

MEDIA FLOAT NEGATIVE PIECE ON CHURCH



Bill Donohue replies to a critical article on the Catholic Church:

Last week I saw an article on a British website, [The Conversation](#), that was critical of the Church. I did not respond, but I will now: it has been picked up by Newsweek and was posted on the front page of Yahoo.

The author, Brendan Canavan, teaches marketing in England. He seeks to account for the alleged collapse of Catholicism and, fortunately, provides links to articles that support his position. I say “fortunately” because in point of fact the support is often thin, non-existent, or even contradictory.

He says the Church is one of the “most profitable brands in history.” This may come as a shock to a marketing professor in the U.K., but the Church is not a “brand.” As for its alleged “profitability,” the author links to an article that details how *unprofitable* it is today.

Similarly, he concludes that the sexual abuse scandal “has irreparably” tarnished the Church. He links to an article in a British tabloid that discusses how one man said he was molested 35 years ago, and mentions a study about priestly sexual abuse that covered decades-old cases.

He cites the decline in Catholic congregations as a sign that it needs to become more relevant, yet the piece he links to admits that the trendy Protestant denominations have been in free-fall for decades. Hello! He says the Church’s problems with gays threaten a “schism,” yet the linked article never

mentions anything about a “schism.” That’s a big charge—it demands big evidence. There isn’t any.

To substantiate his position that the Catholic “brand” needs updating, he links to articles that discuss the tobacco and auto industry. Swell. Similarly, he says, “Research suggests that anti-gay and anti-science attitudes are turning people away from religion in the U.S.” The linked article quotes one young woman, and she complained about politicians.

In short, Newsweek and Yahoo have been had. But I guess they liked the story so much that the lack of supporting data were deemed irrelevant.