

TRUMP SCORES

A comparison between President Donald Trump's first year in office on the issue of religious liberty, and that of his predecessor, President Barack Obama, showed a considerable difference: religious rights spiked under Trump.

On February 1, 2017, Trump chose Judge Neil Gorsuch to take Antonin Scalia's place on the U.S. Supreme Court. Gorsuch is a strong proponent of religious liberty, holding that conscience rights are paramount.

Trump endorsed school choice, championing the cause of tax incentives to businesses that fund private schools; he emphasized the need to help minorities.

An executive order on religious liberty was signed by Trump. It sent a clear message to his cabinet on how to proceed with such matters.

A bill to allow the states to strip funding from Planned Parenthood was signed into law by Trump. This encouraged several states to pass bills restricting abortion.

Trump authorized direct assistance to persecuted Christians in the Middle East.

As important as anything, a religious exemption to Obama's HHS mandate was granted by Trump.

The religious elements of Christmas were celebrated at the White House. Under Obama, they were downplayed. In fact, an ornament depicting a mass murderer, Mao Zedong, was hung from a Christmas tree.

Obama chose several anti-Catholics to be in his administration; no bigots were selected by Trump.

MAHER SPARKS PETITION DRIVE; TIME WARNER & HBO GUILTY

Time Warner has a pathological problem with Catholicism. Consider the following.

On November 10, Bill Maher proved to be both a bigot and a coward. His commentary on Jesus, Mary, and Joseph was despicable: He used an obscenity to describe Joseph and Mary having sex. He showed his cowardice when he refused to comment on his perverted friend, Louis C.K.

Maher's bigotry triggered a petition drive demanding that HBO respond to Maher the way it did when he offended African Americans in June. Thousands signed it online. You can sign it by filling out the form on p. 15 and mailing it to HBO chief Richard Plepler.

HBO is a Time Warner company. So is TNT. Within a week of Maher's assault on the Holy Family, a TNT show, "Major Crimes," portrayed a priest as a child abuser, indicting the entire Catholic Church. That was on November 14.

TBS is also a Time Warner company. During the same week, "comedian" Samantha Bee mocked the Immaculate Conception. That was on November 15.

This led Bill Donohue to write an open letter to Time Warner Chairman and CEO Jeff Bewkes.

"Could you please tell me how many practicing Catholics—the ones who actually accept the teachings of the Magisterium of the Catholic Church—work for Time Warner in the production and writing of the programs? I am not expecting a definitive

tally: a guesstimate will do.”

Donohue explained his reasoning. “I ask this because many producers and writers in your employ obviously hate Catholicism. Moreover, as someone who touts his commitment to diversity and inclusion, perhaps you can tell me what’s driving this double standard.”

Donohue pointed out that when Maher dropped the “N-word” on June 2, HBO called his remark “completely inexcusable” and “tasteless.” Maher quickly apologized.

When news of Louis C.K.’s sexual perversions surfaced—to cite one example, he found it fun to masturbate in front of women—HBO pulled all of his programs from its website and removed his past projects from its On Demand services.

The petition drive was occasioned by HBO’s duplicitous response. Maher gets reprimanded, Louis C.K. gets sanctioned, and Catholics get nothing!

On November 17, Maher had another chance to slam Louis C.K. He balked again. Worse, he made a half-hearted defense of Al Franken, another one of his sick buddies. He finished with a vile statement about Jesus and Our Blessed Mother.

Maher, Louis C.K., and Franken are all cut from the same cloth. Their anti-Catholic bigotry is sickening. They’ve long made sweeping generalizations, blaming *all* priests for the behavior of some, but are now closing ranks protecting each other.

Sickos and hypocrites all.

AL FRANKEN MUST GO

When the news broke that Senator Al Franken molested a woman when she was asleep, we immediately called for his resignation. There is no place in public office for sexual abusers.

We pointed out that if Franken were an accused priest, he would be forced to step aside, pending an investigation. In his case, because he is an admitted molester, he should resign.

The priest reference is particularly poignant given that Franken has a history of mocking priests, and indeed the entire Catholic Church, for sexual offenses.

In 2008, we noted that Franken mocked the Eucharist, ridiculed the crucifixion, slandered all priests as molesters, belittled practicing Catholics, and disparaged Church teachings on life. Four years earlier, he trashed the Eucharist and attacked priests.

For Franken to now be caught up in a sex scandal of his own is hardly surprising given the morally debased circles he used to run in: he was a Hollywood fixture before entering political life.

If he does not step aside, the Senate is obligated to invoke all of its powers to see that he does.

The Republicans have their own problems with serious accusations of sexual misconduct being made about senatorial candidate Roy Moore. The explanations he offered are unconvincing. He is another disgrace.

How ironic it is to observe that after years of Hollywood bashing the Church over a few miscreant priests, the stories of abuse and perversion in their own ranks are now surfacing

non-stop.

WEINSTEIN'S BIGOTED LEGACY; DUPLICITY MARKED HIS LIFE

Bill Donohue and Harvey Weinstein have been locking horns for over two decades. So when the *New York Times* broke the story about his sexual escapades—using his power position to abuse women in his employ—it triggered a strong response from us.

We now know that Weinstein abused women even as he championed the cause of women's rights. This appears to be consistent with his duplicitous personality: He condemned some expressions of bigotry (anti-Semitism) while contributing to other expressions (anti-Catholicism).

On March 24, 2015, Weinstein gave an impassioned statement condemning anti-Semitism at a Simon Wiesenthal Center awards dinner.

"We're gonna have to get as organized as the Mafia," Weinstein said. "We just can't take it anymore. We just can't take these things. There's gotta be a way to fight back." He was given the Humanitarian Award by Christoph Waltz, who praised him for making movies that made Jews proud of their heritage.

At the time, Donohue said, "I join Weinstein in condemning anti-Semitism. But before I am prepared to issue a joint statement with him, he needs to first condemn anti-Catholicism and pledge not to contribute to it again." Donohue was referring to Weinstein's long history of Catholic-bashing movies.

In 1995, Weinstein and his brother, Bob, offered us “Priest,” a film featuring nothing but miscreant priests. In 1998, they gave us “The Butcher Boy,” which starred Sinead O’Connor as a foul-mouthed Virgin Mary. In 1999, we were treated to “Dogma,” where the audience learned of a descendant of Mary and Joseph who works in an abortion clinic.

In 2002, they released “40 Days and 40 Nights,” a film that ridiculed a Catholic for giving up sex for Lent. Also opening in 2002 was “The Magdalene Sisters,” a movie that smeared nuns. In 2003, “Bad Santa” opened for the holidays; Santa was cast as a chain-smoking, drunken, foul-mouthed, suicidal, sexual predator. In 2006, “Black Christmas” made a predictably dark statement about the holiday.

“Philomena” was released in 2013. It is a tale of malicious lies about Irish nuns and the Church (Harvey lobbied hard for an Oscar, but came up empty). In real life, Philomena Lee was a teenager who abandoned her out-of-wedlock son, and who, because of the good efforts of the nuns, was adopted by an American couple. They are currently working on another movie, “Mary Magdalene.”

Weinstein’s womanizing did him in. If Hollywood weren’t a hotbed of anti-Catholicism, he would have been history years ago.

HHS MANDATE VICTORY

President Trump did not let Catholics down: His administration granted a religious exemption to the Health and Human Services (HHS) mandate on October 6th. Those employers whose “sincerely held religious beliefs” are compromised by providing for abortion-inducing drugs, sterilization, and contraceptives in

their healthcare plans do not have to abide by the mandate.

By providing for the religious exemption, the Trump administration affirmed conscience rights, a liberty trashed by the Obama administration. This means that organizations such as the Little Sisters of the Poor will not have to abide by healthcare provisions deemed morally offensive.

The Catholic League expressed its concerns on several occasions that the Trump administration was slow to reverse the Obama policy. But we never doubted that President Trump would eventually render the right decision. This ruling effectively overturns one of the most anti-Catholic policies crafted by the Obama administration.

It is for everyone to note, especially Catholics, that the Obama HHS mandate was an opening for demanding Catholic entities to pay for abortion. That was the purpose of including abortion-inducing drugs in the policy.

What still needs correction, not simply clarification, is the Obama administration's pernicious attempt to redefine what constitutes a Catholic organization. Catholic entities that hire and serve non-Catholics do not lose their Catholic status simply because the government defines them as functionally secular.

JUDICIAL NOMINEE MALIGNED; TWO SENATORS GUILTY

It was right out of the 19th century. A Catholic nominee for the federal bench is questioned about her Catholicity by two members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. This is exactly

what the nativists did—they argued that Catholics professed allegiance to Rome, and were thus un-American.

Welcome to America in 2017. Senator Dick Durbin and Senator Dianne Feinstein were not content to question the bona fides of Amy Coney Barrett, a professor at Notre Dame Law School; she was nominated to serve on the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. No, they had to get into the dirt by implying that her dedication to the Catholic faith might compromise her judicial thinking.

Bill Donohue wrote a stinging letter to both [Durbin](#) and [Feinstein](#) as soon as the story broke and made media headlines about his response. He pointed out something that virtually every news story on this issue missed: both Democrats voiced the same line of bigoted reasoning in 2005; the victim that time was Judge John Roberts, who was being considered for the U.S. Supreme Court.

Donohue told Raymond Arroyo on his EWTN show, “The World Over,” that this was no coincidence. If Durbin and Feinstein smeared a high court nominee 12 years earlier—implying he exercised “dual loyalties”—then it was clear that both have anti-Catholic bigots working for them.

Durbin and Feinstein were guided in both instances by the Alliance for Justice. It is an umbrella group, funded by billionaire atheist George Soros, that represents scores of organizations dedicated to promoting a left-wing judiciary.

Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore, who is the bishops’ point man on religious liberty, issued a statement on this issue. “People of faith—whatever faith they may hold—should not be disqualified because of that faith from serving the public good.”

Father John Jenkins, president of Notre Dame, defended professor Barrett, taking sharp aim at Feinstein’s remark that the nominee’s “dogma lives loudly” within her. “I am one in

whose heart 'dogma lives loudly,'" he said.

Princeton University president Christopher Eisgruber sent a note to Feinstein saying, "Because religious belief is constitutionally irrelevant to the qualifications for a federal judgeship, the Senate should not interrogate any nominee about those beliefs."

There were some other senators who made comments that smacked of anti-Catholic bigotry, but none matched Feinstein's line of attack. Durbin's remark—he questioned whether there was room for an "orthodox Catholic" on the bench—was more veiled, but just as bigoted.

It is hoped that Durbin and Feinstein got the message. They are a disgrace.

SERRA STATUE DEFACED

In two instances recently, a statue of Saint Junípero Serra was vandalized. Both crimes were committed in California.

In the first offense, "Murder" was written on a statue of Saint Serra near the San Fernando Mission, outside of Los Angeles. His hands were painted red and a swastika was depicted on the statue of the child standing next to him. Fortunately, everything was quickly cleaned up.

The second statue was defaced at the Old Santa Barbara Mission. Saint Serra's statue was decapitated and splashed with bright red paint. It was also restored.

Pope Francis canonized Father Serra in 2015. The 18th century priest personally founded six missions, baptizing more than 6,000 Indians. He did more to defend the natural rights of

Indians against Spanish conquistadors than any other leader at the time, secular or religious.

The assault on this revered priest comes on the heels of many attacks on historical figures, all stemming from the Charlottesville tragedy. As with those episodes, the persons involved in this barbarism have accepted the hate-filled propaganda of extremists, misrepresenting history to serve a radical agenda.

After Charlottesville, we predicted that the anarchists would vandalize the missionaries next. A week later, they targeted Saint Serra.

We are involved in a frontal assault on Western civilization, and the Judeo-Christian ethos that defines it. That is why the Catholic League is opposing these attempts at cultural cleansing—the ultimate goal is to undermine our religious heritage.

MOTHER TERESA DEFILED; APOLOGY GRANTED

The Bedford Cheese Shop, with outlets in Brooklyn and Manhattan, was the unlikely source of a filthy assault on Mother Teresa this summer. After we launched a vigorous protest, the offensive item was quickly withdrawn and an apology was granted.

We got a tip from an outraged Catholic who visited the Manhattan store on July 26. He sent us a picture taken with his camera phone of a card display for Brebrousse D'argental cheese. The cheese was described as having a heavenly texture.

That part was fine, but it didn't stop there: it was followed by a wholly gratuitous, and patently obscene, remark about Mother Teresa.

We showed a picture of the offensive card online, but given that children may innocently pick up Catalyst, we did not think it appropriate to be reprinted here.

"If the Bedford Cheese Shop did this to some other religious figure," said Bill Donohue, "the owner would be in serious trouble. But she chose to defile Mother Teresa, which is why there will be no physical retaliation. They should nonetheless be punished by everyone, not just Catholics: a boycott is in order."

The store, which is owned by Charlotte Kamin, ignored some initial complaints, but once we got involved, things changed. To be specific, we listed the email address of the store, asking those on our email list to contact her. They sure did.

Less than an hour after being pounded, the vile card was withdrawn. Donohue then asked for an apology. Less than a hour later, it was granted. Here is how the store responded to the barrage of emails.

"We have received your email regarding the cheese description. Please be aware that the sign was taken down. We sincerely apologize for any hurt or anger, none of which was intentional. We hope you have a blessed day."

Donohue was pleased with the outcome, but not the statement. "This is a lie—it was intentional," he said. "No matter, they got the message."

We at the Catholic League can lead, but we depend on allies for support. If the guilty are not subject to sharp rebuke, they will try to ride it out. That they didn't is a tribute to all of those who took the time to register their anger.

Why anyone would choose to defile Mother Teresa—for reasons which have absolutely nothing to do with Catholicism—is beyond comprehension. But if she can be attacked by a cheese store owner, no Catholic figure is safe from assault.

Like firefighters, we don't start trouble. But like them, we are called to put out fires, and this was a doozy.

BOGUS LAWSUIT ENDS

A lawsuit designed to intimidate Bill Donohue and the Catholic League came to a screeching halt in August. We won.

At every step of the way, a lawsuit filed by Rebecca Randles against Donohue and the Catholic League was knocked down by the courts. Donohue never libeled anyone, and she knows it. She is known as one of the most notorious Church-suing attorneys in the nation.

Randles lost in the U.S. District Court, and then lost again in the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals. She wisely decided not to appeal her bogus lawsuit to the U.S. Supreme Court, though it would have been fun to watch her lose again.

Randles tried to silence Donohue and the Catholic League, and she failed. She should have known better.

Donohue noted that her penchant for misleading the public goes way beyond him. In a news release, he wrote that “her bio,

listed on her website, says she is a ‘trustee for *Southwest Baptist University*.’ (My italics.) There is no such school.”

Many thanks to Erin Mersino for representing Donohue and the Catholic League—she did a splendid job. Thanks, too, to Richard Thompson, president of the Thomas More Law Center, for accepting this case. “They are two committed Catholics,” Donohue said, “persons whose courage is matched only by their brilliance.”

To read the statement by the Thomas More Law Center click [here](#), and the letter Donohue sent to Randles, click [here](#).

CATHOLIC BASHING IS OKAY; OTHER INSULTS ARE NOT

A rash of obscene insults targeting God, Catholicism, President Trump, and African Americans took place in the spring. The guilty parties were all prominent members of the cultural elite.

The good news is that the assaults on President Trump and African Americans generated considerable moral outrage. The bad news is that the Catholic League stood virtually alone in objecting to the attacks on God and Catholicism.

Netflix aired an animated series, “F is for Family,” where one of the characters, Greg, just back from making up with his wife Ginny—thanks to Father Pat—pulls a crucifix out of his pocket, asking the Lord for strength while chanting, “vagina, vagina, vagina.”

In another episode, Greg and Ginny’s son, Kevin, is shown

masturbating while staring at a candle with an image of Our Blessed Mother. Another show featured Father Pat, who is gay, as a child molester.

Bill Donohue took the unusual step of writing to Netflix CEO Reed Hastings asking him if his wife, Patti Ann, approves of the show. "Since this is an animated show," he asked, "would she recommend it to little kids? If she has not seen these episodes, please ask her to do so and get back to me."

Sarah Silverman's Netflix film, "A Speck of Dust," featured the comedian asking the audience if they would allow God to ejaculate in their mouth. We detailed her previous attacks on Catholicism, noting the lack of moral outrage at her sick brand of humor.

Kathy Griffin got into trouble when she held a bloody head of President Trump. Finally, there was considerable pushback, led by CNN, which dumped her. She then had the audacity to blame the president for the backlash against her.

The New York Public Theater hosted "Julius Caesar" in Central Park. In place of Caesar the production inserted a President Trump look-alike; his wife had a Slavic accent. Caesar/Trump was brutally assassinated. Delta and the Bank of America pulled their sponsorship, but the *New York Times* did not, citing its allegiance to free speech.

Bill Maher dropped the "N-word" on his show, igniting a wave of protest. He apologized. As we pointed out, he has never apologized for his attacks on Catholicism; we have amassed over 60 such incidents.

In other words, this tells us that insulting God and Catholicism is perfectly okay, but violence and insults hurled at blacks are not okay. Appeals to decency apparently only go so far.

As always, the cultural elite bear most of the blame: they set

the table for these offenses. Regrettably, they have only gotten more vicious in recent years.