

REASONABLE FAITH IN AN AGE OF FEELING

Kyle Nazareth

Robert P. George, Seeking Truth and Speaking Truth: Law and Morality in Our Cultural Moment (Encounter Books)

St. Thomas Aquinas sums up the moral life in five words: do good and avoid evil. Rather obvious, right? However, what once felt like common sense isn't anymore. Moral discourse now sounds like a room of people speaking different languages. Catholics defend a baby's right to life, the secular left a woman's "bodily autonomy." Both claim the moral high ground, yet we talk past each other.

As Alasdair MacIntyre observed, we still use the language of morality, but we've lost the framework that gives it meaning. Cut off from virtue, tradition, purpose, and any hierarchy of goods, words like *rights* and *dignity* collapse into slogans; moral claims devolve into expressive individualism; and we drift toward what Benedict XVI warned was a "dictatorship of relativism." Without a common standard, feelings drown out reasons, free speech erodes, cancel mobs form, and some even justify political violence against those labeled hateful, as the assassination of Charlie Kirk showed.

In *Seeking Truth and Speaking Truth: Law and Morality in Our Cultural Moment*, Robert P. George names our predicament the "Age of Feeling" and proposes a commonsense alternative—reason. Across twenty-three essays on metaphysics, bioethics, jurisprudence, political philosophy, culture, and education, he argues that truth in contested matters can be known and isn't remade by feelings or lived experience. He offers clear public reasons for the morality Catholics know by revelation, restoring the common ground for civil discourse.

The book's opening chapters present a comprehensive pro-life anthropology: every human being has full moral worth at every stage (embryo, fetus, infant) and in every condition (including severe cognitive impairment). The fundamental question is: What is a human being? George answers with the classical view that the human person is a unity of body and soul.

In a secular age, the "soul" can sound like a fairy tale, but George argues this is a mistake. We can't explain our rational nature—our capacity for conceptual thought, deliberation, and free choice—without an immaterial soul. Catholic teaching holds that intellect and will are spiritual faculties making us in God's image. You can see this in the way our minds grasp universal, nonphysical realities. You have never bumped into "the perfect circle" or "truth itself" as physical objects, yet you can understand them. Because our minds can know these immaterial realities, the intellect and soul must be immaterial as well. While science excels at explaining the material world, it can't exhaust human personhood because we're more than atoms and laws scaled up.

Based on the kind of beings we are, George draws a moral conclusion: every human is a rational creature with intrinsic dignity deserving respect. He draws on Aristotle and St. Thomas, who distinguish a thing's substance (its enduring reality) from its accidents (changeable features). For humans, our substantial rational nature stays constant, even as accidental traits like IQ or developmental stage vary. Therefore, from conception to natural death, every human being remains equally worthy of dignity and respect, including the smallest, weakest, and least wanted.

By contrast, body-self dualism— an Enlightenment form of the Gnostic heresy—treats the "real person" as a mind or will separate from the body he inhabits, like a ghost in a machine. This erroneous idea erodes equal dignity by treating humans at early stages of life or with impaired capacities as mere

bodies without personhood. It leads to unethical positions on abortion (the unborn have bodies but no personhood), euthanasia (the person departs from his living body), and transgender ideology (the “real self” is trapped in the wrong body). George counters with the Aristotelian-Thomistic view: the human person is one composite substance, a living body animated by a rational soul, and both share in dignity.

He then turns from what we are to how we should act. Natural law isn't a man-made law like a constitution, or a physical law like gravity; George argues it's the moral order knowable by reason from basic human goods such as life, knowledge, friendship, and religion. These goods yield duties not to attack them, and rights protect those duties. Much is knowable without revelation: don't lie, murder, or cheat. Natural law isn't a comprehensive rulebook; it supplies first principles for society to apply prudently.

George's influential account of natural law again complements Church teaching: it is the universal moral law inscribed on every heart, expressing human nature's orientation toward ordered goods and ultimately God. Conforming to it helps us discern right from wrong and grow in virtue by knowing, loving, and serving Him.

Throughout the book, I kept coming back to the Catholic synthesis of reason and revelation, of natural and divine law. Philosophy discerns natural law and shows morality's rational intelligibility; theology purifies and completes it, ordering us to our supernatural end in God. Theology is the queen perfecting her handmaid, philosophy. Thus, faith and reason aren't rivals but united ways of participating in the one Truth, as God authors both. As Benedict XVI noted, the Church has long united Greek reason with biblical faith, laying the foundation of Western thought.

Seeking Truth and Speaking Truth stands in this philosophical tradition, harmonious with Catholic theology. More than just

critiques of the “Age of Feeling,” it’s an excellent field guide for Catholics to bring reasonable faith into the public square, and re-ground our moral language not in feelings, but in Christ, the one Truth.

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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.

TWO CHEERS FOR TRUMP'S FLAG BURNING STANCE

William A. Donohue

President Trump's criticism of the 1989 Supreme Court decision, *Texas v. Johnson*, that legalized burning the American flag, is deserving of great respect, notwithstanding some problems with it.

Trump was right to say, "The people in this country don't want to see our American flag burned and spit on." This alone is not sufficient reason to ban flag burning, but it is not irrelevant to the issue. More important, he was right to sneer at the high court when he said, "they called it freedom of speech." This needs to be expanded upon to understand why he is not off-base.

Two cheers for Trump. His reason for sneering, however, is not deserving of a third cheer.

"But there's another reason [besides free speech] which is perhaps much more important," he said, "it's called death. Because what happens when you burn a flag is the area goes crazy." He argued that flag burning "incites riots" and that those who are convicted would face a year in prison.

The problem with this formulation is that it is a recipe for stifling any speech deemed controversial. We've been down this road before.

In 1949, the Supreme Court exonerated a suspended Catholic priest, Father Arthur Terminiello, after he made an inflammatory speech in Chicago. He was arrested and prosecuted

for breaking a Chicago ordinance prohibiting speech deemed to “stir the public to anger” or create a disturbance.

If his conviction had not been overturned, a mob could threaten to riot whenever they learned that someone whom they disagree with was scheduled to speak at a particular venue. This is what legal analyst Harry Kalven called the “heckler’s veto.” It puts the blame on those who want to express themselves.

Ergo, Trump’s rationale for objecting to the Supreme Court’s decision allowing flag burning is a non-starter. But is also wrong to say that he has no basis for objecting to that ruling. Conservative pundit Dana Loesch errs when she says, “the government has no right to control speech or expression.” In fact, it does all the time, without controversy.

We have laws in this country against libel, perjury, obscenity, incitement to riot, infringement on copyright, treasonous speech, bribery, harassing phone calls, false advertising and the like. Someone who lies on his resume cannot seek relief by invoking free speech. Thus, her position holds no water.

Where the Supreme Court erred was in declaring flag burning to be speech. It is not—it is conduct.

Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black considered himself to be a First Amendment absolutist. In 1960, he wrote in a law journal, “It is my belief that there are ‘absolutes’ in our Bill of Rights, and that they were put there on purpose by those who knew what the words meant, and meant their prohibitions to be ‘absolutes’...”

Not only was Black wrong about that, he later proved he was not the absolutist he claimed to be. His dissents in four “free speech” cases proves it. Here’s one of them.

In 1969, twenty years before *Texas v. Johnson*, the Supreme

Court took up a flag burning case that overturned the conviction of a man who burned the American flag while also making contemptuous speech about it. In *Street v. New York*, the court ruled that his speech was clearly protected, but it balked on whether flag burning should be considered “action.”

Black, the “absolutist,” dissented, arguing that “It passes my belief that anything in the Federal Constitution bars a State from making the deliberate burning of the American flag an offense. It is immaterial to me that words are spoken in connection with the burning. It is the burning of the flag that the State has set its face against.”

Another liberal, Justice Abe Fortas, agreed with Black in his dissent. “One may not justify burning a house, even if it is his own, on the ground, however sincere, that he does so as a protest.” He also pointed out that the flag is not like any other property.

In the 1989 decision, the four dissenting judges, led by Chief Justice William Rehnquist, agreed with that position by emphasizing the cultural significance of the flag. Rehnquist also took Black’s position by saying flag burning was conduct, not speech.

Much of the confusion over this issue revolves around the difference between “speech” and “expression.” They are not identical, which is why attempts to conflate them are misguided. Speech, as the Founders understood it, was to be protected because it was foundational to freedom. It was political speech—the right to agree or disagree about the makings of the good society—that was their concern.

Expression is a very elastic term, covering conduct that has nothing to do with what the Founders envisioned. For example, the ACLU considers dwarf-tossing, mud wrestling, sleeping in parks, and the right of demonstrators to stop traffic on bridges, to be protected speech. This trivializes the First

Amendment. Indeed, it is insane.

Trump has reintroduced a subject worthy of much discussion, even if his particular stance is problematic.

JAMES DOBSON, R.I.P.

Dr. James Dobson, founder of Focus on the Family, has died. He was a committed evangelical, a brilliant psychologist and an influential conservative activist. He also helped build good relations between Protestants and Catholics.

In 2005, Bill Donohue was honored when he shared a stage with many Protestant leaders at a “Justice Sunday” event in Louisville, Kentucky. Organized by Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council, noted speakers included James Dobson, Dr. Al Mohler and Chuck Colson.

Jim was a kind man who had the courage to go against the secular wave. A culture warrior, he never tired in his defense of traditional moral values, driving his critics mad. His books, articles, speeches and televised appearances showed how devoted he was to fighting the good fight. He also spoke in easy to understand terms, never trying to show off by speaking over people’s head.

God bless James Dobson.

FREE SPEECH ON CAMPUS BARELY EXISTS

Every year the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE) releases its annual survey results assessing free speech on college and university campuses. The “2026 College Free Speech Rankings” was recently published, and the results are not sanguine. Indeed, they are disturbing.

The survey included 68,510 student respondents from 257 colleges and universities. The average overall score was 58.63, which was a failing grade. In fact, 166 of the 257 schools got an F for their speech climate; only 11 received a C or higher. Here’s a sample of the state of free speech on campus.

“The percentage of students saying it is acceptable to shout down a speaker, block entry to a campus speech, or use violence to stop a campus speech all increased since last year and are at record highs.”

The school which is number-one in the country allowing free speech to rein is Claremont McKenna College, followed by Purdue University and the University of Chicago. The worst is Barnard College, a women’s school affiliated with Columbia University. Columbia is the second most intolerant of free speech, followed by Indiana University.

Catholic schools that were included in the survey are Georgetown, Duquesne, Fordham, DePaul, Dayton, Marquette, Villanova, Notre Dame, Loyola University, Chicago and Boston College. All received a grade of F. Loyola and Boston College were in the bottom ten worst schools in the nation, both Jesuit run.

The topics that ignite the greatest intolerance on campus—subjects that are considered too hot to discuss—are

the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, abortion, the presidential election of 2024 and transgender rights. The Left, which controls most schools, is virulently against Israel and Donald Trump, and strongly favors abortion and transgender rights. In other words, conservatives find it hard to speak freely on most campuses.

What was perhaps the most alarming finding was the percentage of students who find violence to be an acceptable response to stop campus speech—34 percent are okay with it. This is up from 24 percent in 2021. Who do they want to stop? It is not left-wing speakers—they are always welcome.

For example, students were asked about six controversial topics and whether they thought a speaker should be allowed to discuss them on campus. Three-in-four said no one should be allowed to discuss whether “Black Lives Matter is a hate group” (76 percent), and the same proportion (74 percent) said no one should be allowed to discuss whether “Transgender people have a mental disorder.”

This is striking given that some Black Lives Matter leaders taught its followers to hate white people (they also ripped off the organization to such an extent that it barely exists), and a number of the most prominent psychiatrists in the nation are convinced that transgender people have a mental disorder. Yet such speakers are treated as if they belonged to the Flat Earth Society.

Interestingly, one of the six controversial topics the students were asked about was whether “The Catholic Church is a pedophilic institution.” While 62 percent said such speakers should not be allowed on campus, the entry begs the question—why was it included in the first place? We know that four percent of the priests between 1950 and 2002 had an *accusation* made against him for sexually abusing minors, but most of the abuse was committed by homosexuals, not pedophiles. Thus did the survey seriously misrepresent this

topic to the students.

When students were asked if they felt comfortable disagreeing with a professor about a controversial topic, only 41 percent said they did. A majority (52 percent) said they felt uncomfortable expressing their views on a controversial political topic during an in-class discussion. From what we know, they were obviously conservatives.

The greatest intolerance for free speech was experienced by those who expressed themselves on social media. Two-in-three (66 percent) said they felt uncomfortable discussing an unpopular political opinion to their fellow students on a social media account tied to their name. One more reason not to trust social media—it is flooded with crazies.

In short, reasoned debate does not exist on most campuses. This is precisely what Charlie Kirk died defending—the right to speak freely in colleges and universities. Lucky for him he dropped out of college. No wonder he spoke so clearly and persuasively. He was never corrupted by tyrannical professors.

POPE “DISAPPOINTS” LGBTQ CATHOLICS

Trying to get accurate information about the LGBTQ Catholic participation in the Holy Year Jubilee can be frustrating. Misinformation and disinformation abound, but in the end the consensus was these disaffected Catholics did not get what they wanted—a big shout-out from the pope. It never happened.

“Did Pope Leo welcome LGBTQ Catholics at Jubilee events?” Putting this question in a search engine yields a response

from AI (Artificial Intelligence) that says, "Pope Leo XIII did not specifically address LGBTQ issues during his papacy." True enough. Pope Leo XIII died in 1903 at a time when transgender persons barely existed.

On a second try, accessing a different search engine, more misinformation was given. "During the Jubilee events, Pope Leo met with diverse Catholic groups including the LGBTQ community." Wrong. He did not.

AI was twice mistaken, but when seasoned journalists get it wrong, that is more serious.

CNN said the Jubilee was "the first officially recognized pilgrimage of LGBTQ Catholics to Rome." PressReader.com is a widely used digital newspaper platform, and it reported that "LGBTQ+ Catholics" participated in "a Vatican-sanctioned event that many had believed impossible."

These are examples of disinformation—intentionally distorting the truth.

The *Washington Post* noted that when "the gay jubilee" began, "many participants said they would be disappointed to leave without a public gesture from Leo." It correctly noted that it was not forthcoming. The *New York Times* reported that "Pope Leo XIV did not individually welcome the contingent [of LGBTQ Catholics] at a Jubilee audience on Saturday morning, as he did with some other groups in attendance."

CBS News and Fox News quoted Vatican officials as saying that being listed in the Jubilee calendar of events was one thing, but they hastened to add, "They are not sponsored activities."

The *National Catholic Reporter*, which is pro-LGBTQ and is opposed to the Church's teachings on sexuality, said of this contingency that it "is not explicitly endorsed by the Vatican—nor will participants receive a dedicated papal audience as other groups have." CBS News also said when the

pope addressed the Jubilee audience on Saturday, he “made no special mention of the LGBTQ+ Catholics.”

The queer Catholic group responsible for organizing this contingency is La Tenda di Gionata (Jonathan’s Tent), an Italian LGBTQ association. It drew the support of Outreach, DignityUSA and New Ways Ministry.

An internet search of the principal organizer turned up bizarre results. Trying to access information on Jonathan’s Tent was nearly impossible. “The page you are trying to reach no longer exists, or has been removed.” Typing in “La Tenda di Gionata” was a little better, but no less puzzling.

A page appears saying that it was founded in 2018 by Don David Esposito, “a prematurely disappeared priest.” That’s an odd way to say he’s dead.

We know more about Outreach. It was founded by Father James Martin, who ministers to these people. He openly rejects the Church’s teaching on homosexuality, taking great umbrage at the *Catholic Catechism* for saying that the homosexual inclination, and homosexual acts, are “intrinsically disordered.” He wants that changed to “differently ordered” people, thus normalizing homosexual behavior.

On the website of DignityUSA, a Catholic queer group, it says that one of its goals is to seek changes “to harmful church teachings on gender and sexual orientation.” New Ways Ministry, one of the boldest groups that publicly rejects the Church’s teachings on sexuality, likes to make a fetish of our bodies. It is advertising an event in October called, “Honoring Our Bodies.”

There are Catholics who are struggling with their “intrinsically disordered” orientation who want to be chaste. Courage is the name of a Catholic ministry that was founded explicitly to serve them. It is not the kind of ministry that wins the applause from any of the aforementioned rebel groups.

The Catholic Church welcomes everyone, but it does so on its terms, not on terms that are subversive of its teachings. That would be suicidal.

Pope Leo is trying to bring unity to the Church. There are times when that can be tricky. He does not want to humiliate anyone, but he also wants to be honest. Prudence is the most cardinal of the cardinal virtues, and his exercise of it is exemplary.

APPEAL TO TRUMP: EXPAND PANEL ON RELIGION

The day after the mass shooting of Catholic schoolchildren, Bill Donohue wrote to President Trump asking him to do more about anti-Christian bigotry. After commending him and FBI Director Kash Patel for treating this incident seriously, he said the following.

“What happened in Minneapolis was not an isolated incident. Attacks on Catholics, and indeed all Christians, have risen sharply in recent years. Our website provides plenty of documentation on this issue, including violent assaults on persons and property.

“It is indisputable that the mass shooter hated lots of demographic groups, but he saved his real hostility for Catholics. He did not choose a public school to attack, nor did he wait until the children were in the classroom to go on his killing spree—he deliberately chose to kill them while they were praying in church.

“We know from what he has said in writing, and on video, that

his rampage was born of an anti-Catholic animus. He laughed at Jesus dying on the Cross, cursed at Catholics for worshipping him, mocked the Eucharist, and expressed his admiration for Satan. He may have had serious issues, but he was also very calculated in his game plan.

“The time has come to deal with this problem in greater detail.

“On February 6, you announced the formation of a Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty, putting Attorney General Pam Bondi in charge. She was authorized to create a task force to ‘eradicate anti-Christian’ bias. The focus, you said, would be to stop ‘all forms of anti-Christian targeting and discrimination within the federal government.’

“On February 19, I wrote to Attorney General Bondi alerting her to the trove of documents that we have on this subject. I asked her to provide us with a contact person. On March 24, she did, and subsequently we turned those documents over to Michael Gates, Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice. On May 20, I met with him in Washington, D.C. Furthermore, on May 20, we sent all the members of the Commission information on how to access the documents that we gave to the DOJ.

“I would like to recommend that the Commission not limit itself to anti-Christian bigotry emanating from the federal government. To be specific, anti-Christian bigotry stemming from civil society needs to be addressed, either by this Commission or a new one. Its seeds lie outside government, especially in those institutions that shape the content and contours of our culture.”

IT'S OFFICIAL—MOST DEMOCRATS ARE SOCIALISTS

There was a time, not too long ago, when to call someone a socialist was to stigmatize him. No more. Most Democrats proudly admit they are now socialists. Even communism is making a comeback.

Gallup released a survey on September 8 that found most Americans still view capitalism more favorably than socialism, but this is not true of Democrats. The researchers found that when comparing Republicans, Independents and Democrats, "Democrats are the only partisan group of the three that views socialism more positively than capitalism—66% to 42%, respectively."

That 24 percent gap is significant. It explains the enthusiasm for New York City mayoral candidate Zohran Mamdani, a professed socialist whose views more closely align with communist thought.

In April, CATO Institute, a libertarian think tank, released the findings of a survey that found "more Democrats have positive views of socialism (67 percent) than capitalism (50 percent). Strong liberals lead the way with 82 percent having favorable views of socialism compared to 28 percent who feel positive toward capitalism."

Even more stunning, fully a third (34 percent) of Americans have a favorable view of communism. Even though the communists in the twentieth century murdered over 150 million people—mostly in Stalin's Russia, Mao's China and Pol Pot's Cambodia—communism is gaining popularity in some quarters. Yet none of Marx's fans want to move to North Korea.

The Democratic Party is no longer the Party of JFK, LBJ, Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton. And it is not merely its affection

for socialism that sets it apart. Their support for open borders, a relaxed attitude towards crime, and transgender mania have nothing to do with socialism—they represent a total loss of common sense and a penchant for self-destruction.

These Democrats may be highly educated—in the sense that they stayed in school for a long time— but that doesn't mean they are well educated. Too many have adopted the ideological vision of man and society force-fed to them by an alienated and angry professoriate. Despite what they say, there is no such thing as democratic socialism: the Scandinavian countries are welfare-state economies—they are not an example of socialism. The face of socialism is Venezuela, not Sweden.

Anyone who says he believes in socialism, as do most Democrats these days, and denies its legacy—it is one of poverty and oppression— needs to talk to those Americans who have lived under socialist regimes. The Dems may be too far gone to change, but they will have no riposte worth noting.

Marx taught that “religion is the opiate of the masses.” More accurate was the French sociologist, Raymond Aron. He aptly observed that “Marxism is the opiate of the intellectual.” It's now the official brand of the Democratic Party.

SPINNING THE CATHOLIC KILLER'S BIO

FBI Director Kash Patel got it right when he labeled the Minneapolis mass shooting as an act of domestic terrorism and an anti-Catholic hate crime.

Did Robert Westman (who changed his name to Robin after he

falsely identified himself as a woman) also hate others, besides Catholics? Yes, there were many demographic groups whom he hated, but he only chose one group to murder—Catholic children. He did not go into a public school, nor did he choose to kill at a Catholic school—he killed two Catholic kids (and injured 18 others) while they were praying at Mass.

Many reporters and pundits downplayed the anti-Catholic motive behind the shootings. Jake Tapper at CNN said Westman did not have “a specific motive,” noting that his “manifesto” was “kind of rambling.” Had he entered a mosque and killed Muslim children, would Tapper be just as bewildered?

Similarly, the radical left Southern Poverty Law Center said the killer expressed “a mix of ideologies” that “may not fit neatly in a box.” However, if he hated lots of people, but only shot black kids, it’s a sure bet it would be seen as white racism, and nothing else.

When riots broke out after the death of George Floyd, Zohran Mamdani, the would-be mayor of New York City, blamed “white supremacy.” But he could not bring himself to blame anti-Catholicism for the Minneapolis mass shooting. He blamed guns.

In short, it’s hard for some to acknowledge Catholics as victims. The left is so used to treating Catholics as part of the oppressor class that it’s not easy to see them as the oppressed.

One person who was not confused about Westman’s motive was Rosie O’Donnell. She said he was a “Republican, MAGA person, white supremacist.” After she was proven wrong, she apologized.

The *New York Times* did not apologize for attacking conservative commentators for drawing attention to the transgender status of Westman. They had every right to do so: such persons are generally suffering from severe mental disorders and have a history of violence (well documented by

the Catholic League).

Westman left notes saying how much he regretted his transgender status, saying it screwed up his life. He also blamed his marijuana smoking for messing up his mind. Importantly, he warned parents not to let their children smoke weed or attempt to change their sex. But the media downplayed these remarks.

Liberal politicians and reporters are ever-so sensitive to trans persons, yet they never treat Catholics that way. Again, in their Manichean dualistic vision of reality, Catholics are the bad guys. If it appears they are actually victims, it throws them into a state of cognitive dissonance.

The mayor of Minneapolis could not bring himself to condemn anti-Catholicism, but he wasted no time condemning anyone who might use this “as an opportunity to villainize our trans community.” The media took a more oblique approach, but it was just as political.

The Associated Press could not refer to Westman as a male so it opted for illiteracy when it said that “the shooter was in their early 20s” (our italics); it had four reporters on this story. NBC apologized for referring to Westman as a male, even though he was.

Westman may not have had a consistent political stance, but if anything he was on the left. An international news agency referred to his “pro-communist ideologies.” The *New York Post* mentioned his “far-left politics.”

It is not conservatives who are calling for Trump and Musk to be killed, which is what Westman did. Nor is it conservatives at Ivy League universities who are leading the war on Jews. Westman wrote about “Free Palestine” and those “filthy Zionist Jews.” He argued that “Israel must fall” and that “6 million wasn’t enough.” That is the voice of left-wing Jew haters these days.

It is also not conservatives who hate Catholics; it's those on the left.

Westman did not stumble when he chose to kill Catholic kids. "Maybe I could attack an event at the on-site church," he wrote. "I think attacking a large group of people of kids coming in from recess is my best plan...Then from there I can go inside and kill, going for as long as I can."

We know that he scouted the church and he knew the children would be at Mass. According to one of his coworkers, "recent events have been the catalyst for this thing he has been planning for a long time." In a video, he said about his Catholic victims, "Who's listening to your prayers now?" "Where's your [expletive] God?"

Westman also ripped the Eucharist, mocking the words, "take this all of you and eat." He laughed at an image of Jesus pinned to a shooting target and drew an inverted pentagram promoting Satanism, scribbling "666." This is the work of a virulent anti-Catholic bigot, which is why it is too easy to simply mention his mental issues.

He was not all negative. He admired the left-wing killer Luigi Mangione, and he sported a sticker that said, "Defend Equality"; it featured a machine gun overlaid on a gay pride flag. Not exactly what we would expect from a conservative.

For the media and commentators not to acknowledge that Robert Westman was primarily an anti-Catholic, left-wing, transgender bigot is intellectually dishonest. He may have had many demons, but to discount these elements of his biography amounts to a coverup.