

# HATING #1

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The United States is the richest and most powerful nation on earth.

New York City is largely regarded as the number-one international city.

The New York Yankees have the most World Series wins and the richest history of any major league team. The Catholic Church is seen as the most influential religious body in the world.

Being #1 is everyone's dream. In some cases, it can be a nightmare.

Hating the United States is not only a popular sport abroad, it is very popular on our own college campuses. When I was in the Air Force, the First Sergeant, a Southerner, made it known that he hated New Yorkers (he knew from my accent). The Yankees are hated as much as they are revered. And the Catholic Church is singled out for acrimony more than any other religion.

The word *schadenfreude* is German for the joy that some have over the misfortunes of others. It speaks to our very human, yet dark, side. So when 9/11 happened, there was dancing in the streets of some foreign cities. When the clergy sexual abuse scandal hit the papers a year later, Catholic haters were basking in joy. Being #1 made the Church an easy target.

As can be seen from this issue of *Catalyst*, those who harbor an animus against Catholicism are very active these days. When there are no more contemporary cases of sexual abuse to report on, journalists like those at *The Week* resurrect old cases, trying to give them currency. It's pathetic.

Kids are being raped by public school teachers and the

offenders are still being moved from school district to school district. In school lingo, it's called "passing the trash." Yet few bother to comment on it.

The *New York Times* reports on new documents that were found by historians that prove how brave and noble our priests and nuns were during the Holocaust, sheltering over 3,000 Jews. But the reporter could not resist saying that "this doesn't change" the negative portrait of Pope Pius XII. Not for people like her. She's already made up her mind. She said he was "silent" during the Holocaust. But that's not what her newspaper said about him in 1941 and 1942. It said just the opposite.

Two years ago, anti-Catholic activists and government officials in Canada were making wild accusations about "mass graves" found at residential schools for indigenous children; some of them were administered by the Catholic Church. But now that the excavations have turned up no "mass graves"—not a single body has been found—where are the apologies? There are none.

If hating the Catholic Church for being #1 is a full-time sport, it makes its occurrence no less odious. Why can't some just move on and let go?

The Catholic Church is not a target simply because of its history, size and influence—it is being singled out because of the threat it poses to secular elites. They loathe the moral mantle that the Church occupies and they want to destroy it.

The teachings of the Catholic Church on sexuality is what makes its enemies mad. Never mind that we acquired our notions of sexual reticence from our Jewish brothers and sisters, the focus is not on Jews but on us (most Jews today are secular and the Orthodox are too small to matter). Never mind that those who throw sexual restraint to the wind live a short and ugly life, we still get the blame.

The goal of the enemies of the Catholic Church is to silence

its voice. They want to intimidate the clergy, quiet the laity, and erase the presence of the Church from the public square. Unfortunately, too many of us have been obliging. We should instead be defiant.

Being defiant is what led Catholics to hammer the Los Angeles Dodgers when they honored an anti-Catholic group of gay men dressed as nuns. We were delighted to lead the way. There is no virtue in being passive when our sensibilities are being assaulted.

There are other encouraging signs on the horizon. The FBI is now in the spotlight after reports surfaced that agents were spying on Catholics. Mothers are being more vigilant than ever before about what is going on in the public schools. The pushback against transgenderism—the mad idea that we can switch our sex—is growing, even among gays. And surveys indicate that Catholics want their priests and bishops to be more vocal.

When urban terrorists interrupted Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral in December 1989, Cardinal John O'Connor was shaken. He was reminded by Father Benedict Groeschel that it was a backhanded compliment to the prestige of the Catholic Church. They didn't go after the mainline Protestants, he noted.

So, yes, there is a price to be paid for being #1. The Catholic Church may have lost some of its luster—for making lousy decisions—but it still commands the attention of the ruling class. We should be less shy about flexing our moral muscles in public.