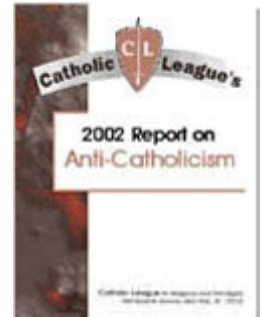


Executive Summary

Reactions to the sexual abuse scandal in 2002 ranged from legitimate criticism to wildly unfair generalizations; we have no interest in addressing the former.



Most Catholics were understandably angry, hurt and dismayed by the news, which provoked some activists to speak and act irresponsibly. Regarding the media, newspaper and television reporting on this subject was mostly professional. But the same cannot be said of commentators, cartoonists and TV dramas; there were many examples of sensationalism. Attorneys for alleged victims were sometimes fair, other times not. In other words, it would be difficult to render a blanket judgment.

It is important to remember that the best studies of the sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church show that 98 to 99 percent of priests over the past half-century have not been charged with abusing a minor. Whether the source is the *New York Times*, the Associated Press or authors in the academy, the result is still the same. While no one can say for sure how priests compare to their counterparts in other religions (or to school teachers, social workers and psychologists), no one has ever been able to demonstrate that the Catholic Church is an anomaly: the Church has no monopoly on this problem.

This needs to be said because some states' attorneys general and some victims' attorneys acted in 2002 as if the Church were the only institution that had this problem. This may explain why they zeroed in on the Church to the exclusion of others, but it does nothing to justify their behavior. It must

be said that either this shows a profound ignorance of the problem or it shows an anti-Catholic bias.

Thomas Reilly is the Massachusetts attorney general. He also is a man known to engage in hyperbole when addressing the scandal; so much so that he had to back off when confronted with a torrent of criticism. To be exact, Reilly said he wanted his office to involve itself in the recruitment, selection, training and monitoring of priests. Why he didn't say he wanted to pick the next pope is a mystery.

The establishment clause of the First Amendment was written primarily to keep the government from encroaching on religion. It is not easy to see how someone like Reilly, who obviously knows something about constitutional law, could float the idea that his office ought to vet prospective seminarians. To the extent this was a public relations stunt, the implications are even scarier: it suggests there is a market for such anti-Catholic fare.

Jeffrey Anderson is perhaps the most well-known victims attorney in the nation. He is also one of the most reckless. His attempt to use the RICO statute against the Vatican was more than mischievous—it was legal thuggery. Others have exploited this law before but few have been more brazen about it than Anderson.

District Attorneys in New York, Pennsylvania and New Hampshire also showed how biased they were. They explicitly said they had no interest in obtaining the personnel records of any clergymen save Catholics. Ditto for teachers and other professionals who work with youngsters.

Now if the goal is to protect children, then mandatory reporting laws should ideally cover all adults in every walk of life. If, however, the goal is to “get the priests,” then only the Catholic clergy will be targeted. This, unfortunately, is exactly what happened in many parts of the

country.

Take New York State. Jeanine Pirro is the Westchester D.A. She has admitted that not one Catholic priest has ever contacted her office regarding the sexual abuse of a minor. She has also said that not one minister, rabbi or clergyman of any other religion has ever contacted her office regarding this crime. Yet her focus is on priests and only priests.

Not only did Pirro decide to go after priests, while giving others a pass, she unfairly blamed the Catholic Church for blocking a mandatory reporting bill in New York State. It cannot be said too strongly that the Church had absolutely nothing to do with it. It was Family Planning Advocates, the lobbying arm of Planned Parenthood, and the New York Civil Liberties Union, that sought to have the mandatory reporting law apply only to the clergy; they did not want the law to extend to abortion providers. Why? Because if it did, the truth would come out: it has been known for years that when Planned Parenthood learns of cases of statutory rape, which it does on a regular basis, it rarely reports such crimes to the authorities. It wouldn't be good for business if they did.

The report card of the media was better. It was a rare event in 2002 to read a newspaper account of the scandal that was patently unfair, much less anti-Catholic. The *Boston Globe*, the *Boston Herald* and the *New York Times* covered the story carefully and with professionalism. The evening news anchors on television similarly did what they are supposed to do—report, not editorialize. Peter Jennings did a one-hour special on the scandal and handled himself with distinction. The problems we had with the media were mostly limited to pundits, cartoonists and script writers for TV shows. Now it might be argued that commentators should be given free reign to opine and not be held to the same standards as reporters. There is much truth to this point. But no one is exempt from responsibility and that is the gravamen of our charge: a line has been crossed when wild accusations and attempts to impugn

the character of innocents are made. It matters not a whit who is doing it.

Bill Maher is a comedian. Comedians are given, quite rightfully so, plenty of latitude to score points. Again, though, it is unacceptable to maintain that their line of work exempts them from all criticism. Maher is a textbook example: in 2002 he repeatedly made the most sweeping and damning statements about Catholic priests. This was vintage Maher: his hatred of the Catholic Church is deep. What is even more disturbing is that many applaud his bigotry.

Many comedians took pot shots at the Church but no night-time host showed the kind of fixation that David Letterman did. There was a time during the year when we wondered whether Letterman was capable of ever moving on to some other group; that his comments were often unfair made things worse. "South Park" chimed in as well, as did "MADtv." But it was the drama shows that were particularly bad. Shows like "The District," "CSI: Miami," "Law and Order," "Boston Public" and "The Practice" were the biggest offenders. And no one in Hollywood showed his resolve to slam Catholics more than David E. Kelley. In fact, when one examines his record, it is no exaggeration to say that Kelley is positively obsessed with Catholicism.

The Catholic League's complaints about these shows often triggers the refrain that this is just an example of art imitating life. After all, we are told, the scandal in the Church is real, so what's wrong with script writers picking up on it? The problem is they never seem to do so when other segments of the population are in the news. Take Muslims. On September 11, 2001, we were bombed by 19 Muslim men and the first thing out of everyone's mouth was let's not generalize about all Muslims. Fine. But why wasn't this same standard applied to priests in 2002?

Cartoonists that mocked a specific Church leader tied to the

scandal generally did not incur our wrath. But those who painted all priests as perverts did. That's the difference: when there is a jump from the individual to the collective, it's the difference between criticism and bigotry. Sadly, there was no shortage of anti-Catholic bigots in this line of work in 2002; only a small sample of such cartoons is shown here.

Then we have the pundits. Here's an example of what we consider anti-Catholic. In late October, *Newsday* columnist Sheryl McCarthy offered some cute ideas about Halloween costumes. Her list of characters included Martha Stewart, Osama bin Laden, Saddam Hussein, George W. Bush, et al. Curiously, there was one entry that was not a character: it was a group. "A Catholic priest's costume would also be a crowd pleaser this year," McCarthy said, "replete with clerical collar and a lascivious grin."

It is striking that McCarthy did not ridicule Muslims as a group, choosing instead to name specific men. But it is apparent that in her mind, Catholics merit a different response: it is quite okay to slam all priests for the behavior of a few. That's why she's included in our annual report.

The scandal was also exploited by a Columbia University student who made an obscene anti-Catholic remark about priests on the loudspeaker during the half-time activities of a football game with Fordham University. This incident drew considerable attention in the New York area and was made worse when the offending student refused to apologize. A meeting I had with Columbia president Lee Bollinger proved to be productive.

Perhaps the most vulgar and inexcusable event of the year was the fracas involving shock-jock hosts Opie and Anthony. A man and woman from Virginia entered St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York around 4:00 p.m. on August 15, the Feast of the

Assumption, and proceeded to have sex in front of men, women and children. A detailed description of the encounter was relayed by cell phone to the "Opie and Anthony" show so that all listeners could be entertained. The event was planned, coordinated and approved by those associated with the show.

When we learned of the incident, we immediately contacted the FCC asking that it revoke the license of the offending station, WNEW. But after the station dropped the show like a pancake, we told the FCC it was not necessary to revoke its license. We had succeeded in getting Opie and Anthony fired (from all the stations that were carrying them) and thus had already accomplished what we really wanted to do.

The amount and variety of hate mail we received as a result of getting this show kicked off the air was astonishing. We've never seen anything like it. There are so many sick minds out there it is unbelievable, young men being the worst offenders. In fact, we could fill scores of volumes this size with nothing but the vicious, obscene, blasphemous and threatening hate mail we received from those crushed by our victory over their favorite show.

Not every issue we confronted featured some aspect of sexuality, though at times it seemed that way. The perennial Christmas wars heated up again at year's end, though with a difference: this time we made good on our pledge of a year earlier to see to it that New York City was sued for religious discrimination.

During the Christmas season of 2001, we learned that New York City public schools were explicitly allowing Jewish and Islamic religious symbols in the schools while barring Christian ones. To be specific, the menorah and crescent and star were permitted but the nativity scene was not. That's because the Schools Chancellor's office declared the Jewish and Islamic religious symbols to be secular. Catholics were told they should be satisfied with a Christmas tree.

To get the kind of legal standing we wanted, we needed to find a Catholic parent who lives in New York City, sends her kids to public schools and was willing to be part of the lawsuit. We found such a person in Andrea Skoros. We then contacted our friend at the Thomas More Law Center in Ann Arbor, Michigan, Richard Thompson, to see if his firm would take the case. He agreed and the suit was filed. The final outcome may not be known for some time.

These kinds of battles occur with greater frequency every December as challenges are made to the display of Christian symbols on public property. At the core of this issue is the desire to dumb-down Christmas, making it a holiday centered on snowflakes and colored lights. Indeed, anti-Christian bigots around the country have even objected to both of these items!

Politicians, both Republicans and Democrats, have played some dirty games with Catholics over the years, and 2002 was no exception. This time it was the Democratic National Committee (DNC). In a move that was as astonishing as it was bigoted, the DNC provided a link on its website to a professed anti-Catholic organization, Catholics for a Free Choice.

During the latter half of 2002 we launched a massive public relations campaign against the DNC, but it stuck to its guns. So have we. If this issue hasn't been resolved by the next presidential election, look for it to explode wide open. Our objection to Frances Kissling, who runs Catholics for a Free Choice, is not her position on abortion (wrong though it is); it is her commitment to undermining Catholicism. That is why the Catholic League wants the DNC to sever its links with her.

In the eyes of many Americans, the American Red Cross is about as American as apple pie. But something rotten happened to that image in March 2002. A chapter of the Red Cross in southern California had banned high school students from singing patriotic songs at one of its functions. The songs "God Bless America" and "America the Beautiful" were censored

because of “sensitivity to religious diversity.” Just so no one gets the idea that this was a freak decision made by a fringe chapter, it is important to know that this was supported by the top officials at the headquarters of the American Red Cross.

Four hours after we asked over 100 activist organizations to drop their support for the American Red Cross, we got what we wanted: an apology and a new policy allowing the dreaded patriotic songs to be sung.

This only goes to show how political correctness of the worst kind has penetrated the establishment. Had the kids wanted to sing a song with obscene lyrics, it is a sure bet that at least some of those who wanted to censor the religious lyrics would have risen to their defense. And the ACLU would have been there to defend these people.

Anti-Catholic artists are not hard to find. Consider that a Napa Valley museum, Copia, depicted the pope and nuns defecating, and a Florida college, Gainesville, showed Jesus being sodomized. We drummed up some free but unwanted publicity for the museum (we also sent it a giant “pooper-scooper”) and succeeded in pressuring the college to move the masterpiece to a remote location on campus.

At a community college in Los Angeles, it wasn’t art that was the focus of our attention—it was Catholic-bashing lectures being taught by someone with zero credentials that got us exercised. “The Sex Lives of the Popes” and “Crime and Immorality in the Catholic Church” were to be taught as part of an adult education series at Pierce Community College. I wrote a letter to the sponsors, both private and public, asking if their interest in academic freedom would also extend to sponsoring lectures on the “Sex Lives of Prominent Rabbis” and “Crime and Immorality in Islam—from Muhammad to 9-11”; we emphasized that they would be taught by someone with no credentials. The bottom line was they got the message and the

lectures were cancelled.

These last few examples are typical of the way the Catholic League responds. We do not ask the government to censor art or lectures that offend; rather we use moral suasion and public pressure. This way we use our First Amendment right to freedom of speech to bring media attention to perversions of that right. While everyone may have a legal right to insult Catholicism (or any religion), no one has a moral right to do so. This is the turf we fight on, thus making the offender—not us—the center of controversy.

Gerard Bradley of Notre Dame Law School and Robert George of Princeton University filed an amicus brief in the landmark voucher case that was decided by the U.S. Supreme Court in June 2002. The case, *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris*, involved a dispute over voucher money going to parochial schools. The public monies spent on the program went overwhelmingly to Catholic schools in Cleveland because that is where the parents of indigent schoolchildren elected to send them. The high court ruled 5-4 to sustain the constitutionality of the program, over the objections of the familiar enemies of religion. Thus did the Catholic League play a role in this significant victory for liberty.

Finally, there has been a spate of anti-Pius XII books written in recent years. Deeply flawed though they are, most of them cannot be said to be explicitly anti-Catholic. The same is not true of the work of Daniel Goldhagen.

In Goldhagen's book, *A Moral Reckoning*, he separates himself from others by demanding that the Catholic Church implode: he wants the Church to refigure its teachings, liturgy and practices to such an extent that no one would recognize a trace of Catholicism in this new construction. That is why Goldhagen is not simply against Pope Pius XII: he is an inveterate anti-Catholic bigot.

It must also be said that Goldhagen is a profoundly ignorant

man. The number of historical errors in his book, as enumerated by author Ronald Rychlak, are so voluminous as to be embarrassing. But there's more than sloppy scholarship at work. Goldhagen hasn't a clue about Catholicism. He justifies his indictment of Catholic liturgy on the grounds that the liturgy is a public policy issue much the way school vouchers are. And he cites me as one who would defend this point!

These are some of the highlights of the annual report. There is, of course, much more in it. Not every entry will strike the reader as a convincing example of anti-Catholicism. We respect that judgment. We make the calls, explain our rationale and leave the rest to you. But no matter how much reasonable persons may quibble over some items, it is highly unlikely they will be unimpressed by the current state of anti-Catholicism in the United States.



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