

VICTORY FOR PRIESTS' RIGHTS; AMICUS BRIEF PREVAILS

On December 3, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled in a 6-1 decision that the Pennsylvania grand jury report on the Catholic clergy cannot make public the names of 11 priests who challenged the release of their identities; they claimed that doing so would violate their reputational rights as guaranteed by the state constitution.

The Catholic League filed an *amicus curiae* brief in this case and was cited in the court decision.

The priests maintained that they did not have an opportunity to challenge the accusations made against them to the grand jury. Moreover, they said the report contained "false, misleading, incorrect and unsupported assertions." Thus, their reputations would be smeared if their names were not permanently redacted. The court agreed.

Indeed, the majority ruling concluded that permanently redacting the names of these priests was "the only viable due process remedy we may now afford to Petitioners to protect their constitutional rights to reputation."

The judges said that a person's "personal reputation was regarded by the framers of our organic charter as a fundamental human right—one of the 'inherent rights of mankind.'" Furthermore, the ruling said, "throughout our Commonwealth's history, it has been accorded the same exalted status as other basic individual human rights, such as freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and freedom of the press."

Had all the priests in Pennsylvania who were named in the report taken the same position as the plaintiffs—none were given a realistic chance to rebut the charges (many were dead)—the grand jury report would have imploded. Thirty-four

states have a constitution similar to that of Pennsylvania's: the reputational rights of priests can prevail there as well.

This is a big victory for the due process rights of priests.

There is no institution in the nation that publishes the names of accused employees. They don't do it in the media. They don't do it in Hollywood. They don't do it in the public schools. They don't do it in the colleges or universities. They don't do it in any other religion. Why should the bishops be any different?

Finally, let's stop with the sop that all that matters are the victims. They surely matter and everyone who has truly been molested—by anyone—deserves justice. But many of the people who scream the loudest for victims are phonies—they never go after the molesters in the public schools.

Kudos to the Pittsburgh lawyers at Porter Wright Morris & Arthur for representing the Catholic League. Priests have rights, just like those lawyers, reporters, and pundits who wish they didn't.

DNC RIPS CHRISTIANS

The chairman of the Democratic National Committee, Tom Perez, has a problem with Christians. He thinks they are stupid.

Speaking on December 6 at a liberal gathering in Washington, D.C., Perez appeared unhinged as he delivered a whining speech over the inability of Democrats to get their message across. He identified three obstacles: "Fox News, their NRA newsletter, and the pulpit on Sunday."

Perez then unloaded on the clergy and the faithful, making a

veiled stab at President Trump. “That person on the pulpit is saying ‘ignore everything else that this person has done and is doing. We have to focus on one issue of *Roe v. Wade*.’ And people buy it because that’s their only source.”

It bothers Perez to no end that practicing Christians care about the fate of the unborn. News Flash: We think for ourselves!

This is not the first time that Perez’s passion for abortion has sent him off the rails. Last year he said, “Every Democrat, like every American, should support a woman’s right to make her own choices about her body and her health. That is not negotiable and should not change city by city or state by state.”

Perez’s statement was too much for Democratic commentator Mark Shields. After quoting the remark just cited, Shields said, “The Democratic Party, which is a pro-choice party, would now become the ‘no choice’ party.”

Perez’s demeaning comments are not going to sit well with millions of Americans.

NEW NEA CHAIRMAN PICKED; VICTORY SECURED

On November 1, President Donald Trump nominated Mary Anne Carter to be the new chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). We labored hard to affect this decision, and we are delighted with his choice.

Heading the NEA is one of the most important posts in the

nation affecting the culture, and we trust that Ms. Carter will not disappoint us. She needs to be confirmed by the Senate.

Carter is well prepared to hit the ground running. She has served as senior White House advisor to the NEA since the early days of the Trump administration, and has been acting chairman since June. Her advocacy for the arts has won the plaudits of Republicans and Democrats alike.

Raised in a military family, "MAC" as she is called by her friends, was chosen by Florida Governor Rick Scott to be his chief of staff. She oversaw and implemented his agenda, handling everything from budgetary matters to communications. Prior to that position, she served as Executive Director for Conservatives for Patients' Rights. She also did a stint at the Heritage Foundation where she was Director of U.S. Senate Relations.

This announcement means a great deal to the Catholic League. For the past ten months, we have been pushing for a morally responsible person to head the NEA. Here's why.

At the end of last year, we learned that the most obscene assault on Christians ever staged, "Jerry Springer: The Opera," was coming to New York City in January. An NEA grant was given to the production company of this vile musical, the New Group, under the tenure of the outgoing NEA chairman, Dr. Jane Chu.

On January 23, 2018, Bill Donohue held a press conference at the National Press Club in Washington D.C. objecting to the NEA funding of the New Group. He was joined by Brent Bozell, president of the Media Research Center and a member of the Catholic League's advisory board, Dr. Deal Hudson of the Christian Review and a member of the Catholic League's board of directors, and Ralph Reed, founder and president of the Faith and Freedom Coalition.

The next day Donohue sent a letter to President Trump asking him to honor our request: "Please appoint someone who will not continue to fund anti-Catholic grantees, exhibitions, or performances."

The day after Donohue's letter to the president, the Catholic League president kept the pressure on by sending a strongly worded letter to NEA Chairman Dr. Chu, registering his concerns. She wrote back and Donohue offered a blunt response.

By choosing Mary Anne Carter to head the NEA, President Trump has made good on our request. Congratulations to him, Ms. Carter, and all of those who supported us in this effort. This is also a victory for the arts, properly understood.

CHRISTMAS CENSORS

The Christmas censors wasted no time this year trying to censor Christmas. The Chesterfield County Schools in Virginia yielded to a few students who objected to

Christmas songs that mentioned Jesus; all such songs were banned. If they had it their way, Christmas would be banned, not simply lyrics that mention Jesus.

In 2017, there was a nativity scene at the Ravenna Courthouse Lawn, but this year it has been banned. The mayor in this Ohio town said, "When people complained, I could not defend it. For me, if I cannot defend something when people complain, I should not be doing it." Untrue. If people complained about his delinquent leadership, he would be unable to defend himself, yet he would not resign.

Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) is one of the most

strident anti-Christian groups in the nation. They are trying to get a cross and a star removed from a public park in the Pennsylvania borough of Honesdale. But they have been met with opposition from Christians and Jews alike.

FFRF also objected to a nativity scene on the property of Oscoda Township in Michigan. Christians took the matter into their own hands and arranged to have the crèche erected on private property across the street from the township hall.

The Catholic League will erect its life-size nativity scene in Central Park on December 12. Check it out if you get to New York—it's right in front of the Plaza Hotel.

AMICUS CURIAE BRIEF FILED; CATHOLICS IN A FRENZY

In response to the Pennsylvania grand jury report on offending priests, the Catholic League filed an *amicus curiae* brief in the Western District of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. Represented by the Pittsburgh law firm Porter Wright Morris & Arthur, the brief challenges several aspects of the grand jury report that was released by Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro.

The report has damaged the reputation of several persons and institutions, and has set the table for government officials to misuse the findings. A more complete rendering of the Catholic League brief can be found on pp. 4-5.

We believe that anyone who hurts a minor must be investigated and, when appropriate, prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Such investigations and prosecutions must however be

conducted in accordance with the protections required by the United States Constitution and, in this instance, the Pennsylvania Constitution.

There is perhaps no greater threat to liberty than a politically motivated prosecutor. When those motivations extend beyond individuals who have engaged in criminal wrongdoing—targeting an entire religion—the threat is cataclysmic to all faiths.

This is not the first time that Attorney General Shapiro has used the power of his office to single out the Catholic Church in order to impugn its moral integrity, but it is his most egregious effort. We are asking the Pennsylvania Supreme Court to take the necessary steps to ensure a grand jury process grounded in the Constitutional protections of due process, reputation and religious freedom.

This grand jury probe has inspired other states to conduct their own investigations, all the while ignoring the abuse of minors in other religions, never mind in the public schools. It has also triggered a crazed reaction on the part of some lay Catholics, many of whom just want to bring down a bishop, regardless of whether he deserves to be unseated. Cardinal Donald Wuerl is a prime example of this frenzy (see p. 7).

Pope Francis weighed in attempting to put this issue in perspective. “In olden times these things were covered up—but were covered up also in families, when an uncle abused his niece, or a father raped his child; it was covered up because it was a very great shame. That is how people thought in the last century.” He asked us not to use today’s understanding of this issue to judge past decisions.

The Catholic League will never condone wrongdoing, and wants the guilty to pay. But we are also committed to defending the innocent; this is not an easy task in today’s overheated climate. Making critical distinctions is more important now

than ever before.

ST. LOUIS VICTORY

In January 2017, when a bill was introduced in St. Louis to expand abortion rights, the Catholic League supported St. Louis Archbishop Robert Carlson in his effort to stop the bill. We lost that round but won in court in October.

The bill added “pregnancy and reproductive health decisions as protected classes” to an existing anti-discrimination ordinance. It meant that Catholic non-profits, such as schools and social service agencies, could be fined for maintaining their opposition to abortion in matters of employment and insurance coverage.

Archbishop Carlson feared that the bill could turn St. Louis into “a sanctuary city for abortion.” His fears were not without merit. As soon as the law passed, Catholic institutions were attacked, triggering a lawsuit.

On January 12, 2017, Bill Donohue wrote to Lewis Reed, the president of the Board of Aldermen in St. Louis, stating that the government “has no constitutional right to encroach on the religious liberties of Catholic institutions, or those of any other religion.”

A federal judge ruled on October 4 that by not allowing for a religious exemption, the St. Louis ordinance violated the U.S. Constitution and Missouri law. Judge Audrey Fleissig said the law violated the First Amendment rights of Catholic schools by requiring them to employ or house people who are pro-abortion.

The judge’s ruling does not apply to secular institutions. But

it is a victory for Catholics and people of all faiths. We salute Archbishop Carlson for his courage.

BEE PIVOTS

Looks like our campaign against Samantha Bee's TBS show, "Full Frontal," is paying dividends. In the August 15 edition of her show (reruns were aired over the past few weeks), Bee ran 23 advertisements; on September 12, there were 19.

We have been able to pick off seven of her most prominent sponsors: Verizon, Procter and Gamble, Wendy's, Ashley HomeStore, The Wonderful Company (maker of pistachios), Popeyes, and Burger King.

What we are most pleased with is a change in Bee's script. We started to target her sponsors because of two things: her relentless anti-Catholic assaults, and her use of the c-word to describe the president's daughter.

Bee has subsequently stopped attacking the Catholic Church and has not employed vulgarities to assail public persons or institutions. We are delighted that she has decided to pivot.

Do we trust Bee? Not at all. Any person with her record of bigotry and obscenities is not to be trusted. But her producers know that it was her antics that triggered a public revulsion against her, and that the Catholic League has played a major role in that effort.

We will continue to monitor Bee's show, and will resume our campaign if and when she starts acting out again. It is a sorry state of affairs in this country that it takes a stern reaction from groups like the Catholic League to get the likes

of Samantha Bee to zip it.

GRAND JURY PROBES EMERGE; CHURCH SINGLED OUT

Following the publication of a Pennsylvania grand jury report on clergy sexual abuse, many states are considering launching a grand jury of their own.

Illinois, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey and New York have announced investigations, and other states are weighing doing the same. Radical activist groups like the Center for Constitutional Rights are asking for a federal probe, though there appears to be no congressional interest in that effort.

The Catholic League position is clear and concise: there should be no grand jury investigation of the Catholic Church *unless all other private and public sector institutions are included*. To single out the Church smacks of bigotry.

Where are the calls for grand jury investigations of Jewish, Mormon, Muslim, and Protestant organizations? Wherever adults intermingle with minors on a regular basis, there is the possibility of abuse. Most important, why is no one calling for an investigation of the public schools?

The identity of the victimizer should not matter: what should matter are the victims. Moreover, given the great strides that have been made in this country since the Dallas reforms of 2002, it makes it all the more unjust to examine only the Catholic Church.

Bill Donohue wrote a letter to the attorneys general in all 50

states, and it was copied to thousands of state lawmakers across the nation, asking them to include all religious organizations, private non-sectarian entities, and the public schools in their probes. It was a big undertaking, but it was necessary. See p. 4.

We need to know who knew what and when about the predatory behavior of Theodore McCarrick, and we need assurances that the seminaries are not gay enclaves. What we don't need are endless panels and investigations of what happened decades ago. We already have a good grip on that.

Catholics are angry about what has happened, and who can blame them? However, it is important not to be played.

To be specific, we should not let all other institutions off the hook—we should demand that they be investigated—otherwise we wind up playing right into the hands of our adversaries. That's what they want: they want us to do their bidding for them. Remember, most of the cases surfacing now are about offenses committed decades ago, and most of the offenders are either dead or no longer in the priesthood.

Our job is to defend the Church against wrongdoing; we are not here to defend wrongdoing by the clergy. It is also our job to insist that priests and bishops are entitled to the same due process afforded everyone else. Sadly, that needs to be emphasized today.

BEE'S TV SHOW REELING

The Catholic League protest of Samantha Bee's TBS TV Show, "Full Frontal," is paying dividends: sponsors continue to flee.

Her filthy show has long targeted Catholicism, but when she used a vulgar term to describe President Trump's daughter, she went beyond obscene. We decided to take aim at her advertisers.

In the last issue of *Catalyst*, we cited the following sponsors who discontinued advertising on Bee's show after we asked them to do so: Verizon, Procter and Gamble, Wendy's, and Ashley HomeStore; the latter was very critical of her show.

Bee's show took a few week hiatus in late June-early July, airing reruns. When it returned, so did we. We asked The Wonderful Company, producer of Wonderful Pistachios, to pull its ad. It did. We asked Popeyes to withdraw advertising. It did. We requested Burger King to do the same. It did not. Indeed, it continued to advertise for two more weeks, but we did not give up.

On August 15, after striking out with appeals to the Burger King CEO, we heard from Burger King president José Cil. When he learned of our concerns, he said, "our advertising plan never targeted this show in particular," conceding that a "small number of our television ads have appeared." The good news is that he said, "we won't be advertising with this show going forward." They did not.

This shows what can happen when we persevere. Yielding is for losers.

OLD ABUSE CASES SURFACE;

CRITICS GO BONKERS

This was a tough summer for the Catholic Church. Revelations of sexual misconduct involving Cardinal Theodore McCarrick (he is no longer a member of the College of Cardinals) kept surfacing, and then came the Pennsylvania grand jury report on clergy abuse. For our part, we never wavered, making our voice loudly heard in the media.

All of the cases were about instances of sexual abuse extending back decades: not a single news report cited a new incident. Yet the impression given by the media was that these were on-going; this perception only fed an already overheated environment.

The Pennsylvania grand jury report named priests who were never given an opportunity to defend themselves. It also published lies, many of which were contested by some bishops before publication, but were never given the time of day. To read Bill Donohue's thorough analysis of the report, which was widely distributed, see pp. 8-10.

Critics took particular aim at Cardinal Donald Wuerl. They alleged that he must have known about McCarrick's misdeeds because he succeeded him as the Archbishop of Washington. Others criticized him for not doing enough to combat priestly sexual abuse when he was Bishop of Pittsburgh. Donohue quickly defended him against these cruel distortions of his record; see pp. 11-12.

The anger that many Catholics experienced at these stories about old cases—most of the priests accused in Pennsylvania are either dead or have been removed from ministry—allowed their emotions to cloud their thinking. They took on a stridently adversarial position against the hierarchy.

These Catholics became so unhinged that they called for grand jury investigations in all 50 states. Not of every

institution—only Catholic ones. Thus did they show how they have been played by the enemies of the Church.

They want financial probes and priest personnel files to be released. They want Catholics to stop giving to the Church, and some even asked for all the bishops to resign at once. But they never made the same demands of others, allowing the public schools, Christian schools, and yeshivas off-the-hook.

They are being played. They are doing what the arch-enemies of the Catholic Church want—they are promoting mutiny. This kind of purist mentality is what Jesus warned about, but evidently these Catholics never learned that lesson.

Yes, “the guilty must pay,” but the innocent must also be protected. Most bishops and priests are good men who do not deserve to be trashed.