

CARDINAL DOLAN VERBALLY ABUSED

This is the article that appeared in the May 2025 edition of Catalyst, our monthly journal. The date that prints out reflects the day that it was uploaded to our website. For a more accurate date of when the article was first published, check out the news release, [here](#).

Bill Donohue sent the following letter to the parties noted.

March 14, 2025

Jelani Jefferson Exum
Dean, St. John's Univ. School of Law
8000 Utopia Parkway
Jamaica, NY 11439

Dear Dean Jefferson Exum:

A recent incident was brought to my attention about the conduct of one of your law school students, Vishai Balani. He is alleged to have attacked Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Archbishop of New York, on X (since removed). On February 22, he said Dolan was "a bootlicking disgrace with your nose up Donald Trump's ass." He also used derogatory language to smear New York City Councilman Robert Holden and New York City Councilwoman Vickie Paladino. (See the enclosed.)

I have spent many years in higher education, and have written several books on civil liberties, so I am well aware that student speech is given wide protection. I am also aware that with liberties come responsibilities, and this is especially true of Catholic institutions of higher education.

St. John's Law Mission Statement says the school strives to foster an "equitable" environment where "respect for the rights and dignity of every person" is maintained. The Student Code of Conduct proscribes "verbal," as well as "physical

action,” saying they are “inconsistent with the Core Values of St. John’s University.”

Regarding the Core Values, the Code says that “Students are required to engage in responsible social conduct and to model good citizenship in any community. Students shall not engage in any conduct that reflects a failure to live up to the expectations of all St. John’s students.” It ends by being specific: “Any behavior (verbal, written or physical) that abuses, assails, intimidates, demeans, and/or victimizes.”

It seems plain that Vishai Balani has violated these norms. How you handle instances like this is not my business. But as president of the nation’s largest Catholic civil rights organization, it is my business to combat attacks on individual Catholics and the institutional Church. Accordingly, I am asking that you take this situation seriously.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.

President

cc: Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Archbishop of New York
Fr. Brian Shanley, O.P. president of St. John’s Univ.
Jack Flynn, Director of Student Conduct
Councilman Robert Holden
Councilwoman Vickie Paladino

NORTHWESTERN OFFERS ANTI-CHRISTIAN COURSE

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The following is an excerpt from a letter that explains why there is a problem at Northwestern.

March 27, 2025

Dean Adrian Randolph
Northwestern University
Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences
1918 Sheridan Road
Evanston, Illinois 60208

Dear Dean Randolph:

It has been brought to my attention that a faculty member in the Department of Religious Studies at the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, Dr. Lily Stewart, is using her class, "Introduction to Christianity," to engage in a frontal assault on the Catholic Church. How do I know this?

The syllabus says the class "will explore histories of Christian colonialism, bigotry, liberation, and dissent." Indeed, it says, Jesus "has been at the forefront of projects of colonialism, violence, and subjugation, but also peace, liberation, and revolution."

Students are also put on notice. "Much of the material and topics that we are working with in this class include racist, ableist, Islamophobic, anti-semitic, transphobic, misogynist, homophobic, self-harm, murder, and sexual assault."

In other words, brace yourself in class when I discuss the historical contributions of the Catholic Church.

Imagine if a course on Islam were to portray the religion and its adherents as an evil force. What would Northwestern do when students and Muslim scholars complained?

It is to be expected that professors will develop an approach to their discipline that differs from that of others in their field. That is how it should be. But we are not talking about legitimate avenues of discourse or research. We are talking about a frontal assault on a world religion.

Those who engage in vitriolic caricatures of demographic groups, be they religious, ethnic, racial, or sexual, may find expression in social media, but they have no business in academia.

If there are some who read this letter who are not convinced that Professor Stewart has crossed the line, consider that there is a depiction of Jesus in the syllabus, with the following inscription:

Hey girl.

*How about I turn that water into wine,
we put on some slow jams and just cuddle?*

#Hot.Jesus

This is not scholarship. It is hate speech with a scholarly veneer.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.
President

cc: Michael H. Schill, President
Peter M. Barris, Chair, Board of Trustees
Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, Chair, Department of Religious Studies

Lily Stewart, Professor Religious Studies

Barbara Gellman-Danley, President, Higher Education Commission

SATANISTS LOOK ENFEEBLED

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The Satanic Grotto is not a well-known Satanic group, but it made a media splash in Kansas. On March 28, it held a “Black Mass” on the grounds of the Capitol building. Due to the leadership of Kansas City Archbishop Joseph Naumann, Christian protesters convincingly outnumbered the Satanists, making the small band of Satanists look enfeebled.

The leader of the Satanist group, Michael Stewart, was arrested for assaulting one of the Catholics who protested. When he was handcuffed, he yelled, “Hail Satan!” After he illegally entered the Kansas Statehouse, a scuffle ensued, and a few of those who confronted him were arrested.

Satanism is often associated with Devil worship, and at one time manifested itself as witchcraft. Some Satanists see themselves as atheists who put their entire trust in reason; others perceive Satan to be real.

Satanism is spiking internationally, and it appears to flourish at Christmas and Easter. To what extent it is responsible for Christian persecution is unknown, but to say that the Devil’s hand is not at work is risible.

AMICUS BRIEF UPDATE

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In the last issue of *Catalyst*, we mentioned that we have secured the services of the Pittsburgh office of Leech Tishman to represent the Catholic League in a case before the New Jersey Supreme Court defending the rights of priests in the Diocese of Camden. We mistakenly said that Superior Court Judge Peter Warshaw took the side of the Camden Diocese in February, 2025; it should have read May, 2023.

There has been an important development. Our attorney, Russ Giancola, not only filed the amicus brief, he was notified that he will be able to present oral arguments; this is not typical in friend-of-the-court briefs. We are delighted that he will do so.

Unfortunately, we are the only Catholic lay group filing an amicus. When it comes to religious liberty issues, in general, there is usually no problem in getting others to support the Catholic Church. But when it comes to the rights of accused priests, many get gun shy. Not us.

The term “witch hunt” is overused, thus losing currency. But when state governments litigate against priests in decades-old cases of abuse—giving every other group, religious or secular, a pass—what else can we call it?

RESTORING CATHOLIC RIGHTS; OUR ROLE WITH THE DOJ AND FBI

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We have established a working relationship with the Trump administration seeking to redress attacks on Catholic rights emanating from the federal government.

To be specific, after Bill Donohue wrote to U.S. Attorney General Bondi volunteering our efforts in addressing this issue, he received a letter from the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice providing contact information.

We will be sure to give this person a boatload of documents. We have more data on violations of Catholic civil and religious rights stemming from the federal government than any organization in the nation.

Donohue also wrote to Congressman Jim Jordan, who heads the House Judiciary Committee, regarding his success in subpoenaing documents on how the Biden administration violated the rights of Catholics. We have a good working relationship with his staff.

Donohue said to Jordan, "In 2023, I wrote ten news releases on this subject: four were open letters to you; one was a letter I wrote to FBI Director Christopher Wray; the rest were standard news releases. I issued three more statements in 2024, two of which were open letters—one to Wray and one to you."

Donohue then restated some questions that he previously posed to Jordan on this subject.

“On what basis did the FBI conclude that these Catholics [Radical-Traditional Catholics] warranted a probe? Do they have a history of violence? If so, where is the evidence? If not, why were they singled out?”

“On what basis did the FBI decide it was necessary to enlist ‘mainline Catholics’ to spy on their fellow parishioners? Where is the evidence that ordinary practicing Catholics pose a security threat to the United States or to other law-abiding Americans? How common is it for FBI agents to infiltrate houses of worship—of any religion—employing ‘tripwire sources’?”

Donohue asked new questions as well. Of particular interest was the 2024 report by Inspector General Michael Horowitz. He found that the FBI tried to establish a relationship between mainstream Catholics and extremists, but that it “lacked sufficient evidence.” Donohue asked, “Why did the Analysts think there was a relationship in the first place?”

Donohue also wanted to know why “the entire probe was based on one person, Defendant A. Not only was he identified as a violent bigoted thug, he did not even attend a Catholic church—he went to some breakaway church.” He concluded, “Was he used as a pretext to go after Catholics?”

We are very happy to team with Attorney General Pam Bondi and House Judiciary Chairman Jim Jordan in getting to the bottom of these totally unwarranted attacks on Catholics by federal authorities.

MIRACULOUS RECOVERY

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Michael P. McDonald

Anthony Foti is the web designer that keeps our website firing on full cylinders. He is a man of deep faith. He and his family attend the Latin Mass, and together with his wife, he has instilled the Catholic faith deep in the hearts of his children. But last year, Anthony and his family's faith would get them through tragedy and triumph.

Their ordeal started around Easter last year. The Foti household came down with some illness. It seemed pretty standard, and about a week later, it seemed like it had run its course. However, it lingered in his young daughter Maria.

They took Maria to the pediatrician several times due to ongoing fever and unusual pain in her back. Maria underwent strep and blood count tests and all the normal stuff you would do for a child with a virus. During that week, Maria complained of back pains, which progressively got worse, but they were not constant leading her pediatrician to believe it was body aches that you get from being sick.

But by Sunday, April 7, this back pain appeared to be more than just a body ache. Maria woke up complaining of severe back pain and a stiff neck. They quickly took Maria to the hospital where she had a few exams and was sent home.

By the next morning, her condition had deteriorated. Maria could not stand up. They took her back to the hospital. This time the tests revealed Maria had an extremely high bacteria count in her system, and an MRI uncovered a massive abscess along six of her spinal disks, which was causing compression

on her spinal cord. Maria was transferred to Cohen's Children's Hospital where a pediatric neurosurgeon awaited to perform emergency spinal surgery.

While Anthony waited during those agonizing hours, he prayed with all his might. As family and friends reached out to help, he asked them to pray for Maria. A home cooked dinner is appreciated, but what Maria really needed now was their prayers he told them.

After several grueling hours, the head neurosurgeon came out to speak with Anthony and his wife. The surgeon informed them that he was able to remove the abscess from Maria's spine, but she would be completely paralyzed from the waist down. The surgeon said he was not particularly religious, but if they were praying people, they should start praying.

Anthony threw his whole heart and soul into those prayers. He constantly prayed the Rosary, beseeching the Blessed Mother for aid. He asked every saint he could think of to intercede on behalf of his daughter. A cousin reached out to let Anthony know that she had access to a first class relic of St. Gemma Galgani, the patron saint of back surgery, and she would bring it to him so that Maria could pray with it. Interestingly, the feast of St. Gemma coincided with Maria's stay in the hospital, and what happened next, Anthony attributes to the intercession of St. Gemma.

Approximately 24 hours after the surgery, Maria started to wiggle her toes. According to all the doctors and the experts, she should not have been able to do that. But she was, and later that night she was able to lift her knee up. A few days later, Maria was able to walk with assistance. Her medical team was astounded by her speedy recovery.

On April 12, Maria had a follow-up MRI. Anthony remembers waiting beside his little girl and praying the Rosary with all his strength. He felt this awe come over him as though the

Mysteries were coming to life. Suddenly, he saw Maria in the MRI kicking and moving her lower body as if she was re-growing the synapses, and he knew that God was healing her. He prayed even harder.

The neurosurgeon began calling Maria the “Miracle Girl.” Even he was convinced Maria’s recovery was more than just modern medicine at work. On April 17, Maria was discharged from the hospital. She would go on to an inpatient rehab facility where she would spend 10 days. By the end of April, Maria was home with her family.

She would continue on with physical therapy for the rest of the year. At one of her appointments, an infectious disease doctor wanted to see how she was recovering. He told Anthony that what Maria had was extremely rare. In fact, there were only 22 cases of pediatric epidural abscess in medical literature. When he saw Maria moving around he was amazed.

A couple months later, Maria was being evaluated by a neuropsychologist. After reading her medical history, the doctor was amazed that Maria could move around normally. This expert asked Anthony a very familiar question: were they, by chance, religious?

It has been a year since Maria’s sickness, and she has made a full recovery. While the secular experts cannot explain it, those of us who keep the Catholic faith can see the hand of Providence in her recovery. As it says in James [5:15], “And the prayer of faith will save the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up.”



PHOTOS OF MIRACULOUS RECOVERY

To see photos of Anthony Foti's daughter and her miraculous recovery, click [here](#).

FREE SPEECH, ANYONE?

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Few Americans will publicly admit that they don't believe in free speech, yet attacks on it are commonplace. How can this be? While some are simply lying, others entertain a notion of free speech that allows them to be censorious while professing allegiance to it.

Two years ago, the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE) released a survey of 45,000 college students from 201 colleges. It found that liberals were the most intolerant of free speech.

That same year Real Clear Opinion released a survey on this topic and found that Democrats were the least supportive of free speech and the most supportive of censoring speech they found disagreeable. In fact, a third said Americans have "too much freedom." The figure for Republicans was 14.6 percent.

An event took place in April that sheds light on this issue.

On April 8, former Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett spoke at Princeton University. At least he tried to.

About 150 people showed up outside the building where he was to speak, chanting anti-Semitic slogans. After he spoke for about 15 minutes, some 20 people, most of whom were students, shouted him down, accusing him of genocide. Shortly after they were escorted out, a pro-Hamas activist started screaming at him, stopping his address. Ten minutes later the fire alarm went off, shutting down all the microphones.

Princeton is an elite school, but it has little respect for free speech. In the 2025 survey by FIRE of 251 colleges,

Princeton ranked 223, meriting a rating of “below average” on the free speech scale. The situation is so bad on campus, especially with regard to stifling the speech of Jewish students, that the Trump administration has halted dozens of research grants to the Ivy League school.

The state of free speech is also precarious.

In a poll of voters taken in November, it was found that a majority of those who voted for Donald Trump rated “the future of free speech in this country” as “the single most important factor” affecting their vote. Only a minority of those who voted for Kamala Harris felt this way.

Why do so many liberals have a big problem with free speech? It basically comes down to one thing: they are obsessed with control. And if they can control your speech, they are well on their way to succeeding.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF SUBJECTIVISM

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Bill Donohue has decided to address a story that is developing in Anytown USA. The venue is a local gym for adult men and women.

Reporter: Why are teenage boys allowed to compete in pre-teen boy games in Anytown?

Mayor: They are not. The only boys who can compete in pre-teen sports are those who identify as pre-teen.

Reporter: But I just witnessed what is obviously a teenager competing in a pre-teen event.

Mayor: Your perception is not determinative. We spoke to the boy you are talking about, and he says he is pre-teen.

Reporter: But it is obvious that teenage boys are bigger and stronger than pre-teen boys.

Mayor: That may be true, but it is also true that there are pre-teen boys of various sizes.

Reporter: This is crazy. We already have sports for teenage boys, so why the need for them to compete with pre-teens?

Mayor: They are not. The real issue is who determines who a teenager is.

Reporter: That's easy. Birth certificates settle this issue.

Mayor: Birth certificates simply prove the age that someone was assigned at birth.

Reporter: Are you implying that is not enough evidence?

Mayor: You don't get it. There is a spectrum of age groupings. Quite frankly, it is entirely possible for someone to consider himself to be younger, or older, than the age assigned at birth.

Reporter: If this continues, there will be no pre-teen sports programs left.

Mayor: This misses the point. The government has no right to tell anyone what sex or age someone is. We live in a free country, and we need to respect the autonomy, and conscience rights, of everyone. We also believe in being inclusive, letting everyone compete according to the sex and age they

identify with.

Reporter: Does this apply to occupations as well?

Mayor: What do you mean?

Reporter: Can someone claim to hold a certain job even if it appears to outside observers that he is lying?

Mayor: You are being argumentative.

Reporter: Not at all. I am simply following your logic. From this day forward I will consider myself to be Mayor of Anytown USA.

Mayor: But I am the mayor.

Reporter: Not anymore. You were elected. My self-identification matters more. And guess what? You're fired.

Mayor: This is outrageous.

Reporter: By the way, I have also decided to identify as a woman. Can you tell me where the ladies shower room is? Your wife just entered.

IS THE ACLU CRAZY?

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by Bill Donohue

This article originally appeared in the American Spectator on March 20.

If there were a proposal to erect a statue of St. Michael the Archangel on a municipal building, it would be understandable if some objected. However, it would not be understandable to object on the grounds that a depiction of St. Michael stepping on the neck of the Devil ineluctably conjures up images of George Floyd. But that is exactly the position of the ACLU of Massachusetts.

Having authored a Ph.D. dissertation, two books, and a monograph on the ACLU, I am convinced that most of its board members and senior officials harbor a deep animus against religion. Nothing bothers them more than Christianity, especially Catholicism. This is much more than a phobia: religion is seen as a threat to liberty.

When the ACLU was founded in 1920 by Roger Baldwin (the ACLU today falsely claims that Baldwin was one of 10 who founded the organization), all the provisions of the First Amendment, save for religious liberty, were listed as part of their ten objectives. That was not an oversight: Baldwin was an atheist.

Still, the reasoning of the ACLU of Massachusetts is off-the-charts, even by ACLU standards. It is challenging a decision made by the mayor of Quincy to erect two statues of Catholic saints outside the Quincy Public Safety Building. Mayor Thomas Koch chose St. Florian and St. Michael the Archangel; they are the patron saints of firefighters and police officers, respectively. The ACLU says the statues violate the separation of church and state.

The ACLU is well aware that religious statues adorn many buildings in the nation's capital, including the Capitol Building, the Supreme Court, the Library of Congress, the Lincoln Memorial, and other public buildings. Even in Massachusetts, the Boston Public Library features the outstanding work of John Singer Sargent: his religious murals, including "Madonna of Sorrows," are classic. At the State House, there are statues and paintings of famous Christians,

clergy, and laity alike.

But none of this is enough to allay the fears of the ACLU.

In the ACLU's letter to Mayor Koch and the Quincy City Council, it said that "we note that the contemplated statue of Saint Michael is not only troubling ... it depicts a figure stepping on the neck of a demon. Such violent imagery is particularly abhorrent in light of the murder of George Floyd and other acts of police brutality throughout the country."

In other words, the revered saint who battled Satan and who is known as the guardian prince of Israel—he stood ready to defend God's chosen people—reminds the ACLU of a serial violent criminal who resisted arrest and was subdued by the cops; he had four times the lethal dose of fentanyl in his system. Maybe if St. Michael had been depicted as engaging in dialogue with the Devil, instead of crushing his head, the ACLU would have applauded.

Would Baldwin have agreed with the ACLU? Only in part.

When I interviewed him in his home in New York City in 1978, we discussed an array of issues. He was cordial and forthcoming. But when it came to religion, he was an extremist. Here is an exchange I will never forget (See my book, *The Politics of the ACLU*: Transaction Press, 1985).

Donohue: The ACLU has even gone so far as to deny the right of people to voluntarily take the time during the day, as a schoolchild, to say a prayer.

Baldwin: Not on school time.

Donohue: Well, whose rights are being infringed upon if there is a silent prayer voluntarily said by a student?

Baldwin: If they don't say anything? You mean if they don't—

Donohue: Right. Are you afraid they are going to proselytize

the rest of the class?

Baldwin: Well, they've tried to get around it. They've tried to get around it even further than you by calling it meditation.

Donohue: What's wrong with that?

Baldwin: You don't say anything about God or religion or anything. I suppose you can get by with that but it's a subterfuge, because the implication is that you're meditating about the hereafter or God or something.

Donohue: Well, what's wrong with that? Doesn't a person have the right to do that? Or to meditate about popcorn for that matter?

Baldwin: I suppose that—it sounds very silly to me because it looks like an obvious evasion of the constitutional provision.

Back to St. Michael. Baldwin surely would have opposed erecting the statue, but he would have done so on conventional church and state grounds. Even if he were apprised of the George Floyd incident, he clearly would not have equated St. Michael stepping on the head of the Devil with a cop kneeling on Floyd. I spent many hours with him. He may have been an extremist on church and state, but he was not crazy.