

JAMES TALARICO'S STRANGE BRAND OF CHRISTIANITY

[Bill Donohue](#)

Texas state representative James Talarico is running for a U.S. Senate seat in his home state. Bill Donohue wrote him a letter today about his strange brand of Christianity. To read it click [here](#).

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INTERFAITH RALLY SEARS MAMDANI

[Bill Donohue](#)

Last night's Interfaith Rally Against Extremism was held near Gracie Mansion, home of New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani. Organized by EndJewHatred and attorney Brooke Goldstein, upwards of 1,000 protesters jammed 87th Street between York and East End Avenue.

Aside from a few hecklers, the only visible protesters who opposed the rally were a few dozen ultra-Orthodox Jews; they believe the Jewish state should not exist until the Messiah comes.

Most of the speakers were young and middle-age Jews. Also speaking was an African activist, a Muslim woman from American Muslim & Multifaith Women's Empowerment Council, and a Hindu man representing Hindus for Universal Rights; I was the only

Catholic who spoke. I am grateful to Rabbi Daniel Schonbuch for inviting me.

All the speakers, including non-Jews, were very well received. Most of them focused their remarks on Mamdani's anti-Semitic statements and policies. It is clear that he has offended legions of New Yorkers.

Chants of "Zohran Mamdani's got to go," and "Zohran, Zohran, you can't hide, we charge you with hate and lies," were heard throughout the 90-minute demonstration. Pro-America remarks, and shout-outs to the NYPD, were also commonplace (there was a large police presence). The American flag and the Flag of Israel were everywhere. It was clearly a very patriotic assembly.

I felt it necessary to participate for two reasons.

Jews and Catholics make up the majority of New Yorkers, and over the past few decades I have joined with Jews in protesting attacks on our respective religions, so when asked to speak at this rally, I did not hesitate.

The Catholic League is also highly critical of Mamdani's radical politics and his animus against people of faith. That is why we have on the front page of our website a section, "Mamdani Watch"; it details our objections to him.

I closed my comments with a plea to religious New Yorkers across faith communities. We need to take a NATO Article 5 approach—an attack on one religion is an attack on all religions. It would behoove Mamdani to heed this message.

POPE LEO CONFRONTS AI

[Bill Donohue](#)

In 1891, Pope Leo XIII gave us the encyclical, *Rerum Novarum* (“new things”), which affirmed the dignity of work and the need for a fair wage. It was also a qualified endorsement of private property and a denunciation of socialism.

Now, on the 135th anniversary of that encyclical, Pope Leo XIV gives us “Magnifica Humanitas: On Safeguarding the Human Person in the Time of Artificial Intelligence.” He begins by nicely laying out the moral groundwork that must undergird AI, and then he addresses his subject in detail.

Leo draws on Saint John Paul II who welcomed “the rise of democracy and the market economy.” He picks up on that theme, emphasizing the right to private property, noting that “it is always subordinate” to the common good. That end presupposes that we are not just an aggregate of individuals; rather, we are “interconnected” and are jointly responsible for the commonwealth.

To facilitate the pursuit of the common good, the pope says we must abide by the principle of subsidiarity, meaning that, ideally, civic duties should be handled at the level closest to the individual. To achieve this end we must strengthen “the fabric of associations and communities while avoiding further centralization of power.”

Leo insists on coupling human rights with human dignity. Owing to our human dignity, human rights are “universal and inalienable,” and among those rights “the first is the right to life, from conception to its natural end.” He explicitly cites abortion and euthanasia as contrary to human dignity and a violation of human rights.

Thus does he set the stage for a discussion of AI. At bottom,

he understands that AI is here to stay, like it or not.

Contrary to some media accounts, he is not opposed to it; rather, he is opposed to its manipulation in the hands of unscrupulous individuals and groups. Similarly, it has been misreported that when he says he would like to “disarm” AI, he does not mean he wants to extinguish it. “To disarm,” he writes, “does not mean rejecting technology, but preventing it from dominating humanity.”

Technology, he says, can be a force for good or ill. He implores us to guard against the “risk of dehumanization,” i.e., “building a future that excludes God and reduces others to a means.”

The digital revolution, the Holy Father says, has changed the principle of subsidiarity. No longer is the State the highest level—now it is those who command the technological expertise to radically transform society. This means we must protect against the monopolization of data and decision-making authority. We must resist technological actors who seek to impose on us their grand designs.

AI is not human. Leo offers this insightful nugget. “So-called artificial intelligences do not undergo experiences, do not possess a body, do not feel joy or pain, do not mature through relationships and do not know from within what love, work, friendship or responsibility mean. Nor do they have a moral conscience, since they do not judge good and evil, grasp the ultimate meaning of situations, or bear responsibility for consequences.”

While AI has no moral conscience, the pope hastens to add that “we cannot consider AI to be morally neutral.” That is because “every technical tool embodies choices and priorities through what it measures, ignores and optimizes, and how it classifies people and situations.” What worries him is the reality that “small but highly influential groups can shape information and

consumption patterns,” and affect political and economic dynamics to suit themselves, not the common good.

One of the greatest dangers AI poses is the specter of transhumanism and posthumanism. It is undeniably true that the perfection of human beings is an obsession with some technocrats. Indeed, some think they can create a hybridization of human beings. “If the human being is treated as something to be perfected or surpassed,” Leo warns, “it becomes easier to accept that some lives are less useful, less desirable or less worthy.”

The pope is also adept at noting how unsupervised children are being swallowed up by digital devices and how social media is affecting their psyches. Lower attention spans, sleep deprivation, inability to control emotions—all of this is well documented. Exposure to pornography, hypersexualized material, as well as cyberbullying, are threats to the wellbeing of young people.

He admonishes us not to allow AI to transform us into a new form of slavery. We are being reduced to “data” that allows us to be tracked and treated as “packages” to be moved around with abandon. It is not enough to “invoke efficiency,” especially if it results in a “chain of exploitation.”

Pope Leo ends with a plea not to allow AI to be entrusted with war-like powers. “No algorithm can make war morally acceptable.” Following Pope Francis, he says the “just war” theory is “outdated.” He did not proffer an alternative thesis.

Science tells us what we can do. It does not tell us what we should do. This powerful encyclical should reach an audience well beyond the Catholic community. Pope Leo XIV has given us much to weigh.

INTERFAITH RALLY TO PROTEST MAMDANI

On Tuesday, May 26, Bill Donohue will participate in an interfaith rally to protest Mayor Zohran Mamdani. It will be held outside Gracie Mansion (E 88th Street and East End Avenue, New York, NY 10028) from 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM.

The rally will bring together people of different faiths, including Jewish, Christian, Hindu, and Muslim leaders, to call out Mamdani for his callous indifference and tacit support for the radical mobs and Islamists who have flooded the streets to attack houses of worship.

This rally is being organized by End Jew Hatred and led by Brooke Goldstein of The Lawfare Project. Other organizations participating in the event include the Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center of Nassau County, #WalkAway, Hindus for Universal Human Rights, and American Muslim & Multifaith Women's Empowerment Council.

If you have any availability and wish to send a strong message that these assaults on our religious liberty are unacceptable, we hope to see you there!

MEDIA REACTION TO COLBERT'S

EXIT

Bill Donohue

Media stories on the end of “The Late Show with Stephen Colbert” lament the decision by CBS to terminate the show, and some are heralding him as the great Catholic evangelizer. This cries out for a rebuttal.

Father James Martin, known for his ministry to gays and transpersons, declares that Colbert is “one of today’s best Catholic evangelists.” The first three reasons he gives for making this assessment are (1) “he is normal, or at least as normal as a famous late-night talk show host can be” (2) “people understand that he is not paid to promote the church,” and (3) “he does it all with a sense of humor.” Nice qualities but if that makes him “one of today’s best Catholic evangelists,” the bar is set pretty low.

Mark Kennedy writes for *Crux* and notes that Colbert is different from his competitors because he wears “his Catholic faith and his adoration of his wife and frequent guest, Evie McGee Colbert, on his sleeve.” He is also someone who allegedly “could quote Psalms by heart.” Let’s assume this is true. How does this justify Kennedy’s observation, “Many Catholics Mourning the Loss of Late-Night Host Stephen Colbert’s Show”?

Mary McNamara has a piece in the *Los Angeles Times* titled, “We Will Miss the Divine and Very Human Ministry of Stephen Colbert.” She explains her reasoning by noting that he is “the single greatest argument for married Catholic clergy.” Others may see it as “the single greatest argument” to maintain celibacy.

I like Colbert. He invited me twice to appear on his Comedy Central show, “The Colbert Report.” But he is not St. Colbert. His commentary includes defending a Doritos commercial that

substituted the snack for the Eucharist. One of his shows featured a close-up photo of a priest distributing condoms instead of the consecrated Host. Regarding the play, “Jesus Christ Superstar,” he said, “It is the least gay musical because it’s got Jesus in it. Just this one guy with great abs hanging out with 12 of his buddies for three years in the countryside. Absolutely. Nothing gay about that at all.”

Colbert’s joke about President Trump performing oral sex on Vladimir Putin—using an obscenity—did not come off as an evangelizing moment. Ditto for his comment heralding a bald British bisexual black actress for playing Jesus in “Jesus Christ Superstar.”

Kennedy and McNamara, like so many in the media, are angry at CBS for firing Colbert. They smell politics. They should instead look at the bottom line.

Colbert’s CBS show had a budget of over \$100 million annually, and he was earning \$15 million a year. The show lost almost half its advertising revenue since 2018, and was losing \$40 million a year.

CBS cannot make miracles. Indeed, not even the “greatest Catholic evangelizer in the world” can be expected to survive with numbers like that. It’s time the media stopped portraying him as a poor Catholic soul who was victimized by corporate greed.

MARIAN MIRACLES MARK MEMORIAL

DAY

Bill Donohue

It defies rational explanation, but then again not everything worth believing passes the rational smell test. We're not talking about magic; we're talking about miracles. Magic involves tricks. Miracles do not—they involve divine inspiration, which is beyond ordinary comprehension.

Memorial Day is defined by one AI platform as “a time for remembrances and reflection, often marked by stories of miraculous events and divine interventions.” Not bad for a robot.

It is worth nothing this Memorial Day two recent news stories which are believable to Catholics, if not to those whose only God is science (yet some inexplicably insist there are 59 different genders). The stories speak to death and destruction.

In March, John Petrovich was doing his Saturday morning run in a Pittsburgh neighborhood when he passed a house where there was an ambulance in the driveway. As was his wont, he made the Sign of the Cross and said a “Hail Mary.”

Several days later he ran by the same house and a woman at the edge of the driveway waved to him and asked him to stop. She thanked him for saving her life. He was puzzled and asked how this happened.

She said that when he first ran by her house, she felt she was dying, but before she landed in a hospital bed “she got a vision of Jesus who came to her, and said, ‘It’s okay. Everything is going to be fine. You’re going to be fine because this person prayed for you.’” She continued, saying, “On the palm of his hand was your face—on Jesus’ hand. And I thought, ‘I have to thank you for saving my life.’” He was

speechless.

[On May 10](#), there was a big fire at Mother of Christ Specialist Hospital in the Diocese of Enugu; it is named after the Nigerian town. Just about everything was lost for good. The reception area, administrative offices, the doctor's lounge, etc. were leveled. Computers, printers, scanners and documents were all destroyed, as were televisions, refrigerators and furniture of all sorts. But not everything was decimated.

A prized statue of Our Blessed Mother, one that was passed from one department to another for devotional practices every three months, survived intact amid the flames.

One of the nuns, Maria, was struck by what happened. Her own office was also spared. "No smell of smoke, no flame, nothing. I started shouting, crying, and singing because I realized this was a great miracle." She said this incident had a great effect on Protestants, not just Catholics in the area. She concluded, "Those who did not believe in the intercession of Mary should know that she is still interceding for us."

Memorial Day honors those who gave their lives to protect our freedom. For Catholics, we also have some miraculous events to ponder.

TRUMP IS RIGHT ABOUT RELIGION AND CRIME

[Bill Donohue](#)

President Trump ignited his critics again, such as Huff Post, when he opined on May 19, "When you have religion, you have

less crime. It's like, 'Gee, I want to go to heaven, so I'm not going to do this or that.' Who knows?"

His observation about religion and crime is accurate: there is a mountain of evidence that shows an inverse relationship between religious ideas and practices (religiosity) and crime, meaning the more religious the person is the less likely he is to engage in crime. Trump's attempt to explain why falls short, but he is on the right track.

My own sociological research on this issue, as evidenced in [*The Catholic Advantage: How Health, Happiness and Heaven Await the Faithful*](#), found that the Three "B's," beliefs, bonds and boundaries, are positively related to the Three "H's," health, happiness and heaven.

With regard to crime, those who hold to religious beliefs, have strong bonds and recognize behavioral boundaries, are much less likely to participate in criminal behavior than those who are non-believers, have tenuous bonds with others and fail to observe boundaries.

Duke University psychiatrist Harold G. Koenig is coauthor of the most respected work in the field, *Handbook of Religion and Health*. His team looked at the research and found that in 91 percent of the studies, there was an inverse relationship between religiosity and delinquency or crime. In a research study released after this project, 100 percent of the studies found a significant difference between religious students and those who were not religious.

We have known of the connection between religion and crime since at least the late nineteenth century when French sociologist Emile Durkheim noted that the strong bonds that religious-minded people form act as a social control mechanism, leading to fewer criminal acts. Moreover, the norms and values associated with religiosity ensure greater compliance with standards of civility.

Durkheim's thesis has been put to empirical tests by sociologists such as Travis Hirshi and Michael Gottfredson. They found that social control, which religion abets, accounts for less crime. To put it differently, those who have weak ties to social groups are left isolated and are therefore more likely to disregard the rights of others. Lacking moral rules, they allow their base appetites to rule.

Beliefs matter but if they are not accompanied by practice—by attending religious services—their influence is significantly lower. That is because, as University of Texas at San Antonio sociologist John Bartkowski found, those who attend religious services exhibit better social control and social skills.

Critics of Trump's observation on the relationship between religion and crime know nothing of the sociological research in this field. If they were not reflexively anti-Trump, they would not make comments that make them look patently stupid.

ARE DEMOCRATS PHOBIC ABOUT RELIGION? NO, IT'S WORSE

[Bill Donohue](#)

A new Pew Research Center survey, "How Americans Feel About Religion's Influence in Government and Public Life," reveals that Republicans and Democrats seriously disagree on the public role of religion. What the survey does not disclose is why. Before addressing this issue, it is important to recognize areas of general agreement.

Most Americans (8-in-10) think churches should not endorse political candidates, and most (54 percent) think government

should enforce separation of church and state (only 13 percent want government to *stop* separation of church and state). Despite media reports to the contrary, only 10 percent of Americans have a positive view of “Christian nationalism” (6-in-10 never heard of it).

Is religion’s influence gaining or losing influence in America life? The poll found that 37 percent say it is gaining while 61 percent say it is losing. But is it a good thing or a bad thing that 37 percent say it is gaining influence? This matters because this figure is the highest share since 2002.

More than half of Americans (55 percent) have a positive view of religion’s influence on American life; the rest are split between those who are neutral and those who are negative. Republicans and Democrats vary considerably: 7-in-10 of the former believe religion has a positive impact while less than 4-in-10 of the latter agree.

Similarly, 7-in-10 Republicans think the Bible should have a great deal, or some, influence on U.S. laws, as compared to only 3-in-10 Democrats. Had respondents been asked if the Bible should have a great deal of influence on American society, as opposed to its laws, the figure would likely be higher.

It is no secret that Republicans believe that the teachings that mark our Judeo-Christian heritage, e.g., the Ten Commandments, are a positive guide to the good life. Why don’t Democrats? Why are they skittish on the question of religion? To be blunt, are they phobic?

The issue of phobia deserves to be raised because we constantly hear about the nefarious influence of “Islamophobia.” New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani, and many academics, never tire of rolling out this canard. Now if some Americans are wary of the effects of Islam on American society, it is because of the illiberal beliefs and practices

of many of its adherents.

What is behind the Democrats negative view of religion, which in America largely means Christianity? Fears of a Christian theocracy may be prevalent among some Democrats, but this concern is not supported by any survey data. So what is it that is bugging them?

If there is one thing that liberals prize (most Democrats are liberals), it is autonomy. "It's my body," "I have my own moral compass," and the like, reflect this value. Accordingly, the regard "Thy Shalt Not" to be violative of their precious embrace of autonomy. Worse still, they reckon, is the fact that the author of these three dreaded words is God. The match has been lit.

A close cousin to autonomy is narcissism, and at the collective level, namely society, it manifests itself as nihilism. That is not a prescription for the good society.

This condition may not be true of all Democrats, but it is true of too many of them. A hostility to Christianity, properly understood, is not in anyone's interest. Unfortunately, that explains what's driving so many Democrats these days—it is less a phobia than it is an animus.

DO DEMOCRATS NEED DEPROGRAMMING?

[Bill Donohue](#)

There is something seriously wrong with a large swath of self-identified Democrats. If the nutty things they believe were

true of others, calls for deprogramming would be everywhere. But the only ones pleading for deprogramming are contemporary Democrats (they are not at all like the Democrats of old).

In October 2021, failed presidential candidate Hillary Clinton said the time had come for a “formal deprogramming” of what she called President Trump’s “cult members.” Two years earlier, “Today” show host Katie Couric rhetorically asked, “How are we going to really almost deprogram these people who have signed up for the cult of Trump?”

In 2020, failed Trump White House communications director Anthony Scaramucci raised the same issue. A few days later, failed CNN host Don Lemon said “a lot” of Trump voters “need to be deprogrammed right now, before they cast their next ballot.” Former Secretary of Labor Robert Reich said the same year, “When this nightmare is over, we need a Truth and Reconciliation Committee.” He was outdone by David Atkins, a prominent California Democrat, who wondered aloud “how ‘do’ you deprogram 75 million people?”

Senator Bernie Sanders insisted, “we need to send all the Republicans to the reeducation camps.” Eugene Robinson, an African American columnist for the *Washington Post*, said, “There are millions of Americans, almost all white, almost all Republicans, who somehow need to be deprogrammed.” Michael Beller, an attorney for PBS set his sights on kids, imploring Homeland Security to take the children of Republican voters away. “And then we’ll put them in reeducation camps.” He was subsequently fired.

Deprogramming is a staple of totalitarian regimes, perfected by Mao. Given their contempt for conscience rights, it is not surprising that some Democrats want it as part of their arsenal. Ironically, they would make for exemplary candidates.

A recent survey found that 1 in 3 Democrats believe that the attempted assassination of President Trump at the White House

correspondents' dinner was staged (the figure for Republicans was 1 in 8). Similarly, the attempted assassination of Trump in Butler, Pennsylvania was regarded as a staged event by 42 percent of Democrats (as compared to 7 percent of Republicans).

It would be wrong to write off this insanity to Trump Derangement Syndrome. It's much deeper than that. Consider the following views that are popular with many Democrats.

- Our sex is not determined by our father—it is assigned at birth
- Men can get pregnant
- Tampons belong in the boys' restroom at school
- Unborn babies are not human
- It is possible to have two mommies
- It is not easy to decide what a woman is
- Race is a social construct
- All economic disparities are unjust
- White people are inherently racist
- Blacks cannot be racist
- We need to defund the police
- We need to abolish bail
- We need to abolish prisons

Irrationality reigns supreme with those who prioritize feelings over reason. It is also dangerous. It literally plays into the hands of those who, like Hitler, say there are no objective truths.

Deprogramming, for political reasons, is not a viable option in a free society. Indeed, it needs to be condemned. Lucky for many of today's Democrats that more don't agree with their tactics; otherwise, they would be forced fed their own medicine.

TRUMP'S RELIGIOUS LIBERTY PANEL UNDER ATTACK

[Bill Donohue](#)

Ever since President Trump announced on May 1, 2025 that he wanted a Religious Liberty Commission to make recommendations on how to protect our most important freedom, critics have tried to discredit it. The same is true of the Task Force to Eradicate Anti-Christian Bias; it was created on February 6, 2025, under the aegis of the Department of Justice (DOJ).

The final report of the Religious Liberty Commission will soon be published, but already it is coming under attack, especially by the Associated Press (AP) and the Interfaith Alliance.

On May 9, AP reporter Peter Smith ran a news story on the Commission that teed it up for critics; he did the same thing on May 1 in his story on the Task Force. He listed a series of comments by members of the panel, as well as reported instances of restrictions on religious liberty, followed by remarks from critics. His reporting deserves closer scrutiny.

One of the Commission's members has called for a Presidential Medal of Freedom for "a baker who refused to create a wedding cake for a same-sex couple."

That's right, Jack Phillips, who never denied selling a cake to homosexuals, refused to personally make a "wedding" cake for two men, citing his Christian objections. He won in the U.S. Supreme Court in 2018 but was bullied and badgered by vindictive gay activists and lawyers who sued him in a civil lawsuit. The case bounced around the courts until he finally

won again. His courage was exemplary.

Amish parents in New York asserted their First Amendment right to religious liberty when the state denied them a religious exemption allowing them not to have their children vaccinated. Yet the law allows for medical exemptions. Parental rights are also at stake.

Catholic nuns in Westchester, New York are being told they have to call those who falsely claim to be of the opposite sex "they," and to allow them to use the same room in their care facilities as those of the opposite sex.

The AP reporter notes that "progressive" critics of the Task Force to Eradicate Anti-Christian Bias claim that accusations against the Biden administration lack documentation. This is false. The Catholic League alone turned over a wealth of documents, and I met personally with one of the DOJ attorneys, offering more information.

It is also noted that one of the members of the panel, Carrie Prejean Boller, was ousted. True. The former Miss California and convert to Catholicism claimed, without evidence, that her critical remarks of Israel were representative of what Catholics think; the Palestinian flag pin that she liked to wear was another expression of her partisanship.

The AP story mentions that some who testified before the panel argued that workplace regulations conflicted with their religious beliefs. Yes, when a nurse is forced by the University of Vermont Medical Center to perform an abortion, despite her religious convictions, that is a serious problem.

A Catholic woman was fired by Blue Cross Blue Shield for refusing the Covid vaccine; she won her court case in 2024. Other instances involve an Hispanic woman who was told to remove a crucifix from her desk at school, and students in Michigan who were told they could not sing a Christian song at a talent show.

The AP piece says the Commission is being sued by the Interfaith Alliance for not having diverse members and viewpoints. That's a keeper. The Interfaith Alliance is one of the least diverse religious associations in the nation: its idea of religious liberty is so narrow as to make it hostile to any honest interpretation of it. To include those of their ilk on this panel would be to sabotage it.

President Trump's policies on religious liberty are in stark contrast to that of his predecessor. He is expanding this foundational freedom while Biden contracted it. The problem his critics have has less to do with him than it does the plain meaning of the First Amendment.