

LYING AND DOUBLE STANDARDS

I have often told my daughters that one of the great things about my job is that I don't have to lie. I believe in what the Catholic Church teaches, and believe that its voice should be given a fair hearing in society. Because it often is not—indeed there is a cacophony of cat-calls trying to shut it up—the Catholic League is needed more than ever.

It is one thing to confront adversaries who truly believe they are meritorious; it is quite another to deal with liars. Unfortunately, lying has become pervasive in our society, and I am not talking about hyperbole: I am talking about intentionally spinning the truth. It's becoming an epidemic.

A few months ago, I was debating a woman on Canadian TV about the movie, "Angels & Demons." My complaint centered on the lies about the Roman Catholic Church that the Dan Brown book, and Ron Howard movie, made. She replied that parts of what they said were true. When I asked her to identify what part was historically true, she breezily said, "I don't know." I told her the first thing that came into my mind: "You are positively astounding." That was the end of the debate.

Over the past year, we tried to get the word out that a bill in New York State changing the statute of limitations on the sexual abuse of minors was unfairly targeting the Catholic Church. The bill's author, Assemblywoman Margaret Markey, said this accusation was false: she maintained that the public schools were covered by her bill. After being pounded by Catholics who knew better, she amended her bill to include the public schools. She never commented on why her amendment was necessary.

The *New York Times* is hurting. It is \$1 billion in debt and has declining revenue. In the spring, rumors were floating that it would have to sell the *Boston Globe* (which it has). At

the time, union leaders pressed newspaper officials to square with them. On April 9, in the pages of the *New York Times*, Richard Perez-Pena, said that "Executives of the Times Company and the paper have refused to discuss the matter." What ever happened to transparency and all the talk about sunshine being the best policy? This is the same newspaper that wants institutions ranging from the CIA to the Catholic Church to turn over internal documents. Isn't it convenient to make exemptions for oneself?

On May 18, *New York Times* reporter David Carr wrote a column about the financial future of the newspaper. "What's going to happen to the *New York Times*?" was the question on everyone's lips. "I thought I'd take a crack at that question with a few caveats," he said. Then he came clean. "First, I'm not briefed by the people in charge and they generally listen with some amusement to my opinions and head the other way." Great. The newspaper of record laughs at one of its business reporters when asked to discuss what's wrong with the business. How cute.

Once Sonia Sotomayor was nominated to be on the Supreme Court, how many times did you hear about all those Catholics on the high court? Some of the comments were really below the belt. But did anyone mention that of the 12 Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee, 7 are Jewish? So why is it a problem to have a majority of Catholics on the Supreme Court, but not a problem to have a majority of Jews making the selection for the Democrats?

When the health care bill was being debated over the summer, several pro-abortion members of the House and Senate denied that the bill provided funding for abortion. Senator Mike Enzi and Senator Orrin Hatch called them on it: they introduced amendments that would explicitly exclude abortion from the bill. The amendments lost.

Similarly, Rep. Lois Capps introduced an amendment that she

claimed would not provide funds for abortion. Rep. Joe Pitts disagreed and put the question to Counsel at the committee hearing. "If the Capps amendment is adopted, would the secretary of health and human services be allowed to cover elective abortions in the public plan?" The answer was yes. In fact, Counsel admitted that the Capps amendment was, in the words of Pitts, "a sham." Case closed.

Speaking of abortion, a subject about which more lies have been told than any other issue, how can the pro-abortion people explain how an eight-month old baby can survive after being cut from the womb of her mother? This happened in July in Massachusetts. According to the champions of abortion, a fetus is just a clump of cells. Then how do they explain why the clump of cells has a birth certificate and a name? And since when do clumps of cells start crying and smiling?

All of us have lied at one time or another, and in some cases it can be justified. If someone shows up at my office threatening to kill one of my employees, and asks if he or she is at work, I will lie without blinking an eye. But that's not what's going on in most instances. How these people can routinely lie about matters that cause great damage to others, and apparently experience no guilt, is, as I say, positively astounding.