

CHALLENGING THE NEW YORK TIMES

*Like it or not, no newspaper in the United States has more influence on our nation's elites than the New York Times. And no one has consistently challenged its editorial positions with greater authority than Rev. Msgr. Daniel S. Hamilton. Fortunately, this Long Island priest has collected more than 300 of his letters-to-the-editor, many of which were printed in the Times, and had them republished in a new book, *Jousting With The New York Times 1961-2014: Worldviews in Radical Conflict*.*

The following is a selection of his letters, some of which have been excerpted. They were chosen by Bill Donohue, his former altar boy.

October 7, 1964

On Ecumenism

Your otherwise clear-sighted editorial of Oct. 7 "On Ecumenism," dealing with the aggiornamento within the Roman Catholic Church, contains one serious error: "Before Pope John was elected in 1958 it would have been fanciful to think of the Roman Catholic Church recognizing the possibility of merit or salvation outside the Catholic fold..."

On the contrary, The Catholic Church has consistently taught the possibility of merit and salvation for those outside its visible unity – namely, for non-Catholic Christians and for those of other religions. Indeed it is and has been Catholic teaching that God gives sufficient graces to all men to be saved. Basic to Catholic teaching has been the recognition that countless millions have belonged by at least desire and longing to the salvation community which is the church, although in good faith they neither recognized it as such not

therefore entered its visible unity.

Ironically, the Catholic position on this universality of God's salvific will (as the subject is called in dogmatic theology has been much more liberal than the classical protestant position. Most recent and most startling in a long series of statements (through many centuries) by the teaching church was the excommunication, in 1949, of a priest who taught the doctrine you wrongly assume to have been characteristic of the Catholic Church before 1958.

April 17, 1978

Of tuition, taxes and equal justice for all

Your April 14 editorial "Tuition Credits Fail Every Time" rejects such credits because, first, they include help for the very wealthy, who don't need it. This obligation, more theoretical, you admit, than practical, can easily be overcome by putting an income eligibility ceiling on tuition-paying parents. Congress can take a look at this program as often as it likes.

Objecting that such credits will hurt public schools, however, reveals your persistent failure to recognize that parents are gravely hurt by a system of double taxation which effectively denies their natural and constitutional right to choose nonpublic, often religious oriented, schools for their children. Such parents, moreover, want no "subsidy," only a just share in the taxes they have already paid for education.

Both public and nonpublic schools serve the common good in this community. For more than a century, Federal and state governments have done just about everything possible to discourage parents from choosing nonpublic schools. These schools have significantly declined over the past decade.

May 20, 1981

What must human life do to prove personhood?

Those who question whether the new human life is a person imply that the fetus, or “little one,” must be able to do something to qualify as a person. Is he producing heartbeats or brain waves (about three to four weeks)? Is he responding to sensory stimuli (about six weeks)? Or growing hair on his head (about 16 weeks)? Or able to live outside the womb (about 28 weeks and constantly decreasing)? Or is an even longer period – does baby talk and socialize adequately? – needed to qualify for the dignity of personhood?

Clearly, speculators invoke a variety of contradictory biological, philosophical, psychological and sociological criteria to answer their question.

What reason is there, however, for denying the little one the dignity of personhood right from his or her beginning, from conception? Nobody can offer any compelling reason. Despite agreement that the conceptus is a new, unique member of the human species, the problem seems to be that the little one is so small and helpless.

Those who want to deny personhood to the new human life, not those who affirm it, are the ones who invoke a host of unverifiable and debatable opinions about personhood.

April 2, 1993

Where is the equal humaneness in all this?

A New York physician specializing in abortion recently botched a late-term abortion in which he cut off the arm of the unborn child who was born the very next day. Had the doctor killed the unborn child, he arguably could have escaped, despite the late-term factor, criminal charges. But he failed to kill and now suffers a penalty only because the unborn child survived. In his defense the doctor maintains that the day he cut off the fetus's arm, she was not a person; only the next day, when she was born did it become a person. He did no harm to any person.

Please, where is the equal fairness, the equal humaneness in all this? Persons of whatever religious affiliation or none who identify abortion as the direct and illegitimate taking of an innocent life urge no “theology” on the law or on the citizenry. They urge the indisputable evidence of bio-medical science. Religious beliefs constitute no part of this evidence.

January 21, 2001

Research that kills. Yes? No?

Embryonic stem cell research advocates can't understand why opponents reject such experimentation even though it might (stress might) result in cures for various debilitating diseases. The answer is twofold.

First, you may not do evil that good will come of it. In procuring human embryo stem cells, the embryo is destroyed. And what's so bad about that?

Bio-genetics testifies with certainty that the human embryo is a new member of the human species containing all that is necessary, given the proper nurturing environment, to grow through all stages of human development. What? You mean this little cluster of cells is a human being? Yes, a human being in the very first stages of his or her development. Who would wish to have been destroyed, killed, when he or she was an embryo?

Secondly, adult stem cell research, which involves no destruction of the human embryo, shows great promise. We should concentrate on methods of cure that cause no harm, that do not kill. A human being should never be used as a means to an end.

June 17, 2005

Exactly what happened

The bottom line on Terry Schiavo: Terry was severely brain-

injured, not recoverable, but certainly not dying. The pathologist's report designates the cause of her death as "marked dehydration," What caused this? The withdrawal of her gastric feeding tube. Why was it removed? Her husband said Terry said (years ago) she wouldn't want to live this way. You conclude she was "allowed to die." In reality, she was forced to die. The direct cause of death was the removal of her gastric feeding tube. What severely disabled but not dying person so nourished will be next?

August 9, 2010

Nature is the heart of the matter

Nature universally disqualifies same-sex persons from engaging in the generative act. No question of discrimination arises; in fact that charge is a red herring. Nature has made men and women sexually different, not the same. Marriage is, indeed, a fundamental right – if one qualifies. A father cannot marry his daughter or a mother her son. Brother and sister cannot marry. A seven year old male and female cannot marry. Same-sex persons even more radically do not qualify; they cannot in nature be the subject of a right to marry one another.

That's nature and the natural moral law, which the civil law flouts at society's peril. There lies the heart of the matter.

January 28, 2013

Balderdash too much to take

Frank Bruni's op-ed article (1/27) seems to adopt historian and author Garry Wills as his personal theologian and guide for his ultra-acerbic and, in part, woefully misinformed column of Jan. 27.

Well known as an intellectual and author, now somewhat disaffected Catholic, Wills presents himself as a practicing Catholic but has long distanced himself from key teachings of the Church and maintains a Catholic identity only on his own terms. Academics and journalists seeking comment on the Church

should avoid consulting only such Catholics. Fully committed Catholics should be the first source for such information and comment.

October 7, 2014

A columnist free to dump

Frank Bruni's column for the *Times'* Sunday Review section mentions his previous columns in which he slanders, assaults and condemns the Catholic Church for the Church's biblical teachings on sexual morality, concerning which no response, including my own, was admitted to print. Now, he has added a fourth column, no less gratuitous, insulting and misinformed than the previous three.

I have a suggestion for you. If you wish to maintain journalistic fairness, that you invite a Catholic journalist also competent in Church teaching and concerned for fairness and courage and give him/her the same space to respond to Frank Bruni.

If no one is invited or admitted, prepare to join the chorus of the already large company of those who are convinced that you can't get a fair hand from the editorial management of The Times. For a candidate I recommend William A. Donohue, president of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights. His competence in this field is well known and widely appreciated.

For information on how to order this book, [click here](#).