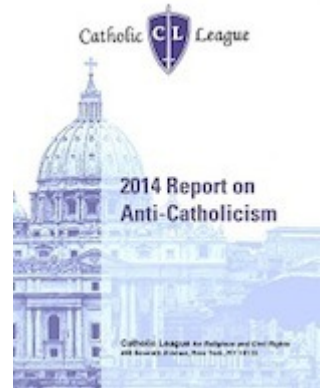


MEDIA

February

The Academy Award nomination for Best Original Song was revoked from the film “Alone Yet Not Alone.” The film and the song of the same title had a strong evangelical Christian theme, and the song was sung by a well known evangelical artist. The official reason for revoking the nomination for only the fourth time in the 86 year history of the Oscars was that the song’s composer had violated the rules by lobbying committee members. Some of the people associated with the film pointed out that lobbying in favor of one’s films is not at all uncommon, and speculated that the nomination was revoked because of its Christian theme.



May 26

After Pope Francis spent three historic days in the Middle East trying to bring Christians, Jews, and Muslims together, he fielded 11 questions on nine issues during the plane ride home. Two dealt with his trip: there was one question on Jewish-Muslim relations, and one on the status of Jerusalem. But there were three on sexual issues: priestly sexual abuse, celibacy, and divorced and remarried Catholics.

The media’s coverage of the trip focused on the pope’s remarks on the plane. On the “Today Show” the following morning, only two issues were discussed: sexual abuse and celibacy. In Nicole Winfield’s AP story the night of the trip, about half the article was on sexual abuse; in the next day’s version, this was the only issue covered. Almost all of CNN’s coverage was on sexual abuse. John Allen of the *Boston Globe* covered many topics, but most of his reporting was on sexual abuse. The *Boston Herald* showed no interest in anything but sexual abuse.

In England, the *Guardian* only discussed sexual abuse and celibacy. Almost all the coverage by the BBC was on sexual abuse. This subject dominated the coverage in the *Daily Mail*.

There is no mystery here. The big media lean left, and what interests them is pressuring the Catholic Church to change its teachings on sexuality. Their obsession with priestly sexual abuse, which as a problem is mostly a non-starter these days, is a function of their desire to discredit the Church's moral authority.

May 29

The following is an excerpt from an article by Bill Donohue that was originally published by Newsmax. It cites two different stories where an anti-Catholic bias could be seen in how the media reported:

Every demographic group can cite instances of media bias against them, but no group is more unfairly covered, on a consistent basis, than Catholics. Here are some examples drawn from news stories published on May 29.

Whenever a Catholic does something good, such as a police officer or firefighter who risks his life for someone, his religion is never mentioned. Nor should it be. But when he does something bad, we all learn of his religious affiliation.

To wit: Lukas Iorio went on a drunken rampage on the Jersey Shore— he was arrested for carjacking, assault, burglary, driving under the influence, criminal mischief, and resisting arrest. Here is how the media played it:

- “Former Bergen *Catholic* Wrestling Star Charged with Assault, Carjacking in Manasquan.” *Star-Ledger*
- “Ex-Bergen *Catholic* High School Wrestling Star Lukas Iorio Accused of Wild Rampage on Jersey Shore.” *The Record*
- “Former Bergen *Catholic* Wrestler Charged with Attacking 5 in Jersey Shore Rampage.” Cliffviewpilot.com

- “Manasquan Charges ex-Bergen *Catholic* Wrestler with Beach Carjacking, Wild Behavior.” Myfoxny.com

All the italics were added. To its credit, CBS reported it fairly: “New Jersey High School Wrestling Champ Accused in Bizarre Rampage.” It is not biased to mention in a news story that Iorio went to a Catholic school, but to put it in the headline is a different story.

“Female Catholic Priest Celebrates Mass at St. Francis House” was the headline in the *Columbian Missourian*. Of course, this never happened. What happened is that yet another woman – a senior citizen, of course – played make-believe and had herself “ordained.” The Harbor Country News ran a story billed as “Wife, Mother & Now Priest.”

MLive, a blog post, told readers, “Michigan’s First Woman Priest in Dissident Catholic Sect: ‘My Job is to Give Witness.’” At least it mentioned “dissident Catholic Sect.”

The *Columbian Missourian* not only ran the most dishonest headline, it ran a biased story. The caption to her photo began by saying, “Janice Sevre-Duszynska, a female priest, led a mass at St. Francis House.”

The first paragraph of the story said: “In the middle of a living room, a table is set like an altar, with wine and bread prepared for Holy Communion. At the head is a priest dressed in a black shirt, jeans and sandals, hair tied behind the head revealing a gold earring hanging from her ear. She has a purple stole around her neck, which rests on her lap as she sits.”

In the next paragraph we learn that she is “an ordained Roman Catholic priest with one exception: The Roman Catholic Church does not recognize her status as a priest.” Of course, the only thing that counts is the “one exception.” It could also be said that the Roman Catholic Church does not recognize those who dress up as the Pope on Halloween to be the Pope.

The media game, naturally, is to whip up public sentiment against the Catholic Church for its teaching on ordination. It never does the same with regards to the role of women in the Orthodox Jewish community, or in Islam.

June 10 – 11

The dissident Catholic magazine *Commonweal* put the worst possible face on St. Louis Archbishop Robert Carlson when it reported on his exchange with attorney Jeffery Anderson, who has a hatred of the Catholic Church. Anderson released video clips of Carlson's deposition where it was made to look like Carlson did not know it was a crime for an adult to engage in sex with a child. Anderson edited out the lead-in to the question, which was about mandated reporting laws.

On June 11, Dennis Coday at the *National Catholic Reporter* essentially offered the account by the St. Louis Archdiocese regarding a controversial exchange between Anderson and Carlson. He should have stopped there. Instead, later in the day he walked back his piece, saying Grant Gallicho at *Commonweal* may have been right when he accepted Anderson's version.

At issue was whether Carlson was responding to a question regarding mandatory reporting laws, or a question about the criminal nature of sex between an adult and a child. Carlson maintained that he was responding to the former question; Anderson claimed he was responding to the latter.

This entire controversy erupted because of something that neither *Commonweal* nor the *Reporter* addressed: Anderson intentionally clipped that part of the video exchange he had with Carlson so as to convince the public that Carlson didn't know it was against the law for an adult to have sex with a child. Instead of blasting Anderson for his unethical distortion, Gallicho not only took Anderson's side, he spoke with derision against Carlson's lawyer (e.g, "defense attorneys aren't too keen on compound questions").

July 1

Following the Supreme Court's decision in the *Hobby Lobby* case, numerous media attacked the five Catholic justices who voted in the majority.

"Once again an all-Catholic, all-male, all-ultra-conservative majority of five has voted en bloc to eviscerate fundamental rights," said Annie Laurie Gaylor of the atheist Freedom From Religion Foundation. "Court's Catholic Justices Attack Women's Rights" was the headline of Margery Eagan's *Boston Herald* article. The American Humanist Association issued a statement with a picture of a rosary next to birth control pills.

In the Huffington Post, Ryan Grim noted that "these men [the five judges who voted for religious liberty] are Christians." He also said, "The Supreme Court ruled Monday that Christian business owners are special."

Also in the Huffington Post, Ronald A. Lindsay, a militant atheist, asked, "Is it appropriate to have six Catholic justices on the Supreme Court?" "Unfortunately," he wrote, "a majority of the Supreme Court may now be resurrecting concerns about the compatibility between being a Catholic and being a good citizen..."

Philip F. Cardarella, writing in the *Kansas City Star*, said that when JFK ran, the question was, "How could someone who owed his religious obedience to the Pope in Rome and the doctrines of the Catholic Church truly be trusted?" After the decision, he opined, "Five men on the Supreme Court—all Catholics—may well just have proven him [JFK] wrong."

September

Hartford, CT – The Archdiocese of Hartford challenged a \$1 million verdict awarded to an individual who claimed he was abused by a priest. The timeline is as follows:

- Jacob Doe claimed he was molested in the early 1980s by a priest, Father Ivan Ferguson, who died in 2002.

- Doe had until 1988 to file a lawsuit, but he never did.
- In 1991, the statute of limitations was amended to 17 years.
- Doe had until 2003 to file a lawsuit, but he never did.
- In 2002 the statute of limitations for civil cases was extended to 30 years; it was made retroactive.
- In 2005, the Archdiocese of Hartford paid \$22 million in a settlement with 43 people who claim they were molested by Fr. Ferguson and other priests dating back to the 1960s. Doe was not one of the parties that sued.
- Doe filed a lawsuit in 2008 after the statute of limitations was changed in 2002.
- In February 2014, a jury awarded Doe \$1 million.

There is something wrong with this picture. It is no wonder that lawyers for the archdiocese argue, among other things, that making the statute of limitations retroactive for sexual abuse cases in 1991 and 2002 violates the civil liberties of their defendant.

It was particularly disturbing to read the editorial in the *New Haven Register* that invoked Pope Francis' humble approach to sexual abuse, and his critical remarks on materialism, as a lever to criticize the archdiocese. According to its logic, the pope would counsel dioceses not to defend their interests, even in the face of palpable injustice. This is absurd. It is also a twisted reading of the pope's thoughts on these issues.

Just as disconcerting was the lack of honesty on the part of the Connecticut media: none mentioned that the amended timeline on the statute of limitations only applies to kids molested in private [read: Catholic] schools—it does not apply to kids raped in public schools.

Internet

January 8 – January 13

We were only one week into the new year when we were treated

to one of the most anti-Catholic articles we've seen in many years. Columnist Jamie Stiehm published her onslaught against Catholics, as well as the Catholic Church, in *U.S. News and World Report*. We choose our words carefully: this was not just an assault on the teachings of the Catholic Church, it was an assault on Catholics.

"The Catholic Supreme Court's War on Women" was the title of this screed. What set Stiehm off was Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor's decision to stay the Health and Human Services mandate from taking effect January 1.

Sotomayor was referred to as "just a good Catholic girl" who "put her religion ahead of her jurisprudence. What a surprise, but that is no small thing." The Justice's decision "brings us to confront an uncomfortable reality," Stiehm writes. "More than WASPS, Methodists, Jews, Quakers or Baptists, Catholics often try to impose their beliefs on you, me, public discourse and institutions." She then listed, as a happy exception, Nancy Pelosi. Sotomayor, by contrast, "is selling out the sisterhood."

"Catholics in high places of power have the most trouble, I've noticed, practicing the separation of church and state," Stiehm says. "The pugnacious Catholic Justice, Antonin Scalia, is the most aggressive offender on the Court, but not the only one." Now it seems that Justice Sotomayor "has joined the ranks of five Republican Catholic men on the John Roberts court in showing a clear religious bias when it comes to women's rights and liberties. *We can no longer be silent about this*" (Italics added).

Stiehm also indicted "the meddlesome American Roman Catholic Archbishops" who "seek and wield tremendous power and influence in the political sphere." Moreover, "The rock of Rome refuses to budge on women's reproductive rights and the Supreme Court is getting good and ready to strike down *Roe v. Wade...*"

Bill Donohue asked Brian Kelly, the Editor and Chief Content Officer of *U.S. News*, whether he defended the article. To his surprise, Kelly did. Brian Kelly said Jamie Stiehm's attack on Catholics and the Catholic Church was "within the bounds of fair commentary." He compared her vicious statement to "pieces from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Archdiocese of New York and Concerned Women for America."

Here is how Bill Donohue replied: "I have no way of knowing if Kelly is a bigot. I do know he is incompetent. Any man who equates a reasonable defense of Catholicism, written by those in the employ of the Catholic Church, with Jamie Stiehm's anti-Catholic screed, lacks the faculty of discernment, and thus has no legitimate role to play in journalism. He couldn't defend this in public; I challenge him to do so."

January 21

Comedian Sarah Silverman posted a bigoted video on YouTube that featured her talking to a Jesus character about abortion. The language she used was so vulgar—she ended with the "c" word about women—that it cannot be repeated on broadcast television, or republished in any respectable newspaper.

Silverman exploited Christianity by hijacking Jesus in support of killing kids in the womb: he was shown making fun of unborn babies, saying "fertilized eggs aren't people. People are people" and announced that he is, "Jesus F*cking Christ." Silverman said pro-life Christians are un-American and that "using religion to dictate legislation is un-American."

Toward the end of the video, the Jesus character was shown rubbing her while they were sitting on a couch. She said, "Oh, that's my spot." To which he replied, "I know where your spot is...that's a good little Jewish girl."

April 16

A video titled "Easter Bunny's Coming" was posted on the YouTube Channel for Fox Broadcasting's "Animation Domination

High-Def" (ADHD) programming block. According to the Parents Television Council (PTC) the video "contains graphic cartoon images of fornicating rabbits, multiple unbleeped 'f-words,' harsh references to male sexual anatomy and vulgar slang for ejaculation." The video closed with a reference meant to imply that Jesus had been watching it.

The video, which included overt references to Christians and Jews, was debuted during Holy Week and Passover.

After objections were raised by PTC, Target pulled its advertising from the program, and on April 18, Fox announced that the television component of the show would be cancelled in June. Fox did not specify if the ADHD website or the online content would be removed once the show was cancelled.

April 26

A Dario Castillejos cartoon published on cagle.com titled "Saint Pope John Paul II and Pedophile Priests" shows a figure meant to be the former pope blessing a child. At the same time a hand and arm reaching out from under the pope's cassock is attempting to grab the child. The cartoon, published the same day as his canonization, depicted St. John Paul II as covering for child molesters.

June 14

In response to the film "Philomena" and the "mass grave" hoax, Niall O'Dowd, founder of Irish Central, posted an article on his website where he attacked the nuns who ran the mother and baby homes across Ireland.

O'Dowd's article accused the nuns of selling children to wealthy American families as part of secret and illegal adoptions. He said that the unmarried mothers whom the nuns cared for were "held in female gulags masquerading as convents." He went on to say that the children were "snatched" from their mothers for "forced" adoptions.

July 25

On philly.com, a news website affiliated with both The *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Philadelphia Daily News*, a story was posted about a new group that would help pay off the student loan debt of men and women who pursue the religious life. While the story was positive, an image was used promoting the story of a woman in full habit, wearing heavy makeup and smoking a cigarette. After complaints, the image was quickly removed from the website, but remained posted on some of philly.com's social media sites.

August 13

In a column for internet news site WorldNetDaily, former rock musician Ted Nugent commented on the sexual abuse crisis, and specifically on the deposition given by St. Louis Archbishop Robert Carlson.

Nugent incorrectly states that Carlson did not know it was illegal for priests to have sex with children. Nugent says that Carlson looked like "a space cadet zombie" while testifying that he did not remember if he knew that priests having sex with children was illegal. [The questions Carlson did not remember were actually about his knowledge of mandatory reporting laws in the 1980s.]

Nugent goes on to call Carlson a "fraud," "liar," "punk," "black-hearted," "devil in disguise," and an "evil, evil monster." He calls for the archbishop to be "stripped of his pompous title, excommunicated from the Catholic Church, and thrown to the court system for prosecution to the maximum extent of the law."

September 4

An article on Newsmax's website read "Former Catholic Cop Tried to Join ISIS after Conversion to Islam" in reference to the terrorist group ISIS that is murdering Christians in Iraq. The opening sentence of the article read "A Catholic-born former police officer from North Carolina attempted to join the Islamic State (ISIS)." The gratuitous references to the

man's former religion would never have been mentioned if he was being celebrated for having saved a life.

Newspapers

January 23

Chicago, IL – The *Chicago Tribune's* editorial cartoonist Scott Stantis drew an image of a bishop wearing a mitre. Two snakes are emerging out of the mitre, one snake says "forgive us father" the second snake replies "for we got caught." The cartoon implies that bishops hide crimes such as sex abuse and only apologize once they have been caught. The cartoon was subsequently published on January 26 in the *Dallas Morning News*.

January 24

The *New York Post's* film critic Sara Stewart gave the pro-life themed film "Gimme Shelter" a negative review. However, the review not only criticized the film, but mocked the efforts of a priest and a Catholic charity that tried to help the pregnant teen in the film. The review stated that the film "feels as if it's underwritten by the Roman Catholic Church." It went on to say that a priest in the film "imparts vague sentiments that feel as if they've had God references edited out of them" and criticized the charity helping the teen for surrounding the girls with "praying hands imagery and [taking] them to church."

February 22

Hazleton, PA – Syndicated cartoonist Jeff Stahler depicted a priest distributing communion to a woman. The priest says "Body of Christ" and the woman replies "Is it locally made?" The cartoon was published in the *Standard-Speaker* among other newspapers.

March 14 – 16

Stroudsburg, PA – The *Pocono Record* published an article saying that former Scranton Bishop Joseph Martino "allowed" a

priest who was credibly accused of abuse to transfer to a diocese in Paraguay. The article faulted Bishop Martino and his predecessor for failing to suppress the priest in question. The Diocese of Scranton responded by outlining the many steps Bishop Martino took to keep the priest out of ministry, which included warning both the bishop and the papal nuncio in Paraguay. The *Pocono Record* ignored the diocese's response and instead printed a second article about the priest two days later without ever mentioning the bishop's efforts to sound the alarm.

The *Pocono Record* did print the Catholic League's letter to the editor which stated in part, "The faithful of the Diocese of Scranton should be praising Bishop Martino's actions, and those of his successor, to fight abuse, not reading a one sided argument that attempts to fault him for the actions of someone half a world away."

April 9

Danbury, CT – A Drew Sheneman cartoon published in the *News-Times* shows Pope Francis in the left panel saying "our priests should live simply like those we serve." The right panel shows two priests lounging by a pool and preparing to go golfing. One priest asks the other "what did he say?" "I don't know, something about servants" is the reply. This cartoon makes it look like all priests are lazy and live exorbitantly.

April 16

Ireland – The *Irish Times* published a cartoon by Martyn Turner that showed three priests reading a newspaper announcing a new bill that would require mandatory reporting of child abuse. The priests share a speech bubble that reads "I'd do anything for children (But I won't do that)." The cartoon implies that all priests cover for their colleagues by refusing to report those who molest children.

Archbishop of Dublin Diarmuid Martin spoke out that "many priests and people feel hurt" by the cartoon.

April 30

Washington, DC – A Tom Toles cartoon in the *Washington Post* shows two characters discussing a large poster that reads “Prevent Child Abuse.” The man asks “What do you call somebody who drags his feet on identifying and punishing abusers?” A woman who is reading a newspaper about John Paul II replies “Saint?” The cartoon was published days after the canonization of St. John Paul II and attacks his record on preventing child abuse.

May 25

Cincinnati, OH – The *Cincinnati Enquirer* published a preview of an upcoming fringe theatre festival with the headline “May the peace of FRINGE be upon you.” The headline included a picture with Elvis Presley’s head superimposed on an image of the Sacred Heart.

June 20 – 23

When news of a “mass grave” found outside a Catholic Mother and Baby Home in Tuam, Ireland broke, the media went wild. As details started to emerge about the lack of truth behind these stories, the media began to back away. [To read Bill Donohue’s analysis of the story click here.](#)

The Associated Press issued its first retraction on June 20 regarding its stories of June 3 and June 8 on Ireland’s “mass grave” story. On June 23, AP reporter Shawn Pogatchnik issued a second, more complete, retraction; his article was titled, “Media Exaggerated Horror Tale at Irish Orphanage.” Here is an excerpt of what he said:

“The reports of unmarked graves shouldn’t have come as a surprise to the Irish public, who for decades have known that some of the 10 defunct ‘mother and baby homes,’ which chiefly housed the children of unwed mothers, held grave sites with forgotten dead. The religious orders’ use of unmarked graves reflected the crippling poverty of the time, the infancy of most of the victims, and the lack of plots in cemeteries

corresponding to the children's fractured families."

"Contrary to the allegation of widespread starvation highlighted in some reports, only 18 children were recorded as suffering from severe malnutrition. While publicly available records are incomplete, sporadic inspection reports indicate that the orphanage's population exceeded 250 throughout the worst years of child mortality, when overcrowding would have encouraged the spread of infection."

AP admits that it was guilty of "repeating incorrect Irish news reports that suggested the babies who died had never been baptized and that Catholic Church teaching guided priests not to baptize the babies of unwed mothers or give to them [sic] Christian burials. The reports of the denial of baptism later were contradicted by the Tuam Archdiocese, which found a registry showing that the home had baptized more than 2,000 babies."

AP had the courage to admit it erred; many other outlets did not.

July 2

Wilmington, DE – An RJ Matson cartoon was carried by several newspapers, including *The Journal-News*, depicting a photograph of the nine justices of the Supreme Court, except that the five justices who voted in the majority of the *Hobby Lobby* case are shown wearing a mitre and cross. The cartoon's caption reads "We didn't lose our religious freedom when we became judges." The cartoon mocks the judges, all of whom are Catholic, for siding with the religious freedom arguments in this case.

July 3

Kansas City, MO – The *Kansas City Star* published a Lee Judge cartoon that shows two priests at an altar atop an Aztec-looking temple. The altar is labeled "Who we're willing to sacrifice to protect the priesthood," and the bottom step of

the temple is labeled “Women and children first.” This cartoon says that priests are willing to sacrifice anything, including the wellbeing of women and children, to protect the priesthood.

The cartoon was subsequently published in New York’s *Watertown Daily Times* on July 13. This occasioned Bishop Terry LaValley of the Diocese of Ogdensburg to write a letter to the editor. Bishop LaValley requested that an apology be printed or that his subscription to the *Daily Times* be canceled. The bishop wrote “I cannot and will not encourage readership of a newspaper that prints such disparaging and offensive portrayals of men who give their lives in service to others.”

July 6

Hudson Valley, NY – In response to the Supreme Court’s ruling in the *Hobby Lobby* case, the *Times Herald-Record* published a Bill Day cartoon which shows a book meant to represent the Bible. The book is labeled “Holy Corporations by The Supremes.” A speech bubble from the book reads “Go forth and multiply.” By using a biblical quote and a book that looks like a Bible, the author is mocking the religious freedom arguments presented by the owners of Hobby Lobby.

July 20

New York, NY – The *New York Post* ran a story about a charitable home run by nuns that was raising the rents for tenants, some of whom had lived in the building for decades. Along with the story, the *Post* printed a stock image of an imposing nun in full habit holding a ruler as if she was going to hit someone. The nun in the image was wearing a large cross around her neck and appears to be in makeup with manicured nails. The article did not identify the photo as a caricature, and made it appear that the nuns were punishing the tenants.

September 3

New York, NY – The *New York Post*’s story about an American man who tried to join the ISIS terror group had the following

headline: “The Catholic ex-cop who tried to join ISIS from US.” The article goes on to mention that the man attempting to join the “murderous band of jihadis” was “Catholic-born.”

September 24

Hartford, CT – The *Hartford Courant* printed a Bob Englehart cartoon titled “Connecticut Supreme Court Considers Reversal of Law that Benefits Sex-Abuse Accusers.” The cartoon depicts a woman labeled “Victims” with a thought bubble that says “Unfair.” Meanwhile the devil and pedophile priests both share a thought bubble that reads “Fair!” The cartoon demeans priests and generalizes that all priests are pedophiles.

October 1 – 2

Harrisburg, PA – The *New York Times* reported that the Diocese of Harrisburg adopted a policy barring boys on high school wrestling teams from competing with girls from other schools; girls in Catholic schools have also been barred from football and rugby teams. The policy is not new: the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference Education Department has explicit rules on this subject. Indeed, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia previously dealt with this issue.

The rationale behind the Pennsylvania policy was clear-headed: there are nature-based differences between the sexes that need to be observed. Ergo, sports that involve “substantial and potentially immodest physical contact” ought to be treated differently. All but the enlightened ones have the cognitive ability to distinguish between wrestling and ping-pong.

We were astonished to read that the *New York Times* ran another story the next day on this topic. This was the second day in a row that the *Times* covered this story, and there was nothing new of any substance in the new piece.

The latter news story on the Pennsylvania Catholic high school wrestling policy merited 978 words. By contrast, the same day’s *New York Times* ran a story on Oslo withdrawing from a

bid to host the 2022 winter Olympics that totaled 406 words. A story on Derek Jeter starting his own web forum was a mere 599 words. Even the Major League Baseball playoff game between the Pirates and Giants didn't outdo the Catholic high school story—it was 897 words. If we add the first story on the wrestling policy to the most recent one (it was 401 words), the total figure is 1,379.

No newspaper in Philadelphia or Pittsburgh reported on this story, and outside of *The Sentinel* (a Carlisle, PA paper), it got almost no coverage; no national wire service or newspaper covered it.

October 16

Minneapolis, MN – The *Star-Tribune* published a commentary by Arthur McCaffrey, a Harvard psychologist and *Boston Globe* contributor. McCaffrey's article, titled "Is the media too deferential towards the church?" cheered the decision of the *Star-Tribune* editorial board to twice call for the resignation of Archbishop John Nienstedt. McCaffrey called these editorials a "brave public service."

McCaffrey went on to criticize those who defend the Church, spewing anti-Catholicism throughout. He claimed that "deference is something that the Catholic Church has profited from throughout its long history" and called for that deference to end. As proof he cited "Supreme Court justices hobnobbing with Catholic bishops at the annual 'Red Mass' dinner" and President Obama's efforts to "yuk it up" with Cardinal Timothy Dolan at an annual fundraising dinner in New York.

McCaffrey called for newspapers, and the media generally, to be more critical of the Church and demand "honesty, transparency and accountability from our most entrenched institutions."

The *Star-Tribune* did not print a letter to the editor from the

Catholic League responding to McCaffrey's article.

October 17

Buffalo, NY – Adam Zyglis' cartoon "Church Synod" shows a sign that reads "Gays" pointing at a confessional outside of a church. Two bishops are shown pointing at the confessional and one says "At least we're starting to welcome them in." Zyglis draws cartoons for the *Buffalo News*. This cartoon was also published in Maine's *Portland Press Herald*. This cartoon refers to an interim report of the synod of bishops.

October 19

Portland, ME – A cartoon by John Cole in the *Maine Sunday Telegram* depicts Pope Francis with the title "Habemus Papam" (We have a pope). Next to the pope is a cardinal labeled "Vatican Conservatives" who is reading a newspaper about the synod interim report's comments on divorce and sexuality. The cardinal's heading reads "Habemus Palpitations" implying that he is having a heart attack.

November 12

Gallup, NM – The *Gallup Independent* published an editorial to mark the one year anniversary of the Diocese of Gallup having filed for bankruptcy. In it the *Independent* published a list of 8 demands that it wanted the judge to institute against the diocese. Among them, "Publicize the list of credibly accused abusers by inserting it for three consecutive weeks in the church bulletins of every parish that was ever a part of the Gallup Diocese" and "Publicly release a list of all real property in Arizona and New Mexico" that the diocese owns. The editorial even opined that "the Diocese of Gallup has no need for such property."

November 21

Providence, RI – Following the arrest of a suspended priest, the *Providence Journal*, like most other news outlets, had a news story reporting the arrest. But unlike other outlets, the Journal also published a timeline of all priestly sex abuse

cases in Rhode Island since 1972. Only two of the entries on the timeline referred to the priest who had just been arrested.

A few weeks earlier a minister was sentenced to five years in prison for sexually abusing a student. The *Providence Journal* did not publish a timeline and simply re-printed a small AP story about the case. That's because the minister committed his crimes while serving as principal of a Baptist school.

Radio

January 27

During the "Imus in the Morning" program simulcast on the Fox Business Network, regular guest Rob Bartlett reprised his "Don Corleone, The Godfather" character. In character Bartlett discussed the alleged homosexual network in the Swiss Guard:

Bartlett: "I am concerned for Pope Francis... he's being guarded by a bunch of finocchios...apparently there is a network of homosexuals within Il Papa's security forces, the Swiss Guard... do not misunderstand me. I have nothing against the gays, if a man wants to [censored] another man, that is none of my business. However if he's going to be more concerned with the velvet drapes in the Sistine chapel than insuring the safety of Il Papa perhaps he should just protect the altar boys instead."

March 7

On "Imus in the Morning," which is simulcast on the Fox Business Network, Don Imus and the co-hosts discussed Pope Francis. Imus found it confusing that Pope Benedict XVI continues to live in the Vatican:

Imus: "It's just, that's ridiculous."

Bernard McGuirk [producer]: "It's their church, let them do whatever they want."

Imus: "Ok, well that's the problem. Them glomming onto the kids."

Later in the segment Imus continued to discuss the fact that he does not like Pope Benedict XVI:

McGuirk: "Your issue is with the previous pope."

Imus: "Yes, sneaking around [the Vatican], I mean you have that whole gay mafia there, I mean come on what a nightmare."

July 8

On his nationally syndicated "Savage Nation" radio show, host Michael Savage attacked the pope and the efforts by Catholics to help immigrant children who had arrived at the border illegally. Savage said, "Here's a breaking report. Catholic churches are providing housing for the storm of illegals crossing the border. You heard me. This is a conspiracy of the government/ Catholic complex. The government/Catholic complex is working together. [...] [T]hose who torment us for our own goodwill torment us without end, for they do so with the approval of their own conscience. There's your Roman Church, with a Jesuit, communist pope."

July 28

On his daily radio program, "Imus in the Morning," host Don Imus was interviewing Fox News contributor Fr. Jonathan Morris about Pope Francis' off-the-cuff interview style. Fr. Morris said that the pope's style had a way of touching people. Imus responded with a remark making reference to the abuse crisis.

Fr. Morris: "I'm happy he does it [off-the-cuff interviews]. And he knows, I believe, that its worth risking, you know, bad consequences, for the positive outcome of reaching out to people and touching people where they're at. I love it, but what he said about this Don was..."

Imus: "Careful touching people." [Fr. Morris stops suddenly.]

Fr. Morris: "What was that?"

Imus: "Nothing. [pause, silence] I said just careful on the touching people."

December 6

A National Public Radio (NPR) game show, "Wait Wait Don't Tell Me" decided that the Brooklyn Diocese's outreach program to millennial "hipsters" was worth a few jokes. There was a cheap shot taken about transubstantiation, and the Hail Mary was the source of laughter. By far the most offensive statement was made about Jesus. Here is what comedian Peter Sagal said:

"You can take a selfie with Jesus. The Catholic Church preaches that Jesus is always with us, in fact he's right behind you. So this new app—Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn shows a woman sitting by herself. She's holding out her phone to take a selfie like the kids do, but in the picture you see this woman and this bearded beatific man smiling behind her. It's not some (random) creepo who got into the church, it's the Son of God. This raises all sorts of questions for the woman. For starters, why didn't Jesus offer just to take the picture himself? His hands were occupied."

Some suggested the reference was to Jesus' hands being nailed to the cross, while others saw a veiled reference to Jesus with his hands on his genitals. After the Catholic League asked those on our email list to contact NPR, many did. As a result, NPR responded to complaints about the offensive episode. Here's how NPR responded: "Wait Wait is a comedy show that pokes fun at the news. The goal is always to make people laugh. I regret that we did not succeed in this case."

The "news" that NPR decided to deride was neither a major national or international story: it was about an outreach program aimed at young people in the Diocese of Brooklyn. More seriously, NPR was very selective about who it wanted its audience to laugh at. For example, never once did NPR come even close to mocking Muhammad, and no sexual references have ever been made about him, including on "Wait Wait."

Bill Donohue wrote to House Speaker John Boehner asking him to take up the issue of defunding the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the parent company of NPR. Until Catholics are

afforded the same degree of respect for their “deeply held religious beliefs,” they should not have to subsidize attacks on their religion. This is hardly the first time that NPR has ridiculed Catholics, but doing so at Christmastime makes it all the more egregious.

December 8

Minnesota Public Radio (MPR) made no attempt to be fair in its coverage of a story involving a priest. A jury acquitted Father Mark Huberty of criminal sexual conduct after a woman claimed he took sexual advantage of her during counseling sessions. Three media outlets in Minnesota had been tracking this story from the beginning: the *Pioneer Press*, the *Star-Tribune*, and MPR. When reports surfaced clearing Father Huberty of wrongdoing, the two newspapers gave the jury verdict complete coverage. But not MPR.

For many years MPR has specialized in issuing lengthy reports on alleged priestly abuse; it ran a long story one week earlier about a former priest. When a priest is found not guilty, however, that is of no interest to MPR. To wit: In 2013, MPR did four lengthy stories on salacious accusations against Father Huberty, but when he was exonerated, the best it could do was to offer a 134-word AP story. It had no motivation to recant its previous reporting, or to present its own story.

Television

January 3

On the E! show “Fashion Police,” host Joan Rivers and her guests discussed Hollywood’s power couples and their combined earnings. Discussing Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie, Rivers said “they spent a fortune last year on child care. They spent more money keeping kids quiet than the Catholic Church.”

January 19

Comedy Central aired the one hour premier of “Neal Brennan:

Women and Black Dudes.” Brennan attacked Mary and Joseph, and defamed priests.

Brennan: [On Jesus] “We are going to worship you and your mom, but not your step dad because f*ck him.”

Brennan: “He goes out of town, comes back, Mary’s like ‘I’m pregnant,’ ‘we haven’t had sex in 6 months’ ‘no, it was a ghost’” ... “If I were Joseph and Mary were like ‘do you mind changing Jesus’ diaper?’ ‘No, but maybe the ghost will.”

Brennan: “I went to Catholic school, 12 years. People’s first question when they hear this: Hey Neal, you get molested? It’s a sign of a classy organization isn’t it? And to answer the question, no I didn’t get molested, I f*cked a few priests, but I didn’t get molested. I ain’t no bitch you understand. 8-year-old me f*cking priests. Forgive me father, you know why.”

January 23

The October 2, 2012 episode of “Tosh.0” was re-aired on Comedy Central. Host Daniel Tosh showed a video clip of a priest, a rabbi and an African American sitting next to each other on a plane:

Tosh: “All right, stop me if you have heard this next one. A rabbi, a priest, and a black guy get on a plane. And then a Muslim hijacks it and kills them all. ... Guess which one ordered the 12-year-old boy for his meal?”

January 29

The CW’s Dallas, TX affiliate KDAF reported on the installation of the new Bishop of Fort Worth, Michael Olson, during its evening news program, “Nightcap News.” Talking about Pope Francis the reporter said “this pope may just be the best thing for the Church since sliced Communion wafers” at which point an image was shown of a hand giving out Communion. This was followed by a short clip taken from a movie of a man laughing.

The segment concluded with the reporter saying “Expectations

may be high for the new bishop, he has a tough act to follow with this pope, wait, aren't all bishops *supposed* to follow the pope?" (Emphasis is added on the word "supposed" while Bob Dylan's "Times They Are A Changin'" plays in the background.)

February 5

Comedy Central's game show "@Midnight" asked comedians to respond to a topic in order to earn points. The topic presented, "Jesus, Mary and Toe-Seph," was about a woman who claimed that a bruise on her foot resembled an image of Jesus. Contestants were told to respond to this category "as Satan":

Dana Gould: "I'd believe that before I'd believe that his mom was a virgin. Continued success, Satan."

Arden Myrin: "Figures, Jesus sprays himself all over some stripper's dirty toes and I'm the one with the bad rap. All hail Satan!"

February 14

Joan Rivers and the panel of "Fashion Police" on E! were playing a game where they attempted to identify photographs of Boy George compared to other celebrities, with their faces obscured. When a photo was posted of a person in a long white dress, with a pink robe and purple hair, Rivers guessed, "I'm going to say, Pope Francis when he was about to enter a gay bar." The photo was of George Clinton.

February 21

On E! Network's "Fashion Police" host Joan Rivers and the panel were discussing a dress worn by Oprah Winfrey. Rivers said "I don't know what kind of undergarment she's wearing, but there are no lumps and bumps for a slightly heavier woman. That dress is covering up more secrets than the Catholic Church."

February 25

"Secrets of the Vatican," a 90 minute "Frontline" presentation, marked the 48th time that PBS addressed sexual

abuse in the Catholic Church. Though this problem is practically non-existent in the Catholic community these days, and is rampant in the public schools, as well as in the Orthodox Jewish community, PBS has devoted a combined total of zero episodes to both.

All the contrived melodrama was there: ominous dark images; dramatic music; a deep voice-over; bleak hallways; shadowy figures locking doors as a boy enters the room; the words "Power," "Money," and "Sex" flashing about, etc. The predictable villain: Pope Benedict XVI. Ironically, he did more than anyone to check this problem, but facts don't matter when Jason Berry is involved.

A dissident Catholic, Berry was a co-producer of this show; he was also featured in Alex Gibney's film, "Mea Maxima Culpa." Indeed, the recent hit job was nothing more than a retread of Gibney's propaganda: a New Orleans reporter who previewed it said, "this film reminded me of 'Mea Maxima Culpa.'"

March 7

Joan Rivers, host of "Fashion Police" on the E! network, was critiquing celebrities at the Academy Awards. Discussing Amy Adams' dress and her dancing, Rivers said "Did you see when she tried to dance? Ugh. And I think she's a great actress, but she has less rhythm than an Irish Catholic mother with 18 kids."

March 8

During an episode of "Saturday Night Live," guest host Lena Dunham mocked the story of Genesis during a sketch where she appeared nude playing Eve. Dunham called Adam sexist for suggesting that she was formed from his rib, and lectured God about original sin. She complained to God about health insurance, and refused to cover her naked body, stating, "I'm not going to like conform to society's demands for me." The episode was the second lowest rated "Saturday Night Live" of the year.

March 9

The first episode of the new Fox series “Cosmos” aired. The propagandists involved in this show told viewers that “the Roman Catholic Church maintained a system of courts known as the Inquisition and its sole purpose was to investigate and torment anyone who dared voice views that differed from theirs. And it wasn’t long before [Giordano] Bruno fell into the clutches of the thought police.”

The ignorance was appalling. “The Catholic Church as an institution had almost nothing to do with [the Inquisition],” wrote Dayton historian Thomas Madden. “One of the most enduring myths of the Inquisition,” he said, “is that it was a tool of oppression imposed on unwilling Europeans by a power-hungry Church. Nothing could be more wrong.” Because the Inquisition brought order and justice where there was none, it actually “*saved* uncounted thousands of innocent (and even not-so-innocent) people who would otherwise have been roasted by secular lords or mob rule” (his emphasis).

As for Bruno, he was a renegade monk who dabbled in astronomy; he was not a scientist. There is much dispute about what really happened to him. As sociologist Rodney Strong put it, he got into trouble not for his “scientific” views, but because of his “heretical theology involving the existence of an infinite number of worlds—a work based entirely on imagination and speculation.”

March 10

During a segment titled “Infallible Me,” Jon Stewart attacked Pope Francis on Comedy Central’s “The Daily Show with Jon Stewart.” Stewart discussed a new magazine that had been published about Pope Francis. Stewart said the magazine “will have to go behind the newsstand counter with ‘Prayboy’ and ‘Repenthouse’”

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Stewart then discussed when the pope accidentally used a swear

word, and the pope's confession that he once took a rosary from his dead confessor.

Finally, Stewart showed news clips, including a clip of Fr. Edward Beck, talking about how the pope had opened the door to civil unions. Stewart said "dropping f-bombs, stealing rosaries, not condemning gay unions, that's a lot of rogue popery for this Vatican to deal with." After showing a clip of a Vatican spokesperson clarifying the pope's comments on civil unions, Stewart said "now who's crossed the line? Not a problem that he's running around cursing and grave robbing, but the minute he says something about treating gay people with respect, That's it! Vatican damage control squad leaps into action. What he meant to say was, gay civil unions, f*ck them."

March 18

The guests on E! Network's "Chelsea Lately" attacked Pope Francis during a discussion on a new Russell Crowe movie. Margaret Cho, Liza Treyger and Ross Mathews implied the pope was looking for sex or drugs, maligned Catholic teachings on abortion and insinuated that the pope was gay:

Cho: "The pope is busy though I mean he's everywhere, he's picking up hitchhikers in the popemobile. He's got like bumper stickers 'ass, gas or grass no one rides for free'" [this is a reference to paying for a ride with sex, cash or drugs].

Treyger: "... I feel like I'm a Jew but I would kind of convert to Catholicism. I'll put ash on my forehead, I'll drink a Hail Mary, but if I get pregnant I'll convert back, you know?"

Mathews: "He [the pope] canceled this meeting with Russell Crowe, but he liked "Philomena" so much he invited the real Philomena over. So I don't like Russell Crowe and I love Philomena so the pope and I are kind of, if you think about it, the same person – in a weird way, or at least BFFs [best friends forever]. So as the pope's new BFF I feel like I can say, for the love of God can we start belting that robe? He has kind of a hot little body, and what a shame not to show

that off. I'm just being a friend."

March 25

On the "Late Show with David Letterman" which airs on CBS, Letterman implied that the pope has used cocaine. Letterman then showed a video of Pope Francis speaking, but the pope's words were dubbed over with a rant. In Letterman's video the "pope" said: "People took advantage of me [Jesus], they found out I could do miracles like healing the blind and let lepers f*ck. Now 5000 people show up, with no f*cking clue. They weren't sick, they didn't need healing. They were too f*cking lazy to make a f*cking sandwich. Oh I know, let's let Jesus get it! He's trying to preach, he's trying to share all this information, what, what 5000 of you? Not one of you brought a sandwich? I guess you expect me to get it huh?! I've come to be Jesus the miracle caterer. There's no pressure, I'll just f*cking create food out of the f*cking air."

March 30

Al Jazeera aired a one hour documentary titled "Holy Money." A commercial said there has been "questionable behavior all the way from Rome to your local parish church." The commercial goes on to say "the church is spending heavily on political lobbyists." The documentary claimed to go "into the pockets of the Holy Father to reveal the money issues facing the Catholic Church."

"The Power," "The Money," "The Greed," and "The Scandal" each flashed on the screen as images were shown of expensive looking artwork and long, dark hallways, coupled with ominous sounding music. All of this was meant to make the viewer question the integrity of the Church and imply that donations were being sought to cover up abuse and other scandals.

April 2

On the CW's "The Arsenio Hall Show," Hall had George Lopez as a guest, and they discussed a news story about Pope Francis going to confession in public.

Lopez: "... usually Arsenio, when you hear about priests confessing, he is usually surrounded by the police, and about to be transferred to another parish. [speaking sternly like a police officer]: 'Father this way.' [speaking softer, like a church official]: 'No, Father this way.'"

April 6

"Greatest Mysteries: Vatican" premiered on the Travel Channel. Lies about Catholicism abounded, and the intentional distortion of the truth was commonplace throughout. The program's recklessly inaccurate portrayal of Catholicism seemed straight out of the annals of sci-fi.

Yes, there were rogue popes, none more disgraceful than Rodrigo Borgia, Alexander VI. But if the goal was to promote skepticism of all matters Catholic, then the savants who worked on this program should have stopped there. To say they put their foot in it when they invented a female pope would be a gross understatement.

The Travel Channel program perpetuated a fable that Pope Joan ruled in 855. Among those interviewed for the show was Candida Moss, a Notre Dame professor who is mostly known for discounting the persecution of Christians in the early Church. The fact is that Pope Joan is pure myth: the fairy tale began in the middle of the 13th century, making it inexplicable why no historians in the intervening years managed to write about Ms. Popess. Here is an inconvenient fact: Leo IV died on July 17, 855, and he was immediately followed by Benedict III. There was no pope in between.

April 7

The Science Channel premiered "Unsealed: Alien Files"; the entire half hour episode was dedicated to what knowledge the Vatican has of aliens. The priest who directs the Vatican observatory, Dr. Jose Funes, was interviewed for the program, and he made the rather unexceptional remark that the universe is so huge that "it would be possible that life could evolve

the way we know it on Earth.” This was soon followed by a voiceover that said, “Vatican officials have publicly acknowledged the likelihood of alien life. This dramatic reversal of Vatican policy demands an explanation. What does the Church know, or what have they found that causes them to reverse a 2000-year-old teaching?”

Evidence of alien life, we learn, is available in the “Vatican secret archives.” But thanks to the Science Channel, it is a secret no more. “The Vatican secret archives is approximately 52 miles of shelving we’re told, and over 32,000 archives.” The guy who said this did not disclose who told him this “secret,” but who needs evidence? Then a voiceover gets really melodramatic: “But the secrets hidden within the Vatican can’t stay buried forever. Now new evidence may prove the Vatican is hiding actual aliens from the public.” The program also claimed that skulls with elongated heads and small faces, resembling aliens, were found in 1998 under the Vatican Library, but that access to the site has been denied. A voiceover asked, “Could these skulls be the remnants of aliens who once lived in the Vatican?”

April 8

On NBC’s new late night show, “Late Night with Seth Meyers,” host Meyers did a segment titled “How they reported it.” The segment was a series of mock headlines from a variety of media outlets about a story on global warming:

Meyers: “Maybe we need to turn to religion for a minute, let’s see what Catholic Digest says, ‘Global Warming: It’s Because You Touched Yourself.’ They did warn us, they did warn us a bunch of times.”

An image was shown on the screen of a fake Catholic Digest cover with the aforementioned headline along with a priest holding a chalice and a loaf of bread.

April 16

On April 14, Conan O'Brien made fun of Pope Francis during his late night show on TBS. On April 15, he made an inoffensive joke about Jesus. We said nothing about these two jokes because they were not insulting, and we are not in the business of criticizing comedians when they take light-hearted jabs at our religion. But Conan didn't stop there.

In his April 16 monologue, Conan said the following: "The pope let two 11-year-old boys ride in the popemobile with him. Afterwards the Vatican told the pope 'that's not the kind of publicity we're looking for.'"

By perpetuating the stereotype that priests are child molesters, Conan O'Brien discredits himself and fomented hatred of priests. We make critical distinctions at the Catholic League between disagreement and derision, and we expect no less from late-night talk-show hosts and their writers.

April 21

On NBC's new late night show, "Late Night with Seth Meyers," Meyers did a segment, "Venn Diagrams," where he sought to find common ground between two seemingly unrelated things. He compared "The Second Half of the Final Season of 'Mad Men'" [a TV show] with "Catholic Girls." The common thread was, "You Have to Wait Before You Get To See it All."

While we have heard worse, there was a disturbing pattern evolving. His show was only a few months old, and it was already clear that he had a Catholic fixation. On March 6, he made a quip about the pope and Jesus. On April 3, Meyers discussed "Philomena," a movie we exposed for its vicious lies about nuns. One of the movie's stars, Steve Coogan, who predicted that he would garner an Oscar (he came away empty-handed), whined about the criticism leveled at the film. This is in addition to his April 8 mock Catholic Digest headline. There were other shots taken at Catholics as well.

April 29

On the Comedy Central show "Tosh.0" Daniel Tosh hosted a mock game show, "American Christians got hella Talent" which featured the "Holy Trinity of judges." God was represented as an empty chair. Jesus was described as being fond of "fishing for men" [gay innuendo]. And the Holy Ghost was someone with a white sheet over his head. The judges commented on a series of faux performers.

The first act was "Fr. Flanagan and the hairless angels." A man dressed as a priest did a provocative dance with two young boys dressed as altar boys. The dance ended with the priest hugging the boys. Tosh said, "that's a slippery slope Fr. Flanagan." After the performance the judges offered their comments; Jesus refused to judge the man, and God responded "we're here to judge, don't be such a p*ssy."

Another act featured a rabbi who the judges disqualified. Tosh asked the judges "[are] you still upset about that whole crucifixion thing?" As the panel watched other fake contestants, Tosh interjected at one point, "you can cut the tension in this room with a nail through the palm."

The sketch ended with a bizarre sequence about the film "X-Men" and included God defending X-Men's director, Bryan Singer, against accusations that he sexually abused children.

May 16

After being pounded with mail from angry Catholics, including many bishops, Bill Maher laid off portraying priests as molesters for several months on his HBO show "Real Time with Bill Maher." Then he went back to the sewer again:

Maher: "This week Pope Francis said he would baptize aliens if they came to Earth. I love you, Frank, but that is some Mitt Romney-level crazy pope. I'm pretty sure any beings advanced enough to travel hundreds of light years aren't that interested in getting sprinkled with magic water. Besides, given the past history of fondling and groping, the last thing

the Church needs is a 50-foot-priest with six arms.”

May 30

Joan Rivers’ filthy antics made even her panelists recoil in embarrassment on E!’s “Fashion Police.” The occasion for Rivers’ vulgarity was a picture of singer Solange Knowles with her hair sticking up, looking particularly messy. Rivers quipped, “From the looks of Solange’s hair that comb gets used less frequently than the pope’s penis.”

June 4

Chelsea Handler and guest Ryan Stout attacked homosexual priests on the E! network’s “Chelsea Handler.” The occasion was Pope Francis advising young married couples not to see cats and dogs as an adequate substitute for children. Handler responded, “Yeah, that’s the point! And like you would know about having children—you’re a gay priest.” Stout followed up by saying that for these priests, “cats aren’t the same as kids.”

June 20

On E! network’s “Fashion Police” host Joan Rivers was commenting on a mug shot of singer Kid Rock. In the photo Kid Rock has a long beard and long shaggy hair:

Rivers: “...and if you look at this mug shot, this is the way Jesus would have looked if Mary had given birth in a trailer park instead of an inn.”

June 20

Bill Maher took a shot at Catholics during his HBO show “Real Time.” Maher discussed some recent comments that the pope had made about drug use and then he made an unnecessary joke about the center of the Catholic faith. “You know, look I respect, the pope says he never indulges in anything stronger than the Blood of Christ,” said Maher.

June 23

On the “Late Show with David Letterman” (CBS) Letterman

discussed the pope's remarks that members of the mafia were excommunicated. Letterman introduced the topic and made some mafia related jokes. Then Letterman made a joke about abusive priests: "...the pope also said, that members of the mafia, excommunicated, and creepy priests, not a problem. So that's... [laughter and applause] not what he said, but you know."

June 27

Joan Rivers attacked gay priests on her E! show "Fashion Police." Commenting on a short plaid skirt worn by singer Katy Perry, Rivers said "She is so much a Catholic schoolgirl that three priests stopped her to say 'you're cute, do you have a brother?'"

July 11

On HBO's "Real Time with Bill Maher," Maher discussed the *Hobby Lobby* case that the U.S. Supreme Court decided. Here is an excerpt:

- "...but the five Catholic men on the Supreme Court agreed with Hobby Lobby that those women who have pleasure sex should be saddled with a baby."
- "And those five Catholic men on the Supreme Court, they know that God loves every tiny spec of human life, every single sperm from the moment it leaves the penis, until it tries to sneak into America. Then you're on your own."
- "...the five Catholic men on the Supreme Court they decided that, I think, that Catholic doctrine trumps federal law."
- "I just think that it's a little suspicious that its five Catholic men, and the Catholics do the thing about ejaculating. They do."

July 15

On CBS' "Late Show with David Letterman," the host talked about celibacy, priests, Pope Francis and Cardinal Timothy Dolan:

Letterman: “The pope is considering repealing celibacy for priests. Priests will no longer have to take a vow of celibacy. They’ll be gettin’ it done. It’s a miracle! And everybody is taking him seriously, earlier today at Communion, Cardinal Dolan, over at St. Patrick’s, sent over some Communion wine over to a sweet looking young thing over in the first pew...” [at this point Letterman used body language to imply that he is hitting on a girl. Nodding, winking, etc.].

July 16

For a second night David Letterman discussed priestly celibacy. He began by saying Pope Francis was thinking about lifting the celibacy requirement for priests. “That’s right, the pope is saying that priests can be in a marriage with a woman and have sex.” [A clip of women are shown cheering.]

The pope was also shown speaking to bishops and cardinals, his words dubbed over. “When two people love each other very much, they become more than just good friends. Eventually they might even get married and have a baby. The mommy and daddy make the baby together, but it grows inside the mommy.”

Letterman continued “So if a priest sees someone out there in the crowd that he likes, he might send over some Communion wine.” [Letterman was shown pointing and winking at someone.] Off camera, band leader Paul Shaffer replied, “That little lady over there.” To which Letterman replied, “Priests having sex, can you believe that?” [The clip of the cheering women is replayed.]

July 17

Kristeen Young was a musical guest on CBS’ “The Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson.” Young performed her song “Pearl of a Girl” which attacked religion, the Bible and the Blessed Mother. Song lyrics include:

- “I never knew I was a girl until they stooped to tell me, I never knew I was disturbed until they dropped

three volumes on me. But in the Bible/Torah/Quran there are really no good roles for me except concubine and wash woman. I used to be the sad one, now I just wanna stab them.”

- “They’ve needed to have the law so they can legally bind us. They’ve needed to have the church so they can morally ground us. They’ve needed most of the dough, they must be so scared of us. So their stories are of ghosts; I only wish the Virgin would’ve had an abortion.”

July 18

Joan Rivers called Jesus a pimp on her show “Fashion Police” on E! While looking at a photo of singer Kid Rock wearing a full length fur coat, with sunglasses Rivers said “First of all, let me just say, Kid Rock, when did he audition to play Jesus Christ Super Pimp?”

July 18

On “Real Time with Bill Maher” (HBO) Maher called the pope a pimp during his “New Rules” segment: “New Rule. The pope is a pimp. I’m serious. I find myself wanting to ask this pope a question I never wanted to ask a pope before: Can I party with you?”

July 22

On Comedy Central’s “The Daily Show with Jon Stewart,” the host mocked Fox News for a soft interview with Sen. John McCain. Pretending to be a reporter, Stewart asked of himself, “Is Jon Stewart fair to Republicans?” Although this skit had absolutely nothing to do with Catholicism, Stewart managed to turn it into another one of his vintage Catholic-bashing moments.

Stewart: “Does the pope sh*t [bleeped] in the woods? Because if not, not only am I not fair to Republicans, I think a bear wearing a hat gave me Communion.”

[Next is an image of Stewart kneeling with his hands folded in prayer, and a large bear dressed as the pope holding a Host and ciborium; Stewart is kneeling waist high to the bear.]

Stewart: "I'm not going to make that other joke that I was just about to make—it was about one of us not using our teeth."

July 24

On the E! show "Chelsea Lately," host Chelsea Handler discussed sex abuse in the Catholic Church. She took issue with Pope Francis' statement that there was a zero tolerance policy for clerical abuse. Handler said "Well yeah, what should there be, a 50% tolerance policy? There should have been a zero tolerance policy years and years ago."

July 31

David Letterman made a series of jokes about summer vacations on his CBS late night show. He ended the segment claiming to have video footage of Pope Francis' summer vacation. Letterman showed a clip of an old man running along a beach wearing only a thong. A mitre was superimposed on his head.

August 1

On his HBO show "Real Time with Bill Maher," the host made two comments that caught our eye. Speaking about those that win the lottery but continue to work, Maher said "Oh please, either quit your job or give the money back, you're a waste of good luck, like a nun with a huge rack."

Later Maher said, "Where did we get this idea that drudgery is next to godliness? The Church of course. For hundreds of years the Catholic Church taught that God loved poverty, that's why he made so much of it."

August 4

A new show, "Partners," starring Kelsey Grammer and Martin Lawrence, premiered on FX. The show received negative reviews, but that is not why the Catholic League protested it. The show

revolves around two down-on-their-luck lawyers who team up. Lawrence's character decides to investigate his ex-wife, who has found religion and moved into the rectory of the parish where she is a bookkeeper. The protagonists believe that she is now sleeping with one of the priests. They break into the rectory in the middle of the night hoping to confront the priest, but end up searching his empty room. They find rosary beads that they insinuate are used for sex as well as a box of condoms and other clues that help them conclude that the woman is sleeping with the priest.

After this the sexual jokes abound. For example, "I can't believe my ex-wife was getting broke off by the one straight priest in Chicago"; and, "This is the woman I lived with for 22 years ... and the entire time she's sleeping with Fr. Francis giving him a second coming."

August 6

On an episode of "Late Night with Seth Meyers" which airs on NBC, Meyers said, "A Spanish hotel inspired by *Fifty Shades of Grey* is having its opening delayed because officials are concerned that it's too close to a nearby Catholic Church. 'We don't want to be next to all those creepy perverts,' said the hotel."

August 9

Comedy Central re-aired an episode of "South Park" from July 3, 2002. The episode, titled "Red Hot Catholic Love," was entirely about priestly sex abuse. The cartoon featured priests, bishops and cardinals defending child abuse. It was re-broadcast as part of Comedy Central's "Shart Week" programming. The Catholic League condemned the show when it originally aired.

August 15

A new show, "The Knick," on Cinemax featured a nun who performs an abortion. Sister Harriet, a nurse who runs an orphanage, visits an Irish Catholic woman, Nora, who wants an

abortion. The woman doesn't want her husband to find out.

Sister Harriet: "Your husband will know nothing of it. I promise."

Nora: "Will God forgive me? I don't want to go to hell for killing a baby."

Sister Harriet: "He knows that you suffered. I believe the Lord's compassion will be yours." [The audience is led to believe that the nun performed the abortion.]

September 5

Cinemax's "The Knick" continued its storyline about a nun who performs abortions. An ambulance driver who knows that the nun, Sister Harriet, performs abortions tries to extort money from her in exchange for his silence: "See I know about you. The mothers, the babies, the abortions. I've seen you with all of them. You are who you are. You defy God and you kill his creations and you stand there looking down on dirty old Cleary. A girl could get hanged for killing babies if the Bishop knew what you were doing."

After a girl dies while trying to abort her own baby, the ambulance driver, Tom Cleary, strikes a partnership with Sister Harriet:

Sister Harriet: "Now you know why I do what I do for these girls."

Cleary: "Don't go off defending your baby murdering. I still don't like it but I won't see another girl bleeding to death winding up here. So how about this? I find the girls needing services and you do the job on them. Good and safe?"

October 7

An episode of "The Mindy Project," a Fox show, opened with an implied sex scene involving Dr. Mindy Lahiri (played by Mindy Kaling) and Danny Castellano (played by Chris Messina); it was titled, "I Slipped!" The room is dark and there is moaning. Here is how the script unfurls:

Mindy: "Oh my God, Danny, this is heaven. Wait! Danny, Danny, that doesn't go there!"

Danny: "I slipped!"

After the title sequence, the two characters are shown in an office arguing about the sexual encounter from the night before. Mindy is upset with what Danny did. Danny insists it was a mistake. It is implied that Danny attempted anal sex. They take a shot at the Church's teachings on sodomy, as well as gay priests and the abuse crisis:

Mindy: "Okay, so you're innocent? You had no intent?"

Danny: "Of course no intent. I'm Catholic. Even if I think about that..."

Mindy: "They promote you to Cardinal?"

Danny: "Hey! Hey! That is all over. It's over. Pope Frank is on the case."

Danny: "Can we please just go talk about this in your office, please?"

Mindy: "I don't know, Danny, because my office only has one entrance and I don't know if that's enough for you anymore."

The show's writers may be interested in promoting homosexuality but there is no need to bring Catholics into their twisted storylines.

October 8

On MSNBC's "Morning Joe" the co-hosts discussed the synod of bishops that was going on at the Vatican to discuss challenges facing families. The co-hosts particularly focused on a speech given by a couple who had been married for 55 years. The couple discussed the role of sex in marriage as part of their remarks.

Joe Scarborough initially described the couple's speech as "uncomfortable" and co-host Mika Brzezinski found the situation very funny. Scarborough then made a comment about priestly celibacy.

Scarborough [to Brzezinski]: "You like that?"

Brzezinski [while laughing]: "I think it was probably very enlightening for them."

Scarborough: "The joy of sex."

Brzezinski [while laughing]: "Oh stop"

Scarborough: "I don't know how many of them are celibate"

October 8

On NBC's "Law and Order: Special Victims Unit" the case centers around a popular but troubled young actress. The starlet, who is in her twenties, performs oral sex on a 15-year-old boy while she is in rehab. As a result, she gets charged with statutory rape. It turns out that she was molested by a producer when she was a teenager. Detectives want to prosecute the producer, but the statute of limitations has run out on the older rapes that he's responsible for:

Detective Amanda Rollins: "Were you sick the day that they went over the statute of limitations at law school?"

Unnamed Detective: "Yeah, yeah, she's 24, which in New York is one year too late to charge statutory rape. Anybody want to explain to me why that law still exists?"

Prosecutor Rafael Barba: "You can thank the Church lobbyists for that."

Barba's claim is patently false. Planned Parenthood and the ACLU are responsible for these situations. By blaming the Church, NBC is fanning the flames of anti-Catholicism.

October 10

The Tom Selleck show "Blue Bloods" on CBS has treated Catholics fairly in the past before beginning to turn on its audience. Selleck stars as Police Commissioner Frank Reagan.

Reagan, a practicing Catholic, cannot defend the Church's teachings on homosexuality, so when Catholicism is branded an "anti-gay faith," he replies, "Well, I do believe the Church is a little behind the times on this." Indeed, he goes so far

as to say, "I do believe the Church is backwards on this. And of all the stands to hold onto. In the midst of the scandals of the past decade." Viewers also meet a conflicted Cardinal Brennan, and a proud lesbian, Sister Mary.

October 27

After delivering a subtle pro-life message in earlier episodes, the writers for "Jane the Virgin" on the CW Channel got around to exploiting the Blessed Mother in the third installment. The show is based on the premise that Jane became pregnant through artificial insemination and remains a virgin. But in a recent episode Jane decided she was going to have sex with her boyfriend. In church during Mass, Jane's grandmother spoke to her about honesty, making her feel guilty. Hallucinating, Jane pictured the choir singing to her. Here is what followed:

Choir: "Tonight's the night you'll lie in bed. You should tell the truth, but you'll lie instead. Don't have sex, Jane, don't have sex."

Grandmother: "Can you really lie to my face?"

Choir and Congregation: "Can you really lie to her face?"

Statue of Virgin Mary: "Virginity for you and me if you keep your legs closed."

Choir and Congregation: "Keep them closed! Keep them closed! Keep them closed!"

When the scene ended, Jane was still in church. She was shown telling her mother and grandmother she was going to have sex with her boyfriend. Jane's mother said, "Halleluiaah," shocking the grandmother.

October 29

During "Late Night with Seth Meyers" on NBC, the late night host made the following statement in his monologue:

Meyers: "A church in Seattle has filed a lawsuit claiming that the legal marijuana retailer next door is too close to a

church," Meyers said. "'It's causing some problems,' said the priest, through a giant mouthful of Communion wafers." [Talking as if his mouth is full, and acting as if he is stuffing more food in his mouth], Meyers continued, "It's like super close to the church. I mean, sometimes it seems like it's coming a little closer" [he acts as though he is taking a big drink].

There is a Seattle church that filed a lawsuit protesting the licensing of a legal marijuana retailer next door, but it is not a Catholic church: Mount Calvary Christian Church Center filed the lawsuit. But those who write script for Meyers are not interested in attacking Protestants—it's much more fun mocking Catholics. That they stooped so low as to trash the Catholic celebration of the Eucharist shows the depth of their disorder.

November 6

On "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart" (Comedy Central) Stewart made a gratuitous joke about Jesus. He was comparing the reaction of Republicans following the 2012 election to the reaction of Democrats following the 2014 election.

Stewart: "...they [the media] said the exact same things about the Republican party when their death warrant was signed, a mere 24 months apparently before it burst forth from its grave like Jesus Christ [imitates the way a preacher might say 'Jesus Christ'] or a zombie depending on your personal beliefs."

November 6

On Comedy Central's game show "@Midnight" comedians respond to questions or topics by making jokes and are awarded points. Host Chris Hardwick introduced the topic "Jesus Christ Superstardust" where the contestants had to guess if the person pictured was a hot priest, or an unemployed actor working at a restaurant. The contestants were told to guess if the person pictured was a "servant of God or a server of

french fries”

Hardwick: “The priests were taken from the 2014 hot priest calendar which features 12 actual Vatican priests sexy enough to be mister January through December. GLORY HOLE-LELUJIAH!” [a “glory hole” is used for anonymous gay sex].

The first round featured a picture of someone who was not a priest. The second round was a priest, “Father July.” In the second round, the show’s performers took a gratuitous shot at Jesus; they also played their anti-Semitic card. Jeff Ross, one of the contestants, said, “I’m not even gay and I want to nail him like Jesus to the cross.” To which Hardwick replies, “Listen, don’t worry, Jeff is a Jew—he did nail Jesus to the cross.”

November 7

For the second night in a row, Comedy Central’s “@Midnight” game show attacked Catholics. Host Chris Hardwick asked the comedians to come up with sensational headlines that could be used by the *New York Post*. Contestant Jim Norton responded “In God we thrust, Vatican sex scandal.” Hardwick awarded points for the joke.

November 9

“Mulaney,” is a Fox TV show starring comedian John Mulaney that offers typical sit-com fare blended with occasional stand-up appearances.

The story line was silly: Mulaney dupes his mom into thinking he’s a practicing Catholic, and even asks a priest to lie to his mom about going to church. He doesn’t succeed in his quest, but not before telling the priest that he is not like other comedians. On his knees in prayer, he says, “I would like to point out that I never did jokes about priest molestation during that whole thing—even though a lot of stand-up comics did and I totally could have.”

While still on his knees, Mulaney’s girlfriend walks in,

asking, "Are you praying?" Mulaney grabs his crotch and says, "No, I'm just masturbating."

November 21

Providence, RI – Following the arrest of a suspended priest, Father Barry Meehan, NBC 10 Rhode Island summoned its I-Team to investigate. The Diocese of Providence learned of the accusations of the priest in question in December 2012 and immediately contacted the police. In January 2013 the priest was suspended, and proceedings were initiated in the Vatican for a permanent removal from ministry. He was arrested and formally indicted in November 2014.

However the NBC 10 I-Team report focused not on Meehan but on letters sent from the diocese to the State Police about a number of different priests. The names were all blacked out so the reporter actually had no idea who the letters referred to. The reporter continually showed the blacked out letters and indictment. There was also an image of hands holding a crucifix. SNAP leader Ann Hagen Webb was interviewed but the reporter did not identify her as part of SNAP.

The documents used for the I-Team investigation were not proof of a cover-up or larger scandal, and in fact provided no new information about Meehan, because the diocese had previously released all its information on him. The letters had no names or dates, and all the letters were the diocese contacting the police. These facts did not stop NBC 10 from airing its one sided coverage and trying to stir up animus against priests.

November 25

During the Christmas episode of "Tosh.0" on Comedy Central, host Daniel Tosh opened a segment, "Beef Baby Jesus," by explaining that in a previous episode viewers were encouraged to tweet using the hashtag #beefbaby. Tosh then showed a clip on how the 'beef baby' was made using meat, human feces, and semen. Tosh then wrapped the "beef baby" in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger.

December 9

On the celebrity show “TMZ” a joke was made about gay priests. The story focused on New England Patriots Quarterback Tom Brady’s use of the word “F*ck” on the football field. Some TV cameras have picked him up saying it and aired it on their broadcasts.

Brady answered questions about it during a radio show which TMZ played clips from.

Brady [to radio station]: “Yeah, we’re not choir boys, I know that.”

TMZ Narrator: “And Catholic priests are upset he isn’t.”

An image of a person dressed as a cardinal holding a bible is shown. The face of the person is censored.

December 16

The host of “Late Night with Seth Meyers” on NBC made a joke about a priest embezzling money and implied that all priests are child abusers, “This is unfortunate. Today a Catholic priest was sentenced after being convicted of embezzling money from a charity. Said Catholic officials, ‘embezzlement, oh thank God oh, oh I thought it was going to be so much worse. Oh, thank you. Oh it’s a Christmas miracle. He just stole money.’”

Special Reports

DEBUNKING “PHILOMENA”

January 27

The film “Philomena,” which premiered in the fall of 2013, was nominated for four Academy Awards. What had been peddled as a true story was, in fact, untrue. Worse, it deliberately painted the Catholic Church in a negative way, and was especially cruel to Irish nuns.

“Philomena” is such an outrageous lie that Bill Donohue

exposed it in a lengthy article, "Debunking Philomena." Copies were sent to the bishops, those in the entertainment industry, and to many in the media; scores of reporters in the U.S., England, and Ireland were mailed a copy. It is posted on the Catholic League website; see the "Special Reports" section.

The crux of the matter was this: according to the book (of the same name), upon which the movie is based, Philomena Lee got pregnant out of wedlock in Ireland in 1952 when she was 18-years-old. That part is true. But it was a malicious lie to say that the nuns stole her baby and then sold him to "the highest bidder." It was also a lie to say that Philomena went to the U.S. to find him.

In reality, Philomena's mother died when she was six, leaving her father to care for three boys and three girls. He put the girls in a convent and raised the boys. When Philomena got pregnant, and could not provide for her child, her father contacted the nuns asking for assistance.

In other words, the nuns never "stole" the baby. Moreover, Philomena's baby was not sold to "the highest bidder": no fee of any sort was charged.

The Wisconsin couple who adopted the boy offered a donation, which is customary, but it was entirely voluntary. And Philomena never set foot in the United States until the end of 2013 when she was hawking the movie—no attempt was ever made to find her son. Her son died of AIDS in the mid-1990s.

When the writer, the director, and the actors involved were asked about criticism by the Catholic League, they quickly said that the movie was "inspired" by true events. To show how utterly dishonest they are, consider the last paragraph of the book's Prologue. The author, Martin Sixsmith, said, "Everything that follows is true, *or reconstructed to the best of my ability*" (Italic added).

The word "everything" is an absolute—it allows for no

exceptions. But Sixsmith can't even complete the sentence without contradicting himself: as soon as "or" is added, the claim is no longer absolute. It gets better. "Gaps have been filled," Sixsmith says, "characters extrapolated, and incidents surmised"; this was also how the film starts. The gaps, it turned out, are gargantuan, but he was a master at filling them.

The film's producer, Harvey Weinstein, proved how diabolical he is when he went to Switzerland to meet with Vatican officials: he wanted the pope to see the film in a private screening. He failed. Father Federico Lombardi of the Holy See Press Office said, "The Holy Father does not see films and will not be seeing this one."

There were more lies. Steve Coogan, a co-producer of the movie and the person who adapted the book for the screen, told CNN that Philomena Lee was invited by the Vatican to meet with the pope. In fact, the two of them shook hands with the pope with a wall in between them, as part of the general audience, which is open to the public.

After the film received four Oscar nominations – it did not win a single one – the lies continued to mount. The *New York Times* said it was a contender because one of its "advantages" was "its backing by the Weinstein Company, which even orchestrated an audience with Pope Francis."

Regarding the so-called meeting of Philomena Lee and Pope Francis, she was denied a private audience; all she got was a pass to join the general audience. According to Vatican Radio, in the nine months that he was the pope in 2013, "over 6.6 million people attended events led by Pope Francis at the Vatican." Of that number, 1.5 million attended the pope's weekly general audience. Philomena Lee was one of the 1.5 million people who "met" the pope.

However, two Vatican officials did agree to see it.

Immediately, it was said that Pope Francis' "personal secretary" saw it. Floating this lie was Coogan as well as several media outlets on both sides of the Atlantic. The person they identified as the pope's personal secretary, Msgr. Guillermo Karcher, is actually one of nine papal masters of ceremonies; he is not even the main master. Msgr. Alfred Xuereb was the pope's secretary.

It is true that the Weinstein boys, Harvey and Bob, spent an enormous amount of money lobbying this movie. The non-stop ads in the *New York Times*, multiple each day, and in every section of the paper, were just one index. The lavish parties that Harvey Weinstein threw in Hollywood—everyone wants an invitation—also positioned him to score. While this may have gone down well with those in Tinseltown, it did not sit well in the Vatican.

Father Federico Lombardi, head of the Holy See Press Office, explicitly said that the pope would not see the movie. Furthermore, he took umbrage at those who were exploiting the pope to cash in on the film. According to Lombardi, "It is also important to avoid using the pope as part of a marketing strategy."

The website of *People* magazine quoted the 80-year-old Philomena Lee as saying, "I'm thankful and happy I did find him [her son], and that's all I ever wanted to do."

Similarly, in the entertainment section of *Time*, it was written, "Many other Irish women found themselves in similar situations [pregnant out of wedlock at age 18 in 1952] but, unlike Lee, never managed to find the children who were taken from them."

All of this was a lie because Philomena Lee never found her son: he died in 1995 and was buried on the grounds at the very convent that took her in when she was in need. She was lying about this because it fit with the lie about her looking

frantically for him for 50 years. In the movie, she was depicted as searching for her son in the United States.

In regards to the lie that Philomena went to the United States to look for her son, here is what Suzanne Daley and Douglas Dalby wrote in the *New York Times* on November 29, 2013: "In fact, much of the movie is a fictionalized version of events. Ms. Lee, for instance, never went to the U.S. to look for her son with Mr. Sixsmith, who is played by Steve Coogan, a central part of the film."

Philomena Lee never set foot in the United States until November 2013 when she went to Los Angeles to hawk her movie. Indeed, Philomena never even bothered to tell her daughter, Jane, about the brother she never knew she had until Philomena had too much to drink at a Christmas party in 2004.

Kevin Cullen of the *Boston Globe* added to the lies when he said the nuns "gave him [the son] away to an American family behind Philomena's back."

Steve Coogan, a producer and screenplay writer for the film "Philomena," was quoted in *The Sunday Times* (of London) as saying that the nuns asked Philomena Lee's son, Anthony, "to pay thousands of pounds to be buried" on the grounds of Sean Ross Abbey. "We didn't put that in the film. We were restrained." He also stated that "The film offers an olive branch to the church in showing Philomena's forgiveness. She dignifies her religion."

Furthermore, Steve Coogan concluded his remarks with this gem: "The Catholic League is a conservative wing of the Catholic church. They say no fee was charged for Anthony's adoption, but they [the nuns] did ask for a large donation. Well, call me stupid, but that sounds like a financial transaction."

Coogan was also a guest of Bill Maher on his HBO show, "Real Time with Bill Maher." Maher said there were 60,000 Philomenas in Ireland, women who had children out of wedlock and gave

their children up for adoption. Coogan claimed they were “maltreated and eventually their babies were sold to Americans.”

Bill Maher also said that Philomena Lee “looks like a slave in the movie,” stating she worked long hours in the laundries. Coogan went further by contending that the women “were victims of actual slavery,” and were “incarcerated against their will.”

No woman was ever incarcerated against her will in any of the laundries: *Every last one of the women came to the nuns—the nuns did not fetch the troubled women.*

Moreover, they were not mistreated, never mind enslaved, and no babies were sold. In early 2013, the Irish government released the McAleese Report on the Magdalene Laundries: it debunked these myths, and many more, yet people like Maher and Coogan have continued to promote them.

The Independent.ie (Irish Independent) ran a story by Liz O'Donnell on “Philomena” saying that Philomena Lee’s “child was stolen by the nuns.” This was incorrect: the 18-year-old Lee, pregnant out of wedlock, was taken to the nuns by her widowed father, hoping they would care for the baby. They did. At age 22, Lee voluntarily signed a contract awarding the nuns her son. The nuns then got her a job. That is the undisputed truth.

“Good Morning America” on ABC also interviewed Coogan; In the voice over, the following was said: “Philomena is based on a true story about an Irishwoman played by Judi Dench who travels to the U.S. to track down the son she was forced to give up for adoption when she was a teenager.”

In his remarks, Coogan said that 50 years ago in Ireland, women who were pregnant out of wedlock, and abandoned by their family, would go to homes run by nuns where “your child would be sold to Catholic, often American, wealthy American

couples.”

Chris Buckler, the BBC Ireland Correspondent, wrote Philomena Lee’s child was “taken away from her. When her son Anthony was three-and-a-half years old, the nuns in the convent gave him up for adoption to an American couple. *It all happened behind Philomena’s back*” (Italics added).

In fact, Philomena voluntarily signed adoption papers relinquishing custody of her son when she was 22 years of age. None of this was done by accident. It was as deliberate as it was malicious.

Sister Julie Rose, an official at the convent in question, flatly denied charging a fee. “No children were sold by any mother or the congregation, to any party, nor did the congregation receive any monies in relation to adoption while we were running the mother and baby home.” Even the author of the book upon which “Philomena” is based admitted that it was “customary for the adopting party to make a donation,” but that it was not mandatory.

All of this was a lie. The proof is the oath that Philomena signed. Here is what it said:

“That I am the mother of Anthony Lee who was born to me out of wedlock at Sean Ross Abbey, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary, Ireland, on 5th July 1952.

“That I hereby relinquish full claim forever to my said child Anthony Lee and surrender said child to Sister Barbara, Superioress of Sean Ross Abbey, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary, Ireland.

“The purpose of this relinquishment is to enable Sister Barbara to make my child available for adoption to any person she considers fit and proper inside or outside the state.

“That I further undertake never to attempt to see, interfere

with or make any claim to the said child at any future time.”

This oath was signed by Philomena Lee. Below her signature, it says:

“Subscribed and sworn to by the said Philomena Lee as her free act and deed this 27th day of June 1955.” Signed, Desmond A. Houlihan, notary public.

Not only did Philomena Lee voluntarily sign an oath when she was 22 giving her son up for adoption, in the film itself, Dench says, “No one coerced me. I signed of my own free will.”

Regarding the lie about Philomena’s baby being sold, in the book by Martin Sixsmith upon which the film was based, he stated that, “While neither the NCCC [National Conference of Catholic Charities] nor Sean Ross Abbey [the convent where Philomena resided] charge any fees, it is customary for the adopting party to make a donation....”

These lies were aided and abetted by many in the media, for reasons that only underscore the existence of the Catholic League.

The Catholic League has greatly emphasized the fact that Philomena was not a child when she voluntarily put her son up for adoption—she was 22. Anyone who doubts what has been said should read p. 51 in Martin Sixsmith’s book, *Philomena*. While he was a major part of the spin game regarding Philomena, the oath that he reprinted settles the argument: her baby was not “forcibly taken” and nothing happened “behind her back.”

IRELAND’S “MASS GRAVE” HOAX

The following entry was originally published in the July/August Catalyst. It is an excerpt from Bill Donohue’s report, “Ireland’s ‘Mass Grave’ Hysteria.” To read the full account, see the “Special Reports” section of the Catholic League’s website.

June 23

Mass hysteria gripped Ireland, England, and the United States over reports that nearly 800 bodies of children were found in a mass grave outside a former home run by nuns in Tuam, near Galway. The Catholic Church was hammered incessantly, and shrill cries of maltreatment abounded. Fresh off the heels of horror stories about the Magdalene Laundries, and the torment of Philomena Lee (as recorded in the film, "Philomena"), the public was reeling from the latest report of abuse at the hands of cruel nuns.

None of this is true. There is no mass grave. Women were not abused by nuns in the Magdalene Laundries. And Philomena's son was never taken from her and then sold to the highest bidder. The evidence that the public has been hosed is overwhelming. Truths, half-truths, and flat-out lies are driving all three stories. That's a bad stew, the result of which is to whip up anti-Catholic sentiment. This is no accident.

Regarding the latest hoax, many reporters and pundits charged that the "mass grave" story is "Ireland's Holocaust." The Nazi analogy belittles what happened to Jews under Hitler, and dishonors Irish nuns. The nuns never put kids into ovens; they did not starve them to death; and they did not torture anyone. Even if the most glaringly dishonest stories about children who died in Irish homes were true, they would not come close to approaching the monstrous atrocities that Jews endured under the Nazis. To make such a comparison is obscene.

It is true that 796 children died in the Tuam home between 1925 and 1961, and their whereabouts are uncertain. But that hardly merits the fantastic leap that wicked nuns dumped them in a septic tank, treating them as if they were raw sewage. There is not a scintilla of evidence to back up this scurrilous accusation. Yet in May and June, this propaganda was disseminated on both sides of the Atlantic, treated as if it were an accurate account.

What is perhaps most striking about this story is the extent to which much of the mainstream media had to walk back its inflammatory stories. The Associated Press even apologized in June for distorting the record. But the damage has been done: once again, the Catholic Church in Ireland has been unfairly blamed for persecuting innocent women and children.

Anti-Catholicism in Ireland, England, and the United States is fueling the “mass grave” hysteria. It’s a sick appetite, and there is no shortage of irresponsible persons feeding it.

One of the key players in the “mass grave” story about the Tuam home was Catherine Corless, a local historian. Her research “suggested 796 babies were buried in a tank outside the former Tuam Mother and Baby Home, in Co. Galway, once run by the Bon Secours nuns in Galway.” Research that suggests an outcome is hardly unimportant, but it is not dispositive. Furthermore, while it is entirely fair to surmise what happened, it is quite another thing to declare exactly what happened.

What is not in dispute is the fact that between 1925 and 1961, 796 children died at this home in Tuam. An initial investigation concluded that “No one knows the total number of babies in the grave.” On June 5, the *New York Times* said the local police discounted the “mass grave” story as myth. “These are historical burials going back to famine times,” the police said. They added that “there is no confirmation from any source that there are between 750 and 800 bodies present.” Yet that is precisely what many media outlets, and activists, said.

Eamonn Fingleton, writing in *Forbes*, noted that “experts believe that the babies were buried in unmarked graves within the grounds of the orphanage.” This was not uncommon in Ireland in the first half of the 20th century; this is the way church-run orphanages and workhouses buried their dead.

In many ways, the observations of Brendan O'Neill are the most impressive. He is an Irish atheist with no dog in this fight, save for telling the truth. O'Neill is anything but politically correct. He saw through the malarkey about the Magdalene Laundries, and he has been equally courageous in challenging tales of "mass graves."

"On almost every level," O'Neill said in his June 9 article in *Spiked*, "the news reports in respectable media outlets around the world were plain wrong. Most importantly, the constantly repeated line about the bodies of 800 babies having been found was pure mythmaking. The bodies of 800 babies had not been found, in the septic tank or anywhere else." The myth was the product of Corless' "speculation" that the children who died in the home were buried in a mass grave.

O'Neill was adamant in his conviction that "it's actually not possible that all 800 babies are in this tank-cum-crypt, as pretty much every media outlet has claimed." He cited a story in the *Irish Times* that said "the septic tank was still in use up to 1937, 12 years after the home opened, during which time 204 of the 796 deaths occurred—and it seems impossible that more than 200 bodies could have been put in a working sewage tank."

Tim Stanley is another reliable source from the U.K., and he was also convinced that the popular understanding of what happened is false. "It is highly unlikely, if not physically impossible," he wrote on June 7, "that 796 bodies would have been placed into one septic tank." He took note of the fact that "the tank was only in use between 1926 and 1937," thus undercutting wild accusations that the vile nuns treated dead children like raw sewage for decades.

Fingleton drew on his own experience to question the veracity of the conventional wisdom. He did not mince words: "For anyone familiar with Ireland (I was brought up there in the 1950s and 1960s), the story of nuns consciously throwing

babies into a septic tank never made much sense. Although many aforesaid nuns might have been holier-than-thou harridans, they were nothing if not God-fearing and therefore unlikely to treat human remains with the sort of outright blasphemy implied in the septic tank story.”

Adding considerable weight to the observations of O’Neill, Stanley, and Fingleton was Dr. Finbar McCormick. He teaches at the School of Geography, Archaeology and Paleoecology at Queens University in Belfast. He berated the media for using the term “septic tank” to describe the child burials at the home. “The structure as described is much more likely to be a shaft burial vault, a common method of burial used in the recent past and still used today in many parts of Europe.” He specifically said that “Many maternal hospitals in Ireland had a communal burial place for stillborn children or those who died soon after birth. These were sometimes in a nearby graveyard but more often in a special area within the grounds of the hospital.”

So if the public has been duped, how did this story begin? It began innocently enough in 2010, but it took on a strong ideological bent in early 2014. The key players were Corless and Martin Sixsmith.

In 2010, Catherine Corless read an article in the *Tuam Herald* that caught her eye. The piece, “Stolen Childhoods,” recounted the fate of a former resident in the Mother and Baby home in Tuam that was run by the Bon Secours Sisters. She had already done research on this home, so she naturally followed up and contacted the man identified in the article. This provided her with other leads. Two years later, in November 2012, Corless published her findings in a local journal.

What was most striking about Corless is not what she said in 2012, but how she changed her story. In her journal article, there was no professed anger at the nuns, or the Catholic Church. But later she was in rage. While she does not explain

her change in tune, it is evident that her encounter with Sixsmith early in 2014 proved to be a game changer.

Sixsmith is the English atheist who wrote the patently dishonest book about Philomena Lee; the movie about her life was based on his work. Since then, he has taken every opportunity to fan the flames of anti-Catholicism, and even arranged to include the “mass grave” hoax in a documentary about the horrors of Irish nuns. Once he hooked up with Corless, she became increasingly strident in her denunciations of the nuns and the Catholic Church.

Corless was now on a tear. Her previous comments on the possibility of a mass grave, which were tentative, gave way to absolute certainty. “I am certain there are 796 children in the mass grave.” Just as important, she was now convinced of the mendacity of the Catholic Church. “I do blame the Catholic Church,” she said. “I blame the families as well but people were afraid of the parish priest. I think they were brainwashed.” No longer a Catholic, she confesses, “I am very, very angry with the Catholic church.”

The notion that a mass grave existed in the site of the Home is oddly enough credited to the same person who says there never was one. His name is Barry Sweeney. Here’s what happened.

In 1975, when Sweeney was 10, he and a friend, Frannie Hopkins, 12, were playing on the grounds where the home was when they stumbled on a hole with skeletons in it. Corless had heard about some boys who found skeletons there, but did not know their identity until 2014. On St. Patrick’s Day, Sweeney was drinking at Brownes bar, on the Square in Tuam, when he learned of Corless’ research. The two subsequently met.

In her journal article, Corless made mention of a “few local boys” who “came upon a sort of crypt in the ground, and on peering in they saw several small skulls.” So how did she make

the leap in 2014 that she was “certain” there are 796 bodies in a mass grave when just two years ago she wrote about “several small skulls”? The leap, it is clear, was not made on the basis of the evidence.

More important, Corless did not jump to the conclusion that “the bones are still there” because she learned from Sweeney about some new evidence. We know this because he contradicts her fantastic story. He was quoted in the *Irish Times* saying “there was no way there were 800 skeletons down that hole. Nothing like that number.” How many were there? “About 20,” he said.

It is a credit to Douglas Dalby of the *New York Times* that he did not bury this new information the way most other media outlets did. On June 10, he wrote that “some of the assumptions that led Ms. Corless to her conclusion [about the mass grave] have been challenged, not least by the man she cited, Barry Sweeney, now 48, who was questioned by detectives about what he saw when he was 10 years old. ‘People are making out we saw a mass grave,’ he said he had told the detectives. ‘But we can only say what we seen [sic]: maybe 15 to 20 small skeletons.’”

It does not speak well for Corless that she was flatly contradicted by one of the few persons whose credibility no one questions. Any objective researcher would have adjusted his thesis after encountering a central figure such as Sweeney. Even more bizarre, her initial assessment was sober in analysis. But meeting Sweeney was too late to matter: Corless had already met Sixsmith, and she wasn’t about to let the facts get in her way. Ideology, as we have seen repeatedly in history, has a way of trumping the truth.

It was not just writers such as Fingleton who see an anti-Catholic bias at work (he calls the whole story a “hoax”). Dalby quoted a member of the committee that was organized to memorialize the dead children, Anne Collins, as saying she has

had it with the ideologues: "Ms. Collins said the news media and 'church bashers' had hijacked the situation, and she disagreed with the widespread condemnation of the nuns."

Tim Stanley was right to finger a double standard that is present among elites: "Whenever a Muslim does something cruel or barbaric (such as female genital mutilation), politicians and the media are quick (rightly) to assert that this is a cultural practice rather than a religious one. But whenever a Catholic is guilty of a crime, it is either stated or implied that it is a direct consequence of dogma."

The Sixsmiths of this world are not at all angry about the mass killings and the mass burnings of unborn babies going on today right before our eyes. No, they are too busy fabricating stories about nuns sexually assaulting young women, stealing their kids, and dumping their bodies in septic tanks. It tells us a great deal about the current state of anti-Catholicism that such nonsense is not only accepted, it is welcomed as affirmation of the venality of the Catholic Church.