Young people, girls, Democrats, liberals, and those who live in cities or the suburbs. Why is this not surprising?

In the 12 years that Gallup has been tracking this issue, those who identify as "LGBTQ+" has tripled. This suggests that this phenomenon has everything to do with culture, not biology. To put it simply, we are witnessing the queering of America.

If anyone doubts that this is a culturally induced condition, consider that young people in California are 40 percent more likely to identify as transgender than the national average. It is not a coincidence that California is one of the most liberal states in the nation.

Transgenderism is flowering in colleges for the same reason. Liberal professors, most of whom are militant secularists, are indoctrinating their students with this mind-altering poison. At Brown University, four in ten students (38 percent) say they are "LGBTQI+." The "I" stands for intersex, which is another fiction. While it is true that there is a rare disorder that allows for both male and female genitalia, all of those people are intrinsically male or female—there is no third form.

Between 2010 and 2023, the gay and lesbian population increased by 26 percent, and the percentage identifying as bisexual increased by 232 percent. Those identifying as "other sexual orientations" within the so-called LGBTQ population increased by almost 800 percent.

These people are in serious need of professional help, making the parents of prospective college students wonder whether

they should consider enrollment in a community college or a trade school. Why send your kid to an Ivy League school where he may come home at Thanksgiving giving thanks to his discovery that he is a girl?

Fortunately, the Trump administration is not putting up with this madness.

On February 19, The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued an official statement defining sex as an immutable biological classification of male or female. HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. explained, "This administration is bringing back common sense and restoring biological truth to the federal government. The prior administration's policy of trying to engineer gender ideology into every aspect of public life is over."

HHS defines a female to be "A person of the sex characterized by a reproductive system with the biological function of producing eggs (ova)." Accordingly, it defines woman to be "An adult human female." (Are you listening Ketanji Brown Jackson?) A male is defined as "A person of the sex characterized by a reproductive system with the biological function of producing sperm." Accordingly, it defines man as "An adult human male."

This may come as a shocker to the Washington Post—it published an incredibly irresponsible piece on the same day of the HHS ruling denying that sex is binary—but to most Americans not drugged with ideology it makes perfect sense. The newspaper continues with the fiction that "Sex is widely understood to refer to a label assigned at birth," when, in fact, it is simply recorded at birth. No one "assigns" our sex—it is determined exclusively by our father and can be detected in utero.

The queering of America serves no legitimate interest. It only serves to encourage the agenda of severely addleheaded men and women, as well as those who are profiting from them either

ideologically or financially.

CULTURAL CORRECTION LONG OVERDUE

William A. Donohue

Economists often note that the stock market occasionally goes into spasms, or sudden downturns that gets everyone nervous. But, they caution, such changes are often necessary: they amount to a market correction. Cultures change as well: wild swings of the pendulum typically abet a strong reaction.

We are now witnessing a cultural correction. But it is folly to think that all of those responsible for our cultural rot have gotten the memo. In other words, the Trump effect is real, but it would be foolish to overestimate the cultural correction.

It is gratifying to learn that those responsible for woke cultural ideas are on the defensive. DEI is now being panned in places few would have thought possible a year or two ago. Critical race theory is losing support, and elites are no longer lapping up to Black Lives Matter, a thoroughly discredited flash-in-the-pan entity. Compassion for those who entered the country illegally is now shifting to compassion for the victims of migrant criminal behavior. Those who succumbed to pressure from the Biden administration and engaged in censorship now regret doing so.

A New York Times/Ipsos poll released in February found that when Americans are asked what the Democrats stand for, most of them listed abortion, LGBTQ issues and climate change. The

survey also found that most people are concerned about bread and butter issues and migrants crashing our border, not the ones Democrats are excited about. In other words, the Dems are seriously out of touch with most Americans. Look for some to change their ways.

Are these changes genuine? Some are, but many are not. No matter, even unprincipled shifts that move the right way are worthy of some applause.

While it is true that many members of the ruling class—the senior decision-makers in government, corporations, the media, education, the entertainment industry, and the like—are rethinking their political preferences, many others are not. They are lying in wait. It would be more accurate to say that some elites are in retreat than it would be to conclude that they have turned over a new leaf.

The New York Times recently slung arrows at Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg for saying he is putting an end to censorial Facebook policies. The esteemed “newspaper of record” said his company suffers from “a fundamental hollowness at its core,” and went on to berate him for caving into Trump’s influence. The Times was not altogether wrong. It does suggest a less than principled stance, so there is an element of hollowness to Zuckerberg’s moral compass. But at least he is not tone deaf.

Can Trump change the culture? To some extent he already has. He played a major role in putting the final nails in the DEI coffin (diversity, equity and inclusion). He has also turned the entire transgender industry upside down, putting an end to the federal role in what is surely the greatest child abuse scandal in American history. Mutilating genitals, chemical castration, puberty blockers—this is a shameful chapter in the history of the medical profession.

Trump has even scored overseas, beckoning Hamas to release the

hostages. No sooner had he slapped Mexico with tariffs when our southern neighbor pledged to send 10,000 troops to seal our border. This is great news, but expectations of a glacial shift in the culture are wrongheaded.

It is true that culture affects every aspect of society, but it is also true that other sectors, such as the political and economic, affect the cultural landscape. Trump was elected in large part because the American people were fed up with excess: excessive inflation; excessive numbers of migrants crashing our border; excessive rights given to the accused and the convicted; excessive deference to the medical profession (e.g., Covid policies and transgenderism).

Trump can reverse some of these conditions, but the forces of resistance must not be discounted.

Most of those who work in higher education will do all they can to subvert Trump's agenda. The teachers unions who govern elementary and secondary education are not going to change their stripes. Neither will those who work in Hollywood. Many on Wall Street are not on his side—they gave lavishly to Harris. The mainstream media is almost as corrupt today as it was yesterday. Left-wing activist organizations will double down. A new survey found that 42 percent of federal government managers in Washington, D.C. intend to work against the Trump administration. And disdain for our Judeo-Christian heritage is deeply embedded in elite and radical quarters.

To be sure, there will be progress, and that is because of the pressure being exerted from the bottom up. It was the average Joe who voted for Trump, not the ruling class.

It behooves those of us who want to push the pendulum back to a state of normalcy to be vigilant, keeping a close eye on those who say they are turning over a new leaf. As for those who won't budge an inch, they need to be outed and defeated. We plan to do our part.

WE ARE WITNESSING A CULTURAL SHIFT

William A. Donohue

Cultures change, sometimes slowly, sometimes quickly. The changes are sometimes positive, sometimes negative, sometimes a little of both. The reasons why they change are multiple. In short, there is no such thing as a cultural template or a cultural iron law. They vary. That said, it appears we are in the throes of a cultural shift.

In the last century, we had two world wars and both brought about dramatic changes in the culture. After the Great War (as the first one was initially called), western nations witnessed relaxed social mores. The cabaret society was popular on both sides of the Atlantic: nightlife and entertainment, much of it risqué, brought relief after the war. Prohibition in the U.S. was resisted in urban centers, and was eventually repealed.

World War II saw a massive influx of women into government and private sector jobs. Racial integration of the armed forces proved to be a bellwether of things to come. From the mid-1940s to the mid-1960s, American society was marked by stability: there was virtually no inflation, marriages were strong and church-going was commonplace.

From the late 1960s to the early 1980s, the counterculture challenged traditional norms throughout society. Standards fell in school, boardrooms and bedrooms. The feminist movement, fueled by anger, was more revolutionary than reformist. Sexually transmitted diseases and drug use spiked. In short, promiscuity subverted the stability of the 1950s.

Two things happened in 1981 that represented a cultural shift: Ronald Reagan became president and AIDS was discovered. He was a voice of traditional morality and AIDS put a brake on sexual experimentation. A modicum of stability reigned.

The next shift occurred in the latter part of the 2000s. The Obama administration signaled a departure from the kinds of religion-friendly policies that marked previous administrations. Identity politics became all the rage. The Biden administration took this to another level, beginning with the selection of Kamala Harris as vice president.

The Biden-Harris team launched a massive attack on boundaries: inflation and the national debt soared; immigrants by the millions crashed our borders; crime exploded; the ruling class embraced gender ideology; and attacks on religion reached a new level.

The Trump landslide represents another cultural shift. He won not simply because the domestic and foreign policies of Biden-Harris were a proven failure. He won because the ruling class didn't settle for giving the cultural pendulum a gentle push—they gave it a wild swing.

Woke culture—the idea that traditional moral norms and values are inherently offensive—has created havoc in school, the workplace and in families. No social order can survive if its culture is under constant assault, and it is this reality that accounted for Trump's stunning victory. The American people threw down the gauntlet, seeking a return to normalcy.

After the election, the *New York Times* interviewed many Trump voters. One stuck out in my mind. A 52-year-old woman said she had never voted for a Republican before, but this time she did. She cited one major factor: her son isn't learning anything in school, and that is because his class is heavily populated with the children of illegal aliens who can't speak a lick of English. This was a direct consequence, she noted,

of the Biden-Harris policies.

The signs of a cultural shift are everywhere. Identity politics is being challenged in corporations and universities: both are pulling back on DEI standards (diversity, equity and inclusion). Mayors that allowed thugs to destroy their cities—in the name of protesting racial injustice—are cracking down. Schools that abandoned standards are reinstating them. Voters who approved resolutions to legalize hard drugs have rescinded them. The pushback against gender ideology is real and will continue. And our border will soon be secure again.

It's too bad it took pushing our culture to a crisis level before those who promoted these policies got a good slap in the face. Every policy that worked to undermine traditional mores was bound to fail. Even the village idiot knew that defunding the police would only generate more crime. The shame of it is that the village idiot proved to be smarter than those who unnecessarily created this mess—the mostly wealthy white secularists with post-graduate degrees.

This is a good time for the clergy and the laity to exercise their religious muscles and become reengaged in society. The culture is ripe for a return to commonsensical policies, the kind that imbue Catholic moral theology and social teachings. We don't need more imbecilic experimentations: we know what works and what doesn't.

This cultural shift will not proceed without resistance. Those responsible for sabotaging our society—and that is exactly what they did—occupy many important seats of power, and they will not go quietly into the night.

That's where we come in. No administration can effectively transform society without significant help from non-governmental sources. Our number-one goal is to defend and promote religious liberty, but to do this we must take on those who seek to undermine it. We're ready to roll.

REFLECTIONS ON THE ELECTION

William A. Donohue

Not surprisingly, the mainstream media were in disbelief over the results of the presidential election. That's because they live in an intellectual ghetto. Instead of just talking to each other, it would be so nice if they actually spent time talking to those who work in housekeeping, the cafeteria, maintenance and security.

Will they change now that they have been proven wrong? Not at all. They are hopelessly incapable of changing, though they love to say that the public has a hard time accepting change. Not so. They do.

Does money count in elections? Not as much as many think. Harris raised over \$1 billion and wound up \$20 million in debt in the final week. Trump spent half as much, over \$400 million. In the few weeks before the election, Bill Gates gave Harris \$50 million, and Michael Bloomberg followed with another \$50 million. George Soros topped them both.

Do celebrities matter? They may if they occasionally show up for a rally or fundraiser. But Harris went overboard, bringing in Oprah, Bruce Springsteen, Beyonce, Taylor Swift, Katy Perry, Jennifer Lopez et al. She also went on "Saturday Night Live" before the election. This actually hurt her. Why? She was already seen as a lightweight, the word-salad queen, so being surrounded by celebrities only fed the perception that she was not a serious person.

Why were so many of the polls wrong? Because most of them never corrected for the Trump supporters who simply won't speak to them. They don't trust them, and, importantly, they

know it is not popular in many circles to admit being for Trump.

The pollster that was the most accurate was J.L. Partners. Based in the U.S., it was founded by pollsters for the British Prime Minister; it published its results with the Daily Mail, a conservative U.K. publication. It was one of the few that got it right: it said in the run-up to the election that Trump had a 54 percent chance of winning. McLaughlin & Associates also did a good job.

Pollsters often ask the wrong questions, or they don't dig deep enough. For example, the media kept reporting that Trump's unfavorability rating was significantly higher than Harris'. On election day, Nate Silver, who runs an influential survey site, reported that Trump's unfavorability score was 8.6 points higher than his favorability score. For Harris, her unfavorable rating was 2.0 points higher than her favorable rating.

A more important question is how the public views the candidates on their leadership abilities and their ability to get things done. A month before the election, Gallup found that when it comes to who is a strong and decisive leader, Trump outscored Harris 59 percent to 48 percent. On their ability to get things done, Trump won 61-49. Exit polls on election day found that his numbers increased significantly on related measures.

In other words, an election is not a popularity contest. It is about issues and who is the most likely to govern effectively.

Billy Martin, who coached the New York Yankees, was hard to deal with. Bobby Knight, who coached the Indiana University basketball team, could be obnoxious. Bill Belichick, who coached the New England Patriots, was surly. Unlikeable though they were, they were also great leaders who knew how to win.

Ergo, while Trump's persona may strike many as offensive, few

question his ability to get things done, and that is what counts in the end.

Democratic strategist James Carville warned Democrats in October that Harris was not getting her message out. This misses the point. She had no message. That was her problem. Being against Trump is not a message—it's a feeling: it doesn't tell voters what policies you want to implement.

Admittedly, she was put in a delicate position. Joe Biden dropped out after the debate in June because the media could no longer pretend that he wasn't mentally challenged. They covered up for him for years, but could do so no longer. Harris never faced a challenger—she was anointed—and proved incapable of separating herself from his policies.

More than anything else, it was the politics of extremism that did her in.

- Flooding the economy with funny money drove prices sky high
- Allowing millions of migrants to crash our borders and then be rewarded with better services from the government than are afforded homeless veterans angered millions
- Playing catch and release with violent criminals was indefensible
- Forgiving student loans for the middle and upper classes while making the working class pay for them was infuriating
- Promoting policies that allow children to change their sex behind their parents' back was mindboggling
- Allowing boys to compete against girls in sports and shower with them was morally bankrupt
- Allowing the FBI to spy on Catholics was malicious
- Inviting foreign aggression was irresponsible

These policies did Harris in. For the most part, the American

people do not want extremists on the right or the left in office. Thank God for that.

NEW YORK TIMES' LYING "FACT-CHECKERS"

William A. Donohue

"Fact-checking" has blossomed into a journalistic industry. Too bad it's so corrupt. By corrupt I mean dishonest. The latest example comes by way of the October 3rd edition of the *New York Times*.

On the first page of the "National" section there was a full-page spread listing 21 instances where Sen. JD Vance and Gov. Tim Walz said things during their debate that the paper deemed worthy of fact-checking. Vance was subjected to 17 of them.

Let's stop right there. Why was Vance subjected to 80 percent of the "fact checks"? Are we to believe that Walz has a near monopoly on speaking the truth?

Of the 17 quotes by Vance that were analyzed, only one was deemed to be true. Four of his remarks were deemed false. The other twelve were scored as either "exaggerated," "misleading" or "needs context." By contrast, of the four quotes by Walz that were scrutinized, one was deemed to be true, one was said to be false and the other two were scored "misleading" or "exaggerated."

The *Times* opened with the following quote by Vance: "The statute you signed into law, it says a doctor who presides over an abortion where the baby survives—the doctor is under no obligation to provide lifesaving care to the baby who

survives a botched late-term abortion.”

Kate Zernike scored this as a false statement, saying, “Mr. Vance is distorting the so-called born alive law that had been in effect in Minnesota since the 1970s. That law required doctors to report when a ‘live child’ was ‘born as the result of an abortion,’ and to provide ‘all reasonable measures consistent with good medical practice’ to care for that infant.”

Zernike completely misrepresented what the law said.

She only acknowledged the first part of the second sentence of the 1976 law. This is inexcusable.

Here is what the entire sentence says: “All reasonable measures consistent with good medical practice, including the compilation of appropriate medical records, *shall be taken to preserve the life and health of the child* (my italics).”

The law signed by Walz in 2023 deleted the italicized words, replacing them with “to care for the infant who is born alive.” Now why would he want to do that?

It should be obvious that to “care for an infant” is not the same as to “preserve the life” of an infant. Keeping the baby warm is a poor substitute for keeping him alive.

In her analysis of Vance’s comments, Zernike further said, “Doctors have argued to get rid of these laws because there are already laws requiring them to provide appropriate medical care to any human.” Similarly, in her reply to Catholic League email subscribers who contacted her, she said that the law Walz repealed “was duplicative of other laws that prevent infanticide.”

This is astounding. When it comes to other demographic groups in our society—gays, blacks, et al.—we can’t have too many laws protecting their human rights. But when it comes to

infants, one is enough. Sorry, this is a lame excuse.

Zernike wrote in her Times piece that in the “extremely rare cases of infants who have been ‘born alive,’” they were “close to death,” and doctors said it took “decision-making away from families...”

That’s rich. First, why did she put quotation marks around “born alive”? Is not the issue what to do about babies born alive as a result of a botched abortion? There is nothing so-called about that.

Second, since when do doctors allow parents to make decisions for them when faced with the prospect of saving the life of their baby? Are they not obligated to save lives, and not to defer to others whether to intervene? Where does this stop? And why choose to start with innocent babies?

Since when have we expected doctors to be mere “care givers,” professionals who “care for an infant who is born alive,” but who do nothing to save the child’s life?

In her reply to our supporters, Zernike defends this position, saying, “*this does not allow a doctor to kill a viable child* (her italics).” This is a red herring. Neither Vance nor I said so. Vance spoke about the doctor being under no obligation to attend to the child, and I defended that interpretation.

She said in her *Times* response to Vance that in the five years that Walz has been governor of Minnesota, “there have been eight recorded infants ‘born alive.’” Three were classified as “previabile”; two had “fetal abnormalities and died shortly after birth”; and three were provided “comfort care” and died shortly after birth.

The key question is whether any of these babies could have survived had they been given proper medical attention.

Let's say the babies may have died anyway. What about the seven cases that occurred between 2015 and 2019 where reports simply said that "comfort care measures were provided as planned"? And what about a 2017 case where records show "no specific steps taken to preserve life were reported" of a baby born alive?

Passively allowing babies to die is barbaric, just as Vance said. Lying about it is just as bad.

TRUMP WAS RIGHT ABOUT ABORTION

William A. Donohue

Vice President Kamala Harris and ABC moderators made comments about abortion during the presidential debate that were factually incorrect. Former President Donald Trump was correct. Worse, the media, by and large, are siding with the false narrative.

Harris was asked by Linsey Davis if she supported any restrictions on a woman's right to an abortion. "I absolutely support reinstating the protections of *Roe v. Wade*," she said. She added that "nowhere in America is a woman carrying a pregnancy to term and asking for an abortion. That is not happening. It's insulting to women of America."

Trump responded saying, Harris "would allow abortion in the eighth month, ninth month, seventh month." She replied, "Come on." He followed up saying, "You could do abortions in the seventh month, the eighth month, the ninth month." She answered, "That's not true."

Trump won the argument.

Late-term abortions, contrary to what Harris said, are more common than what she contends. In 1995, Dr. George Tiller told his fans, “We have some experience with late terminations; about 10,000 patients between 24 and 36 weeks and something like 800 fetal anomalies between 26 and 36 weeks in the past 5 years.”

Ron Fitzsimmons used to tell the media that partial-birth abortions—where the baby is 80 percent born—were extremely rare. Then in 1995 he went on national TV and admitted that he “lied through [his] teeth,” saying he was just spouting “the party line.”

In 2019, the pro-abortion Guttmacher Institute admitted that at least 12,000 late-term abortions take place annually in the U.S. In 2023, fact checkers at the *Washington Post* conceded that at least 10,000 late-term abortions take place each year.

Quite frankly, under *Roe v. Wade*, abortion-on-demand, while not a *de jure* right (it was not permitted after viability except in limited cases), was a *de facto* right. For proof, consider *Doe v. Bolton*, the companion case to *Roe*; it opened the door to abortion-on-demand.

In *Roe*, the high court said the states may outlaw abortion “except where it is necessary, in appropriate medical judgment, for the preservation of the life or health of the mother.” The ruling in *Doe* defined what an “appropriate medical judgment” was. It entailed the “physical, emotional, psychological, familial, and the women’s age—relevant to the well-being of the patient.”

Not surprisingly, every state law that attempted to limit post-viability abortions to those necessary for the *physical* health of the women failed in court when challenged. In effect, the joint decisions in *Roe* and *Doe* legalized abortion up until birth. So when Harris says she accepts *Roe*, that

means she wants to make all abortions legal, at any time during pregnancy.

Moreover, Harris voted against the “Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act” that would protect unborn children by prohibiting abortion at 20 weeks, a point where the child is able to feel great pain.

Then there is the matter of governors allowing babies to die after a botched abortion.

Trump addressed this issue by initially misidentifying the culpable governor as being from West Virginia—he later corrected his mistake saying the governor was from Virginia (he was referring to Ralph Northam). Substantively, what Trump said was basically right. He accused the governor of contending that “the baby will be born and we will decide what to do with the baby. In other words, we’ll execute the baby.”

Here is what Virginia Gov. Northam opined in 2019. If a baby survived an abortion, he said, “The infant would be kept comfortable. The infant would be resuscitated if that’s what the mother and the family desired, and then a discussion would ensue between the physicians and the mother.” So while the baby would not be “executed,” per se, he could be put down, or left to die, after he was “kept comfortable.” That’s infanticide. There is no other word for it.

Northam is not alone among Democrats on this issue. Just prior to his stunning admission, New York State Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed legislation that allowed premature babies who survive a chemical abortion to be denied treatment.

At the federal level in 2019, the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act was blocked by Senate Democrats. It would require that a baby born alive during an abortion must be afforded the same care that would apply to all babies delivered at the same gestational age. Harris was one of the senators who voted to kill the bill. On January 11, 2023, all

but two congressional Democrats voted against this same bill.

It is one thing for Harris to be wrong—candidates for public office frequently misrepresent their record—but it is quite another when the media misrepresent the truth. And it is infuriating when they set themselves up as “fact checkers” during a presidential debate and are later proven wrong. ABC disgraced itself.

Moderators should moderate. They are not paid to be commentators.

OUR CULTURE OF COMFORTABLENESS

William A. Donohue

What happened in Butler, Pennsylvania is emblematic of our culture of comfortableness. We are a nation that lacks accountability for misconduct and incompetence, the net result of which is a growing pattern of serious social problems. It is institutionally ubiquitous.

It is this culture that accounts for the failure of the Secret Service to protect former president Donald Trump. A very relaxed environment in the Secret Service accounts for what happened. Consider the following.

- In March 2017, a 26-year-old man, Jonathan Tuan-Anh Tran, jumped the fence at the White House while carrying a dangerous weapon; he had two cans of Mace. Astonishingly, he was allowed to walk around for 15 minutes before he was apprehended by two Secret Service

agents. While they were fired, a week later Tran was released. The following year he was found carrying a knife while attempting to illegally enter the office of Rep. Devin Nunes.

- In 2022, Arian Taherzadeh, 40, and Haider Ali, 35, duped four Secret Service officials by posing as officers and employees of the federal government. They obtained paraphernalia, handguns and assault rifles used by federal law enforcement agencies. These were not ordinary members of the Secret Service: one was on detail for the first lady; another was a uniformed division officer in the White House; a third was on detail for Vice President Kamala Harris; and the fourth was assigned to the presidential protection detail. None was fired—they were merely suspended.
- In April 2024, a female Secret Service special agent assigned to cover the vice president jumped on her boss and began beating him. The agent, Michelle Herczeg, who had a history of aberrant behavior, chest-bumped and shoved her superior, then tackled him and punched him while still having her gun in her holster. Fellow agents wrestled her gun away, cuffed her and removed her from the premises. When questioned about this, Anthony Guglielmi, chief communications officer for the Secret Service, called the incident a “medical matter.” The offending agent was not fired—she was simply removed from Harris’ detail.

These are just a few examples that we know of in recent times.

Regarding the last incident, Rep. James Comer, who chairs the House Oversight and Accountability Committee, argues that the Secret Service, under the tutelage of its former director, Kimberly Cheatle, has become so concerned about the diversity, equity and inclusion agenda that it has lost sight of its primary mission, namely providing the highest standards of security. Shameless as ever, Cheatle refused to resign,

waiting to be forced out for her incompetence. She should have been fired on the spot.

Lowering standards is a prescription for failure. It is not just the Secret Service that has become too comfortable in their work. Here are a few examples.

It is important for parents to be friendly with their children, but it is a monumental mistake to be their friend. When that happens, parents lose their mantle of authority. It is not easy to discipline someone who sees you as his equal, making accountability almost impossible.

Brooks Brothers makes excellent men's dress shirts. They also have what they call "Friday Shirts." They are described as a "comfortable alternative to our signature dress shirts." This complements the "dress down Friday" phenomenon that was created many years ago. This set a tone in the workplace: employees can get comfortable on Fridays. When this becomes part of their psyche, they are less likely to bust their chops.

From kindergarten to graduate school, student expectations have been lowered for decades, the result being a decline in academic excellence. The one ensures the other.

Calls to "defund the police," and going easy on street crime, has led to a demoralization of the police, a shrinking of their ranks, and a crime wave that is out of control. In New York City, it is not uncommon to see cops standing around doing nothing—they have been told to stand down. They have become quite comfortable in their new environs.

We remove cats and dogs who cannot fend for themselves and place them in shelters. Men and women who cannot fend for themselves are left to rot on the sidewalks, and pleas to remove them are met with demands to protect their "liberty." No one is held accountable.

Baseball players who jog the bases, instead of sprinting, are rarely disciplined. They have become accustomed to their comfortable condition.

Let's not forget Catholic children who attend Mass wearing their soccer uniforms. Parents who insist on proper dress are met with resistance by their children, so most accede to their wishes instead of holding the line.

There is nothing intrinsically wrong with getting comfortable, especially after working hard all day at school or at work. But when comfortableness becomes the hallmark of our culture, misconduct and incompetence reign supreme.

We have become so nonchalant about wrongdoing that it is a wonder that matters haven't deteriorated further. The reaction to the attempted assassination of Donald Trump was a disgrace. It sadly reflects who we have become. Time to reboot.

WE ARE BADLY DIVIDED

William A. Donohue

In his eighteenth century classic, *Letters from an American Farmer*, J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur said he had never seen such assimilation as in America. The French writer said our ability to "melt" disparate peoples into a new man was remarkable and unparalleled. Thus was the idea of a "melting pot" born. What he said is nicely acknowledged in our national motto, *E pluribus unum*, "out of the many one."

That was then. Now we are a badly divided people, and most of the reasons for our predicament are not an accident: they represent the logical consequences of a series of policies and

programs, many of which originated at colleges and universities; they are designed to divide us.

From multiculturalism, which teaches hatred of western civilization, to the promotion of mass migration, which makes mince meat out of the “melting pot” ideal, we are nation divided; it is evident along racial, ethnic, religious, class and sex lines.

In June, Pew Research Center released survey results that show the effects of the culture war on politics. The differences between Biden and Trump supporters are vast.

“Someone can be a man or a woman even if that is different from the sex they were assigned at birth.” This question, which is biologically illiterate—no one “assigns” our birth (it is determined by our father)—is seen by Biden supporters as true. But not for Trump supporters. Six-in-ten of Biden’s fans (59 percent) believe this to be true, but only one-in-ten (9 percent) of Trump’s fans believe it makes sense.

“The criminal justice system in this country is generally not tough enough on criminals.” Only a minority of Biden enthusiasts (40 percent) agree, but most of those drawn to Trump (81 percent) agree.

“Society is better off if people make marriage and having children a priority.” A mere 19 percent of Biden supporters agree with this statement, as contrasted to 59 percent of Trump supporters.

Whether the question is how much slavery still explains racial inequality (Biden fans think it does) or America’s openness to people from all over the world is essential to who we are as nation (Trump fans are not buying it), the chasm is wide.

There is also a lot of hatred. I use the word intentionally. I am not talking about people disagreeing—that is commonplace—I am talking about hatred.

I have met a lot of conservatives who say they hate so-and-so (a public figure) because he is a liberal. In some cases, I know the person rather well, and while I may have sharp disagreements with him, I know him as a friendly and honest person. So I reply by saying, "Do you know him personally?" Of course they don't. That gives me an opportunity to defend my characterological assessment, insisting on drawing a difference between disagreeing with someone and hating him.

Those who love Biden hate Trump, and vice versa. The hatred of Trump, often called "Trump derangement syndrome," is so bad that 86 percent of Biden's biggest supporters, as reported in a recent Rasmussen survey, approve the Justice Department's authorization of "the use of deadly force" in retrieving documents at Trump's residence in Mar-a-Lago.

It is interesting to note that most Democrats disagree that we are not tough enough on crime, yet believe that Trump should be subjected to a raid where deadly force is authorized—*for an alleged crime of a non-violent nature*. The hatred runs deep.

What's driving these outcomes? As I show in my new book, *Cultural Meltdown: The Secular Roots of Our Moral Crisis*, the divisions we are seeing are ultimately traceable to a conflict between a religious vision of man and society and a secular one.

The data show conclusively that when it comes to religiosity, or beliefs and practices, Republicans are clearly more likely to say that religion is important to them. Not so for Democrats—they are the Party of secularists. To show how this plays out, consider the Pew question on marriage and the family.

Democrats do not agree that "Society is better off if people make marriage and having children a priority." But why? Secularists see such a conviction as an anathema because it challenges their belief in autonomy. That which might

interfere with career goals is not an option, and in any event it smacks of patriarchy. It also carries a religious meaning, and that is taboo.

Now it may be that for any particular individual, making marriage and the family a priority is to interfere with his or her personal goals, at least at that time. But the question wasn't about the respondent's personal life; it was about what is in the best interests of society. To those fixated on themselves, which is more common among secularists, that is not a viable choice. They are drawn to thinking in terms of me, not we.

This, too, shall pass. But in the meantime, that which divides us remains real. It is also eating away at our social fabric.

OUR PAMPERED ELITES

William A. Donohue

When I did the chapter on transgenderism for my upcoming book, *Cultural Meltdown*, I was struck by the fact that blacks are the least likely to believe in the fiction that the sexes are interchangeable. The biggest dopes are white people. Not just any white persons—those with post-graduate degrees are the dumbest.

Why are white well-educated people so stupid? To begin with, the ability to stay in school is not a good index of how bright someone is. Some of the brightest people I have ever met never went to college, and some of the biggest air heads I have ever met are college professors. This explains why I was not surprised to learn that those with post-graduate degrees are the most likely to believe that we can change our sex.

Does education corrupt? Depending on the course of study, and who the professors are, it may. For example, it can corrupt our cognitive faculties when we put common sense aside and allow ideology to run riot. Add to this the tendency of those with alphabets after their name to look down on the masses—it gives them a mantle of moral superiority—and the scene is set to ride off a cliff. Here's a real-life example.

A recent Rasmussen poll asked respondents if they agreed with Disney official Karey Burke when she bragged how good it is for the company to have “many, many, many LGBTQIA characters.” Those who were the most likely to say this is appropriate for children under 12 were those in the highest income bracket—earning more than \$200,000 a year. They are among the most “well educated” in the country, having graduated from elite schools.

Are the rich morally corrupt? Some are. To be specific, they are more likely to be secularists, and this matters greatly: their distrust in God allows them to put their trust in themselves. And given their insular existence—they love gated communities, chauffeurs, and their own security—they can rest assured knowing that whatever the masses believe in is probably wrong.

Rich well-schooled young people have dominated the domestic news lately. From Berkeley to Columbia, they rioted, vandalized, burned American flags, camped out on campus property, attacked Jews, barricaded themselves in college offices, blocked traffic, assaulted the police and cheered for Hamas. According to the NYPD, most of those arrested at Columbia were students.

No one doubts, however, that outsiders played a key role, especially in organizing and strategizing how to win. Where did they get their money and training? From well-schooled rich people, of course.

It was hardly a shocker to learn that George Soros was involved. He loves to create anarchy, and uses his Open Society Foundations to great effect. David Rockefeller is another big player. Susan and Nick Pritzker are awash with left-wing money (Nick is the uncle of J.B. Pritzker, the billionaire governor of Illinois).

One of the most generous donors to left-wing causes is the Tides Foundation. According to Capital Research Center, which does yeoman work tracking how the rich undermine America, "If the Left does it, Tides funds it." It is one of the masters of "dark money," funds that are hard to trace. It specializes in "pass-through funding," a mechanism that shuffles money to communist-inspired organizations such as the Working Family Party.

Not only has Soros lavishly funded Tides, so has the Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Rockefeller Foundation, Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Silicon Valley Community Foundation and K. Kellogg Foundation.

The Tides Foundation managed to grease two of the most pro-Hamas organizations responsible for the campus riots, Jewish Voice for Peace and IfNotNow. Another source of money for this crusade is Goldman Sachs, Wall Street's behemoth financial organization.

Here's how the game is played.

Goldman Sachs Philanthropy Fund funnels money to The People's Forum, a radical left-wing entity with ties to the Chinese Communist Party. It is backed by American businessman Neville Roy Singham. He uses Goldman Sachs' charity arm as a pass-through to The People's Forum. Though Goldman Sachs maintains it has no direct ties to this group, in a circuitous way it does.

Singham is a filthy rich socialist whose father was Sri Lankan

and mother was Cuban. He is proud that The People's Forum is "a movement incubator" of extremist causes.

The protesting students on our campuses have much in common with their well-heeled donors. The rich live a secure pristine lifestyle, unaffected by the consequences of their ideas. Meanwhile, their student stooges take over university buildings with impunity, having food delivered to them by Uber drivers.

All of them have much in common with Mao (Singham adores him). The Chinese monster may have identified with the oppressed, but in reality he managed to kill 77 million of them. He also lived large—he had 50 villas to live in.

The elites live a pampered existence. What they learned, and what they are teaching, in the colleges and universities is more often than not subversive of the very institutions they govern. They are as vindictive as they are irrational.