

FBI DOCUMENTS ON CATHOLIC PROBE NEED ANSWERS

The following letter explains why Catholics deserve to know why the FBI launched a probe of Catholics under the Biden administration.

March 24, 2025

Hon. Jim Jordan
Chairman
House Committee on the Judiciary
2056 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-3504

Dear Chairman Jordan:

I am delighted that you issued a series of subpoenas to the FBI last month seeking documents on a number of serious matters, and that you recently obtained them. Of interest to the Catholic League are those documents pertaining to the FBI's probe of Catholics. It appears there was an anti-Catholic cell group in the Agency during the Biden administration.

In 2023, I wrote ten news releases on this subject: four were open letters to you; one was a letter I wrote to FBI Director Christopher Wray; the rest were standard news releases. I issued three more statements in 2024, two of which were open letters—one to Wray and one to you.

As the president of the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization, I am committed to getting to the bottom of this issue. To that end, I would like to restate a series of questions that I previously posed to you on this subject; the last one is new.

1. *On what basis did the FBI conclude that these Catholics [Radical-Traditional Catholics] warranted a probe? Do they have a history of violence? If so, where is the evidence? If not, why were they singled out?*

2. *On what basis did the FBI decide it was necessary to enlist “mainline Catholics” to spy on their fellow parishioners? Where is the evidence that ordinary practicing Catholics pose a security threat to the United States or to other law-abiding Americans? How common is it for FBI agents to infiltrate houses of worship—of any religion—employing “tripwire sources”?*

Inspector General Michael Horowitz issued his report on this issue in 2024. He began by noting that the Richmond Field Office examined “a purported link between Racially or Ethnically Motivated Extremists (RMVEs) and ‘Radical Traditionalist Catholic’ (RTC) ideology.” It was concluded that though the probe of Catholics “lacked sufficient evidence” to establish a relationship between the extremists and RTC ideology, there was no evidence of malice. It was also concluded that FBI Analysts “incorrectly conflated the subjects’ religious views with their RMVE activities....:”

3. *This begs the question: Why did the Analysts think there was a relationship in the first place? It is one thing to concede that there are racial and ethnic extremists in every religious **and** secular organization; it is quite another to assume a nexus between a mainstream religious organization and violence, especially when the grounds for making such an assumption are spurious.*

The report said that the entire probe was based on one person, Defendant A. Not only was he identified as a violent bigoted thug, he did not even attend a Catholic church—he went to some breakaway church.

4. *How could FBI Analysts embark on an open-ended*

investigation of mainline Catholics on the basis of an ethically compromised person who was not even Catholic? Was he used as a pretext to go after Catholics?

Hope this is helpful. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.

President