

# VICTORY OVER TWITTER

Three hours after we listed the email address of a key official at Twitter, asking our subscribers to protest its decision to freeze the account of a Catholic media outlet, Twitter reversed itself and unlocked the account.

Catholic World Report (CWR) is a respectable Catholic media outlet. On January 24, it received notice from Twitter that its account has been locked for hateful conduct. CWR appealed but lost.

CWR posted the following tweet on January 19. "Biden plans to nominate Dr. Rachel Levine, a biological man identifying as a transgender woman who has served as Pennsylvania's health secretary since 2017, to be HHS Assistant Secretary for Health."

It was obvious that Twitter took offense to CWR's description of a 'biological man identifying as a transgender woman.'

This provided an opening for the Catholic League. Bill Donohue did not mince words. "Twitter is a menace to freedom. It needs to be reined in by the Congress." To punctuate his point, Donohue quoted Pope Francis saying gender ideology is "demonic." Would that make the pope a purveyor of hate speech? Donohue asked, "I dare Twitter to silence the Holy Father. Let's get this settled right now."

Meanwhile, we asked our subscribers to demand that Twitter reinstate CWR. We made this request at roughly 1:00 p.m. on January 29. Three hours later, after being pounded by our supporters, Twitter notified CWR that its account was being unlocked.

This was a major victory for free speech.

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# NATIVITY SCENE VICTORY; AUTHORITIES YIELD

It was a fast turnaround. The day after we notified local government officials in upstate New York that they were unconstitutionally banning a nativity scene, they yielded.

A few weeks before Christmas, we were contacted by Knights of Columbus Council #275 about their being denied the right to erect a nativity scene outside the Ulster County office building, something they had done for many years. Yet a menorah and a Christmas tree were allowed inside the building.

On December 9, Bill Donohue wrote a letter to Ulster County Executive Patrick Ryan explaining why his decision was constitutionally problematic. He cited two Supreme Court decisions from the 1980s that Ryan was violating: *Lynch v. Donnelly* and *County of Allegheny v. American Civil Liberties Union*.

Donohue told Ryan that “you have created two constitutional problems: a) you have denied the display of a crèche in an area where it would be surrounded by a secular symbol, namely a Christmas tree [thus making it legal], and b) you have discriminated against Christians for barring their religious symbol while permitting Jews to display theirs.”

Two options were outlined by Donohue. He said, “you can ban the menorah or you can include the crèche. The former option makes claims of discrimination moot; it is also the intolerant alternative. The latter option is inclusive, exhibits tolerance, and ends the controversy.”

Ryan was also informed that in the 1984 *Lynch* decision, the

Supreme Court ruled that the Constitution “affirmatively mandates accommodation, not merely tolerance of all religions, and forbids hostility toward any. That would argue in favor of allowing the crèche to be displayed alongside the menorah and the Christmas tree.”

Donohue closed his letter as follows: “By acceding to this request, needless litigation can be avoided. Because Christmas is upon us, we will need to hear from you as soon as possible.”

On December 10, Donohue received a phone call from Marc Rider, Deputy County Executive at Ulster County, explaining that a decision was reached to place the nativity scene alongside the menorah and the Christmas tree in the lobby of the building (having the crèche stand by itself outside might show favoritism for the Christian symbol). Donohue thanked him for his reasonableness.

This was an important victory. We confront these battles every year.

The Catholic League is delighted to help the Knights of Columbus. They have some very courageous people at the local and state levels.

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## KEY LAWSUIT BY DOJ

The Department of Justice filed a lawsuit last month against the University of Vermont Medical Center for reportedly forcing medical professionals to perform an abortion against their will.

Cardinal Timothy Dolan is the chairman of the United States

Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee for Religious Liberty, and Archbishop Joseph Naumann is chairman of the USCCB's Committee on Pro-Life Activities. They issued a strong statement commending the Trump Administration for defending conscience rights.

In 2018, a nurse at this medical center in Burlington, Vermont, whose objections to abortion were well known, had a fast one pulled on her—she was not told that she had to participate in an abortion until she entered the room.

What this nurse had to endure should never have happened. In 1973, just weeks after the high court legalized abortion, Congress enacted the Church Amendment. It prohibited courts and government agencies from forcing healthcare workers from performing an abortion if they morally objected. The vote was 92-1.

Even Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun (he wrote the majority opinion in two 1973 rulings legalizing abortion) said that “a physician or any other employee has the right to refrain...for moral or religious reasons from participating in the abortion procedure.”

It is a sign of just how sick our society has become that we are still fighting to protect the most elementary conscience rights.

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## **CHRISTMAS AD CANCELLED; CENSORED BY EDUCATION ELITES**

We became the latest victim of the cancel culture when education elites refused to run our ad with a pro-Christmas

message. To read the ad that the elites couldn't stomach, click [here](#).

The appeal letter that members got in October was a request for funds to pay for a pro-Christmas ad that would be sent to educators. We did our best to secure space in six publications, but in the end we hit a brick wall. Funds raised were deposited in our operating account.

In late September, we sent the ad that Bill Donohue wrote to the marketing and advertising departments of *Education Week*, the National Association of Education, *Scholastic* magazine and the *American School Board Journal*. None of the four got back to us. *Education Next* offered us a spot in its quarterly publication, but that was not practical given our desire to affect decision making in time for Christmas celebrations. One publication, *Education Leadership*, simply rejected the ad.

On Sept. 29, we received what appeared to be promising news from the American Association of School Superintendents and Administrators (AASA).

"The content of your E-blast is subject to AASA review and approval. We often have minor feedback once the team reviews, so I would anticipate a round or two of edits before the message deploys. We will ensure ample time to do so and we have never had an instance when E-blast was prevented from deploying on schedule."

Our director of communications, Mike McDonald, then contacted the agent at AASA to find out how we should pay for the ad. He also asked for further assurance that the ad has been approved. We were told that we could pay by credit card and that "*your ad has been approved and will not be rejected.*"

The ad was scheduled to be digitally distributed on November 13. But on November 6, we received the following email. "I am very sorry to share this news, but, per our Media Kit, AASA has rejected your ad for the **DEDICATED EBLAST on November 13,**

**2020.** I regret to share we are ***officially cancelling this contract*** for that reason.”

Here is what Bill Donohue told the press: “Having spent 20 years in education, teaching every grade from the second through graduate school, I am not shocked by the outcome. As I have said on many occasions, there is more free speech allowed in local pubs than there is on local college campuses.”

It is obvious that the schools want nothing to do with celebrations of Christians, and this certainly includes Christmas.

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## **SERRA VANDALS MUST PAY**

The Catholic League has asked the District Attorney of Marin County, California to “apply the full measure of the law” to hold accountable the six vandals who toppled the statue of St. Junípero Serra in San Rafael this fall.

Bill Donohue wrote to D.A. Lori E. Frugoli saying that the Catholic League fully supports the efforts made by San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone to seek justice. It is outrageous that St. Serra, who long championed the human rights of Native Americans, defending them from atrocities at the hands of Spanish colonizers, would be disrespected.

We sent Frugoli a copy of a lengthy booklet on the deeds of Fr. Serra that was written by Donohue. He details the work of noted historians on this subject, showing how incredibly courageous the 18th century priest was. He not only fought for an end to oppression, he did more to defend the rights of women than anyone at the time.

It was not just in San Rafael where the vandals targeted St. Serra. Thugs toppled statues in many parts of California. Donohue told the D.A. that “attacks on his likeness are not from oppressed peoples seeking justice, but rather violent hordes....” Their goal is to intimidate Catholics.

Donohue ended by backing up Archbishop Cordileone’s position that “this attack on a cherished religious symbol on our church property is not a minor property crime, but an attack on Catholics as a people.”

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## **BARRETT        SPARED        BIGOTED ATTACK;    STELLAR    PERFORMANCE**

Weeks before the Senate Judiciary Committee began its hearings on the nomination of Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the U.S. Supreme Court, Bill Donohue predicted that she was not likely to be subjected to another round of anti-Catholic assaults like she endured in 2017 when she was being considered for an appellate job. He was right.

Donohue reasoned that those who made Catholic-bashing remarks three years ago paid a heavy price for doing so, and would therefore be more careful this time. It was also too close to the election for bigoted politicians to go down this road again.

The Catholic League played a major role in putting these unjust critics of Barrett on the defensive in 2017. More than any other Catholic organization, we led the fight against Barrett’s foes. We did so again in 2020.

When Barrett was grilled in 2017, we issued 10 news releases

on her, garnering 32 media hits: we were cited on TV, radio, newspaper, and internet stories. Most important, we mobilized Catholics to contact Senator Charles Grassley, who chaired the Senate Judiciary Committee when Barrett was being considered for the appellate position. They did so in droves.

On September 17, 2017, Donohue wrote to Senator Dick Durbin and Senator Dianne Feinstein objecting to their line of questioning. In both instances, Catholic-baiting questions and comments were made. What made this news release special was providing our subscribers with Grassley's email address: they let him know of their concerns.

In Donohue's statement to the media, he said, "Senator Durbin and Senator Feinstein came perilously close to applying a religious test to circuit court nominee Amy Coney Barrett. Such a test is unconstitutional."

On October 31, 2017, Grassley took to the floor commenting on Barrett's critics, noting that "Others have spoken on the issue of a 'religious test' but I'll remind my colleagues the Constitution" bars such a measure. He added that "we received many letters on this topic." We made sure he did.

What we did in 2017 paid a huge dividend in 2020. We knew there would be some "oblique shots" at her religion, as Donohue put it, but nothing like what happened last time.

The media sought out Donohue for several TV and radio interviews, and many internet sites picked up our news releases. Mike McDonald, our new communications director, was also interviewed on TV and radio. The Catholic League presence in this controversy was significant.

While anti-Catholic politicians still exist, we are here to stop them.

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# GAY MARRIAGE FALLOUT

U.S. Supreme Court Justices Samuel Alito and Clarence Thomas would like the high court to revisit the 2015 decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges* that granted a constitutional right to same-sex marriage. They made their plea in October when the court declined to review the case involving Kim Davis, the Kentucky court clerk who refused to issue a wedding license to two gay men.

It is not just that the Supreme Court invented a right to gay marriage five years ago, the Justices said; it's that it triggered a wave of anti-religious bigotry. Thomas wrote the opinion and Alito joined it.

"Due to *Obergefell*, those with sincerely held religious beliefs concerning marriage will find it increasingly difficult to participate in society," Thomas wrote. The ruling, he said, "enables courts and governments to brand religious adherents who believe that marriage is between one man and one woman as bigots, making their religious liberty concerns that much easier to dismiss."

Since this decision was reached, Thomas wrote, "people of good will" have been branded "as bigots merely for refusing to alter their religious beliefs in the wake of prevailing orthodoxy."

Thomas and Alito do not exaggerate. It is now commonplace in the media and in the schools to mock and shame practicing Catholics and evangelicals for holding to biblical truths on marriage and sexuality.

These Justices sent an unmistakable message to their colleagues on the bench. We hope they're listening.

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# TEXAS A&M PROF GOES BESERK; OFFICIALS CONTACTED

A professor at Texas A&M University posted several vicious anti-Catholic comments on social media, and apparently was going to get away with it. Bill Donohue wrote to the school's president, Michael K. Young, on September 14 asking for sanctions.

Some of the remarks posted by the professor, Filipe Castro, were new; others were from a few years ago. To read a sample of what he said, [see pp. 4-6](#). Notice that his invective includes physical threats.

Castro is a tenured full professor of anthropology, and as such is afforded maximum free speech protection. Donohue told President Young that he was a tenured full professor of sociology, and that while Castro "is entitled to academic freedom, no freedom is boundless." He then made clear what is at stake.

"When a professor intentionally insults people of faith, in this instance Catholics, it cannot seriously be maintained that he is engaged in rational discourse. Indeed, some of what he [Castro] said is so serious, he could easily be sued." Donohue took special offense to Castro's decision to go "for the jugular by speaking in a vile way about the Eucharist, the centerpiece of our faith."

He concluded by saying, "Quite frankly, Castro does not belong in the classroom."

To entice President Young to act, many officials from education and government were contacted (Texas A&M is a state-

funded institution).

We contacted the Texas A&M Board of Regents; the campus newspaper; the Senior VP & Chief Marketing and Communications Director; the Chancellor; the Vice Chancellor for Marketing and Communications; Texas Gov. Greg Abbott; Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick; the head of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges; Sen. Ted Cruz; Sen. John Cornyn; Rep. Bill Flores; and eight members of the state legislature. We also blanketed the Texas media, as well as our national media list.

Donohue told each of these parties that he knows and respects “the wide latitude given to professors to challenge students.” He hastened to add that Castro had no such intention. “He does not seek to challenge, but to bully.” To resolve this issue, Donohue said, it is up to President Young to take “the right steps.”

If this were happening at a time of relative peace, the stakes would not be so high. But Castro’s hate speech is occurring at a time of civil unrest, and the last thing we need is for a professor to demonize Catholics and trash their religion.

We are getting some interesting feedback. More on this in the next issue of *Catalyst*.

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## PROBE NETFLIX

We have asked the Department of Justice to launch an investigation of Netflix. At issue is the possible violation of federal law governing the production of child pornography. The French movie *Cuties* is the object of our concern.

The film is soft-core child porn masquerading as a coming-of-age story. According to Bernadette Brady-Egan, the Catholic League's vp who reviewed the movie, there is "no redeemable reason to watch it." She added that "at no point could I laugh at this film. I wanted to cry a number of times for these girls."

Netflix bills *Cuties* as a sex-comedy movie, but in reality it is more tragic than anything else. The content is outrageously graphic. According to the Internet Movie Database (IMDb), which prepared a guide for parents, *Cuties* is intended for mature audiences. That is why it branded the "sex and nudity" elements "severe."

*Cuties* seeks to normalize the eroticization of girls. It obviously appeals to some very disturbed men. Moreover, it sends a message to teenage males that it is okay to prey on subteens.

Those "open-minded" reviewers who like *Cuties* are either plain stupid or malicious. They complain about the sexual harassment of women and the like. They claim to be horrified by pedophilia. Yet they feed the appetites of these very sick men.

Sen. Ted Cruz was right to call for a probe of Netflix by the Department of Justice. We are only too happy to support him.

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## **"THE SUMMER OF HATE" SPARKS ANTI-CATHOLICISM**

When the anarchists captured a portion of Seattle, turning it into a haven for the deranged, its clueless mayor, Jenny

Durkan, called it “The Summer of Love.” It didn’t take long before the love birds targeted her home. All of a sudden, she pivoted. Her office issued a statement denouncing the rioters for threatening “the safety and of the Mayor and her family.”

Two weeks earlier, another Washington state mayor, Cheryl Selby of Olympia, who previously celebrated Black Lives Matter, turned on the protesters accusing them of “domestic terrorism.” What changed? The thugs vandalized her home.

Bill Donohue dubbed it “The Summer of Hate.” The hate was directed not only at historic American figures—it was directed at the Catholic Church. We detailed the vitriol and the carnage, condemning every attack. Here is a small sample of what happened over the summer.

A statue of Our Blessed Mother was set on fire in Boston and another statue of the Virgin Mary was vandalized in Queens, New York. In Ocala, Florida a man crashed his minivan into a Catholic church while parishioners gathered for Mass; he then poured gasoline in the church’s foyer and set the church ablaze.

Assaults on Saint Junípero Serra were commonplace, especially in California. San Gabriel Mission Church in Los Angeles County was set on fire destroying parts of the 249-year-old iconic structure. It was founded by Father Serra in 1771, the priest who was a staunch defender of the rights of Indians (statues of him had already been smashed in many towns and cities).

Vandals were charged with a hate crime after they partially disfigured Mission San Jose, a church in Fremont, California. Swastikas and anti-Catholic comments were found on the graves of several Dominican friars on the campus of Providence College. Schools and Catholic statues were destroyed in New Mexico, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, Kentucky, and Colorado.

In Portland, Oregon, protesters engaged in book burning. The

book they chose was the Bible. This is what the Nazis did in 1933: They burned 25,000 books deemed inappropriate in Hitler's Germany. The Communists under Mao did the same thing. All of this is done to erase the past, thereby ushering in a new day.

"The enemy of the Portland Hitlerians," Donohue said, "is American society, which is why they burn the flag. They also hate the Judeo-Christian ethos upon which it is based, which is why they burn the Bible."

The protesters resort to anarchy because they have no blueprint for the future. They are intellectually spent, morally bankrupt and culturally deracinated.