

HOMEOWNERS ASSOC. NOTICE: UPHOLD RELIGIOUS RIGHTS

We often get complaints from members who live in apartment complexes or condominiums that homeowners association managers are too restrictive in dealing with religious symbols at Christmas. We decided to do something about it. On November 19, we contacted over 2,000 of these officials, alerting them to the rights of their residents. Here is the text of the letter.

Now that the holiday season is upon us, it is important that the religious rights of owners be observed. The Federal Housing Act (FHA) of 1968 prohibits discrimination by housing providers on the basis of seven characteristics, one of which is religion. Before 1968, HOA managers had a lot of leeway in enforcing policies that restricted religious practices, but that changed when the FHA was passed.

As interpreted by the U.S. Department of Justice, the FHA permits religious decorations on doors and in common areas. This would include a Jewish mezuzah and a cross. "Similarly, when condominiums or apartments have a common room that can be reserved by residents for private activities like parties or book studies, residents seeking to hold a Bible study or other private religious activity may not be discriminated against."

It should be noted that the Eleventh Circuit has stated, "the Supreme Court has repeatedly instructed us to give the Fair Housing Act a 'broad and inclusive' interpretation.'" In other words, the religious rights of residents are presumptively protected.

What the courts take seriously is any selective enforcement of HOA rules. For example, to allow a menorah but not a nativity scene, or vice versa, is a clear violation of the FHA.

Furthermore, the Supreme Court has ruled that a menorah is a religious symbol (even if it is not solely religious in nature). The crèche is also religious, but a Christmas tree is not—it is a secular symbol. This needs to be said because every year there are instances where these kinds of violations occur.

HOA managers have greater latitude in adopting restrictive rules for balconies. Balconies can be kept clear from displaying religious symbols; they are not analogous to doors or common areas. However, even if the rule is “facially neutral,” there can be a violation of the law if there is evidence of an underlying intent to discriminate.

In conclusion, there should be no attempt to favor one religion over the other, nor should there be any intent to discriminate.

Wishing everyone a happy holiday season.

William Donohue, Ph.D.

President

Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights

We hope this will minimize these problems this year. They now have no more excuses.

BILLBOARD NIXED

We wanted to display a Christmas message on billboards, but we got shot down. So we came up with a new idea—alerting Homeowners Association Managers to the religious rights of residents. Here’s what happened to our billboard idea.

In September, we contacted a company that deals with outdoor marketing in Washington, D.C., hoping to run a Christmas message on billboards, the back of buses, bus shelters, etc. We wanted to take advantage of the new religious-friendly atmosphere in the nation's Capitol.

Unlike the Biden administration, which allowed the FBI to spy on faithful Catholics, the Trump team has not only put an end to this tyrannical scheme, it has promoted a host of religion-friendly policies. We wanted to capitalize on this without being too partisan, which is why we never mentioned anything specifically about the current administration. Here was our proposed message:

Christians Take Note. *Religious Liberty is Thriving Again.* Celebrate Christmas Like Never Before!

The woman we spoke to thought it would be okay, but knowing that we were dealing with D.C. officials, we asked for it to be cleared with their lawyers first. She got back to us, saying, "It looks like that messaging is about 50/50 in terms of being approved. I think if you took out 'Christian' in the 'Christians Take Note' and just had 'Take Note' it would have a better chance."

We refused to bend to these anti-Christian bureaucrats. They really do fear us.

**KILLED BECAUSE HE WAS CHRISTIAN;
CHARLIE KIRK'S**

TRAGIC DEATH

Charlie Kirk was assassinated because he was an outspoken Christian. This is undeniable. Yet the media continue to bury this fact. Of course he was a conservative Christian—those are the only Christians targeted by Christian haters.

The suspected killer, Tyler Robinson, was also a sexually confused young man. It takes a very disturbed man to be “romantically involved” with a man who desperately wants to be a woman.

Apparently, Robinson’s roommate, Lance Twiggs, had a great effect on his ideological convictions, and they were not of the MAGA variety.

According to relatives of Twiggs, “He hates conservatives and Christians. He hated us. He was not raised that way, but he, over the years, has become really detached [and] been radicalized. He has obviously gotten progressively worse the last year or two,” saying he was “always very angry.”

Robinson made it plain to his family that he had a special hatred for Kirk’s Christian message. In an affidavit, a relative said that he “didn’t like Kirk” and was “full of hate and spreading hate.”

An important part of Kirk’s message was a strong defense of traditional Christian family values, something which is anathema to the LGBTQ crowd. Kirk deplored the entire transgender movement, and was therefore seen as the enemy. Liberal Christians tend to be on the transgender side, which is why they are safe.

As federal authorities, and Utah Gov. Spencer Cox, said, the evidence shows that he became “deeply indoctrinated with leftist ideology.” They concluded that he had only been “radicalized” in recent years. Those years coincide with his

relationship with his trans boyfriend.

Robinson was not simply involved with a man who hated being a man, he himself exhibited ties—at least online—to the “furry” community. “Furries” are people who dress up as animals and consider themselves to be a mix of humans and animals. Many give themselves names, choose a species, and attend conventions with like-minded people. Most of the “furries” are homosexuals.

Now why aren't most of those in the media telling the truth to the American people?

What could be more different from Christian sexual ethics than the idea that it is natural for people to hate their sex and their humanness? Let's face it, it is not normal to rebel against one's nature, reconceptualizing oneself as a member of the opposite sex and another species.

The big media are in denial. They are not highlighting the virulent anti-Christian bigotry that bedevils Robinson and Twiggs, or their depraved orientations. They would rather lie than tell the truth. They have too much invested ideologically, financially and emotionally to change.

TRUMP TACKLES BIGOTRY

On September 8, President Trump addressed the Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty, underscoring his commitment to combating anti-Christian bigotry.

The task force he authorized to study this subject issued its initial report on anti-Christian bigotry on the same day (though it was dated June 6.) It covered many of the issues

that the Catholic League has addressed. We previously gave a large batch of documents to the Department of Justice task force.

Among the issues that we addressed, and were cited in the report, were the Biden administration's war on pro-life Christians, particularly its treatment of crisis pregnancy centers. The corruption of the FBI—spying on faithful Catholics and labeling them “domestic terrorists”—engulfed the Catholic League for years; we made available all the documents detailing our efforts to stop it.

In this issue of *Catalyst*, we detail our latest response to the president's effort to stem attacks on Christians. We would like the president to broaden the scope of the panel to study instances of anti-Christian bigotry that emanate from outside the federal government. In his remarks, Trump referenced several such examples, though he was not explicit in charging the task force to address them.

Anti-Catholicism, which is at the heart of this problem, has a long and ugly history. Unfortunately, after many years of progress, the Biden team turned back the clock. Trump is off to a good start trying to rectify it. We stand ready to help.

MORE INFO ON FBI SCAM; SCOPE WAS WIDE

On July 22, an Interim Staff Report on President Biden's FBI Catholic spy ring was released by House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jim Jordan. Some of the new information is distressing.

The FBI began its Catholic spy ring by focusing on “radical-traditionalist Catholics,” but it didn’t end there. Amazingly, according to the FBI’s own internal review of this matter, “investigators found that many FBI employees could not even define the meaning of ‘radical-traditionalist Catholic’ when preparing, editing, or reviewing” the Richmond Field office memo that okayed the probe.

FBI operatives went beyond these “rad-trads” by categorizing “certain Catholic Americans as potential domestic terrorists.” They came to this absurd conclusion based on articles their employees read. “How Extremist Gun Culture is Trying to Co-opt the Rosary” is one of the gems they named as evidence of the nefarious Catholic agenda.

If there is one Catholic group that the FBI thought was emblematic of very conservative Catholics, it is the Society of Saint Pius X (SSPX). This was not a good choice—they are not in full communion with the Catholic Church. This is a break-away association of Catholics founded in 1970 who were upset with the reforms of Vatican II in the 1960s. They were once excommunicated, then reinstated, but are still one step removed from being an authentic part of the Catholic Church.

The FBI’s focus on SSPX and the “rad-trads” was a pretext to opening the door to a much wider investigation of practicing Catholics, most of whom tend to be more conservative than non-practicing Catholics.

As an example of this mad search for wrongdoing, the FBI investigated Catholics who evinced “hostility toward abortion-rights advocates.” In other words, Catholic activists who exercised fidelity to Church teachings on abortion—they are called pro-life Catholics—were considered a domestic threat by the FBI. Similarly, those who espoused “Conservative family values/roles” were labeled “radical.”

It was not dissident Catholics the FBI was concerned about, it

was the loyal sons and daughters of the Church. How strange it is to note that at least some dissident Catholics, and some FBI agents, were both seeking to subvert the Catholic Church.

It is not just the profile of Catholics whom the FBI was examining that was a problem—it was the scope of its investigations. It started in Richmond, then spread to Louisville, Milwaukee and Portland. Its reach even extended overseas—the FBI’s London Office was involved.

The ultimate goal was to have a “national application” of its investigatory measures.

Under Biden, the FBI engaged in one of the most despicable violations of civil liberties of innocent Americans we’ve seen in modern times.

“JEANS” AD HITS A CHORD

A young good-looking star, Sydney Sweeney, managed to set off a firestorm of criticism over the summer with an American Eagle ad.

A video of the ad said, “Sydney Sweeney has great genes.” She was shown crossing out “genes,” inserting “jeans.” She opined, “Genes are passed down from parents to offspring, often determining traits like hair color, personality and even eye color.”

She hit the Left’s hot button. The very word “genes” was enough to ignite charges of eugenics. Moreover, her critics took note that she is a blue-eyed blond white woman, as if that is a bad thing. Ironically, it is those in left-wing circles who pioneered eugenics.

Margaret Sanger, the founder of Planned Parenthood, was one of the great eugenicists of the twentieth century. She believed that the best way to get rid of poverty was to get rid of the poor, especially blacks. This was the motivation behind her birth control agenda.

The Left hates the word “genes” because it reminds them of the role nature plays in directing human behavior. That bothers them. Their quest for social engineering is predicated on the idea that by manipulating the environment, we can determine behavioral outcomes. Nature gets in the way of their grand totalitarian design.

American Eagle did not buckle, sending its sales and stock soaring, thanks to the humorless woke mob. Congratulations to Sydney Sweeney for braving the storm, and to American Eagle for doubling down.

FBI-CATHOLIC SPY RING WAS BIG; NEW INFO IS ALARMING

We have known for years about an anti-Catholic cell group in the FBI that was operative under President Biden. It spied on practicing Catholics, not just those who have been dubbed “radical-traditionalist Catholics” (RTCs). We now know, thanks to FBI Director Kash Patel, and Senate Judiciary Chairman Chuck Grassley, how widespread it was. Indeed, the extent of this unconstitutional probe was far greater than we were led to believe by former FBI Director Christopher Wray.

On February 9, 2023, Bill Donohue expressed his initial concerns about the FBI’s investigation of RTCs. He had a hunch that this probe was a ruse, and that the Bureau was really

interested in targeting practicing Catholics. He asked, "What's next? Will it be a war on 'Catholics who are orthodox?'" It turned out he was right. The FBI went after "mainline" Catholics, not just RTCs.

Wray has insisted all along that the Richmond field office of the FBI was the only office that was involved in this anti-Catholic witch hunt. What Grassley has now revealed proves how untrue this is.

The Richmond memo, detailing the Catholic spy operation (which was first made public by an FBI whistleblower), was distributed to over 1,000 FBI employees across the country before it was publicly disclosed. In fact, the FBI produced at least 13 additional documents and five attachments that made plain its anti-Catholic bigotry. That it relied on information from a hate group, the Southern Poverty Law Center, makes this unseemly caper all the more despicable.

Grassley even revealed a second FBI memo that was drafted for distribution by the Richmond field office. The Iowa Republican noted that "The draft memo repeated the unfounded link between traditional Catholicism and violent extremism, but was never published due to backlash following the Richmond Memo's public disclosure. The existence of this second memo contradicts former FBI Director Christopher Wray's testimony that the Richmond field office only produced 'a single product.'"

The new batch of documents on the Biden FBI Catholic spy ring makes it clear that those responsible for this obscene gambit need to be held accountable. Wray said he was "aghast" when he learned that "mainline" Catholics were being targeted, and former Attorney General Merrick Garland said he was "appalled." They need to be subpoenaed to find out why they did nothing about it.

Remember, Catholics who are "pro-life," "pro-family" and who believe there are only two sexes were called "domestic

terrorists” by Biden’s FBI.

Those responsible for this outrageous violation of the First Amendment rights of Catholics need to be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. We need to know the whole truth.

ANTIFA PROBE NEEDED

A group of Christians recently held a pro-family rally in Seattle and were attacked by Antifa anarchists for doing so.

This is exactly the kind of incident that President Trump’s Commission on Religious Liberty needs to investigate. We contacted their lawyers, and they agreed to do so.

On May 24, a Christian pro-family group, Mayday USA, held one of its #DontMessWithOurKids rallies in Seattle. They were there to combat the radical transgender movement which is exploiting vulnerable young people. It didn’t take long before they were assaulted by Antifa.

They wore their signature black-clad garb and masks, and some exposed themselves publicly. The mayor, Bruce Harrell, a Democrat, blamed the pro-family group, saying they “inspired violence,” yet all 23 of those arrested were from the Antifa gang.

The anarchists waved transgender flags and threw water bottles and other objects at the police. Some jumped the police barrier and assaulted the cops. They called their protest “Keep Your Bibles Off Our Bodies,” saying their goal was to fight “fascist family values.”

One of the pastors who led the pro-family rally, Russell Johnson, wrote that the Seattle mayor “owes Christians in WA

State an apology for his bigoted remarks after folks who were holding a peaceful worship event at Cal Anderson Park were violently assaulted for the high crime of expressing their deeply held religious beliefs in the form of a permitted worship event on city property.”

The pastor thanked us for our support.

POPE LEO XIV SCORES; WELL RECEIVED WORLDWIDE

On May 8, Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost was elected by the voting Cardinals of the College of Cardinals to be the new pontiff. The Augustinian priest chose the name Pope Leo XIV.

He is the first American pope— he was born in Chicago—though he is not well known to most American Catholics. That is partly because the 69-year old spent many years as a missionary in Peru; he is a Peruvian citizen, as well as an American.

What helped him enormously with his fellow cardinals was his previous assignment as prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops. In that role he advised Pope Francis on the appointment of bishops around the world; he also dealt with the resignation of bishops.

Apparently, there was not enough support for Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Secretary of State under Pope Francis, to obtain the 89 votes that were necessary to win. He was the choice cardinal of the more progressive voting members. Cardinal Prevost cleared 100 votes.

Cardinal Wilton Gregory, former Archbishop of Washington, D.C. said of the future pope that it wasn't some "convincing speech that just wowed" the cardinals. It was in small group gatherings that he impressed many of his colleagues. Also, his international experience and pastoral approach proved attractive.

It is said that New York Archbishop Timothy Cardinal Dolan played a key role in advancing Cardinal Prevost's nomination. Some say he was the "kingmaker" who elevated his status. Dolan pitched him as a "bridge builder" and a "citizen of the world." Many look to Dolan to be the bridge between our new pope and our new president.

Pope Leo XIV will have his hands full trying to navigate Catholic waters. The Church is divided and needs someone to mend fences. Catholics are also looking for someone to bring clarity to Church teachings, especially on moral issues. The Holy Father not only commands the "bully pulpit," he has the authority to make decisive rulings.

When he was introduced to the crowd at St. Peter's Square, the new pope dressed in traditional papal garb, including a short red cape with a hood and a white cassock. In doing so, he reverted back to the stylistic choices of popes before Pope Francis broke ranks; he chose to wear simpler clothing.

Another sign of his more traditional approach came when Pope Leo XIV indicated that he would take up residence in the Apostolic Palace, left vacant by Pope Francis for more than 12 years. It will require renovations.

We are very happy and proud of Pope Leo XIV. We stand ready to defend him against those whose agenda is not Catholic friendly.

FIDELITY MONTH

To some, June is Gay Pride Month, but to Catholics, and to traditionalists who belong to other religions, it is Fidelity Month. Bill Donohue was very pleased that he was invited to participate in this event.

Begun two years ago by Princeton Professor Robert George, Fidelity Month is a time to celebrate why we are proud to dedicate June to God, our family and our country. Working with him is Christopher Parr of The Witherspoon Institute.

George, who is a member of the Catholic League's board of advisors, has received the support for this effort by the likes of San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone and former Kansas City Archbishop Joseph Naumann, two stellar Church leaders.

Donohue was asked to tape a video recognizing Fidelity Month. He chose to speak to Flag Day and Father's Day, on June 14 and 15, respectively. A veteran and a father, Donohue defended patriotism and fatherhood from its elite critics, emphasizing why both are central to American society.

Donohue pointed out that the most patriotic Americans, as revealed by survey data, are the working class and the poor. How ironic it is, he noted, that those at the top of the socio-economic scale tend to be the least patriotic. Not surprisingly, they are the same people who devalue fatherhood. It only goes to show what is being taught in the schools.

It is time to reclaim June as a month where traditional moral values are honored.