

CONSPIRATORIAL MADNESS

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We live in stressful times but that doesn't give anyone the right to espouse madness. Yet crazy ideas abound these days and they typically emanate from the keyboards of intellectuals. Just consider the conspiratorial madness of Andrew Greeley, Bill Moyers and Daniel Goldhagen. They are, respectively, Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish. How's that for diversity?

On October 26, Greeley wrote a column for the *Albany Times Union* charging that the cardinals who reviewed the Dallas charter on priestly sexual abuse are "convinced that the sex-abuse crisis was created by Jewish-controlled media to punish the church for its support for a Palestinian state."

My response, printed in a letter to the editor, was as follows: "This is perhaps the most irresponsible statement that has yet been made by any public person on this issue. There is not one iota of evidence to support such a reckless charge and Greeley knows it. I would expect an accusation like this from someone in the asylum. That it was made by a priest is proof positive that the problems facing the Roman Catholic Church extend way beyond the sexual abuse scandal."

Those who want to write off Greeley's remark as just the musings of an irate Irishman need to explain why Greeley so strongly supports the right of two men to marry. From his sex novels to his columns bashing the Vatican, Greeley has made it clear that he doesn't want to be considered a typical priest. He has nothing to worry about—the vote is unanimous.

Bill Moyers is one of the most liberal political pundits of our day. The pounding that the Democrats took at the polls last month sent him right over the edge. He sounded the alarms by saying "the entire federal government—the Congress, the

Executive, the Judiciary—is united behind a right-wing agenda for which George W. Bush believes he now has a mandate.” This is his way of saying Bush staged a coup d’etat on election day.

Want to know what’s really eating at him? “That mandate includes the power of the state to force pregnant women to give up control over their own lives.” In other words, if the Supreme Court rolls back *Roe v. Wade* and the states are then given the power to decide on abortion, we will become a totalitarian nation. Funny thing is that when it comes to China—where the state has literally been known to track a woman’s menstrual cycle and then force her to have an abortion—we never hear a peep out of Mr. Liberal.

Moyers may be a minister, but at the end of the day he’s scared to death of religion. “And if you like God in government, get ready for the Rapture.” What Moyers is predicting is surely a first in history: we are about to become the first theocratic-totalitarian state elected by the people.

There is another book out about Pope Pius XII being a bad guy. Daniel Goldhagen’s *A Moral Reckoning* is so incredibly flawed it is a wonder he found a publisher (the disgrace goes to Knopf). Ron Rychlak tore the book apart in a splendid edition of *First Things*, where he slammed Goldhagen’s thesis as being based upon “selective sources, doctored quotations, sloppy inaccuracies, half-truths, and outright falsehoods.”

But it is not Goldhagen’s sloppiness that has caused many fair-minded Jews to take up the cudgels against him. They know he harbors an animus against Catholicism and he is therefore in a position to poison Catholic-Jewish relations. In short, it’s not because Goldhagen is anti-Pius, it’s because he’s anti-Catholic that Jews (as well as Catholics) are outraged.

Goldhagen is demanding that the Church renounce its teachings

on papal infallibility and salvation. He insists that the Vatican nation-state dissolve and that we rewrite the Catholic Catechism. In short, he wants the Catholic Church to get rid of Catholicism.

It is too easy to brand Goldhagen a bigot. The fact is his knowledge of Catholicism is at the level of an illiterate. For example, he correctly cites a comment I made several months ago that it was not anti-Catholic for non-Catholics to raise questions about the sexual abuse scandal in the Church. When it comes to issues of a political nature (e.g. those that have a public impact), I said it was fair game for everyone to opine. But I hastened to add that when it comes to “house rules” like celibacy, that’s nobody’s business but Catholics’.

So far, so good. Goldhagen accurately states what I said. But then, in what is truly a remarkable admission, he uses what I said as justification for non-Catholics to criticize the Church’s “doctrine, theology, liturgy [and] practices.” This proves his illiteracy. He doesn’t know the difference between school vouchers and the Offertory.

Merry Christmas to all—including those whose delirious ideas bring a smile to my face.