

IRELAND'S "MASS GRAVE" HOAX REVISITED

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on Ireland's famous "mass grave" hoax:

The "mass grave" hoax is back. The Irish government is planning to exhume the remains of babies allegedly buried in a mass grave in Tuam, Ireland. According to the *New York Times*, Ireland's Minister for Children, Katherine Zappone, is leading this campaign. The so-called mass grave is on the grounds of the Bon Secours Mother and Baby Home in the County Galway town of Tuam.

The *Times* reports that this story began in 2014 when "a local amateur historian, Catherine Corless, said she had found death certificates for 796 children who died in the home from 1925 to 1961—but whose burial places were not officially recorded."

There are several factual errors in this news story by Ed O'Loughlin. He has a history of distorting the record.

Earlier this year O'Loughlin referred to Corless as a "dogged local historian" who made headline news when "she published *evidence*" that nearly 800 children had died in the Tuam home, and that the remains of "some" were found in the septic tank. (My emphasis.)

As I have noted several times before, the "mass grave" story is a cruel myth promoted by those whose agenda it is to smear the Catholic Church.

The myth began when Corless published a 2012 article titled, "The Home," in the *Journal of the Old Tuam Society*. In it, Corless made no mention of any "mass grave." If anything, she offered evidence that contradicts what she later claimed.

Here is what Corless said: "A few local boys [in 1975] came upon a sort of crypt in the ground, and on peering in they saw several small skulls." She mentioned there was a "little graveyard." That is not the makings of a mass grave.

The primary source for her "mass grave" thesis is Barry Sweeney. When he was 10, he and a friend stumbled on a hole with skeletons in it. In 2014, he was asked by the *Irish Times* to comment on Corless' claim that there are "800 skeletons down that hole." He said, "Nothing like that." How many? "About 20," he said. He later told the *New York Times* there were "maybe 15 to 20 small skeletons." Is O'Loughlin aware of this? It was printed in the newspaper that employs him.

Corless herself admitted in 2014 that she learned from local residents that the Tuam graveyard outside the Home was dotted with "tiny markers there." There were "bits of stones left to indicate graves." Those "tiny markers" suggest this was a cillin graveyard, or a graveyard for children. A "mass grave" is not dotted with "tiny markers" or "bits of stones." Yet Corless has been able to get away with these contradictory explanations.

In a 2014 news story by Douglas Dalby of the *New York Times*, he says of Corless' account that she "*surmised* that the children's bodies were interred in a septic tank behind the home." (My italic.) His verb is accurate. To surmise is to guess—it is proof of nothing.

As for Corless, she is neither an "amateur historian" nor a "local historian." She is not a historian—local, regional, or national. She doesn't even have an undergraduate degree. She is a typist.

Furthermore, last year, when Zappone released her second Interim Report on this subject, she never used the term "mass grave," or implied anything like it. So why is she so dogged about this issue?

She now says it is important to “demonstrate our compassion and commitment to work towards justice, truth and healing for what happened in our past and, most especially, for those who were previously abandoned.” She should instead worry about the wellbeing of children in Ireland today, beginning with child abuse in the womb.

Zappone’s alleged interest in protecting the welfare of children would be more persuasive were it not for her rabid pro-abortion record. She is an activist, not a health minister. “Married” to her girlfriend, an ex-nun, she is part of the effort to besmirch the historical record of Irish nuns. Yet were it not for the care these nuns gave to abandoned children, they would have died in the street. *No one else wanted them in the early part of the last century.*

Just as in the United States, pro-abortion and pro-gay activists seek to discredit the Catholic Church, thus making it easier for them to succeed. To accomplish their agenda, they are prepared to lie about the Church’s past so as to marginalize its voice today.