

MICHIGAN AG DANA NESSEL IS A DISASTER

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the latest controversy enveloping Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel:

Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel is a disaster. She can't seem to shake charges of bigotry. Worse, she has no problem condemning bigotry when the victims are non-Catholics. Not to worry, Catholics are taking note of her selective interest in justice.

The latest controversy that Nessel is embroiled in concerns new charges of anti-Catholic bigotry, this time coming from Michigan State Rep. Beau LaFave, not the Catholic League.

He is incensed over a retweet by Nessel that cited the hiring of a retired judge by Michigan State University to address sexual abuse. The tweet in question noted his ties to the Catholic Church. LaFave further noted Nessel's previous comments attacking Catholicism.

Nessel's communications director, Kelly Rossman-McKinney, tried to deflect criticism of her boss' problems by claiming victim status. She said that when Nessel told parishioners that if investigators contact them, "please ask for their badge, not their rosary," some of the 500 emails were "vile and hateful," noting one anti-Semitic comment.

Those emails were sent in response to our news release condemning Nessel for her anti-Catholic remark; we listed Rossman-McKinney's email address in my statement. Never once did I cite Nessel's Jewish heritage. For good reason: a) it is irrelevant and b) I never knew she was Jewish until now.

What is most striking about Nessel's response is her condemnation of homophobia (she is a lesbian activist), anti-

Semitism, and Islamophobia. She cited the latter in reference to some of the comments made about Rep. Rashida Tlaib, the Muslim congresswoman who has made a series of incendiary remarks.

Nessel did not include anti-Catholicism in her list of bigoted genres of speech that she deplores. Maybe that's because of her contributions to it. To wit: She has only been in office for a few months and has already drawn the attention of the Catholic League on several occasions.

On October 2, 2018, before Nessel won the election, we noted that Michigan Catholics had better brace themselves if she wins: She flat out said she would not enforce a religious liberty bill that protected the religious freedom of faith-based foster care and adoption services.

On February 25, 2019, we called her out for her anti-Catholic slur about asking investigators "for their badge, not their rosary."

On February 28, 2019, we drew attention to her religious profiling. To be exact, she singled out the Catholic Church for a probe of sexual abuse, never explaining why no other institution was targeted.

In that same news release, we provided her with a list of recent examples about Michigan kids being raped in the public schools. We even noted examples of the sexual abuse of minors taking place in her state by doctors, lawyers, family members, online predators, and law enforcement personnel, as well as by teachers and administrators. Yet she concentrates only on Catholics.

On March 13, 2019, after Nessel went on the attack again (this time joined by Governor Gretchen Whitmer), we asked Michigan lawmakers to address the issue of sexual abuse in the public schools. When *USA Today* did a 50-state investigation of sexual abuse in the public schools, it gave Michigan a grade of "F."

Ergo, it was unconscionable not to include the schools in a probe of wrongdoing.

On March 25, 2019, Nessel merited our response again, this time over making good on her campaign promise not to defend a religious liberty law that protects Catholic social service agencies from being encroached upon by the state.

Now we are in April and Nessel is back in the news for incurring the wrath of a lawmaker about her Catholic problem.

Where this will end no one knows. But bet on the Catholic League to respond to Nessel every time her anti-Catholic bigotry surfaces.

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