NEW YORK TIMES CHIEF EDITOR CONTACTED; D.C. REPORTER IS ANTI-CATHOLIC

The following is a letter by Bill Donohue to the executive editor of the New York Times about a prominent reporter for the paper who recently made anti-Catholic remarks at a public event.

August 1, 2019

Mr. Dean Baquet
Executive Editor
New York Times
620 8th Avenue
New York, NY 10018

Dear Mr. Baquet:

One of your reporters, Carl Hulse, recently voiced an animus to Catholicism that is astonishing. His remarks are so offensive that they disqualify him from objectively covering Catholic issues, and this is especially true of Catholic nominees for the judiciary. That is why I am asking you to remove him from such assignments.

On June 26, Hulse was interviewed by Times columnist Maureen Dowd about his new book, Confirmation Bias: Inside Washington's War Over the Supreme Court; it was held at the 92nd Street Y in New York. Hulse certainly proved he is very knowledgeable about bias—his comments reeked of it. Here is a sample of his anti-Catholic bias.

The conversation centered around Catholic justices on the Supreme Court. Dowd laid the groundwork saying that after she read his book, "I began worrying about the Catholic deep

state." She does not concern me: Dowd is an opinion writer; Hulse is the chief Washington correspondent for your newspaper. But I hasten to add that though two percent of the population is Jewish, and a third of the high court is Jewish, no one ever complains about having too many Jews on the Supreme Court.

Hulse did not mince words. He spoke about "a serious Catholic sort of mafia" that exists. "There is a Catholic cabal," and a "real Catholic underground that is influencing this probably in an outsized way."

This is the kind of paranoia we would expect from tabloids at the checkout counter of a supermarket, not from the New York Times. That he felt so comfortable voicing his anti-Catholic bigotry in public is disturbing; it speaks volumes about his mindset.

This matters so much because there is hardly a Catholic nominee for the federal bench, as well as for the state courts, whose religious affiliation is not questioned by senators, the media, or activists. This is certainly the case with Catholic nominees not suspected of dissenting from Church teachings on the issues of life, marriage, and the family. I know this because we at the Catholic League have been engaged in these fights.

In 2003, Alabama Attorney General Bill Pryor was asked by Senator Chuck Schumer of the Senate Judiciary Committee about his "deeply held beliefs" [read: his Catholic convictions]. He was asked by Senator Dick Durbin whether he understood the "concerns of those who don't happen to be Christian, that you are asserting…a religious belief of your own, inconsistent with the separation of church and state."

In 2005, John Roberts was nominated for the Supreme Court and had to undergo a torrent of anti-Catholic accusations from those in the media and activist organizations. Two senators,

Dianne Feinstein and Arlen Specter, asked if he agreed with comments made by then-presidential candidate John F. Kennedy to the effect that separation of church and state had to be absolute. Thus did they dig up the old canard about "dual loyalties." Were they even aware that Kennedy's infamous Houston remarks were voiced following an outburst from anti-Catholic bigots in the Protestant community?

Later in 2005, as soon as Samuel Alito's name was mentioned as a possible candidate for the Supreme Court, his religion was cited as a source of genuine concern by activists such as Eleanor Smeal, president of the Feminist Majority Foundation. Owing to the controversy over the drilling that Roberts had to endure, he was spared this experience by members of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

In 2009, Sonia Sotomayor was unscathed by anti-Catholicism. This is not surprising: she has never been known for stating her fidelity to Church teachings on issues of life, marriage, and the family. In fact, she was praised as a model Catholic by Catholics United. This organization, as we learned from the Wikileaks email dump of 2016, was set up by Hillary Clinton operative John Podesta for the purpose of creating a "revolution" in the Catholic Church.

In 2017, Senators Feinstein and Durbin were back at it, this time grilling federal court appointee Amy Coney Barrett about her Catholicity. "When you read your speeches," Feinstein said to Barrett, "the conclusion one draws is that *the dogma lives loudly within you* (my italics)." Senator Durbin was just as pointed. "Do you consider yourself an orthodox Catholic?" He then said, "What's an orthodox Catholic?"

Last year, Senators Kamala Harris and Mazie Hirono raised questions about the suitability of Brian C. Buescher to be seated as a federal district judge. His problem? He belongs to the Knights of Columbus. They were concerned about the "extreme" Catholic view that marriage should be a union

between a man and a woman.

Other recent examples, taken from Wisconsin and Michigan, could be added, but the point is the same: there should be no religious test for public office, and there should be no religious bigotry in journalism.

Hulse's paranoia is something that needs to be addressed. There is no Catholic conspiracy. There is no Catholic mafia. Those who think this way are so biased that they have no legitimate role to play in public discourse.

Please do not give Hulse any more assignments where his anti-Catholic thinking may come into play. It does not matter that he says he is a Catholic. Bigotry has nothing to do with one's biography; it has to do with one's convictions.

In 2016, you said on WNYC public radio about the *New York Times*, "We don't get religion. We don't get the role of religion in people's lives." You were right. Now you have an opportunity to do something about it.

Sincerely,

William Donohue
President