

FBI WAR ON CATHOLICS HEATS UP; SO DOES OUR RESPONSE

Three times over the summer Bill Donohue wrote to Rep. Jim Jordan, Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, imploring him to demand that FBI Director Christopher Wray come clean with the real reason why the agency was investigating Catholics.

For reasons still unexplained, it was revealed earlier in the year that the FBI's Richmond Field Office was investigating "Radical-Traditionalist Catholics," or what they call RTCs. The whistle-blowing article on this subject said the agency distinguished between RTCs and "traditionalist Catholics."

On February 9, Donohue made a public statement, raising questions on whether the FBI would stop at investigating RTCs. "What's next? Will it be a war on Catholics who are orthodox?"

On April 11, Donohue wrote a letter to Wray, copying Jordan, requesting to see the evidence that RTCs are a threat. Then he addressed a new revelation. "Now the FBI has upped the ante," he said, "going after 'mainline' Catholics and dioceses." This is exactly what Donohue predicted.

On July 24, in the first of three letters Donohue sent to Jordan this summer, he wrote about the FBI's new target. "This is totally indefensible. It smacks of religious profiling and opens the FBI door to monitoring traditional Catholics, simply because they are loyal sons and daughters of the Catholic Church."

On July 26, after the FBI finally turned over requested documents to the House Judiciary Committee, Donohue contacted Jordan asking him to raise several questions with Wray.

On what basis did the FBI conclude that these [RTCs] Catholics

warranted a probe? Do they have a history of violence? If so, where is the evidence? If not, why were they singled out?

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?"

On August 10, Donohue wrote to Jordan about another revelation. Wray was wrong when he said it was just the Richmond Field Office that was probing Catholics. Now we know that agents in Los Angeles and Portland were also involved. "This calls into question Wray's forthrightness," Donohue said, "and it also begs the question: What else does the FBI know about this matter?"

We commended Jordan for his effort, pledging our assistance in any manner he deems necessary.

This has to end. The FBI needs to undergo major reforms and those involved in the war on Catholics need to be punished.