

WHY ARE LEFTISTS SO MISERABLE?

It was the day after Ronald Reagan beat Jimmy Carter in the 1980 presidential election. I was smiling (I had run Reagan's campaign in the North Hills of Pittsburgh), but most of the other professors at La Roche College (now a university) were sulking, and many appeared depressed. However, their mood was not uncharacteristic of the way they were most of the time: There are a lot of unhappy campers in the professoriate, especially in the liberal arts.

Nothing has changed.

In a new study by psychologists in Finland assessing the state of mind of radical social justice devotees, it was found that those who bought into progressive ideas are profoundly unhappy. Published in the *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, the researchers started with a sample of 851 persons, mostly students and professors at the University of Turku, and then expanded it to 5,030 adults. They distinguished between those who hold to a traditional liberal perspective and those who identify with a radical one. They focused on the latter.

The researchers devised a Critical Social Justice Attitude Scale (CSJAS) that measured seven aspects of what they deemed as representative of "woke" politics. Most of the items dealt with race, though one tapped transgenderism (the idea that the sexes are interchangeable). For example, "University reading lists should include fewer white or European authors" was deemed reflective of the "woke" view.

Social justice attitudes, the study's authors said, "perceive people foremost as members of identity groups and as being, witting or unwitting, perpetrators or victims of oppression based on the groups' perceived power differentials; and

advocate regulating how or how much people speak and how they act if there is a perceived power differential between speakers, and intervening in action or speech deemed oppressive.”

The conclusions were riveting.

Regarding the initial small sample, it was determined that high CSJAS scores were “linked to anxiety, depression, and a lack of happiness.” On the larger sample, “this lower mental well-being was mostly associated with being on the political left and not specifically with having a high CSJAS score.” Women were more likely than men to have high CSJAS scores, which explains why their happiness quotient was smaller.

The researchers noted that their findings were consistent with that of other studies on this subject. They are right about that.

“Liberals, especially liberal women, are significantly less likely to be happy with their lives and satisfied with their ‘mental health,’ compared to their conservative peers aged 18-55.” According to University of Virginia sociologist W. Brad Wilcox, this was “the big takeaway from the 2022 American Family Survey, a striking new poll from YouGov and the *Deseret News*.”

In 2023, Musa al-Gharbi, a sociologist at Columbia University, examined data from many studies on this subject and concluded that conservatives are indeed happier than liberals. He said this finding “is consistent across countries and extends back in time.”

The question remains: Why are those on the left so miserable?

For starters, consider this. Imagine waking up each day thinking the world is made up of oppressors, racists, sexists, homophobes and their victims. Is that likely to put a smile on your dial?

It's actually worse than this. Left-wing professors, which is to say most of them in the social sciences and humanities, love to bask in their negativity. Smug as can be, they love thinking that those who don't share their views are ignorant buffoons; they, of course, are the only really bright ones. Their darkness is their defining characteristic.

But why do these malcontents think this way?

It has much to do with what Catholicism calls the sin of pride, the belief that we are self-sufficient human beings and have no need for God. The big thinkers believe they are too smart to believe in God. Too bad they aren't smart enough to know that boys who claim to be girls should not be allowed to compete against girls in sports and shower with them. There must be a cavity in their brain when it comes to sex.

It must be said that while those on the left are the most likely to be unhappy, it has been my experience that extremists on the right are just as likely to be despondent.

I have often said that when I encounter a highly educated person, or an activist, for the first time, I know within minutes if I am dealing with an extremist. The individual could be on the right or the left—it doesn't matter. The common denominator is humorlessness. They rarely smile and their bouts of laughter usually come at someone else's expense.

Smiling is important. Laughter is important. They are staples of mental health. Hanging around those who are habitually unhappy—for reasons wholly due to their cast of mind and their inflated idea of who they are—is a chore. It's also a bore.

The Finnish psychologists learned that left-wing "woke" mavens find it hard to be happy. The deeper problem is that they actually like it that way.

BIGOTRY AND DISHONESTY ARE COMMONPLACE

William A. Donohue

In my years dealing with the media, government officials, educators, activists, business people, lawyers, artists, and others, I have met my share of bigoted persons. This is not surprising given the nature of my job. Unfortunately, many of these people are also dishonest. When bigotry and dishonesty are mixed together, it's a bad combo. Regrettably, this is commonplace.

This issue of *Catalyst* has its fair share of examples. I have added a few more current ones that may be of interest to our readers.

When a crowd of disrespectful LGBT activists turned out for a funeral service at St. Patrick's Cathedral in February, some in the media gave a totally dishonest account. The New York *Daily News*, which is hanging on by a thread, took the side of the disruptors saying that the Catholic Church "has long condemned queer and transgender people."

As I pointed out, this is simply wrong. The Church does not condemn any demographic group. It condemns sinful behavior. That's not a small difference.

Time.com falsely argued that the Church "has isolated many queer folks from its doors." But the Church doesn't isolate anyone. If some of these people chose to do so—because the Church condemns homosexual behavior (so do most world religions)—that is their choice. So be it.

In the run-up to the traditional St. Patrick's Day Parade on

Staten Island, the biggest media outlet in the area, *Advance/SILive.com*, lobbied to have an alternative parade because the traditional one did not allow gay groups to march under their own banner.

Since when is it the business of the media to hijack an ethnic or religious event, turning it into something that misrepresents its purpose? Just as obnoxious was the dishonest reporting. Gays have always marched in these parades—just like pro-life Catholics—but in neither case should they be allowed to do so under their own banner. The parade is not about gay rights or the rights of the unborn—it's about St. Patrick.

"60 Minutes" recently aired a segment on Moms for Liberty, the women's group that believes children should be treated as children and not be subjected to sexual engineering.

The segment was dishonest—the tape was cut and spliced—making it appear as though these women were book banners. Nonsense. They simply think that books that are highly sexual, if not pornographic, should not be made available to kids. But the show did not air that part of the taping.

When CBS asked me to comment on the Staten Island Patrick's Day Parade it misspelled a word that I wrote in my email response, and attributed the misspelling to me! Similarly, when the *Baltimore Sun* insinuated that I misstated data regarding a plan to expand a probe of Catholic dioceses in Maryland and Delaware—I did not—it was nauseating to read that these "fact checkers" couldn't even spell my name correctly.

Some government officials are guilty of bigotry and dishonesty. The Maryland Attorney General is obsessed with misconduct in the Catholic Church—his earlier investigation got him nowhere (the bad priests are long dead or out of ministry)—yet he has had absolutely nothing to say about the horrible sexual abuse of minors taking place right now in the state's public schools.

We have to start calling those who work against women's sports for what they are—misogynists. That applies to New York State Governor Kathy Hochul. She wants boys and men to compete against girls and women in sports, and to use the same locker rooms and shower facilities. Yet she has the nerve to say that those who disagree with her are exploiting “vulnerable children.”

On the night of his State of the Union speech, President Biden trotted out a woman from Dallas who left Texas to have an abortion. He referred to her baby as a “fetus” (he refused to call her baby a baby) telling everyone that she had to abort her child because her doctor said her own life was at risk. Not so. We know from court records that her doctor did not assert that the woman had a “life-threatening physical condition.”

To make matters worse, why didn't Biden mention that the baby was diagnosed with a disability? Why was it important that he, and his wife, chose this particular woman to showcase that evening? Babies with disabilities deserve the same rights as every other baby.

Disney says it is committed to inclusionary policies, yet in its hiring decisions it continues to give preference to groups that are already overrepresented, e.g., LGBT persons, while never addressing those who are seriously underrepresented, such as Catholics.

On [pp. 8-9, Fr. Paul Sullins](#) has a splendid piece on how dishonest scholarship is these days. Anyone who threatens the conventional wisdom on college campuses, as espoused by left-wing professors, is subject to banishment, or worse.

To be sure, there are good men and women who work in all of these fields, but too often the bigots and the liars rule the roost. They must be outed, resisted and defeated.

LYING ABOUT LATE-TERM ABORTIONS

William A. Donohue

Most Americans want abortion legal but restricted. Most but not all. There are some who favor abortion unlimited—for any reason and at time of gestation. The media will tell you this isn't true. They're lying.

Last September, Vice President Kamala Harris was interviewed on "Face the Nation" by Margaret Brennan. Brennan made the point that Republicans are saying they support abortions "up until, you know, birth." Harris replied, "Which is ridiculous." Brennan agreed, saying, "Which is statistically not accurate."

When Chris Christie was a Republican candidate for president, he told Mika Brzezinski on MSNBC that in his state of New Jersey abortion is legal "up to nine months." She disagreed, saying, "It's not an abortion at nine months. And there's not a doctor that would do it. And it only happens in extremely severe circumstances."

"The claim that Democrats support abortion up until the moment of birth is entirely misleading." That's what former White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said on her MSNBC show.

Jim Acosta of CNN took issue with a family leader on this subject, saying, "Democrats are not in favor of abortion right up until birth."

On "Meet the Press," former President Donald Trump said that some Democrats support abortion up to "nine months and even

after birth you're allowed to terminate the baby." The NBC host, Kristen Welker, said, "Democrats are not saying that."

Steve Benen, an MSNBC producer for "The Rachel Maddow Show," also took issue with Trump's claim that some Democrats support "after-birth" abortion. "There is no such thing. The claim is simply insane."

All of these people who defend the Democrats on this issue are wrong. I will prove it.

Pennsylvania Senator John Fetterman believes in no restrictions on abortion. When asked during a debate, "Are there any limits on abortion you would find appropriate," he answered, "I don't believe so."

In 2015, when Debbie Wasserman Schultz, chairwoman of the Democratic National Committee, was asked if she was okay "with killing a 7-pound baby that's just not born yet," she replied that she supports "letting women and their doctors make this decision without government getting involved." Senator Rand Paul rightly noted, "Well, it sounds like her answer is yes, that she's OK with killing a 7-pound baby."

In 2020, when Vice President Mike Pence called out Democrats for supporting abortion without restrictions, he was challenged by Jane Timm of NBC News. "Elective abortions do not occur up until the moment of birth," she said.

Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council, rebutted her argument. "Believe it or not, 22 states—*almost half*—allow birth day abortion. And in seven of those, women don't need a reason. A pregnant mom at 39 weeks can literally walk into a willing clinic and ask for an abortion, no questions asked."

Perkins knows what he is talking about. 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 Democrats say they simply want to codify *Roe*, what they are saying is they want to make all abortions legal, at any time during pregnancy.

Some Democrat governors actually favor allowing a baby who is born alive from a botched abortion to die unattended.

On January 22, 2019, New York State Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed legislation that allows premature babies who survive a chemical abortion to be denied treatment. Shortly thereafter, the Democrat Governor from Virginia, Ralph Northam, signaled that he was not satisfied with sanctioning abortion up until birth.

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.”

It was so thoughtful of Gov. Northam, who is a pediatrician, to assure us that the baby would be “kept comfortable” before they put him down or let him die.

So there we have it. Contrary to what the media and the Democrats have been saying, there are plenty of Democrats who support legalized abortion through nine months of pregnancy, for any reason whatsoever. There are even those who are okay with infanticide.

FBI SOURCES ON CATHOLIC CHURCH ARE FOUL

William A. Donohue

The FBI spy operation on Catholics has nothing to do with dissident Catholics—the focus is 100 percent on those Catholics who are “pro-life,” “pro-family,” and who “support the biological basis for sex and gender distinction.” These practicing Catholics are labeled “domestic terrorists.”

The use of the present tense is purposeful: the FBI, according to the probe conducted by the Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the FBI, says the Bureau still believes that traditional Catholics pose a “domestic threat to our country.”

The FBI did not dream this caper up by itself: it was assisted by left-wing media and activist organizations.

Regarding the infamous memo that outlined the FBI probe of traditional Catholics, we learned the following: “The two FBI employees who co-authored the memorandum later told FBI internal investigators that they knew the sources cited in the memorandum had a political bias—sources including the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), *Salon*, and *The Atlantic*.”

Three years ago, *The Atlantic* published a piece titled, “The

Real Threat to American Catholicism.” And who might that be? Why the bishops, of course. It was their opposition to abortion that made them a threat to Catholicism.

Two years ago, *Salon* ran a story on how the Catholic Church is “dictating reproductive health care—even in blue states.” It was concluded that we have too many Catholic hospitals nationwide, facilities that do not permit abortion. That is the source of the alleged dictatorship.

SPLC is the real clincher. As corrupt as it is partisan, it can no longer lay claim to being a beacon of information on hate groups in the United States. Its penchant for smearing innocent individuals and institutions is legendary.

The Report said that one of the FBI analysts even acknowledged that the “SPLC was known to have a political bias.” Despite this, they accepted “*with high confidence*” the information they gleaned from SPLC on the Catholic Church (their italics.)

On the SPLC website, they offer a list of “hate groups.” Lumped in with real hate groups is an organization of mothers concerned about what their children are being taught in the public schools. It has 220 entries on Moms for Liberty. Only a deranged person would consider them a hate group.

Other organizations that espouse traditional values, but are in no way hateful—yet are labeled as such by SPLC—include the Family Research Council, Liberty Counsel, Alliance Defending Freedom and the American College of Pediatricians.

In 2017, when Carol Swain was a professor at Vanderbilt University, she recommended against allowing the president of SPLC to testify before the House Homeland Security Committee. She did so for a principled reason. “Rather than monitoring hate groups,” she said, “the Southern Poverty Law Center has become one.” As a result, SPLC conducted a smear campaign against her, claiming she is “an apologist for white supremacists.” Swain is black.

Other notable Americans who are anything but hateful, but who have been branded as such by SPLC, include Somali refugee Ayaan Hirsi Ali, political scientist Guenter Lewy, and Princeton professor Robert P. George (he is a member of the Catholic League's board of advisors).

SPLC's smear tactics backfired when a noted evangelical organization, D. James Kennedy Ministries, sued SPLC in 2017 for defamation. It accused the far-left "hate group" specialist of making "false and misleading descriptions," subjecting it to "disgrace, ridicule, odium, and contempt in the estimation of the public."

In other words, SPLC is a master propagandist, branding as "hate groups" institutions that are merely advocates for traditional moral values.

One might think that Antifa, which is a real terrorist group—it is responsible for countless acts of violence against innocent persons—might be included in SPLC's list of hate groups (if for no other reason than to give it cover as an objective source). Instead, it is one of their biggest fans. In 2020, it posted an article entitled, "Designating Antifa as domestic terrorist organization is dangerous, threatens civil liberties." Just substitute the Klan for Antifa to get a sense of how absurd this sounds.

SPLC agents know a thing or two about domestic terrorism. In early 2023 one of its attorneys, Thomas Webb Jurgens, was charged with domestic terrorism after engaging in violence at a future Atlanta police training facility.

Having an anti-Catholic cell group in the FBI is bad enough. It is made worse when its agents turn to anti-Catholic journalistic sources, and to anti-American outlets. Indeed, it makes us wonder why these FBI employees are still on the public payroll, funded, in part, by traditional Catholics.

Relying on radical journalistic and activist sources for dirt

on the Catholic Church is one thing; it is quite another if outsiders actually planted the idea within the FBI that traditional Catholics pose a domestic threat.

There are enough left-wing Catholics in Washington these days to make it plausible that some of them pitched this probe to the FBI. That is why I have asked Rep. Jim Jordan to look into this.

CHRISTMAS IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE

William A. Donohue

Almost all Americans (9 in 10) celebrate Christmas, and the majority (7 in 10) are Christian. So it should not be controversial to celebrate a holiday that is central to our country's history. But it is.

We've been involved in the Christmas wars for many years. From my perspective, it reached a crescendo about a decade or so ago. Both sides can claim victories and losses. We decided to up the ante this Christmas season by having two public Christmas displays in New York City.

We've erected a life-size nativity scene at the foot of Central Park since the mid-1990s, just outside the Plaza Hotel; we are doing so again. This year we are also displaying a huge digital billboard celebrating Christmas in Times Square as well.

We are doing this because we want to combat the idea that religion should be privatized. That is what the enemies of religion want. They want us to stick to saying the rosary in

church and absenting ourselves from all public celebrations and events. We refuse to do so.

The foes of religion don't even talk about freedom of religion anymore; they speak about "freedom to worship." It started with Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, and has been trending ever since. But "freedom to worship" is not what the First Amendment is all about. It is about the free exercise of religion, and that means the public expression of it.

Imagine if we said that everyone is free to play music indoors, such as in concert halls and arenas. But there can be no sidewalk, street or park ensembles, the kind that made New Orleans famous. No one would believe it if the sponsors of this idea said they were not against music. To privatize it would be to squeeze the life out of it.

Saint John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI were strong advocates of the public expression of religion. No, we don't have to wear our religion on our sleeve, but we have a right to make public our Christian convictions. Freedom of religion, then, is more than conscience rights—it is also about behavior.

The Christmas billboard (see the opposite page) is a digital display. It will be shown four to six times an hour, 30 seconds each, for the two weeks before Christmas. As you can see, we are playing off the theme of "diversity."

We know that those in the ever-expanding diversity industry, which is indistinguishable from the grievance industry, are using "diversity" and "inclusion"—the twin propaganda tools—as a political club. They are invoked to discriminate against white Christians, especially male heterosexuals, and they are employed every Christmas season to diminish its essence.

For example, the anti-Christmas folks, who pretend to be faithful to separation of church and state, like to say that December should not be about Christmas because it excludes those who are not Christian. That's pretty lame. Even though

87 percent of the country is not African American, we celebrate Black History Month each year. Should we do away with it because it is not inclusive of Caucasians, Hispanics, Asians and others?

By identifying Christmas as a celebration of diversity, we are taking a page out of the diversity playbook and using it to our advantage. This point will not be lost on those who want to censor Christmas.

While the nativity scene is integral to the billboard, its prominent display in Central Park makes for a purely religious statement. We are given a permit by the City of New York to have it on public property because parks are considered a public forum—open to musicians, artists, et al.—and therefore they must be open to religious speech.

The number of people who come to Times Square each Christmas season is astonishing. Our billboard is just above street level, between 44th and 45th Street on Broadway, facing west. It can't be missed. The nativity scene is right at the start of Central Park, and it can't be missed by tourists and those who take the 5th Avenue bus downtown.

We want a robust public expression of Christmas. The billboard and the nativity scene both carry an inscription of the Catholic League, with our logo. This way no one will wonder who is sponsoring these exhibitions. Moreover, since most will like them, it is good publicity for us.

The ACLU, of course, won't be happy, but they can't do a thing about it. They love to say that we have to guard against religious speech because children are "impressionable." Yet this never seems to matter when they are pushing pornographic material on to children in the schools.

Similarly, when someone objects to pornography being sold or shown in public, the ACLU says we should simply "avert our eyes." That's what they should do when they object to seeing

Christmas celebrations and nativity scenes in public—avert their eyes.

Believe me, we will not be driven from the public square.

Have a fun-filled and blessed Christmas.

POPE WELCOMES CATHOLIC DISSIDENTS

William A. Donohue

On October 17, Pope Francis welcomed Catholic dissidents who have previously been condemned by U.S. cardinals and bishops. He met for almost an hour with Sister Jeannine Gramick, who, along with Fr. Robert Nugent, founded New Ways Ministry (NWM) in 1977; it is a radical pro-homosexual group. She was wearing a habit for the photo-op, something she rarely does.

After the meeting, Gramick praised the pope for his “openness” to same-sex blessings.

Sr. Gramick was best friends with the most notorious serial child rapist priest in American history, Fr. Paul Shanley. She credited him with having “motivated her to activism.” More telling, after Shanley’s predatory behavior was made public, she said she “grieved for the man I had not seen in almost 20 years, but whose principles and whose advocacy for the downtrodden I had applauded for three decades.” That he molested the downtrodden didn’t seem to matter.

Journalist Maureen Orth (who was married to “Meet the Press” host Tim Russert) ripped Gramick for never once speaking to any of Shanley’s victims.

Fr. James Martin, who was given a prominent position at the Synod on Synodality in Rome—at the request of the pope—said in 2017 that he would like to “canonize” Gramick.

Gramick has long been a thorn in the side of the Catholic Church. After the publication of a book by her and Nugent, *Building Bridges: Gay and Lesbian Reality and the Catholic Church*, they were investigated by the Vatican in 1998. It was determined that there were “serious deficiencies in their writings and pastoral activities, which were incompatible with the fullness of Christian morality.”

Pope Francis did not meet with Gramick out of the blue. In fact, he commended this rogue entity at the end of 2021. At that time, I said he had been manipulated. It is now clear that I was wrong.

After the pope spoke kindly about NWM in a note to Gramick, I learned that the Vatican listed it on its resource page for the upcoming Synod.

Consequently, on December 15, 2021 I wrote to Cardinal Mario Grech, Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops, about the propriety of providing a link to the NWM webinar on synodality.

In my letter, I recounted that in 1999 Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, issued a document detailing how Sr. Gramick and Fr. Nugent of NWM had been sanctioned by two major Church bodies for their public misrepresentations of Church teachings on sexuality.

Ratzinger wrote that in 1984, “James Cardinal Hickey, the Archbishop of Washington, following the failure of a number of attempts at clarification, informed them [NWM] that they could no longer undertake their activities in that Archdiocese. At the same time, the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and for Societies of Apostolic Life ordered them to

separate themselves totally and completely from New Ways Ministry, adding that they were not to exercise any apostolate without faithfully presenting the Church's teaching regarding the evil of homosexual acts."

He then offered evidence of the many attempts by Church officials to persuade Gramick and Nugent to abide by Church teachings on this subject. He concluded that they "are permanently prohibited from any pastoral work involving homosexual persons and are ineligible, for an undetermined period, for any office in their respective religious institutes."

Three years later, the new head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Archbishop Tarcisio Bertone, wrote that "New Ways Ministry does not promote the authentic teaching of the Catholic Church."

Also in 2002, Archbishop Thomas Kelly of Louisville told organizers of the group's conference that they should not celebrate the Eucharist at a NWM event. Following suit in 2007 was St. Paul-Minneapolis Archbishop Harry Flynn: he barred NWM's national conference from celebrating the Eucharist.

In 2010, Cardinal Francis George, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, stated that he can assure Catholics that "in no manner is the position proposed by New Ways Ministry in conformity with Catholic teaching and in no manner is this organization authorized to speak on behalf of the Catholic Church or to identify itself as a Catholic organization."

In 2011, Cardinal Donald Wuerl of the Washington Archdiocese, and chairman of the Committee on Doctrine, joined with Oakland Bishop Salvatore Cordileone, and chairman of the bishops' Ad Hoc Committee on the Defense of Marriage, issuing an affirmation of Cardinal George's denunciation of NWM.

This prompted me to ask Grech, "Were all the senior members of

the Catholic Church wrong about NWM? Or is the decision to welcome them to the synodal process wrong? They can't both be right."

He never replied. We now know why.

There is much confusion in the Catholic Church today. Catholics are looking for clarity, but the Synod on Synodality, which took place in October (it will offer its final report next October) is not expected to rectify this problem. Some say it will only make matters worse. We'll see.

HATING #1

William A. Donohue

The United States is the richest and most powerful nation on earth.

New York City is largely regarded as the number-one international city.

The New York Yankees have the most World Series wins and the richest history of any major league team. The Catholic Church is seen as the most influential religious body in the world.

Being #1 is everyone's dream. In some cases, it can be a nightmare.

Hating the United States is not only a popular sport abroad, it is very popular on our own college campuses. When I was in the Air Force, the First Sergeant, a Southerner, made it known that he hated New Yorkers (he knew from my accent). The Yankees are hated as much as they are revered. And the Catholic Church is singled out for acrimony more than any

other religion.

The word *schadenfreude* is German for the joy that some have over the misfortunes of others. It speaks to our very human, yet dark, side. So when 9/11 happened, there was dancing in the streets of some foreign cities. When the clergy sexual abuse scandal hit the papers a year later, Catholic haters were basking in joy. Being #1 made the Church an easy target.

As can be seen from this issue of *Catalyst*, those who harbor an animus against Catholicism are very active these days. When there are no more contemporary cases of sexual abuse to report on, journalists like those at *The Week* resurrect old cases, trying to give them currency. It's pathetic.

Kids are being raped by public school teachers and the offenders are still being moved from school district to school district. In school lingo, it's called "passing the trash." Yet few bother to comment on it.

The *New York Times* reports on new documents that were found by historians that prove how brave and noble our priests and nuns were during the Holocaust, sheltering over 3,000 Jews. But the reporter could not resist saying that "this doesn't change" the negative portrait of Pope Pius XII. Not for people like her. She's already made up her mind. She said he was "silent" during the Holocaust. But that's not what her newspaper said about him in 1941 and 1942. It said just the opposite.

Two years ago, anti-Catholic activists and government officials in Canada were making wild accusations about "mass graves" found at residential schools for indigenous children; some of them were administered by the Catholic Church. But now that the excavations have turned up no "mass graves"—not a single body has been found—where are the apologies? There are none.

If hating the Catholic Church for being #1 is a full-time sport, it makes its occurrence no less odious. Why can't some

just move on and let go?

The Catholic Church is not a target simply because of its history, size and influence—it is being singled out because of the threat it poses to secular elites. They loathe the moral mantle that the Church occupies and they want to destroy it.

The teachings of the Catholic Church on sexuality is what makes its enemies mad. Never mind that we acquired our notions of sexual reticence from our Jewish brothers and sisters, the focus is not on Jews but on us (most Jews today are secular and the Orthodox are too small to matter). Never mind that those who throw sexual restraint to the wind live a short and ugly life, we still get the blame.

The goal of the enemies of the Catholic Church is to silence its voice. They want to intimidate the clergy, quiet the laity, and erase the presence of the Church from the public square. Unfortunately, too many of us have been obliging. We should instead be defiant.

Being defiant is what led Catholics to hammer the Los Angeles Dodgers when they honored an anti-Catholic group of gay men dressed as nuns. We were delighted to lead the way. There is no virtue in being passive when our sensibilities are being assaulted.

There are other encouraging signs on the horizon. The FBI is now in the spotlight after reports surfaced that agents were spying on Catholics. Mothers are being more vigilant than ever before about what is going on in the public schools. The pushback against transgenderism—the mad idea that we can switch our sex—is growing, even among gays. And surveys indicate that Catholics want their priests and bishops to be more vocal.

When urban terrorists interrupted Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral in December 1989, Cardinal John O'Connor was shaken. He was reminded by Father Benedict Groeschel that it was a

backhanded compliment to the prestige of the Catholic Church. They didn't go after the mainline Protestants, he noted.

So, yes, there is a price to be paid for being #1. The Catholic Church may have lost some of its luster—for making lousy decisions—but it still commands the attention of the ruling class. We should be less shy about flexing our moral muscles in public.

SOCIAL CONSERVATISM IS REBOUNDED

William A. Donohue

This article originally appeared in The American Spectator on July 3, 2023.

It was just a matter of time. Decent Americans have had a radical race and LGBT agenda shoved in their face for too long, and now they are fighting back. Too bad not all conservatives are on board.

Former congressman Paul Ryan recently said that he was not a “cultural war guy,” contending that he is more concerned about the debt crisis. This is what we would expect from someone who found his home sitting on the board of directors of Fox News’ parent company, Fox Corporation.

Under its founder, Roger Ailes, Fox News Network covered what I call the three “M’s” of conservatism: missiles, markets and morality. But in more recent times, with some notable exceptions, Fox News has been more concerned about the first two “M’s.” Ryan’s influence is obvious. Tucker Carlson’s absence is only one clear example.

As it turns out, Fox News is on the wrong side of history. The country is becoming more socially and culturally conservative. Consider three recent Gallup surveys.

In a Gallup poll released June 8, we learned that “More Americans this year (38%) say they are very conservative or conservative on social issues than said so in 2022 (33%) and 2021 (30%). Those who identify as very liberal or liberal on social issues are in decline.” What makes these figures so impressive is that in the past two years, the increase in conservative identification is found among nearly all political and demographic subgroups.

The Gallup poll published June 16 found that support for same-sex marriage is declining: it went from 71 percent to 64 percent in the past year, which is dramatic. This helps to explain the increase in social conservatism.

Why this is happening can be gleaned from a Gallup poll released June 9. The title says it all: “Views of State of Moral Values in U.S. at New Low.” Public assessments on the state of moral values is the worst since Gallup took these measures 22 years ago. “The 54% of U.S. adults who rate moral values in the country as ‘poor’ marks a four-percentage-point increase since last year and the first time the reading has reached the majority level.”

A third of Americans, 33 percent, say our moral values are “only fair”; 10 percent say they are “good”; and a mere 1 percent rate them as “excellent.”

No wonder social conservatism is rebounding—most are convinced we are morally troubled, to say the least. I hasten to add that there are reasons for optimism. Some very good things are happening.

While Covid was a tough time for many Americans, there is one good thing that came of it. Parents, especially moms, found out what some of the schools were doing to their children.

Instead of education, there was indoctrination. The content of this proselytization—and that is what it is—is also objectionable: students are being told how racist America is, and that they can switch their sex. Both are invidious lies.

As a result of this kind of activism, we now have Moms for Liberty, and similar other groups. Proof that they are having an effect is the ruling by the far-left Southern Poverty Law Center to name them on its “hate map.” That is a badge of honor.

Disney is being beaten up all over the place. It has decided to adopt the radical LGBT agenda, most notably by inviting children to believe that they can change their sex, and that there are many sexes besides male and female. Both are palpable lies.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis led the way in taking Disney to task for adopting the woke agenda. The Catholic League documentary, “Walt’s Disenchanted Kingdom,” added to their problems. The blowback from customers showed up on its bottom line: it has taken quite a hit. We are also happy to note that its summertime film, “Elemental,” featuring a “non-binary” character, bombed at the box office.

Bud Light is still reeling from trying to push trans politics down our throats. It now regrets hiring a trans person to market its beer. It should never have done so in the first place. Ditto for the U.S. Navy which hired a drag queen, a man dressed as a woman, to recruit new sailors. It was a monumental flop—recruitment numbers are down.

Target got into the act by selling “tuck-friendly” swimwear—with “extra crotch coverage”—for men trying to pass as a woman. Ever since, they have been feeling the pinch of a boycott.

Muslims run the Michigan town of Hamtramck, and their city council has banned the LGBT pride flag, making the case that

only the American flag should be flown.

The pushback against the Dodgers for honoring drag queens who mock Catholicism, which the Catholic League led, made international news. From all accounts, the message has been received.

Moreover, surveys show that most Americans do not believe men should be able to compete in women's sports. They also oppose sex-reassignment surgery performed on children.

These are encouraging developments. The culture war is far from over.

30 YEARS AND COUNTING

William A. Donohue

July 1 marked my 30th year as president and CEO of the Catholic League. Bernadette Brady-Egan, our vice president, celebrated her 28th anniversary on the same day. We've had a good run, and we're not done.

One reason for not retiring is the state of our country. Never have I seen our country more polarized or disfigured. There is an angry and mean-spirited segment of our society that loathes the United States, traffics in lies, and espouses a wide range of pernicious ideas and policies. At root, they are motivated by a hatred of our religious heritage, and they are hell bent on shoving their militant secular agenda down our throat. They must be stopped.

When I began in 1993, coming home to New York after 15 years teaching college in Pittsburgh and a year in residence at The Heritage Foundation, I inherited an organizational and

financial mess. Fr. Virgil Blum, the founder, died in 1990, and at that point the headquarters moved from Milwaukee to a suburb of Philadelphia.

The leadership at that time was abysmal, and after going through a half dozen presidents, the headquarters relocated to New York City in November 1992; the new home was in the headquarters of the Archdiocese of New York.

How did they find me? After word got out that I was about to start a counter Catholic civil rights organization in Pittsburgh, with the blessings of Bishop Donald Wuerl, I was courted by a New York search firm.

When I came to the interview at La Guardia Airport, the head hunter told me that many people were interested in the job, and that Anna Quindlen had someone in mind. She was a very liberal columnist for the *New York Times*, and not exactly in line with Catholic teachings on a lot of issues. Without blinking an eye, I said something to the effect that "if you want someone like her, you don't want me." He smiled.

He smiled because I obviously said what he was hoping I would say. He then called the three people who were interested in interviewing me at the new headquarters (they would not have wasted their time if the head hunter had given me the thumbs down). The meeting went well. After I underwent back surgery in Pittsburgh, I made the move to New York.

The first thing that the board of directors asked me to do was to stop the bleeding. The Catholic League had been so badly managed that it was losing \$10,000-\$20,000 a month, with not much in reserve. The board asked me to go around the country, meeting with the heads of the chapters, assessing the situation.

I traveled to Minneapolis, Boston, Washington, Milwaukee, Chicago and Pasadena. When I was asked by the head of the Pasadena chapter—who was not a Catholic—what my five-year plan

was, I told him I wasn't sure we would be around for even half that time.

Then he told me that he had scheduled to fly me to Las Vegas the next day. I was slated to talk about the Catholic League to a large group of Notre Dame guys after they spent hours drinking beer and watching a football game (this was an annual event, I was told). To top things off, all of this was to be done on the Catholic League's dime. As you might expect, I never boarded the plane.

With few exceptions, what I uncovered was gross incompetence. The board of directors was also to blame: they allowed some chapters to be full-time positions; some were part-time; some were paid; others were volunteers.

I had warned all of the chapter leaders that tough decisions were likely to be made. By the end of the year, all but two chapters were closed (and those two didn't last long).

When I started half way through 1993, a board member told me the Catholic League was expected to run a deficit of \$150,000 by the end of the year. In six months, I cut it in half. The next year we posted a profit, and we have been on good grounds ever since.

Before I left Pittsburgh, a priest friend asked how I was going to jump start the organization. I know how to work the media, I said, and that will generate free publicity, resulting in new members. It worked.

I was already a regular on CNN's "Larry King Live" and "Crossfire," as well as NBC's "Phil Donahue" show. So I just picked up where I left off. In 1996, Fox News was launched, and immediately I became a regular on Bill O'Reilly's show and "Hannity and Colmes." Then I became a regular on MSNBC, especially with shows hosted by Chris Matthews and Joe Scarborough. It was these opportunities, along with other media exposure, that were responsible for giving the Catholic

League the platform to grow.

I had a physical in May and everything is good. I am writing as fast as ever, and my passion for righting wrongs is still strong. There is much work to be done.

50th ANNIVERSARY DINNER WAS A HIT

William A. Donohue

On April 27, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Catholic League at the New York Athletic Club. In attendance was the Archbishop of New York, Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Bishop Peter Byrne, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of New York, Bishop Joseph Coffey of the Archdiocese for the Military, and several priests, including Father Gerry Murray of EWTN fame.

Several notable lay people were also in attendance. They included Tom Monaghan, founder of Ave Maria University and Ave Maria Law School; Chris Ruddy, founder of Newsmax; Brent Bozell, founder of the Media Research Center; Lauren Green, Fox News religion reporter; Bob Royal, editor in chief of The Catholic Thing; George Schwartz, CEO of Ave Maria Funds, and many other distinguished persons.

EWTN host and Fox News contributor Raymond Arroyo was the Master of Ceremonies. As expected, he had everyone laughing. He introduced Walter Knysz, the chairman of the board of the Catholic League. He spoke at some length about our founder, Father Virgil Blum, and how we have grown since his death in 1990. Cardinal Dolan also addressed how the Catholic League has changed since 1973, offering his personal reflections

about it. I wound up the program.

My comments were mostly on the changing face of anti-Catholicism. From colonial times to the mid-twentieth century, our nation's "last acceptable prejudice" was driven by the WASP elite, mostly over theological differences.

The animus against Catholic individuals waned once JFK was elected president in 1960. However, hatred of the institutional Church continued, with even greater vigor. This time it was militant secularists who were the biggest bigots on the block, bashing the Church for its teachings on marriage and sexuality.

When I took over in 1993—I will be president and CEO for 30 years on July 1—most of the anti-Catholicism emanated from the media, the entertainment industry, the arts, education and activist legal organizations.

The first big change, I told the crowd, became evident in the late 2000s when Barack Obama was elected president. Now the government had become the biggest threat to Catholicism, especially with Obama's Health and Human Services mandate; it tried to force the Little Sisters of the Poor, and other Catholic non-profits, to provide for abortion-inducing drugs in their healthcare plans.

Matters have only gotten worse under President Biden. Though he identifies as a Catholic, he is presiding over the most anti-Catholic administration in modern times, perhaps ever.

Never a pessimist, I ended my talk mentioning several things that give us hope. The extraordinary reaction to our Disney movie—millions have watched it—surely has something to do with the fact that Disney's subscribers have taken a deep dive. The blowback that Anheuser-Busch is experiencing for hiring a transgender person to hawk Bud Light is encouraging. I offered many other examples.

I cited the movement by African Americans, Asians, Hispanics and Muslims toward a more aggressive embrace of traditional moral values as another example of how things are changing. I told the attendees that at the end of the day we have only two choices: we can either quit or fight. For us, it's a no-brainer.

While there is reason to be optimistic, I would be lying if I said Catholics are not worried about our society.

During the cocktail hour, and later in the evening, I had a chance to talk to many people. Virtually everyone I spoke to, male or female, young or old, clergy or lay—it made no difference—is seriously concerned about the state of our country. On so many levels, our country is going south, especially culturally.

We are tired of being lied to. From Covid to transgenderism, we have been lied to incessantly. Indeed, in my closing remarks I said we should be skeptical of elites. To be specific, I said that the next time you hear some “expert”—the ones with the alphabets after their name—say something that strikes you as nutty, trust your gut, not them.

We know that the Catholic Church has the answers to what ails us. Unfortunately, that voice of reason is being thwarted by the ruling class, the elites who run our major institutions. They have broken bread with the so-called progressives, or what is more accurately called the woke mob. But they don't have to have the last word.

Enough of that. Back to the party.

If there is one thing that happened at our Gala dinner that stood out, it was the way Cardinal Dolan worked the room. He met virtually everyone, going around from table to table. He won a lot of people over, and no one was happier with his affability and graciousness than the boys from my local pub. They are now his biggest fans. They are also the thirstiest

people I have ever known.

[On pp. 8-9](#), you'll find an assortment of pictures from this event. It would not have been such a success without the work that our vice president put into it, Bernadette Brady-Egan. She will be VP for 28 years come July 1. This was one of her many shining moments.