

CNN'S INANE STORY ON THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a CNN story on the Catholic Church:

Halloween is a time when children dress up as monsters and witches. It's also a time when some adults get dressed up, but, unlike the children, they actually think they've adopted a new identity. To wit: CNN did a story this week on German Catholic women who dress up as a priest and sincerely believe they've become members of the clergy.

As always, the wannabe priests are senior citizens. CNN described them as "mostly gray-haired women." At a rally, they were "singing along—at full pelt." The protesting malcontents held signs, "Women, what are you waiting for?"

They are a motley crew. "Almost everyone is wearing a rainbow mask. One woman dressed as a clown sends a stream of giant bubbles into the air." This isn't a playground for pre-school kids—it's a demonstration conducted by adult women.

No matter, CNN takes them seriously. It says they want to "modernize" the German Catholic Church. Indeed, it says these "feminists [are] trying to save the Catholic Church." Save it or kill it?

CNN is badly informed. The data convincingly show that the more "modern" a religious body is, the more likely it is to wither and die. It is not the orthodox religious dioceses and orders of priests and nuns that are dying—it's the more "relevant" among them. Indeed, the German Catholic Church is in trouble precisely because it is the most "modern" Catholic entity in Europe, if not the world. Ditto for its Protestant brothers.

A majority of Germans are either Catholic (22.6 million) or Protestant (20.7 million). While only 10 percent of Catholics attend church on Sunday, the figure for Protestants is barely 3 percent. In 2019, 272,000 Catholics left the Church; the number of Protestants who fled was proportionately greater, 270,000. Similarly, a Pew survey on this issue, published in 2019, found that "Germany's share of Protestants has decreased at a faster rate than Catholics."

The same pattern is found in the U.S. In fact, the divide between the orthodox and the heterodox is evident across religions. It is the mainline Protestant denominations that have witnessed the greatest decline, not the evangelical and fundamentalist communities. Orthodox Jews are growing; this is not true of Conservative and Reform Jews. In short, the more a major religion succumbs to the dominant culture, the more irrelevant it becomes to its flock.

It's not hard to figure out. Why would a young Catholic girl, for instance, consider joining an order of nuns that is largely indistinguishable in dress, living arrangements and work from her friends who are married with a family? In other words, the more trendy a religion is, the less special it becomes.

CNN wrote this piece for one reason: it wants women priests. To that end, it wants to convince the public that the time has come for the Church to change. It could have done a story on the Mormons, the Orthodox churches, Orthodox Judaism, the Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church, Islam, and the Southern Baptist Convention—they all have an all-male clergy—but the big fish to fry is the Catholic Church.

This kind of media manipulation is not lost on most Americans. It explains why so many of them hold the profession of journalism in such low regard. They never seem to learn.

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