

# CELEBRATING CELIBACY

A recent editorial in the *Forward*, a Jewish weekly newspaper in the New York area, caught the attention of William Donohue. We are pleased that the *Forward* ran Donohue's missive as the lead letter in its May 10 edition. It is reprinted below.

"While the May 3 editorial on the Catholic church's sex abuse scandal was respectfully written, some of the commentary needs a response.

"The editorialist writes that 'Catholicism celebrates celibacy and views carnal relations at best as necessary for the preservation of the species. Judaism, by contrast, traditionally sanctifies the sex act as an expression of godliness.'

"It would be more accurate to say Catholicism celebrates celibacy as a gift for those ordained to the priesthood. Catholicism also sees sexual relations between a man and a woman in the institution of marriage as an expression of godliness. Moreover, I know quite a few Jews who would take umbrage at the idea that Judaism, without qualification, sanctifies the sex act as an expression of godliness. If true, this would seem to justify adultery.

"More contentious is the statement that 'American Catholics have been clamoring for a liberalization of church attitudes toward sex and reproductive rights.' Not true. Some surveys might suggest this, but what is being registered are preferences, not demands.

"Only those Catholics on the fringe are agitating for the church to change its profoundly countercultural teachings on sexuality. Most Catholics admire the church's emphasis on sexual reticence. Now if all our priests had subscribed to this position—both theologically and behaviorally—we would have been spared the scandal.

“In short, now is not the time to lower the bar simply because some can’t jump over it.”