

POPE AND PRESIDENT CLASH; WAR AND DEPORTATIONS DIVIDE

Pope Leo XIV and President Trump have had their differences before, but now they are at a serious juncture. After weeks of the pope criticizing the president over the war on Iran, Trump took to Truth Social on April 12 saying the pope was “WEAK on Crime, and terrible on Foreign Policy.”

Trump’s recent threats to Iran were stark. “A whole civilisation will die tonight, never to be brought back again.” He said he would target bridges and power plants, thus endangering the lives of innocents. Those reckless comments triggered rebukes worldwide, from the U.N. to the Vatican.

The Holy Father labeled Trump’s statement “totally unacceptable.” He added that to attack infrastructure was a “sign of the hatred, the division, the destruction human beings are capable of, and we all want to work for peace.”

Both the U.N. secretary general and the pope said that if Trump went through with his threats, it would be considered a war crime under international law.

Pope Leo’s desire for peace is understandable. Less understandable was his sweeping statement on March 1 claiming that peace is achieved “only” through “dialogue.” That is simply not true. Historically, war has frequently resulted in peace, an outcome that comes about when dialogue fails. That is why the Catholic Church is not a pacifist religion—it understands the necessity of “just wars.”

Trump’s comment that the pope is weak on crime is no doubt in reference to the pontiff’s criticisms of mass deportations. The U.S. bishops have also been vocal in denouncing the Trump administration on this issue. Cardinal Blase Cupich, Archbishop of Chicago, recently said that “it’s very clear the

American people are saying, 'We really didn't vote for this.'"

In fact, the American people did vote for mass deportations: Trump made this one of his key issues. Moreover, virtually every survey taken on this subject reveals that a majority of Americans approve mass deportations. They do so because they oppose the Biden policy of deliberately allowing 20 million illegal aliens to crash our borders, about which Catholics—55 percent of whom voted for Trump—heard very little from their leaders, either in Rome or at home.

Trump does not help his case by posing as Jesus blessing a bedridden man; he released this Truth Social picture after he criticized Leo. It is offensive and immature.

There will no doubt be occasions where the pope and the president will continue to make public their disagreements. But there are so many other issues, such as religious liberty, where the two share a common interest. Let's pray the latter prove to be controlling.

PRO-LIFERS HIT BY BIDEN

It is well known that the Biden administration treated pro-life Americans as if they were a mortal enemy; this was especially true of Catholics. But we did not know the extent of the misconduct until April when the Department of Justice (DOJ) released a report on more than 700,000 internal records.

The Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act puts restrictions on pro-life protesters and abortion-rights protesters. But under Biden, the latter were cut a lot of slack.

Former FBI Director Christopher Wray admitted two years ago that 70 percent of FACE Act offenses were not committed by pro-life protesters; they committed a fraction of them. Moreover, in 2022, the DOJ did not charge a single abortion-rights activist, but it charged 26 pro-life protesters with a FACE violation. Now we know why.

The DOJ under Biden was operating a two-tiered system of justice. It was prosecuting people on the basis of their beliefs. Prosecutors tracked pro-life activists and sought harsher sentences. They even withheld evidence and tried to exclude jurors based on their religion.

On several occasions, the Catholic League contacted federal officials about the way pro-lifers were being treated. Bill Donohue wrote to the House and Senate Homeland Security Committees, Sen. Charles Grassley, Rep. Chip Roy, Attorney General Merrick Garland and FBI Director Wray, imploring them to address this weaponization of justice.

It is up to the Trump DOJ to finish the job. We need justice now.

IS PACIFISM MORAL?

Bill Donohue

Let's cut to the quick. No, pacifism is not moral. Pacifism means that self-defense, and the defense of one's nation, is immoral. However pure the intent, pacifism holds that it is better to permit innocents to die than it is to use force to stop the aggressors. Now that is immoral.

This issue is back in the news largely because of the war in

Iran. But it is also relevant again because of the recent death of Colman McCarthy, America's premier pacifist, and some remarks by Pope Leo XIV.

McCarthy wrote for The *Washington Post* for decades. He studied to be a monk and was popular in left-Catholic circles for his opposition to violence in any form and for any cause. He was 89.

He was such a purist that he even refused to stand for "The Star-Spangled Banner," objecting to the refrain "the bombs bursting in air." No doubt he hated fireworks. Any pacifist who views grades and exams as "forms of academic violence" surely must find Fourth of July celebrations to be verboten.

Though McCarthy was loved by his left-wing Catholic fans, he spoke with derision about Catholicism. "As the secretly elected leader of a male-run, land-rich, undemocratic, hierarchic, dogmatically unyielding organization headquartered in a second-rate European country, Pope John Paul II had few, if any, worries about accountability. He ruled, accordingly, as an autocrat."

Why the invective? Among other things, he hated the pope's defense of the "just war" doctrine. In his encyclical, *Evangelium Vitae*, His Holiness wrote that "the intrinsic value of life and the duty to love oneself no less than others are the basis of *a true right to self-defense*" (his italics).

McCarthy would have none of it. He believed that we have no right to kill an aggressor even in circumstances where that is the only viable option. Moreover, he believed that even when someone was able to kill an aggressor from killing scores of non-combatant women and children, it would be better to let him slaughter the innocent. This is what pacifism yields—immoral outcomes.

Catholicism ascribes to the "just war" doctrine as broached by St. Augustine. He wanted peace as much as anyone but he also

knew there were times when we had to fight in order to achieve it. He laid down several criteria for war, among them that the cause must be just; that there must be a probability of success; that the means used must be proportionate to the desired outcome; and that force should be invoked only as a last resort.

Many years ago, when I was teaching at a Catholic college, I listened to a visiting professor lecture the mostly Catholic faculty on the merits of pacifism. He cited the tradition of the Quakers as exemplary and had the audacity to chide the audience for its affiliation with a religion that justifies war in some instances. He was not too happy with me when I stopped him in his tracks, arguing that the only reason any of us are alive today is because enough Americans rejected pacifism as a just option in World War II.

Pacifists may say they believe in peace, but in my book they confuse peace with surrender.

Pope Leo XIV has not openly rejected the “just war” doctrine, but recent comments he made about the conflict in Iran come close.

On Easter Sunday, Pope Leo XIV called for all nations to lay down their arms and choose negotiation. On March 1, he went further, saying about the Middle East, “Stability and peace are not achieved through mutual threats, nor through the use of weapons, which sow destruction, suffering, and death, but only through reasonable, sincere, and responsible dialogue.” That comment drew the ire of *Wall Street Journal* columnist Bill McGurn.

McGurn took strong issue with the word “only.” He is, of course, right. Countless wars have resulted in peace. In fairness, the pope was not speaking from a traditional mantle of authority—it was a tweet. No matter, he left himself open for rebuke. It also needs to be said that there are those who

wage war on innocents and explicitly reject dialogue. What then? There are times when we can't talk our way out of a confrontation.

St. Augustine won the debate in 418 A.D. when he wrote that "Peace should be the object of your desire; war should be waged only as a necessity...in order that peace may be obtained" (my emphasis).

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* agrees with Augustine. "Legitimate defense can be not only a right but a grave duty for one who is responsible for the lives of others. The defense of the common good requires that an unjust aggressor be rendered unable to cause harm. For this reason, those who legitimately hold authority also have the right to use arms to repel aggression against the civil community entrusted to their responsibility."

The great American political philosopher, Sidney Hook (whom I greatly admired and studied under), once wrote that "Those who will never risk their lives for freedom will surely lose their freedom without surely saving their lives..." A better rejoinder to Colman McCarthy would be hard to find.

WAS POPE LEO XIV HOODWINKED?

Last April, Bill Donohue wrote a scathing review of a book that smeared the Catholic Church, and Opus Dei, in particular. The following letter to the pope explains why he felt compelled to write to him.

March 18, 2026

Secretariat of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV

00120 Vatican City

Your Holiness:

Your service to the Catholic Church is appreciated the world over, by Catholics and by those who belong to other faith communities. It is in this vein that I write to you regarding your meeting on March 16 with Gareth Gore, the author of *Opus: The Cult of Dark Money, Human Trafficking, and Right-Wing Conspiracy Inside the Catholic Church*. After the meeting, Gore said that you found his book to be a "rigorous piece of work."

I have no idea if this is true, or whether you actually had the time to read it. I read it and published my review in the April 2025 edition of *Catalyst* (see enclosed), the journal of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights. I hasten to add that I am not a member of Opus Dei. I am a sociologist who has published twelve books, and I am president of the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization.

Quite frankly, Gore's book is anything but rigorous. I labeled it "sloppy," saying it is "strewn with hyperbole, innuendo and out-and-out falsehoods. Yet he had the audacity to say in an interview that his book is '100 percent correct.'" To cite one example, any author who portrays the late Cardinal George Pell as a pedophile is either ignorant or malicious. I detail many other examples of his irresponsible commentary.

"To be fair," I concluded, "there are conspiratorial kooks on the right who claim bogeymen are trying to undermine America. However, they are mostly without effect, owing to their notorious stupidity. But those on the left, especially those who write books which appear to be well sourced, are not so easily identified. That's why they are a much bigger menace."

I respectfully request that you take another look at Gore's book. I honestly don't want to see him take advantage of your goodwill.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.

President

CATHOLIC JUSTICES PROBED AGAIN

When Jews and Protestants are being considered for a seat on the U.S. Supreme Court, they are rarely, if ever, asked by legislators to explain how their religious convictions might affect their legal thinking. The same is not true of Catholic nominees: their faith often becomes center stage at the hearings.

Our Catholic Supreme Court Justices are under the microscope again, only this time liberal commentators are afraid they may not be Catholic enough!

Maureen Groppe is a senior reporter for *USA Today*. A recent column she wrote says it all. "Will the Majority-Catholic Supreme Court Listen to the Church on Immigration?" She is particularly impressed that the bishops' conference is making a moral case against Trump's position on birthright citizenship.

The bishops' conference uses stronger language with regard to abortion. It labels it "intrinsically evil." Yet when Catholic Justices overturned *Roe v. Wade*, sending the issue of abortion back to the states, pro-abortion groups blasted them and law journals ran articles about conflating religious convictions

and legal reasoning. The American Bar Association held a webinar on this subject.

“Will the Majority-Catholic Supreme Court Listen to the Church on Same-Sex Marriage?” Imagine a news story on this subject that invites the reader to question the autonomy of Catholic Justices. Would *USA Today* run it?

We all have biases, but when it comes to being clueless about harboring them, no one beats liberals. They live in a world where their political thinking is constantly reinforced, leaving them hopelessly blind to their own prejudices.

OPEN LETTER TO SEN. CORY BOOKER

April 8, 2026

Hon. Cory Booker
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510

Dear Sen. Booker:

On the April 6 edition of the Fox News show, “Special Report with Bret Baier,” you accused ICE agents of “dragging Americans out of churches.” This is a very serious charge. It is also manifestly untrue.

Perhaps you are thinking about an incident at North Hills United Methodist Church in the San Fernando Valley on February 26. There was a migrant who was arrested, but he was apprehended while running across the church parking lot.

The only source that supports your accusation is from a piece in the “People’s World” (formerly known as the “Daily Worker,” an organ of the Communist Party of the United States) on December 2, 2025. It is titled, “ICE Now Grabbing People Out of Churches.”

The article begins by saying ICE “is ushering in the Christmas season by launching immigration raids inside churches across the country.” This is a lie. Not one example is cited.

Oh, yes, we learn about a Chicago woman who says she saw “ICE vans and agents swarming in front of her house, which is very close to the church.” There was also an arrest made of a “Latino man trimming a church lawn in Charlotte, N.C.” Speculation about ICE raiding churches at Christmas was also made, but there is no evidence that they did.

By making unsupported accusations about ICE agents, you wind up smearing them, frightening Americans, and undercutting your credibility. Please retract your statement. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.

President

cc: U.S. Senators

BIG MEDIA COVER FOR ISLAMISTS

Islamists, or Muslim extremists, are on the war path slaughtering Christians in many parts of Africa. And what do those in the big media say about it?

The *New York Times* falsely claims that there is no Christian genocide happening in Nigeria. This has also become the favorite talking point of the mainstream media.

Where is the evidence that a Christian genocide is not taking place in Nigeria? The *Times* provides a link to a story it ran in January claiming that “Spotty research from a Christian activist has been used by Republican lawmakers to justify U.S. intervention in the country [Nigeria].”

In fact, this news story should be studied in journalism classes as a classic case of how “spotty research” is done. It focuses on the comments made by one guy, a screwdriver salesman, who argues that Christians are being singled out for slaughter.

No serious scholar leans on anecdote for evidence. What about the annual reports on human rights in Nigeria released by Freedom House, Aid to the Church in Need, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, U.S. State Department and Open Doors?

Radical Muslims are clearly committing genocide against Christians in Africa. Shame on those who claim otherwise.

BRIAN KILMEADE DEAD WRONG ON PIUS XII

On April 16, on “Fox & Friends,” Brian Kilmeade was critical of Pope Leo XIV, and in the course of his remarks he said the following: “Historically, Pope Pius XII did nothing knowing, documents show that 6 million Jews were being slaughtered. The Vatican knew about it, did nothing, signed a deal with the

Nazis not to invade.”

Shaking his head in agreement was Rich Lowry, editor-in-chief of National Review.

Besides the incredibly dumb remark about the Vatican deciding not to invade—invade with what?—Kilmeade knows nothing about this subject. He is dead wrong. Apparently, Lowry is just as clueless.

The Vatican archives show concretely that the debate is over. Pope Pius XII did more to save Jews than any other world figure. Here is a quick summary of his heroics taken from Bill Donohue’s book, *Why Catholicism Matters*.

1940

- In the December 23, 1940 issue of Time magazine, Albert Einstein was quoted as saying, “Being a lover of freedom, when the Nazi revolution came to Germany, I looked to the universities to defend it, but the universities were immediately silenced. Then I looked to the great editors of the newspapers, but they, like the universities, were silenced in a few short weeks....Only the Church stood squarely across the path of Hitler’s campaign for suppressing the truth.”

1941

- In its Christmas Day editorial, the New York Times said, “The voice of Pius XII is a lonely voice in the silence and darkness enveloping Europe this Christmas.”

1942

- In its Christmas Day editorial, the *New York Times* wrote, “No Christmas sermon reaches a larger congregation than the message Pope Pius XII addresses to a war-torn world this season.”

1943

- Hitler's biographer, John Toland, said, "The Church, under the Pope's guidance, had already saved the lives of more Jews than all other churches, religious institutions, and rescue organizations combined, and was presently hiding thousands of Jews in monasteries, convents, and Vatican City itself."
- Speaking about events in 1943, Sir Martin Gilbert, perhaps the foremost historian of the Holocaust, noted that "the test for Pacelli was when the Gestapo came to Rome in 1943 to round up Jews. And the Catholic Church, on his direct authority, immediately dispersed as many Jews as they could."
- In 1943, the World Jewish Congress thanked the pope for persuading Italian authorities to remove 20,000 Jewish refugees from internment camps in Northern Italy.
- On July 25, 1943, Hitler began his plan to kidnap the "Jew-loving" pope.

1944

- Jewish scholar Jeno Levai describes what happened in the spring of 1944 in Hungary. "Over 20,000 passports had been issued by the papal Nuncio—on the average of 500 a day."

1945

- Anton Zolli, the Chief Rabbi in Rome, converted to Catholicism. He explained why in his book, *Why I Became a Catholic*. "No hero in history has commanded such an army; none is more militant, more fought against, none more heroic than that conducted by Pius XII in the name of Christian Charity." He chose the name Eugenio (after Eugenio Pacelli, Pius XII) as his baptismal name.

1958

- When the pope died, Golda Meir, Israel's foreign minister (she would later become prime minister), telegraphed the Vatican saying, "When fearful martyrdom came to our people in the decade of Nazi terror, the voice of the Pope was raised for the victims. The life of our times was enriched by a voice speaking out on the great moral truths above the tumult of daily conflict. We mourn a great servant of peace."
- Among the Jewish organizations that praised the pope were the following: Anti-Defamation League, the Synagogue Council of America, the Rabbinical Council of America, the New York Board of Rabbis, the American Jewish Committee, the World Jewish Congress, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and the National Council of Jewish Women.

Former Israeli diplomat and author Pinchas Lapid estimated that approximately 860,000 Jewish lives were saved by Pope Pius XII. One thing is certain: no leader, religious or secular, did more to save Jews than Pope Pius XII. He is more than a "Righteous Gentile"—he deserves to be made a saint.

If Kilmeade knew anything about the critics of Pius XII, he would know that many have had to walk back their accusations.

In 2017, the BBC announced the results of an internal probe of the war record of Pope Pius XII. It said it was wrong to characterize him as being "silent" during the Holocaust. In 1999, the author of *Hitler's Pope*, John Cornwell, admitted that he was wrong in making this assessment, and retracted his charge that the pope supported Hitler.

Catholic League board of advisors, University of Mississippi law professor Ronald Rychlak, has also written voluminously about the yeoman efforts of Pius XII during the Holocaust. Gary Krupp, a Jewish student of this subject, who was once critical of the pope, has a drove of documents on his website, Pave the Way Foundation, that detail the great work of this

wartime pope.

Kilmeade is a talking head—he is not an historian. He is way out of his league on this subject.

SEAN HANNITY DEAD WRONG ON CLERGY ABUSE

Bill Donohue

I have known Sean Hannity for years, and he is a good guy. But I cannot allow our friendship to get in the way of my job. He made comments on his April 16 Fox News show about the clergy sexual abuse scandal that are dead wrong. Apparently, he also offended Catholics on his radio show recently.

Sean started out by saying he was raised Catholic, went to Catholic schools and attended a seminary high school. He said he broke away from the Catholic Church because of the clergy sexual abuse scandal. That is his business. But it is my business to correct the record when misstatements of fact abound about this subject.

Sean said, “I left the Catholic Church in large part because of institutionalized corruption. And it was at the parish level to the bishop level, cardinals, all the way to Rome. And you know, the very top scandals, terrible behavior, frankly, went not only unchecked, but they never fully corrected it or dealt with it. And others at the Vatican have totally lost sight of the true meaning of the bible and its teachings.”

His sweeping statements do not hold up under scrutiny.

There was a scandal in the Catholic Church, but its heyday

ended approximately a half-century ago. Most of the offenses took place between the mid-1960s and the mid-1980s. How widespread was it at its height? The *Washington Post* published a survey in 2002 showing that less than 1.5 percent of the estimated sixty thousand or more men who served in the Catholic clergy were accused of the sexual abuse of minors. A *New York Times* survey reported that 1.8 percent of all priests ordained between 1950 and 2001 were accused of sexually abusing minors.

The John Jay College of Criminal Justice issued a study in 2004 that found that in the period 1950-2002, 4 percent of the Catholic clergy were accused of sexually molesting minors. It also found that 149 priests, or 3.5 percent, who had more than ten allegations of abuse were responsible for 26 percent of all the allegations. In other words, of the 4,393 priests who had an accusation made against them between 1950 and 2002 (not all of which were substantiated), a mere 149 of them accounted for more than a quarter of the allegations.

This is a far cry from what Sean would have us believe. A more egregious error is assuming that nothing has changed.

Data from the last year that we have reliable information on, July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024, show that of the 48,176 members of the clergy, exactly two had a substantiated accusation made against him during this period. This means that a whopping 0.004 percent of priests had a substantiated case of sexual abuse made against them by a minor.

Unfortunately, in any institution where adults regularly interact with minors, sexual misconduct is a problem. But there is no institution in American society today, religious or secular, that has *less of a problem with the sexual abuse of minors than the Catholic Church*. To imply otherwise is irresponsible.

We know that 81 percent of the victims were male, and that 78

percent were postpubescent, meaning that the lion's share of the abuse was committed by homosexuals (3.8 percent were pedophiles). Of course, don't expect the media to report these facts, including Fox News, which is part of the cover-up.

I wrote a book on this subject in 2021, *The Truth About Clergy Sexual Abuse: Clarifying the Facts and the Causes*. When it was released, I was asked to sit for an interview at Fox News. The executives who run the cable TV station said that my book was so controversial (I bet none of them read it) that they would only agree to a debate between me and someone else. Not surprisingly, every notable liberal Catholic turned down the debate. So it never aired. Would that not be called "institutionalized corruption," Sean?

Most priests, at every level, are good men and they do not deserve to be spoken about with derision. The scandal should never have happened, but it is totally unfair to generalize from the few to the collective, regardless of the demographic.

If Sean wants to debate me, he can give me a call. He has my work and home numbers.

DONOHUE'S RESPONSE TO HANNITY SCORES

The above article by Bill Donohue scored with the media. Below is what Yahoo! Entertainment, and Yahoo News UK, said about it.

"The backlash from heavy hitters like Bill Donohue of the Catholic League underscores a critical point: you cannot claim to be a defender of Western traditionalism while

simultaneously taking a sledgehammer to one of its primary pillars. Donohue's blistering retort, which pointed out that Hannity's characterization of the clergy abuse scandal as a perpetual, systemic issue does not hold up under the weight of historical scrutiny or data, effectively stripped away the 'common sense' veneer Hannity often uses to shield his arguments."