

MARIO BATALI WINS TOP PRIZE FOR HYPOCRISY

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the latest problems facing Mario Batali:

There is no celebrity chef more adored by elites nationwide than Mario Batali. They particularly like the way he champions women's rights and the rights of the poor. And so far, at least, they seem untroubled by revelations that he abuses both women and the poor. Maybe that's because they still approve of the way he called out the pope five years ago.

Mario is back in the news, this time for sexual assault. On May 20, "60 Minutes" aired a piece noting that at least 11 women have accused him of sexual misconduct; a criminal investigation is underway. Last December, revelations of sexual assault hit the media, but it had no effect on his standing with elites.

One of the stories that broke five months ago involved an encounter that Mario had in 2010, the week of the Oscars. The dinner was held at one of his restaurants in Los Angeles, hosted by the publisher of *Vanity Fair*. Mario showed up late and was obviously smashed.

The special events director says he said to her, "I want to see you naked in my hot tub back in the hotel." Later, he grabbed her crotch. She said he put his hand "between my legs, up and under, so his hand went on my vagina outside my clothes. And he moved his hand backward. So, you know, under my butt."

Mario may like to abuse women but he loves to stand up for their rights. Not surprisingly, he is a big proponent of abortion rights (most abusers tend to be that way). Indeed, in 2013 he even donated \$5,000 in an abortion telethon for

women's abortions.

Mario is also an advocate of two men marrying (those who are pro-abortion are almost always pro-gay marriage). That explains why he wasn't too happy with Pope Francis, who, while visiting the U.S. in 2015, met with Kim Davis; she is the Kentucky County clerk who refused to issue a marriage license to gay couples.

While Mario was performing a cooking demonstration at one of his New York restaurants, he called out the pope for meeting with Davis. He questioned why the Holy Father would "want to meet the one woman who wouldn't want to give out marriage certificates to gay people?" The audience cheered.

Mario also loves the poor. He loves them so much that he and his family spent a week in 2012 eating on the equivalent of a food stamp budget. Why? They were protesting cuts in the food stamp program that were pending in the Congress. So Mario and his family ate a lot of rice and beans to show their solidarity with the poor. "Rice and beans is [sic] in my lunch every day," the obese chef said.

The welfare of the poor, however, was not on Mario's mind when—in the same year as his high-profile food budget stunt—he and his partner agreed to pay \$5.25 million to settle their cash-skimming schemes at eight high-scale restaurants. They took 4-5 percent of the tips from employees, ripping off the busboys to pay for the sommeliers' salaries. The money that was paid out was shared by 1,100 employees; many were forced to work more than 40 hours a week without making minimum wage.

If we knew the identity of the poor whom Mario stole from, we would probably learn that a good portion of them are illegal aliens. In all likelihood we would also learn of Mario's public exhortations on behalf of the "undocumented."

How different is Mario from most other high-flying liberal elites? From what we've learned over the past year, it appears

he has plenty of company. But for right now, the top prize for hypocrisy goes to Mario Batali.