

# OXFORD UNION SPONSORS STAGED DEBATE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the latest game played by the Oxford Union:

Is the Oxford Union committing suicide? It is one thing to [lie to me](#) after being disinvited from participating in a debate on February 28, quite another to knife itself by staging a phony debate on the Catholic Church.

“This House Believes That England Can Never Pay For Its Sins Against Irish Catholics.” Imagine a debate on this subject with representatives of the Irish Republican Army on one side and Sinn Fein (the political arm of the IRA) on the other. This is what the Oxford Union is doing by stacking the deck against the Catholic Church on the motion, “The House Believes The Catholic Church Can Never Pay For Its Sins.”

The three defending the House motion are Mitchell Garabedian, Elizabeth Coppin, and Thomas Reilly.

Garabedian is a good choice. Last year he appeared on WGBH (PBS) in Boston arguing that the Catholic Church should be stripped of its tax-exempt status. In 2011, he was accused by a reporter for the *Boston Globe* (not exactly a Catholic-friendly source) of maligning the good name of an exonerated priest whom the attorney was hounding. When I called Garabedian to see if he had any regrets about trying to destroy Father Charles Murphy, he went berserk, screaming like a madman. He fits in with this circus like a glove.

I do not know Elizabeth Coppin, but since she is there to give voice to alleged victims of the Magdalene Laundries, perhaps someone from the audience will ask her why the McAleese Report (the official Irish government study) on this institution found that most of the horror stories were pure bunk. For

example, there is zero evidence that *any woman was sexually abused by the nuns*. That's not my opinion—it is the testimony of women who lived in the laundries, as recorded in the report.

The third person making the case against the Catholic Church is also a splendid choice. He showcased his contempt for separation of church and state when he was the Massachusetts Attorney General: He said he wanted his office to be involved in the recruitment, selection, training, and monitoring of priests.

If a Boston bishop, acting on reports of corruption in the state government, said he wanted the Church to police public officials and their staffs, he would be accused of trampling on the First Amendment. Indeed, he would be called a fascist. Perhaps Reilly can be asked why he never returned a single indictment of a Boston priest in 2003, and why he thinks he was justified in wasting a colossal amount of public funds on a wild-goose chase (he knew the statute of limitations had long run out on miscreant priests).

The side that was selected to defend the Catholic Church is even better. It includes only two persons, one of whom, Dr. Jay R. Feierman, is a former psychiatrist who treated offending priests. Perhaps someone can ask him how he feels about all the glowing reports that the psychiatrists fed the bishops for decades—telling them how they “fixed” these men—knowing now how wrong they were.

The big prize is Marci Hamilton. For the Oxford Union to treat her as a champion of the Catholic Church is analogous to selecting a supporter of the Klan to defend African Americans.

To begin with, Hamilton and Garabedian are one and the same. They have jointly sued the Holy See, unsuccessfully, and have served on the same panels at anti-Catholic conferences for years. She has quite a resume.

- Hamilton's career attacking the Catholic Church began when she was sought out by Jeffrey Anderson, the most anti-Catholic, Church-suing lawyer in the U.S. His goal, he once said, is to "sue the s\*\*\* out of the Catholic Church." He has made good on his promise.
- A few years back, Hamilton teamed up with Anderson to sue the Holy See. They lost.
- Hamilton is opposed to the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, the seminal bill protecting religious liberty that was overwhelmingly passed by the Congress and signed into law by President Bill Clinton.
- Hamilton falsely accused Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Archbishop of New York, of hiding \$55 million from victims when he was the Bishop of Milwaukee. She has never apologized.
- In 2013, Hamilton said that the Catholic Church's objections to having Catholic non-profits pay for abortion-inducing drugs in their healthcare plans was proof of its "all-out war on women."
- Hamilton always seeks to rescind state laws on the statute of limitations so that she can sue the Catholic Church for decades-old offenses, while at the same time arguing that such legislation *should not apply* to the public schools. She made this case in her 2008 book, *Justice Denied: What America Must Do to Protect Its Children*, and worked to implement her ideas in Colorado and other states.
- In 2016, Hamilton told the press that the U.S. bishops pay my salary. I emailed her on May 5, 2016 calling her a liar. She had no response.
- When discussing the Muslim terrorists involved in the Danish cartoon issue, Hamilton said, "There is no meaningful difference between the reasoning of imams and the Catholic League on these issues," thus maliciously claiming the Catholic League engages in, or promotes, violence against its critics.

There we have it. The Oxford Union is in free-fall. It is hosting anti-Catholic bigots to defend the Catholic Church, making a mockery of its once stellar reputation.

If any of these haters would like to debate me, I will arrange it and pay for all the expenses. But I won't hang by the phone. At least Christopher Hitchens, whom I debated many times, was honest, which is more than I can say for the Oxford Union and its stooges.

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