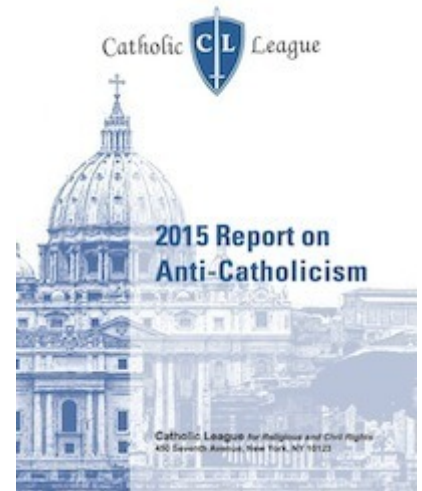


# Executive Summary

The Catholic event of the year—at least for Americans—was also the Catholic League event of the year, namely, the pope's historic visit to Washington, D.C., New York City, and Philadelphia.



Pope Francis electrified the nation, including those who are not Catholic. His spontaneity and authenticity was embraced by tens of millions, and his love of Christ and the Catholic Church was as palpable as it was inspiring. What made his visit so special for the Catholic League was the opportunity for Bernadette Brady-Egan and me to meet him; the invitation was graciously extended by Washington Archbishop Donald Cardinal Wuerl. The meeting took place in the nation's capital on September 23. It was truly a memorable experience.

As to be expected, the Holy Father had millions of Catholics rooting for him. But he needed more than cheerleaders—he needed to be supported when scrutinized and defended when attacked. That was our job. In fact, we went to work months before he arrived in the United States, pushing back against those who had their own agenda, exposing them as political operatives.

One strategy we employed was to get out in front of the pope's critics. For example, we commissioned a scientific survey of Catholics. We chose The Polling Company, astutely run by Kellyanne Conway. We wanted our survey to ask the kinds of questions that most polls neglect to ask, and to dig deeper on the conventional questions. We did this for positioning

purposes: we did not want to be in a reactive mode to media-commissioned surveys.

Almost 7 in 10 Catholics, we found, said their commitment towards their faith had not been altered in any significant way in the recent past. Also, 19 in 20 Catholics—95 percent—said their faith was important in their daily lives. We also learned that 61 percent of Catholics reported that abortion should not be permitted in all or most instances, and 58 percent said marriage should be between a man and a woman. And by a margin of 2-1, Catholics oppose attempts by the government to force private businesses to provide services that violate their beliefs. The figures were much higher for practicing Catholics.

We anticipated that dissident Catholics would come out of the woodwork to make their absurd demands on the pope. We were right. Fortunately, we were more than ready for them: we published a media guide alerting the press corps to phony Catholic groups, entities that support abortion, euthanasia, gay marriage, etc.

When Pope Francis came under fire for meeting Kim Davis, the Kentucky clerk who refused to issue a marriage license to homosexual couples, we rushed to his side. Conscience rights, especially when grounded in religion, are fundamental to a free society, making their dismissal by elites alarming.

Everywhere the pope went—from the White House to the United Nations—he discussed religious liberty. In particular, he implored government leaders to respect it. That he made his appeals with passion made his pronouncements all the more encouraging. While he reached out to everyone, he did not jettison his core principles in the process.

Another issue attendant to the pope's visit was his decision to canonize Father Junípero Serra. We also got out in front of that controversy.

Father Serra not only did more to protect the best interests of American Indians than any other 18th century figure, he made the case that they deserve the same human rights afforded their white colonizers. Still, some bashed the pope for giving Father Serra the plaudits he earned.

Historians who are careful in their scholarship do not make unsupported accusations; they may be critical of legendary figures, but they don't engage in hyperbole or vitriol. Those guilty of slamming Father Serra were, almost to the one, ignorant of his defense of civil rights. Some took the lazy way out and lumped him in with Spanish colonizers, many of whom were guilty of gross injustices. Others were hard-core activists—not a few of whom were virulently anti-American and anti-Catholic. They did not want the truth told about this saintly priest.

I saw this coming early in 2015, which is why I researched and wrote an easy-to-read booklet, *The Noble Legacy of Father Serra*. In a Q&A format, I described his work, and directly confronted the most serious charges against him. It was widely distributed; it was met with acclaim by bishops and the laity.

There was a time over the summer when the California legislature indicated it would vote to remove a statue of Father Serra from the U.S. Capitol. We immediately flooded California Catholics with my booklet, hoping to stem the tide. I was gratified when the vote was put on hold (no vote was ever taken), and was especially happy to learn that John Liston, executive director of Serra International, wrote that my booklet “went a long way in assisting the California legislature to suspend the vote to remove the statue of Fr. Serra from Statuary Hall.”

These are the kinds of things we do at the Catholic League. We are not content to sing the pope's praises in public—we jump into the fray where others dare not go. Even when the pope's visit was over, we took on the *New York Times* for making

unsubstantiated allegations against Father Serra. Researchers and fact-checkers will enjoy reading the exchange, which is reproduced in its entirety.

The tie between Pope Francis and the Catholic League was evident in 2015 even before his September visit. At the beginning of the year, we came down on the same side regarding the controversy over the French newspaper, *Charlie Hebdo*. I laid my anchor down first, taking heat from many sources, including those normally friendly to the Catholic League. So when the pope essentially took my side—I joked with commentator Sean Hannity that I was going to sue the pope for plagiarism—it helped to squash the outcry.

There is much to this story, and that is why we offer a full exposition of it. But it cannot be said too often that my position, which I am proud of, was, from the beginning, not an attempt to exculpate the Muslim barbarians who carried out the massacre; rather, it was a call to common sense. When people intentionally and persistently go out of their way to obscenely portray religious figures who are dear to their followers, they should not be shocked when the offended rebel. This does not excuse the violence. My plea was simply a call for restraint, on both sides.

The author of the First Amendment, James Madison, knew that freedom could be abused, and he even said it could lead to the death of liberty. He was right. This is why those who push the limits of free speech—in effect abusing it—are not the friends of liberty. Indeed, this is exactly why I criticized *Charlie Hebdo* and its defenders. It is their antics that beckon wild reactions, ranging from censorship to violence. They have never learned that restraint is freedom's friend; it is not its enemy.

The abuse of office, especially by government leaders, is another threat to liberty. That was one major reason why we strongly defended San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore

Cordileone. To be sure, bishops are subject to fair criticism from the faithful, and when they involve themselves in public policy issues, e.g. abortion or school vouchers, they are fair game for outsiders as well. But when outsiders force their way into the internal affairs of the Catholic Church, that is a different story. It gets alarming when the intruders are agents of the state.

Archbishop Cordileone simply wanted to ensure that teachers at the four archdiocesan high schools accepted Catholic teachings. He was not looking to exact a loyalty oath—he was merely seeking to avoid a situation where a wayward teacher might decide to go public with his objections to Church teachings.

What Cordileone wanted was hardly exceptional. Do not all religious institutions expect their employees to exercise fidelity to their teachings?

Do not secular institutions—such as the editorial board of a newspaper—expect that employees will not publicly condemn their work? Why should bishops be any different?

Not only did PR professionals in San Francisco jump into the internal affairs of the archdiocese, lawmakers did as well. That prompted me to contact the legislators in Sacramento, and the Board of Supervisors in San Francisco, registering my objections to government encroachment on religion. The guilty officials knew they had no legal basis to win, but that didn't stop them from practicing the politics of intimidation. When government officials seek to bully religious authorities, they cross a moral line, if not a legal one.

The precariousness of religious liberty was also evident in Indiana. Governor Mike Pence sought to have Indiana adopt a law modeled on the 1993 congressional legislation, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. That law was promoted by liberal Democrats and signed by President Bill Clinton. But

when Pence said he wanted a similar law for Indiana, he was met with fierce opposition, drawing activists from many states.

The heart of the controversy was the concern that those who object to facilitating a same-sex marriage might be penalized for doing so. At issue was refusing to serve gay persons (that would be inexcusable)—it was aiding and abetting a ceremony they could not in good conscience follow. Even more important, the vast majority of those who objected to servicing these ceremonies had religious objections, thereby making the need for a law that respects their religious rights all the more pressing.

We not only defended this law, we took on the NCAA for injecting itself into the controversy. For reasons that were purely political, the NCAA president found it necessary to issue a warning to those who were planning to attend the Men's Final Four basketball tournament in Indianapolis: beware of the draconian aspects of the religious-liberty bill. He never detailed what they were. The hysteria and duplicity over this law was a national disgrace.

Hollywood, ever the friend of Catholics, gave us "Spotlight" in November. The movie was based on the outrageous conditions that were allowed to prevail in the Archdiocese of Boston. We all know the story of molesting priests and their enabling bishops, and "Spotlight" recounted this sad story with great effect. Our problem was not the movie, per se, but the reactions to it, especially from the chattering class. We were also put off by the dishonesty of Tinseltown.

When pundits weighed in on "Spotlight," they invariably tarred the entire Catholic Church and misrepresented what happened. We know that only a small percentage of priests were ever guilty of these crimes, but one would never know this from the commentary. We know that celibacy was not the driving force behind these offenses—it's been a stricture for a thousand

years—yet many uninformed pundits claimed otherwise.

The fact is that 100 percent of the victimizers were male, as were 81 percent of their victims, most of whom (78 percent) were postpubescent. That's called homosexuality. Not surprisingly, researchers at John Jay College of Criminal Justice found that less than 5 percent of the offenders were pedophiles. Sadly, even they dodged the obvious, refusing to call it what it was. That is why I refer to the homosexual scandal, and its cover-up, as Scandal II (Scandal I being the church-driven one).

As I pointed out in our monthly journal, *Catalyst*, there will be no "Spotlight" on Hollywood, though child rape has long been a problem there. Worse, attempts to bring that story to the big screen have been met with resistance. The double standard is all too familiar, and all too sickening.

We ended the year, as we usually do, by going to war with those seeking to deny, or neuter, Christmas celebrations. Our biggest fight, and most rewarding, came by tackling the University of Tennessee (UT).

The director of UT's Office of Diversity and Inclusion warned students not to get too Christmas-friendly. He even warned them not to hold Christmas events "in disguise." This wasn't Castro's Cuba trying to stamp out Christmas—it was a southern state university. That this was being done in the name of tolerance made it all the more unbearable.

When we learned of this authoritarianism, we contacted all members of the Tennessee legislature, asking those who sit on education committees to address it. The response was gratifying: responding to many complaints, including ours, the person responsible was sanctioned by his superiors, and his authority to rule on these matters in the future was stripped from him. Most critical, the offensive guidelines were repealed.

There were other skirmishes as well. Most involved municipalities or schools trying to censor or water-down Christmas celebrations. These attempts, with rare exception, were indefensible; happily, some of the decisions were reversed.

Why do these battles rage every year? The lack of judicial clarity, stemming from the U.S. Supreme Court, is one reason for this condition. Ignorance and cowardice on the part of many government officials play a big role. And, of course, there are the activists who hate Christianity—there is no shortage of them—who pull the trigger.

Regardless of what issue we are fighting, it is immensely satisfying when we win. Even when we don't, we put the offending parties on notice: we will be back. Indeed, we are here to stay, doing what we can to defend religious liberty in general, and Catholicism in particular.

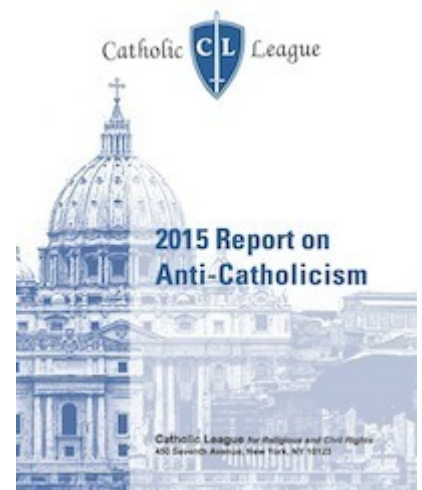
William A. Donohue, Ph.D.  
President

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## Activist Organizations

### January

In 2013, Rebecca Randles, an attorney who works with supreme Catholic-suing lawyer Jeffrey Anderson, sued Bill Donohue and the Catholic League for allegedly libeling a man who had made accusations against a priest in 2011. There was nothing libelous about anything Donohue said, and in January 2015 the suit was dismissed on all counts.





When a Missouri man made allegations against a priest who allegedly molested him and three other altar boys in the early 1980s, Donohue investigated the accuser and found that he had been implicated in a murder. While another man was convicted, it was public record that the priest's accuser had "motive to commit the murder and the opportunity to do so."

Donohue took the information from court records—he did not make it up. Moreover, two of the three altar boys were dead, and the one living man said that none of the abuse ever occurred.

The man who sued Donohue and the Catholic League was riding high when he hired Randles: he had just won a multi-million dollar lawsuit against the Kansas City-St. Joseph Diocese. But Randles proved no match for Erin Mersino, who represented the Catholic League; she works at the Thomas More Law Center in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

The judge dismissed the case mostly on technicalities—the defamation suit was time barred by New York's statute of limitations (almost two years had elapsed before the suit was filed)—and on other matters. The plaintiff filed an appeal at the end of the year.

### **January 6**

**King, NC** – The city council voted to remove a sculpture of a soldier kneeling next to a cross after the city was sued by Americans United for Separation of Church and State. The sculpture, which was part of a larger memorial, featured a black silhouette of a soldier and a cross. Americans United sued on behalf of a local Afghanistan War veteran. In addition to removing the image, the city agreed to pay Americans United \$500,000 to settle the lawsuit.

### **January 6**

**Winfield, AL** – In December of 2014 the city council passed a resolution declaring the town's motto to be "City under God."

The resolution passed unanimously and received little fanfare. The local paper pushed a supportive editorial and the town's mayor, who supports the motto, said several residents contacted him to express their support as well.

Then atheist Hemant Mehta posted on his Patheos blog, "The Friendly Atheist," about the town's decision which caused many other atheists to take to Facebook and other social media to object to the town's resolution. The atheist blogger used the Internet to rally people against the small town. The mayor refused to budge.

### **February 3 – March 4**

**California** – An array of persons not affiliated with the Archdiocese of San Francisco joined some parishioners to wage war on Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone. At issue was a proposed contract for teachers at the four archdiocesan high schools. It seeks to assure fidelity to Church teachings.

Showing nothing but contempt for the First Amendment, lawmakers from Sacramento and San Francisco injected themselves into the dispute. The internal affairs of the archdiocese is none of their business. The media, led by the *San Francisco Chronicle*, joined the critics.

Joining the fray was Sam Singer, a public relations giant who has been accused of having a problem with the truth. He falsely claimed that Cordileone was going to "purge gay, lesbian and pro-choice teachers." He also called on Pope Francis to have him removed.

Some of the accusations that were made were so totally untrue that those making them either did not read the relevant documents or decided to ignore their plain wording. Make no mistake about it, this was a despicable campaign launched against a loyal son of the Church, Archbishop Cordileone.

*Note: For more information about the lawmakers' attack on Archbishop Cordileone see the government section.*

## **February 11**

**Ravenswood, WV** – The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) sent a letter to Ravenswood Middle School saying that a small memorial outside the school violated the First Amendment. The memorial was installed in 2004 after a teacher who was a 25-year-veteran of the school was killed in an accident.

According to FFRF, because the memorial included crosses and angels it was illegal. “Schools cannot advance or promote religion, so that’s what this display is doing” an FFRF attorney said. The teacher’s family agreed to remove the crosses, but left the angels. The school board said it would discuss whether or not to allow the memorial to remain.

## **February 18**

**Oklahoma** – The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) sent letters of complaint to stop two private groups from distributing Bibles to 5th graders at schools in three towns. FFRF had filed lawsuits against other schools in the past.

## **March 20**

**Madison, WI** – The Supreme Court of Wisconsin ruled on a formal complaint, filed by the Catholic League in 2011, against a lawyer, Naomi Isaacson, suspending her for one year and ordering her to pay \$6,600 in court costs. The complaint was filed with the Office of Lawyers Professional Responsibility in St. Paul, Minnesota against Isaacson for making a series of patently anti-Catholic remarks. The case was referred to the courts in Wisconsin, where Isaacson is also licensed.

Below is an excerpt of Isaacson’s bigoted comments that triggered the complaint:

- She called U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Nancy Dreher [who is not Catholic] “Popess Dreher” and “a secret Catholic Knight Witch Hunter.”
- She called U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Dennis O’Brien a “dastardly Jesuit.”

- She called the court-appointed bankruptcy trustee a “mindless numbnut [who] would follow church orders with a vengeance.”
- She accused judges and trustees of conspiring to liquidate the company’s assets “for pennies,” saying the proceeds will go “to members of the Catholic Church.”
- She referred to a contempt-of-court order by Judge Dreher saying, “We may as well flush her papal bull order down the toilet.”
- She said the court “is an arm of the church to force the minority to be converted or face the consequences just like during the Dark and Middle Ages.”
- She called one trustee “Grand Inquisitor.”
- She said Judge O’Brien converted the case to Chapter 7 “on papal orders.”
- She accused the Church of bringing illegal immigrants to America “so their population can outrun that of the Protestants and they can turn the country into another Spain.”
- She said: “The Catholic Church has millions of Jesuits working undercover around the country to fulfill the church’s agenda. They give orders, pull the strings, and their puppets like Nancy Dreher jump like zombies.”

In September 2014, the Catholic League was successful in getting her equally anti-Catholic lawyer, Rebekah Nett, suspended for a year as well.

### **March 26 – April 10**

**Indiana** – Holy Week will be remembered not for religious observances in 2015, but for an assault on religious liberty. It was ignited by social media, and quickly took on a life of its own, bringing in gay activists, left-wing non-profit groups, the media, the entertainment industry, academia, the clergy, and big corporations. The cultural ramifications will be felt for years.

The Catholic League wasted no time coming to the defense of

Indiana Governor Mike Pence. On March 26, he signed a law that was based on a federal law passed in 1993, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA). Not only had there been no controversy when the federal law was introduced by liberal Democrats, it was signed by President Bill Clinton. Subsequent to that time, 30 states adopted their own RFRA, without a fuss.

The 1993 law was passed to rectify a 1990 Supreme Court decision, *Employment Division v. Smith*, that nullified religious exemptions from otherwise valid laws. Under RFRA, the government could not substantially burden religious exercise without compelling justification, and even then it had to be done in the least restrictive way. In 1997, the high court said that RFRA applied only to states that had their own religious liberty acts.

Governor Pence signed the Indiana RFRA because he did not want his state to be without the protections afforded by federal law. What broke this time around is that by 2015 the gay lobby had become more powerful than ever before: it succeeded in convincing many elites that RFRA could be used to discriminate against gays. Never mind that none of these laws say anything about sexual orientation.

No sooner had Governor Pence signed the law when he was attacked by the president of the NCAA. The Indiana-headquartered collegiate sports organization threatened to pull future events from the state because the law allegedly permits discrimination.

Top duplicity prizes go to Senator Chuck Schumer and Hillary Clinton. Schumer slammed the Indiana RFRA law, but in 1993 he voted in favor of the federal RFRA, warning that unless it were passed, "the practice of using sacramental wine, wearing a yarmulke, kosher slaughter and many other religious practices all could be jeopardized." Clinton's husband signed RFRA into law.

## March 26

Mark Emmert, president of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) released a statement concerning Indiana's Religious Freedom Restoration Act days before the Men's Basketball Final Four was scheduled to take place in Indianapolis. Emmert was "especially concerned about how this legislation could affect our student-athletes and employees." And he promised to "closely examine the implications of this bill and how it might affect future events as well as our workforce."

Bill Donohue responded by writing to Emmert on March 27. The following page is an excerpt of his letter.

*Dear Mr. Emmert:*

*I read with interest your concerns about the welfare of student-athletes who will compete in Indianapolis over next week's Final Four weekend. Your concerns are not noble—they are demagogic.*

*After Indiana Governor Mike Pence signed the state Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) yesterday, you said that you were concerned "how this legislation could affect our student-athletes and employees. We will work diligently to assure student-athletes competing in, and visitors attending, next week's Men's Final Four in Indianapolis are not impacted negatively by this bill."*

*Why the high alert? Do you expect that Christians will take to the street looking for homosexuals to taunt and assault simply because the religious liberties of store owners have been affirmed? If that is not what you mean, then be explicit: What kind of negative impact will you be looking to guard against?*

*When Governor Pence signed this law, he joined 30 states, and the federal government, in securing religious-liberty protections based on some version of RFRA. You know perfectly well that student-athletes who have competed in these states*

have never had their rights abridged because of such legislation. If anything, their rights have been expanded. So to say that things might be different in Indianapolis is nothing less than an invidious scare tactic. It also smacks of hostility to religion.

Governor Pence signed the state RFRA because without it, the federal law, which was passed in 1993, would not apply to Indiana (the U.S. Supreme Court stipulated in 1997 that it only applied to states that had adopted their own RFRA). Should the people of Indiana be denied the same coverage that affords most Americans? After all, 19 states have their own RFRA and another 11 have similar laws.

The federal RFRA, upon which all state variations are based, was sponsored by Rep. Nancy Pelosi in the House. Is she the enemy of gays? Sen. Edward Kennedy sponsored it in the Senate. Was he anti-gay? President Bill Clinton signed it. Did he seek to create a hostile environment for gays? Is President Barack Obama also an anti-gay bigot? He voted in favor of the Illinois RFRA when he was in the state senate.

Is there any evidence that RFRA has subsequently fostered a negative milieu for gays, or anyone else? If so, please share it with the rest of us. It is hardly controversial to say that what these aforementioned Democrats did was to merely affirm our First Amendment right to religious liberty. That is what Governor Pence is doing now.

It would be such a relief to learn that you are reconsidering your threat to pull future NCAA events from Indianapolis. But if you do not reverse your position, then you have a moral obligation to raze all of the lavish buildings that comprise the NCAA headquarters in Indianapolis and set up shop someplace else. This would include bulldozing your brand new 130,000 square-foot addition to the NCAA's national office in White River State Park. Don't forget to level the Hall of Champions as well.

*Surely you could set up shop in one of the minority of states that do not support RFRA. Were you to stay put, someone might think you are a phony, among other things.*

*Sincerely,*

*William Donohue  
President*

### **March 31**

The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) used Indiana's Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) as an excuse to attack the Supreme Court's ruling in the *Hobby Lobby* contraception case. FFRF called on Congress to repeal the federal RFRA, and cited the "right-wing, male, Catholic bloc on our Supreme Court [which] ruled that corporations have 'religious rights' that can be 'offended' if employees don't follow their boss's religion."

### **April 5**

On Easter Sunday, the anti-Christian organization, Freedom From Religion Foundation, placed an ad in the *New York Times* arguing that religious liberty laws promote "hate."

### **April 7**

**Franklin County, IN** – The American Civil Liberties Union filed a lawsuit against the county on behalf of the Freedom From Religion Foundation and a Satanist group. The Satanic Temple, a group based out of Massachusetts, filed for permits to erect a display outside the county's courthouse. The Satanic display was meant to protest a nativity scene that is placed outside the courthouse each winter. Franklin County officials rejected the permit application citing a city ordinance that only allows displays from city residents.

### **April 14**

**Oklahoma City, OK** – The American Humanist Association (AHA) threatened to sue the Duncan, OK school district after a third grade teacher in the district distributed Gideon Bibles to her



students. An AHA spokesman accused the teacher of attempting to “proselytize” her students.

#### **April 16**

**Madison, WI** – The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) launched a campaign against Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker’s proposal to expand the state’s voucher program. FFRF installed a billboard that read “V(ouch)ers hurt our public schools” [‘ouch’ was highlighted] near the state capitol. FFRF also commissioned a series of television commercials claiming “Walker wants to take money from our public schools and use it to support someone else’s religion. Your tax dollars shouldn’t fund religiously segregated schools.”

#### **April 22**

**Washington, DC** – Fox News reported that the ACLU is suing the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) over the Church’s refusal to provide contraceptive and abortion “services” in its care for immigrant children. Accusing the bishops of “taking millions of dollars in federal grants” while “imposing their beliefs on this vulnerable population,” the ACLU said this “raises serious concerns” about the separation of church and state. Kevin Appleby, a USCCB official, argued that the ACLU’s real purpose is “ending the productive and successful partnership between the Catholic Church and the federal government on the care and shelter of vulnerable populations. Denying us the freedom to serve betrays the very children the ACLU is purportedly attempting to help.”

#### **April 27**

**Lexington, KY** – The Lexington Pride Parade, having sued a Christian printer for refusing to print T-shirts for a gay pride parade, was rebuked by the Fayette County Circuit Court, which upheld the business owner’s right to decline to print messages that run counter to his religious views. The court overturned a previous ruling by the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Human Rights Commission, which held that the company, Hands on Originals, had discriminated when it refused to print

the T-shirts.

#### **April 29**

**Warren, MI** – An atheist man protesting a prayer station inside Warren City Hall sued the city. A federal judge ordered the mayor to grant the man a permit for a “reason station” where he can distribute atheist literature and advocate for the separation of church and state.

#### **May 14**

**New York, NY** – Yeshiva University law professor Marci A. Hamilton engaged in a baseless smear of New York Cardinal Timothy Dolan. Writing in the law publication *Verdict*, Hamilton deplored New York State’s “failure” to enact a bill suspending the statute of limitations – yet again – for lawsuits involving abuse allegations against private or religious entities. Ignoring the bill’s glaring weakness – that it exempts government entities, like public schools, from such lawsuits – she accused “the Catholic bishops and primarily Cardinal Timothy Dolan” of “pulling the strings” to block the legislation.

#### **June 1**

**Toledo, OH** – The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) claimed that University of Toledo Head Coach Matt Campbell committed a “serious and flagrant violation of the First Amendment” when he led the team in prayer prior to a game in 2012. FFRF cited a YouTube video that showed Coach Campbell telling the team, “I’m going to say this: Every one of us has so much to be thankful for. A great night to play football, play with your brothers. OK? What an opportunity. Let’s be grateful for it.” He then knelt and the team began to recite the Lord’s Prayer.

#### **June 19**

**Baltimore, MD** – Catholics for Choice and Americans United teamed up to place an editorial in the *Baltimore Sun* to attack the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ “Fortnight

for Freedom” campaign, opening with the claim: “This defense of religious liberty campaign is about as disingenuous an effort as any carnival huckster could conjure.” The editorial made it clear that the concept of religious conscience exemptions itself is the target.

## **June 22**

**Washington, DC** – Catholics for Choice ran a full-page advertisement in the *Washington Post's* Express tabloid attacking the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' “Fortnight for Freedom” campaign for religious liberty. The ad, reminiscent of 19th-century Know Nothingism, featured a parody of a famous World War I recruiting poster, with a mitered Bishop in place of Uncle Sam and the legend “We Want You To Help Us Discriminate.” The ad claimed that the bishops' campaign for religious liberty was “discrimination wrapped in a false flag of freedom.”

## **June 24**

**Washington, DC** – Americans United for Separation of Church and State called on the U.S. Air Force to discontinue a flag-folding ceremony that it claimed has specific religious symbolism. It said the ceremony's “second fold ‘symbolizes our belief in eternal life,’ while the fourth ‘represents our weaker nature; as American citizens trusting in God, it is to Him we turn in times of peace, as well as in times of war.’ The 11th fold, it asserts, ‘in the eyes of Hebrew citizens, represents the lower portion of the seal of King David and King Solomon and glorifies, in their eyes, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.’ The 12th fold, it claims, ‘in the eyes of a Christian citizen, represents an emblem of eternity and glorifies, in their eyes, God the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit.’” Although Americans United noted that this flag-folding is to be used “at personal ceremonies where attendance is voluntary,” the group nonetheless demanded that the ceremony be discontinued.

## **July 18**

**Harlan, IA** – In an article published in *Cosmo*, Mississippi abortionist Dr. Willie Parker drew a parallel between Deborah Nucatola, the Planned Parenthood executive who was filmed casually discussing the trafficking of aborted babies' organs over a glass of wine, and Jesus during the week of his crucifixion.

## **July 31**

**New York, NY** – New York Archbishop Cardinal Timothy Dolan wrote an op-ed in the *Daily News* that was critical of Donald Trump's remarks on immigration. He called attention to the history of anti-Catholic nativism, mentioning the role played by Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State (POAU), now known as Americans United for Separation of Church and State. Barry Lynn, who heads Americans United, was offended that Dolan lumped his organization in with "the violent and hateful actions of groups like the KKK," and wrote a letter to the editor accusing Cardinal Dolan of "telling lies about our organization." He made it clear he was also defending POAU.

In fact, Dolan is right about his history and Lynn is in denial. When POAU was founded no one played a bigger role in ideologically launching it than Paul Blanshard, the most notorious anti-Catholic bigot in the nation. His screed, *American Freedom and Catholic Power*, is known to this day for its unrelenting bigotry. He warned that "the Menace" – i.e. the Catholic Church – was about to take over America, turning it into a theocracy. POAU's first president, Glenn Archer, drew on Blanshard's ideology when he labeled the Catholic Church "more dangerous and clever than communism." Archer also petitioned the FCC to deny TV licenses to the Jesuits, claiming they were an "alien organization." If that isn't nativism, the word has no meaning.

## **August 7**

**Madison, WI** – The Freedom from Religion Foundation sent ten letters to sheriffs' offices and police departments around the

country, protesting their placement of the national motto "In God We Trust" on their departments' vehicles. The letters followed an earlier series that were sent to seven other departments and are part of a continuing campaign. The letters object that the motto makes unbelievers feel "offended, excluded and like political outsiders" and furthermore that "it is frightening and politically dubious for the [Sheriff's] Office to announce to citizens that officers rely on the judgment of a deity rather than on the judgment of the law."

### **August 13**

**Belen, NM** – The Freedom From Religion Foundation sent a letter to the city of Belen, demanding that they remove a public Nativity display that has been in place for more than 20 years. The letter stated, "It is unlawful for Belen to maintain a display that consists solely of a Nativity scene, thus singling out, showing preference for, and endorsing one religion." Mayor Jerah Cordova said that the display is more historical than religious; Belen is the Spanish for Bethlehem."Our town was named Belen for a reason," he said, "because our founders wanted it to be named after Bethlehem."

### **August 18**

**Auburn, AL** – The Freedom From Religion Foundation demanded that Auburn University fire its team football chaplain and abolish the chaplaincy. The organization sent a letter to the University's president which read in part: "It makes no difference if the chaplain is unofficial, not school-sponsored or a volunteer, because chaplains are given access to the team as a means for coaches to impose religion, usually Christianity, on their players. Under the circumstances, the chaplain's actions are attributable to the university and those actions are unconstitutional."

### **August 20**

**Chanute, KS** – The Freedom From Religion Foundation sent a letter to Chanute Public Schools requesting the removal of a portrait of Jesus, "The Head of Christ" by Warner Sallman,

that had been hanging in the hallway for decades. The portrait was removed the same day.

### **August 21**

**Washington, DC** – In response to the widespread revulsion toward Planned Parenthood (PP) following the Center for Medical Progress's undercover videos showing PP officials discussing the procurement and sale of fetal organs, Catholics for Choice (CfC) elected to show its support for PP by delivering "cakes and messages of goodwill" to PP clinics. Jon O'Brien, the president of Catholics for Choice, was quoted in a CfC press release: "It is clear that Catholics support Planned Parenthood and reject the extremist rhetoric and dirty, underhanded tactics of the antiabortion lobby... We wanted clinic workers, doctors and nurses to know that we stand with Planned Parenthood and the women they care for."

### **August 25**

**Little Rock, AR** – Responding to the decision by the state of Arkansas to place a Ten Commandments display on its Capitol grounds, the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) sought permission to place on permanent display its own monument declaring that "there are no gods." In a letter to the Arkansas governor and secretary of state, FFRF declared, "Most freethinkers find the Ten Commandments to epitomize the childishness, the vindictiveness, the sexism, the inflexibility and the inadequacies of the bible as a book of morals."

### **August 26**

**Redding, CA** – In response to a letter from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) the Mercy Medical Center, a Catholic-affiliated hospital, agreed to follow through with a local woman's request for a postpartum sterilization procedure. Mercy Medical Center initially denied the woman's request for sterilization, stating that it did not meet the requirement of Mercy's current policy or the Ethical and Religious Directives (ERDs) for Catholic Health Services. The woman appealed to the

ACLU, which sent a demand letter to the hospital claiming that a hospital supported by public funds in California does not have permission to deny “medically indicated pregnancy-related care, as doing so constitutes sex discrimination.” Under pressure from the ACLU, the hospital reversed itself and granted the procedure. Lauren Davis, a representative from Mercy Medical, said that the decision would not affect its policies in the future, that the hospital would always operate within the ERDs and that “tubal ligations are not performed in Catholic hospitals except on a case-by-case basis.”

### **August 27**

**Clark County, NV** – The American Civil Liberties Union and Americans United for Separation of Church and State filed suit in Nevada District Court to challenge a school voucher program. The Nevada program creates “educational savings accounts” that would allow any parent to pull a child from the state’s public schools and take tax dollars with them to pay for private or parochial school. Parents could also use the money for transportation, technology or home schooling.

### **August 28**

**Connellsville, PA** – The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) successfully sued to force the removal of a Ten Commandments monument from the grounds of the Connellsville Area School District Junior High School. FFRF Co-President Annie Laurie Gaylor stated, “We’re very grateful to the plaintiffs who made possible this challenge, in the face of community rancor. Religion is divisive and builds walls between people, which is why it doesn’t belong in our public schools.”

### **August 28**

**Mesa, AZ** – Americans United for Separation of Church and State (AU) sent a letter to the principal of Heritage Academy in Mesa demanding that the school stop using the textbook “Proclaim Liberty Throughout All the Land” in its mandatory senior government/U.S. Constitution class. Heritage Academy is

a public charter school. AU said that the book cites the divine Creator, biblical law and judgment following death.

## **September**

**Madison, WI** – After a dozen law enforcement agencies joined a national movement to place decals that say “In God We Trust” on their vehicles, Freedom From Religion Foundation sent out over a dozen letters to these agencies asking them to remove the words.

## **September 23**

**Brookville, IN** – A lawsuit brought by the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) and American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) against a nativity scene that has appeared on the Franklin County Courthouse square in Brookville was dismissed by a judge. The battle began when the FFRF and ACLU sued Franklin County in December 2014 as a result of officials who refused to remove the nativity scene. A new ordinance was drafted to clarify the use of the Franklin County Courthouse square, which is the location of where the nativity has been placed for decades. As a result of the new ordinance, any display, religious or not, is welcome.

## **October 5**

**Benton, LA** – A demand made by the ACLU to put an end to all religious activities in schools was rejected by school authorities who emphasized how U.S. history is based on “freedom of religion, not freedom from religion.” The Bossier Parish School Board responded to an ACLU letter that demanded a school remove all prayer references by ruling that Airline High School in Bossier City did not violate the constitution.

## **October 19**

**Carson City, NV** – The Nevada Attorney General’s Office filed a motion to dismiss a suit by the American Civil Liberties Union challenging Education Savings Accounts. The program, which is viewed as the broadest school choice program in the U.S. because it’s not limited by issues such as family income,



permits parents to claim most of their child's per-pupil state education funding and put it toward private school tuition or other qualified education expenses.

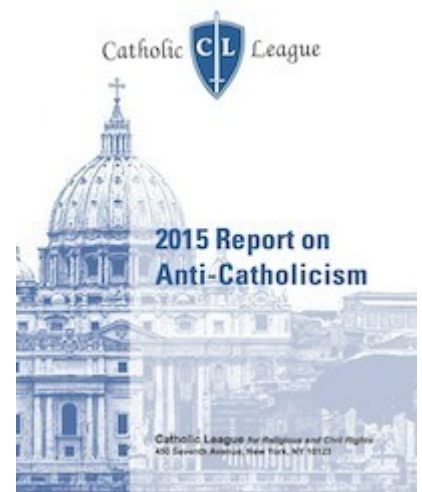
The ACLU and Americans United for Separation of Church and State argued that the law violated the so-called "Blaine Amendment" in the state's Constitution that prohibits the use of public funds for sectarian purposes. ACLU of Nevada Executive Director Tod Story said "Parents have a right to send their children to religious schools, but they are not entitled to do so at taxpayers' expense."

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## The Arts

### March

**Grants Pass, OR** – Jim Ingraham's picture was selected as the Caveman Camera Club's image of the month for March. Given the theme of "contradiction," Ingraham shot a photograph he titled "Bad Nun." The image depicts a young woman who is pregnant dressed as a nun, wearing a habit, inside a church. The woman is holding a bottle of liquor and a cigarette. "A drinking, smoking, pregnant nun struck me as fairly 'contradictory'" said Ingraham.



As the prize for winning image of the month, "Bad Nun" was printed in the March 11 edition of the *Grants Pass Daily Courier*.

### March 20 – 28

**Queens, NY** – York College presented six performances of Stephen Adly Guirgis' play "Our Lady of 121st Street." The

play is about an alcoholic nun who passes away. An advertisement warned viewers of “explicit language” and contained an image of a habited nun, holding a Bible and rosary who is smoking and giving the viewer her middle finger.

### **March 29**

In 2014 artist Doug Blanchard created a series of 24 images depicting Jesus as a gay man. Titled “The Passion of Christ: A Gay Vision” the images are meant to represent different stages of the Lord’s passion. They show a Christ figure who stands up to priests, bankers, politicians, soldiers and police. One who is mocked by news cameras while on the cross and who “rises again to enjoy homoerotic union with God.” Kittredge Cherry, a lesbian author who blogged about Blanchard’s works, decided to compile her blog entries and the paintings into a new book by the same title.

### **May 9**

**New York, NY** – Sara Fellini’s new play, “In Vestments,” set in a Catholic parish called “Our Lady of Perpetual Sighs” was staged in the chapel of West Park Presbyterian Church on the Upper West Side. The play begins with a quandary – what to do with sacramental wine tainted by plaster at the moment of transubstantiation – which serves as a metaphor for poison tainting the body of the church itself.

### **May 28**

**New York, NY** – A gay-happy play, “An Act of God” opened on Broadway, starring Jim Parsons. A contemporary rewrite of the Ten Commandments, its jokes about masturbation, gay sex, Sarah Palin, the Kardashians and Bruce Jenner were well-received by the audience and entertainment media. Not so the play’s jokes about the Holocaust; and the script itself made clear that the Koran and Islam were out of bounds. God is portrayed as a fan of separation of church and state, and describes himself as “a jealous, petty, sexist, racist, mass-murdering narcissist.”

### **July 15 – July 21**

**New York, NY** – “Pope! An Epic Musical” was staged at the New York Musical Theatre Festival. The play is a comedy and depicts an ambitious, idealistic, “rock-star” pope and his conflicts with a tyrannical archbishop who claps people in irons, replacing them with robots. While the play is not obscene, the stereotypical portrayals are not written to endear themselves to practicing Catholics.

### **July 30**

**Milwaukee, WI** – The Milwaukee Art Museum featured an offensive portrait of Pope Benedict XVI that was made up of 17,000 colored condoms. Bill Donohue sent a public letter to the chairman of the museum, Kenneth Krei, and to Michael Durney, the CEO of DHi Group, a New York firm. Both men are associated with officials who have vigorously defended this hate speech: Donald W. Layden, Jr. who is the president of the museum, and David Gordon who is a past director and CEO of the facility and now sits on the board of directors at DHi.

Donohue zeroed in on a remark by Layden. “This was never intended to be derisive, mocking or disrespectful of the pope,” Layden said. Donohue questioned, “Was it intended to be a love letter? If I sent him a portrait of his mother, nicely spliced together with condoms, would he be convinced if I said it wasn’t meant to be derisive?” Gordon minced no words speaking of artist Nicki Johnson’s portrayal of the pope: “It is a work that offends the Catholic Church. So be it.” To which Donohue replied: “Then why doesn’t this brave man ask an anti-Muslim bigot to do a portrait of Muhammad woven with condoms? Would he have the guts to tell Muslims that if they are offended, too damn bad?”

Donohue also addressed the artist, Nicki Johnson, who was angry at Pope Benedict XVI because he counseled abstinence-based programs in Africa to fight AIDS, not condom distribution. Donohue said she was right about the pope’s position, but wrong in her criticism. “After the pope made his remarks,” Donohue wrote, “it was the subject of analysis by

Edward C. Green, then the director of the AIDS Prevention Research Project at the Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies. 'In every African country in which HIV infections have declined,' he said, 'this decline has been associated with a decrease in the proportion of men and women reporting more than one sex partner over the course of a year—which is exactly what fidelity programs promote.'” Donohue then addressed the utility of condoms. “What about condoms? Don’t they work? ‘If AIDS prevention is to be based on evidence rather than ideology or bias,’ Green said, ‘then fidelity and abstinence programs need to be at the center of programs for general populations.’ Does this mean the pope was right? Yes. Green argued that ‘in truth, current empirical evidence supports him.’”

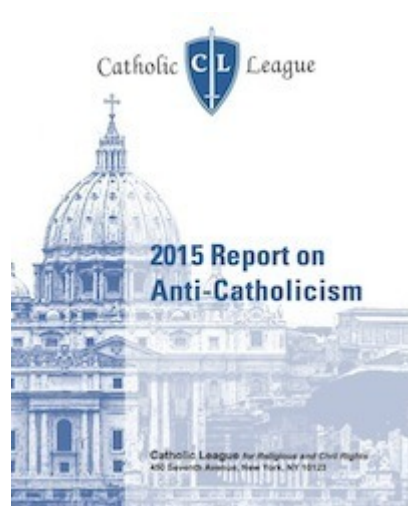
The issue of public funding was cited by Donohue in a second news release. At the federal level, the National Endowment for the Arts gave this museum an \$80,000 grant during the period of August 2008 to April 2010. In addition, it received \$212,500 in federal aid from other sources. Statewide, it receives monies from the Wisconsin Arts Board; it was given \$17,500 in fiscal year 2015. At the local level, it receives funding from the Milwaukee Arts Board for some exhibitions. We contacted public officials at the state and local level about this abuse of funds. “Anti-Catholic art is always objectionable,” Donohue said, “but it is doubly so when it is publicly funded. Catholics in Wisconsin should not be forced to have their hard-earned dollars underwrite a museum that denigrates their religion. If Catholics are forbidden from erecting a nativity scene on public property, the state should be forbidden from funding speech that trashed Catholicism.”

It is always encouraging when the local Ordinary steps into these culture wars, and Milwaukee Archbishop Jerome ListECKi hit it out of the park: “Would the art museum accept works that depicted various political leaders in our state in cow dung (a significant animal for Wisconsin?)...Would they accept

art featuring national or international popular social reconstructionists in a manner that would depict the opposite of what they represented, such as Ghandi sporting an uzi, Lincoln in Ku Klux Klan garb or Hitler with a yarmulke reading the Torah, all in the name of art and beauty?"

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## Charlie Hebdo Controversy



A week into the new year saw the horrible death of 12 people, most of whom worked at the Paris office of *Charlie Hebdo*; a police officer was among the dead. The weekly publication is known for its coarse content and vulgar cartoons. Muslim terrorists, upset with depictions of Muhammad, were responsible for the carnage.

Bill Donohue quickly became part of the story when he issued a news release saying that Muslims had a right to be angry, though they were wrong to react with violence. "Killing in response to insult, no matter how gross," he said, "must be unequivocally condemned." He made several similar statements over the course of two weeks, but many in the media focused exclusively on his comment that Muslims were justified in their anger.

Donohue called the paper's publisher, Stephane Charbonnier, a "narcissist" who "didn't understand the role he played in his tragic death." The Catholic League president drew attention to Charbonnier's comment, "Muhammad isn't sacred to me"; the French journalist dropped that line as justification for his obscene depictions. "Muhammad isn't sacred to me, either,"

said Donohue, "but it would never occur to me to deliberately insult Muslims by trashing him."

Non-violent offenses, Donohue stressed, must be met with a non-violent response. This was uncontroversial, but what many criticized Donohue for was his insistence that Muslims were unnecessarily provoked. He was simply asking all parties to the controversy to exercise restraint: the cartoonists should not intentionally offend Muslim sensibilities and Muslims should not overreact by taking up arms.

After being pounded by many pundits and talk-show hosts on radio and TV for his comments, Donohue found welcome relief in statements made by Pope Francis. "You cannot provoke. You cannot insult the faith of others. You cannot make fun of the faith." The Holy Father insisted that "We cannot make a toy out of the religion of others. These people provoke and then [something can happen]. In freedom of expression there are limits."

If this wasn't vindication enough, the pope, after denouncing the violence, quipped that if his friend, Dr. Alberto Gasparri, the organizer of papal trips, were "to use a curse word against my mother, he can expect a punch. It's normal." This effectively closed the debate on Donohue: the pope had taken his side.

What follows is a synopsis of the news releases and statements made by Bill Donohue between January 7 and January 16.

## **MUSLIMS ARE RIGHT TO BE ANGRY**

**January 7**

*In Bill Donohue's first statement on the attack he condemned the murder but also drew a connection between the publication's repeated insults of Muslims and the attacks that led to their deaths.*

Killing in response to insult, no matter how gross, must be

unequivocally condemned. That is why the killing of 12 people at the Paris office of the newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* cannot be tolerated. But neither should we tolerate the kind of intolerance that provoked this violent reaction.

Those who work at this newspaper have a long and disgusting record of going way beyond the mere lampooning of public figures, and this is especially true of their depictions of religious figures. For example, they have shown nuns masturbating and popes wearing condoms. They have also shown Muhammad in pornographic poses.

While some Muslims today object to any depiction of the Prophet, others do not. Moreover, visual representations of him are not proscribed by the Koran. What unites Muslims in their anger against *Charlie Hebdo* is the vulgar manner in which Muhammad has been portrayed. What they object to is being intentionally insulted over the course of many years. On this aspect, Bill Donohue was in total agreement with them.

Stephane Charbonnier, the paper's publisher, was killed in the slaughter. It is too bad that he didn't understand the role he played in his tragic death. In 2012, when asked why he insulted Muslims, he said, "Muhammad isn't sacred to me." Had he not been so narcissistic, he may still be alive. Muhammad isn't sacred to Donohue, either, but it would never occur to him to deliberately insult Muslims by trashing Muhammad.

## **MUSLIMS AND ARTISTS MUST CHANGE**

**January 9**

*Bill Donohue compared the Muslims who resort to violence in defense of their religion, and the artists who insult people of faith, with Catholics.*

In an ideal world, Muslims who interpret the Koran to justify violence would convert to Catholicism, and artists who think they have an absolute right to insult people of faith would follow suit. If both did, we would have peace and civility.

Catholicism teaches that it is immoral to intentionally kill innocent persons, beginning with life in the womb. It is not a pacifistic religion—it believes in just wars—though it naturally inclines towards non-violence. It most certainly does not counsel violence as a right remedy to insolent behavior. Muslims who say it is morally justified to kill obscene artists, citing the Koran as their impetus, would do us all a favor if they converted to Catholicism.

Catholicism teaches that freedom is the right to do what you ought to do. As such, it is always tied to duty, and to individual responsibility. Once that understanding breaks down—as it has in the West—trouble follows. Unfortunately, many artists interpret their rights as a solo exercise, disconnected from duty or responsibility. But autonomy can never be a sturdy guide to morality: it devolves into relativism and to a wholesale disrespect for the rights of others. Narcissistic artists who associate obscenity with creativity would do us all a favor if they converted to Catholicism.

The central problem with Muslim extremists and irresponsible artists is that neither embodies the virtue of restraint. If they did, they would not act as the barbarians and libertines that they are. Catholicism is the answer.

## **HYPOCRISY RUNS DEEP AT WASHINGTON POST**

**January 12**

Many media outlets criticized Bill Donohue's position on the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks. The *Washington Post* published one such article, noting that the offensive cartoons did not meet the paper's standards. However, anti-Catholic artwork was fine with the paper.

On January 7, the *Washington Post* ran an article by Ishaan Tharoor criticizing Bill Donohue for drawing attention to the irresponsibility of the cartoonists at *Charlie Hebdo*. He took



Donohue to task for not taking a more expansive view of free speech. In his online post, two cartoons from the French weekly were reprinted: one was anti-Muslim and the other was anti-Catholic. They were hardly the worst that Charlie Hebdo has penned, but they offered a glimmer of what the publication has given.

The next day Tharoor's article ran again, but this time there were no cartoons. There was an explanatory statement at the end of his article. *"Editors note: An earlier version of this article included images offensive to various religious groups that did not meet the Post's standards, and should not have been published. They have been removed."*

Now how about them apples? If this isn't bad enough, consider that as recently as the month before, the art critic at the newspaper, Philip Kennicott, bemoaned the fact that an exhibition of Catholic art at the National Museum of Women in the Arts, "Picturing Mary," did not include his favorite—the portrait by Chris Ofili of Our Blessed Mother that was adorned with pictures of anuses and vaginas, as well as elephant dung. Kennicott called it "perhaps the most famous image of Mary painted in the last quarter century." That it wasn't included made this guy angry.

So this is what passes as ethics at the *Washington Post*: it is not only okay to offend Catholics, it is a blow to freedom of speech not to include scatological portraits of the Virgin Mary in Catholic exhibitions. As for anti-Muslim depictions, that's a different story—they don't meet the newspaper's standards. Which is why in 2010 it decided not to run an inoffensive cartoon by Wiley Miller simply because the "Non Sequitur" cartoon printed the line "Where's Muhammad?" at the bottom!!!

**FREE SPEECH PHONIES LEARN NOTHING**

**January 13**

*Proponents of free speech cheered the right of Charlie Hebdo to publish offensive cartoons, but supported other limitations on speech.*

A January 8 editorial in the *New York Times* said *Charlie Hebdo* “has been an equal-opportunity offender: Muslims, Jews and Christians,” as well as others, have been trashed. It said that the editorial director, who was killed, believed that “free expression was nothing without the right to offend.” In a news article from January 13, it quoted a cartoonist at the French weekly saying, “The only thing that is sacred is free expression.”

Fact: *Charlie Hebdo* fired a cartoonist for publishing an article deemed anti-Semitic in 2008. No one has been fired for offending Catholics or Muslims. More important, the notion that “the right to offend” should be celebrated—instead of condemned—tells us much about the adolescent streak in both papers (yes, it should be legal to offend, but it is still immoral). Moreover, if the *only* thing that is *sacred* is the right to offend, then absolutely nothing has been learned. That such twisted thinking is commonplace is scary.

## **SHOULD THE MEDIA SHOW THE CARTOONS?**

**January 13**

*Bill Donohue commented on the propriety of showing the Charlie Hebdo cartoons in newspapers and on television.*

When the Danish cartoons were published a decade ago, the media refused to show them. With the exception of the *Boston Phoenix*, which cited safety concerns, the others either gave no reason or feigned interest in not offending people of faith. But if they really believed in freedom of speech, the cartoons would have been shown.

Why? Because none was offensive: the cartoons never descended to the gutter as some of the more recent *Charlie Hebdo* ones have. Yes, some Muslims object to any portrayal of Muhammad,

but many others do not. Moreover, the Koran does not proscribe such imagery. Ergo, these inoffensive cartoons should have been shown.

What about the *Charlie Hebdo* cartoons? Some are irreverent without being obscene, so there is no reason not to show them. But in the name of decency, the toilet-speech cartoons should not be shown. To do so would be to intentionally insult not only Muslims, but all those who prefer not to have their sensibilities assaulted with pornographic images.

Reasonable people can disagree as to where we should draw the line; unreasonable people say no line should be drawn. That there are as many unreasonable conservatives as there are unreasonable liberals cannot be denied. Some liberals are so enthralled with the “sacredness” of speech that they have completely lost their moral bearings. Some conservatives hate Muslims so much that no portrayal of Muhammad can be filthy enough to satisfy them.

Bill Donohue admires Jeff Zucker at CNN for having the honesty to say that he wouldn't show the cartoons because he didn't want to endanger his employees. Donohue does not admire Dean Baquet at the *New York Times* for saying his reason for opting out was because the cartoons constitute “gratuitous insult.” After all, it was his newspaper that printed the offensive dung-on-the-Virgin Mary image (complete with vaginas and anuses) on February 8, 2006, the day after an editorial explained that it wouldn't publish the Danish cartoons!

## **INVENTING CONTROVERSY**

**January 14**

*Religion News Service published an article about New York Archbishop Cardinal Timothy Dolan's response to the Charlie Hebdo attacks. In it, the author, David Gibson, attempted to create a division between Dolan's response and Donohue's.*

“In finding no justification for the deaths of the *Charlie*

*Hebdo* editorial staff, [Cardinal Timothy] Dolan seemed to part ways with another prominent New York Catholic, Bill Donohue of the Catholic League, who *essentially* said the newspaper editors had brought on their own slaughter” (Donohue’s *italics*). The verbs dropped by Gibson were telling: he couldn’t quite state that the New York Archbishop parted ways with Donohue on this subject, so he inferred that they have. Moreover, he inferred that Donohue blamed the victims. Donohue responded by citing numerous examples where he condemned the murders, and faulted the Muslim thugs who committed them.

## **POPE SIDES WITH CATHOLIC LEAGUE**

**January 15**

Pope Francis condemned the killings of the Paris cartoonists while on board the papal plane to the Philippines, but he also drew a line in the sand. “You cannot provoke. You cannot insult the faith of others. You cannot make fun of the faith.” While he denounced violence against those who offend us, he also said that if his friend, Dr. Alberto Gasparri, the organizer of papal trips, were “to use a curse word against my mother, he can expect a punch. It’s normal.” He added, “We cannot make a toy out of the religion of others. These people provoke and then [something can happen]. In freedom of expression there are limits.”

Bill Donohue was obviously delighted that the pope has taken the same position that he has on this issue. Radio chatterbox Hugh Hewitt doubted whether a single bishop would side with Donohue. What does he have to say now?

Mindless comments have exploded over this issue. On January 14, Salman Rushdie told an audience at the University of Vermont, “The minute I hear someone say, ‘Yes, I believe in freedom of speech, but...’ I stop listening.” Similarly, Victor Davis Hanson criticized Donohue on January 15 for his “de facto attack on unfettered free speech.” Apparently, both of these sages are opposed to laws that prohibit libel, slander,

treasonous speech, harassing phone calls, copyright infringements, false advertising, etc.

Even worse is *USA Today*. After Donohue explicitly rejected its request to write an op-ed defending blasphemy laws in the Middle East, the paper ran an excerpt of his remarks as an opposing view to its opposition to these laws. This is more than mindless—it is malicious.

### **POPE'S "PUNCH" QUIP AND MORE**

**January 16**

When the pope was on a plane coming back from Brazil in 2013, he said, "If someone is gay and he searches for the Lord and has good will, who am I to judge?" Over 900 news stories quickly appeared, the majority of which were dishonest: "Who am I to judge?" was all they quoted. Pundits were even worse: they said the pope was asking us to be non-judgmental about homosexuality.

By contrast, newspapers from January 16 gave scant coverage to what the pope said on January 15 about the Paris murders. The pope said, "In freedom of expression there are limits." He condemned the Paris murders, but he also condemned the needless provocations. "You cannot provoke. You cannot insult the faith of others." As an example, he said that if his friend, Dr. Alberto Gasparri, were "to use a curse word against my mother, he can expect a punch. It's normal."

The disparity in news coverage can be explained on ideological grounds: the media liked what the pope said on the plane to Rome two years ago but they did not like what he said on January 15 aboard the plane to the Philippines. The reaction of pundits to his "punch" quip is not ideological: it offended many conservatives as well as liberals.

What explains the pundits' reaction? Humorlessness. A video of the pope's remarks shows him standing up, microphone in hand, with Dr. Gasparri standing to his right. The pope was clearly

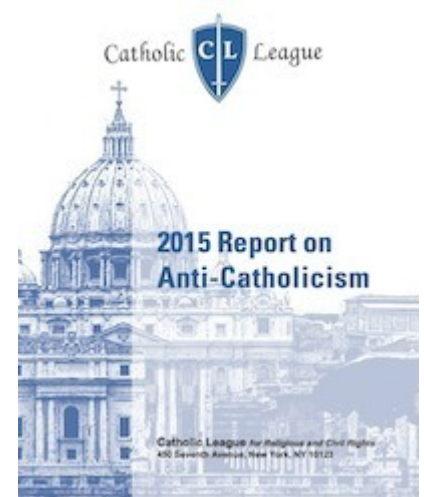
jesting—he feigned a punch at him as he made his quip. Gasparri was cracking up, as were others. But to the humorless, he committed a grave sin. They need to get a life. Too many conservatives are just as stiff as liberals these days.

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## Education

### February 9

**Yulee, FL** – A student at Yulee High School ended the school's morning announcement with "God Bless America." This caused the American Humanist Association to contact the school and the Nassau County School District to warn school officials that saying "God Bless America" over the school's public address system was "inappropriate and unlawful."



### March 16 – April 3

**Cranston, RI** – School teachers were successful in a lawsuit that they filed against the Cranston School District after being told classes would be held on Good Friday. After a court decision ruled that the teachers could absent themselves from school to observe Good Friday, the school committee decided schools will be closed on Good Friday for the following school year.

Jewish teachers in Cranston were allowed to take off on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, but originally, Catholics were required to teach on Good Friday. This didn't sit too well with Catholics, so on March 16 they sued. The edict, which was issued by school superintendent Judith Lundsten, was

overturned by court order.

According to the court decision, as long as teachers submitted their request by April 1, they could observe Good Friday, with impunity. This issue should never have made its way to the courts. Cranston officials looked enfeebled when they demanded proof that Good Friday services are held at area churches. If they were practicing Christians, they wouldn't have had to ask such a dumb question.

In the end over 200 teachers—and many students—were absent on Good Friday. This led to the school committee's decision that they would not schedule classes on the Christian holy day the following year.

### **March 20**

**Turlock, CA** – The California State University Stanislaus chapter of Chi Alpha, a Christian student organization, was deactivated because the group insisted that its leaders be Christians. The university said it would no longer recognize the group due to a non-discrimination executive order that prohibited student organizations from excluding anyone, including in leadership roles. "What they cannot be is faith-based where someone has to have a profession of faith to be that leader" said university vice president Tim Lynch.

Students argued that everyone was welcome to attend their meetings, regardless of their religious belief, but that group leaders were expected to lead prayers and perform other faith-based duties that it would be impossible for someone of a different faith to complete.

### **May 1**

**Lakeland, FL** – A student at Polk State College was assigned four zeros when she objected to assignments posed by Professor Lance Russum. Russum, who was openly hostile to Christianity on social media, assigned essay questions such as "Why did Christianity and its male gods [sic] want to silence women?"

and “From the article on the nuns what makes their defiance of male dominance so important?” Russum in the past had labeled Christianity “false, violent, or oppressive to women.”

### **May 18**

**New Haven, CT** – At their 2015 Commencement ceremony, Yale University awarded an honorary degree to Larry Kramer, whom they cited as an “author and dramatist, advocate and activist,” and praised for founding ACT UP. Mr. Kramer was named a Doctor of Humane Letters. ACT UP is the organization that perpetrated the “Stop the Church” protest in December, 1989, when thousands of protestors crashed St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York City, disrupting Sunday Mass, blowing whistles, screaming slogans and spitting the Eucharist on the floor.

### **May 22**

**Las Vegas, NV** – A sixth grader won an apology from her school after her lawyers got involved to defend her right to use a biblical verse in a school assignment.

MacKenzie Fraiser, 12, was given an assignment intended to include details of her life and an “inspirational saying.” She planned to use John 3:16 to illustrate the importance of her Christian faith, but her teacher reportedly said that “Bible verses or quotations from the Book of Mormon” weren’t permitted.

After her attorneys got involved, however, the school issued the following statement:

“After reviewing the facts of this particular situation, Somerset Academy recognizes that the teacher and assistant principal incorrectly implemented [Department of Education] guidelines....Somerset Academy of Las Vegas and its Administrators apologize for this advertent error. The student will be allowed to resubmit her original presentation, inclusive of her religious beliefs.”



## **June 19**

After being derecognized as a student group by the California State University system because they required leaders to be Christian, the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship reported that it had been reinstated as a campus ministry.

As explained in our 2014 Annual Report, CSU began enforcing a 2011 executive order that prohibits discrimination on the basis of a number of factors, including religion, within student organizations. In order to be recognized as a student group, the organization must allow anyone to join it, and the ban on discrimination extends to leadership positions. As a result, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship and other student groups lost official recognition because they required their leaders to be Christian. However, according to a press release from the group, the nation's largest public school system reversed its decision and will officially recognize InterVarsity again.

## **June 25**

**Madison, WI** – Rachel Langeberg, a Wisconsin college student claimed that a professor threatened to give her a failing grade unless she agreed to remove references to religion and the Bible from a PowerPoint presentation that was part of an assigned group project.

## **September 30**

**New Brunswick, NJ** – Rutgers University's student-run newspaper "The Medium" published an article after the pope's visit to the U.S. titled "I KINDA WANT TO F\*\*\* THE POPE." In the article, the author said "Call me crazy, but after this weekend I kinda want to f\*\*\* the Pope." The author went on to say "Really, I want to feel the Pope inside my soaked p\*\*\*\*." Moreover, "I want to feel his papal fingers pulling my hair as he shoved his d\*\*\* down my throat." "I know it may be frowned upon, since he has taken the oath of celibacy" it later read.

## **October 8**

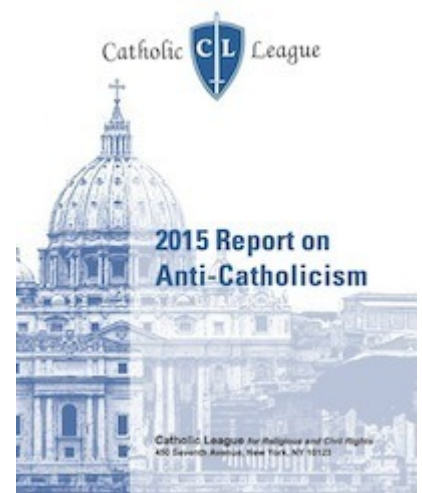
**Wichita, KS** – As a result of Wichita State University's campus being labeled a "pre-dominantly Judeo-Christian environment" that is not inclusive enough for Muslims, the school ripped up an altar and pews to make room for Muslim prayer rugs. One alumnus asked "Why did they have to take out all of the pews" while another individual added "I would like to know where the cross has gone. This smacks of political correctness."

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## Government

### February 3

**Gresham, OR** – The Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries found Aaron and Melissa Klein, who run a bakery, guilty of discrimination for refusing to bake a wedding cake for a lesbian couple in 2013.



### February 5

During his remarks at the National Prayer Breakfast, President Obama was speaking about Muslim madmen when he said the following, "Unless we get on our high horse and think this is unique to some other place, remember that during the Crusades and the Inquisition, people committed terrible deeds in the name of Christ."

The Catholic League issued a news release titled "Obama Insults Christians." Bill Donohue did not accuse the president of intentionally being anti-Catholic, but rather of perpetuating popular misconceptions about the Church while trying to defend Muslims.

The Crusades were a defensive Christian reaction against Muslim madmen of the Middle Ages. Here is how Princeton scholar and Islamic expert Bernard Lewis puts it: "At the present time, the Crusades are often depicted as an early expansionist imperialism—a prefigurement of the modern European countries. To people of the time, both Muslim and Christian, they were no such thing." So what were they? "The Crusade was a delayed response to the jihad, the holy war for Islam, and its purpose was to recover by war what had been lost by war—to free the holy places of Christendom and open them once again, without impediment, to Christian pilgrimage." According to St. Louis University and Crusade scholar Thomas Madden, "All the Crusades met the criteria of just wars."

Regarding the other fable, the Inquisition, the Catholic Church had almost nothing to do with it. The Church saw heretics as lost sheep who needed to be brought back into the fold. By contrast, secular authorities saw heresy as treason; anyone who questioned royal authority, or who challenged the idea that kingship was God-given, was guilty of a capital offense. It was they—not the Church—who burned the heretics. Indeed, secular authorities blasted the Church for its weak role in the Inquisition.

### **February 13**

**Lincoln, NE** – State Senator Ernie Chambers targeted the Catholic Church during a committee hearing on an anti-discrimination bill that would force employers to hire job applicants without considering their sexual orientation or gender identity. The Senate committee was considering exemptions to the law for religious organizations.

Chambers first remarked that if it was up to him there would be no exemption, but then he continued his criticism, targeting the Catholic Church specifically. "I make the admonition to them that the referee makes at every prize fight: protect yourself at all times," Chambers said referring to the Church's opposition to the bill.

## **February 17 – 24**

**San Francisco, CA** – On February 17, eight California lawmakers wrote a letter to San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone condemning the proposed union contract for teachers who work at the four archdiocese high schools. On February 23, two of these legislators asked the Assembly Labor and Employment Committee and the Assembly Judiciary Committee to launch an investigation.

On February 24, Bill Donohue wrote to the chairmen of the two committees; a copy was sent to committee members, and to the eight lawmakers who wrote to the archbishop. The following is an excerpt of that letter; the full letter is available on the Catholic League's website.

*On February 23, Assemblyman Phil Ting and Assemblyman Kevin Mullin asked the Assembly Labor and Employment Committee and the Assembly Judiciary Committee to launch an investigation of the proposed high school contracts for teachers in the San Francisco Archdiocese. The request is not only illicit, it is based on faulty information.*

*As intended by the Founders, the First Amendment insulates religious institutions from state encroachment. At a minimum this means that employment contracts, entered into voluntarily by teachers at religious schools, are, with rare exception, not the business of the state. That the courts, especially the U.S. Supreme Court, have repeatedly validated this fundamental constitutional right is incontestable.*

*In his letter of February 19 to the eight lawmakers, Archbishop Cordileone mentions that the legislators were making decisions based on erroneous information. He explicitly mentioned "the falsehood that the morality clauses apply to the teachers' private life." In their letter of February 17, these lawmakers claim that the contract affects the "professional, public, and private lives of every school employee."*

*This statement is flatly wrong: the contract does not apply to the private lives of teachers. This is not open to interpretation. On February 4, the archdiocese released a statement on Church teachings and practices in the high schools. It stipulates that teachers “must refrain from public support of any cause or issue that is explicitly or implicitly contrary to that which the Catholic Church holds to be true...” It says nothing about the private lives of teachers—it is speaking to the issue of publicly advocating causes that are in direct opposition to Church teachings.*

*A helpful Q&A statement on the contract proposals was also issued on February 4. Not only does it say that there is no “oath” being required of teachers, it even goes so far as to say that if teachers cannot assent to the teachings of the Catholic Church, “then they should at least avoid publicly undermining the lessons taught at the school of their employment.”*

*At this point, I must ask every state legislator: If you had in your employ a person who publicly opposed your positions on law and public policy, what would you do? The answer is obvious. Why, then, should the Catholic Church be held to a different standard? Just like you, those who work for the Catholic Church are not expected to tolerate mutiny.*

*As chairmen of two important committees, please understand the chilling effect that these eight lawmakers are having on the affairs of the archdiocese. Catholic schools have a mission, and while not everyone agrees with it, many do; they expect that their leaders can pursue it without fear of intimidation or punitive sanctions.*

*It must also be asked if these lawmakers are raising similar concerns with the leaders of other faith communities? Christian schools, yeshivas, and Islamic schools exist in San Francisco and other parts of California.*

*Are any of their teacher contracts being scrutinized? If so, which schools are they? If not, why are the high schools in the Archdiocese of San Francisco being targeted for investigation?*

*Finally, are we to believe that if a Catholic teacher were to publicly espouse racist views that these same lawmakers would not object? Indeed, would they not demand that he be fired? And would not Archbishop Cordileone make sure he was fired?*

*This is significant: racism, like abortion, is officially labeled as “intrinsically evil” by the Catholic Catechism. In other words, those who publicly promote abortion or racism have no legitimate role to play as Catholic ministers. Even those who do not agree that both of these issues should be seen as evil should at least respect the right of the Catholic Church to teach otherwise.*

### **March 3**

**San Francisco, CA** – The Board of Supervisors in San Francisco unanimously passed a resolution that declared war on the Archdiocese of San Francisco over its proposed teacher contracts; teachers were to agree that they would not publically promote causes that were contrary to the Church’s teachings. The resolution, authored by Supervisor Mark Farrell, claimed to respect the Archdiocese of San Francisco, but at the same time urged it to “fully respect the rights of its teachers and administrators, and pursue contract terms with their educators that respects their individual rights.” Bill Donohue responded by writing to Supervisor Farrell. An excerpt of that letter is below.

*Yesterday, the Board of Supervisors unanimously passed a resolution, introduced by you, on the rights of teachers and administrators who work for the Archdiocese of San Francisco. It contains several errors of fact. More important, it contains lies.*

*The biggest lie is found in paragraph three. "WHEREAS, the City of San Francisco also respects the autonomy of the Archdiocese of San Francisco..." It is a lie because most of what follows proves that you and your colleagues have nothing but contempt for the autonomy of the archdiocese. As such, your palpable hostility to the doctrinal prerogatives of the archdiocese has grave First Amendment implications.*

*It is not the business of the state to police the internal affairs of any religious institution. Were a clergyman to lecture the Board of Supervisors on what its employment policies ought to be, it would be greeted with howls of protest citing separation of church and state. The establishment provision of the First Amendment cuts both ways.*

*Almost every world religion in history, in both Eastern and Western civilization, has found homosexual behavior to be sinful. Yet you single out the Catholic Church for holding to this teaching—which we learned from Judaism—thus showing your discriminatory colors. Will you now seek to monitor the handbook of teachers used by ministers, rabbis, and imams in their schools?*

*Your resolution, though mostly flawed, is correct on one important matter. You correctly say that the new handbook maintains that faculty "must refrain from public support of any cause or issue that is explicitly or implicitly contrary to that which the Catholic Church holds to be true..." How remarkable! Would you keep on staff those who publicly oppose your positions? Do you see how foolish this makes you look?*

*Finally, you and I both know that your bigoted resolution has no legal teeth. I would add that it has no moral teeth as well.*

**March 9**

**Washington, DC** – The United States Supreme Court ordered a review of the University of Notre Dame's challenge to the

Health and Human Services (HHS) mandate and then sent the case back to the appellate panel for a review in light of the high court's ruling in the *Hobby Lobby* case. On February 21, 2014, the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the University of Notre Dame had to accept an accommodation to the HHS mandate that requires employers to pay for abortion-inducing drugs, contraception, and sterilization.

The *Hobby Lobby* case was decided June 30, 2014, over four months after Notre Dame lost in the appeals court. In its ruling, the Supreme Court held that family-owned businesses could assert religious freedom interests in not complying with the HHS mandate. The 7th Circuit must now review its 2-1 decision taking into consideration the entire *Hobby Lobby* case. The Notre Dame case is the only one to challenge the HHS mandate that was decided prior to the *Hobby Lobby* case.

### **March 27**

**Atlanta, GA** – The Georgia legislature passed a bill, the Hidden Predator Act, that would lift the statute of limitations for two years on civil suits filed against alleged sexual abusers. It was rightly being opposed by the Archdiocese of Atlanta, the Georgia Chamber of Commerce, and other organizations.

One of the Georgia lawmakers who favored the bill was State Representative Jason Spencer. But he was not content to voice support for it—he waged a bigoted anti-Catholic campaign against the Atlanta archdiocese. He repeatedly branded the archdiocese a “pro-child predator special interest group” that is part of the “child sexual predator lobby.”

Rep. Spencer is a Republican conservative pro-life legislator who belongs to a Christian interdenominational church. But his Christian affiliation obviously did not stop him from promoting anti-Catholicism.

### **April 7**



**Washington, DC** – During the White House Easter breakfast, “On Easter,” President Obama said, “I do reflect on the fact that as a Christian, I am supposed to love. And I have to say that sometimes when I listen to less than loving expressions by Christians, I get concerned.”

The president had a grand opportunity to say something timely and urgent; after all, dozens of Christians had just been captured and murdered in Kenya by Muslim barbarians. Instead the president denigrated Christians.

A few weeks earlier, Obama could not muster the courage to mention by name the religious affiliation of those who were chosen for execution—they are called Christians—but he had no problem letting the name Christian roll off his lips when it came to disparaging them. The reason why Obama did not mention Christians by name is because he did not want to offend Muslims.

## **April 21**

**Washington, DC** – The U.S. House of Representatives Oversight and Government Reform Committee voted 20-16 to advance a bill overturning the District of Columbia’s recently enacted Reproductive Health Non-Discrimination Act.

Far from advancing “non-discrimination,” the Reproductive Health Act, along with the Human Rights Amendment Act also enacted by the D.C. government, would “subjugate the Church’s moral teaching to the moral views of the government, violating the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, and result in discrimination against religious believers,” the Archdiocese of Washington said in a statement. For example, as Washington Cardinal Donald Wuerl and Catholic University of America President John Garvey explained in an April 19 op-ed piece in the *Washington Post*, the Reproductive Health Act could be used to force the Church to employ – even in its pro-life education ministry – someone who would use their position to counsel women to have an

abortion. And the Human Rights Act could be used to force Catholic colleges and universities to give official sanction to student groups – such as gay and lesbian groups – that actively oppose Catholic teaching.

## **April 23**

**New York, NY** – It was not surprising – and ordinarily not of interest to the Catholic League – that Hillary Clinton, in a speech to the Women in the World summit, would declare her support for Planned Parenthood. Hillary, after all, opposes a ban on even late-term, partial birth abortion. What made it an issue for us, however, was when she told her feminist audience that religious beliefs on abortion must be changed.

“Yes, we’ve cut the maternal mortality rate in half,” she said, “but far too many women are still denied critical access to reproductive health [read: abortion] and safe childbirth. All the laws we’ve passed don’t count for much if they’re not enforced. Rights have to exist in practice, not just on paper. Laws have to be backed up with resources, and political will and deep-seated cultural codes, *religious beliefs*, and structural biases have to be changed. (Italics added)

In other words, here was presidential candidate Hillary Clinton demanding that the Catholic Church change its teachings on abortion to comport with her ideology. Never before have we seen a candidate be this bold about directly confronting the Catholic Church’s pro-life teachings. We await her explanation of exactly how she plans to use the powers of government to deliver on her pledge.

## **May**

**Camp Lejeune, NC** – An appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals was made after a U.S. Marine officer was found guilty at a court martial for disobeying the “lawful order” of her superior officer to remove biblical phrases that she had taped onto her computer and desk. Former Marine Lance Corporal Monifa Sterling was forced to remove the verse “No weapon formed

against me shall prosper," Isaiah 54:17, from her computer and other biblical verses that she had taped to her desk.

### **May 3**

**Meadville, PA** – A church regained the right to serve and minister at a government-run housing project after initially being booted simply for being "religious."

Rachael Groll, the Children's Ministry Director at Living Waters Church, began reaching out to families at the Gill Village housing project last year when she noticed a group of children eating pancake mix right out of the box. She and her church began providing free food and clothing, as well as after school mentoring, free rides to community events and to their church. Soon she began leading "Sidewalk Sunday School" programs consisting of Bible stories, music and games for the children and families. But last September, the church was notified by the government housing agency that they were not welcome back – simply because they were a religious entity.

The church contacted the Alliance Defending Freedom, which demanded that the housing authorities cease engaging in religious discrimination. "Religious speech receives full and robust protection under the First Amendment and cannot lawfully be excluded from government property simply because of its religious nature and viewpoint." Housing authority officials then agreed to remove the restrictions from the church, acknowledging that they had misunderstood the Constitution.

### **May 21**

**New York, NY** – Bill Donohue wrote a letter to U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on the refusal of the United Nations to punish sexual abuse committed by its peacekeeping missions. He called for the U.N. to either implement its "zero tolerance" policy, or to stop all proceedings against the Holy See on this issue.

Below is an excerpt of Donohue's letter.

*As president of the largest Catholic civil rights organization in the United States, I am appealing to you to do one of two things: a) either ensure that the United Nations' policy on "zero tolerance" against convicted sex abusers serving in peacekeeping missions is enforced immediately, or b) cease and desist from probing into alleged sexual abuse violations committed by those in the employ of the Holy See.*

*This duplicity can no longer be tolerated. When U.N. panels sit in judgment of the Holy See on these matters—while the U.N. itself does nothing to combat sexual abuse committed by those under its watch—it rubs all fair-minded people the wrong way; it is also the height of hypocrisy. Indeed, it is analogous to a corrupt judge overseeing a trial on corruption. Consider recent revelations about the U.N.'s failure to seriously address this issue.*

*In 2002, the American bishops adopted, and began enforcing, a "zero tolerance" policy on sexual abuse committed by Church employees; the Holy See has since implemented a similar policy. Two years later, the U.N. adopted a "zero tolerance" policy, but unlike the Catholic Church, it was never enforced. Worse, the conventional response has been to grant immunity to those accused of sexual offenses. I can only imagine how the U.N. would react if the Catholic Church decided to grant immunity to accused sex offenders.*

*In 2012, eight years after the U.N. adopted its "zero tolerance" policy, you promoted an "enhanced plan of action" to combat this problem, yet a special report by a U.N.-commissioned independent panel recently determined that a "culture of silence" prevails and that "impunity" rules.*

*It is more than laughable—it is obscene—that U.N. peacekeeping members who have been convicted of sexual abuse are not even fined! To be exact, this September the U.N.*

General Assembly will debate whether convicted sex offenders should lose their vacation pay!

This problem is not going away. Reports of women and children being sexually molested by U.N. peacekeeping forces continue to pour in from all over the world. For example, we know that well over 500 victims of sexual assault were recently treated in one year in the Central African Republic alone. How many others have suffered elsewhere?

To do the probing of these cases, the U.N. has authorized 168 civilian positions. But only 1.2 percent of the posts have been filled. Similarly, new ways for alleged victims to state their grievances have been announced, but there has been no follow through. Another program, a multilingual learning initiative for peacekeeping personnel, has been mandated to deal with sexual abuse, but not only has it not been implemented—the pilot program does not begin until May 2016.

When asked why the U.N. has failed to deliver on this issue, its spokesmen say it is difficult to ensure enforcement. No doubt it is. But would this be accepted as a legitimate response if offered by the Holy See? We all know the answer.

I speak from experience. I have read what officials from the U.N. Committee against Torture, and the Committee on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, have said about the Holy See. I have also replied to their reports. In particular, the May 2014 report by the Committee on Torture was a highly politicized and totally biased statement against the Holy See.

Let me repeat my appeal. Either move with dispatch to implement the “zero tolerance” policy that was adopted in 2004, or demand that U.N. officials of the aforementioned U.N. committees stop with their inquiries into alleged wrongdoing by the Holy See. I hope you choose the former.

**June 25**

**Albany, NY** – A Christian couple that owns a family farm in New

York appealed after the state fined them \$13,000 for refusing to host a same-sex wedding on their property. A lesbian couple had filed a discrimination complaint when Cynthia and Robert Gifford said the family's religious beliefs prevented them from hosting the couple's wedding ceremony at the farm, despite the fact that the Giffords did say that the couple was welcome to have its reception there. Last summer a judge ordered the Giffords to pay \$10,000 to the government and \$3,000 to the same-sex couple.

## **June 26**

**Washington, DC** – In a 5-4 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that gay marriage is a constitutional right that must be observed by all 50 states. The five justices cited the 14th Amendment's equal protection clause as their rationale.

Far and away the worst part of this ruling is its ominous implications for religious liberty. The majority declared that religious Americans "may continue to advocate with utmost, sincere conviction that, by divine precepts, same-sex marriage should not be condoned." "The First Amendment," the five justices said, "ensures that religious organizations and persons are given proper protection as they seek to teach the principles that are so fulfilling and so central to their lives."

Justice Clarence Thomas, in his dissent, rightly criticized this genuflection to religious rights. "Religious liberty," he said, "is about freedom of action in matters of religion generally" – it is not confined to advocacy.

Two days after this ruling, *New York Times* columnist Mark Oppenheimer called upon the IRS to revoke the tax-exempt status of churches.

## **June 30**

**Oklahoma City, OK** – The Oklahoma Supreme Court ruled 7-2 that a Ten Commandments monument on the Oklahoma Capitol grounds is

a religious symbol and must be removed, because it violates the state's constitutional ban on using public property to benefit religion. State Attorney General Scott Pruitt had argued that the monument was historical in nature and nearly identical to a Texas monument that the U.S. Supreme Court found constitutional. The court said the Oklahoma monument violated the state's constitution, not the U.S. Constitution. In a statement AG Pruitt said, "The court completely ignored the profound historical impact of the Ten Commandments on the foundation of Western law."

On July 27, The Oklahoma Supreme Court reaffirmed its original decision and issued a ruling denying Attorney General Pruitt's request for a rehearing.

## **July 24**

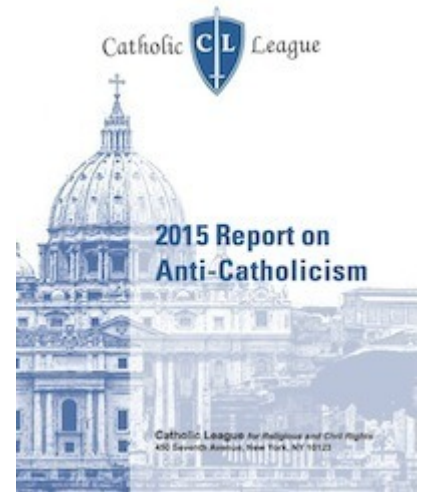
***Bowling Green, KY*** – The state of Kentucky revoked the volunteer prison minister status of ordained Christian Minister David Wells, pursuant to a Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) policy issued in 2014 that states that volunteers cannot refer to homosexuality or other alternative sexual lifestyles as "sinful." Mr. Wells was unable in good conscience to sign a paper promising to comply with this policy, which states that DJJ staff, volunteers and others, "shall not imply or tell LGBTQI juveniles that they are abnormal, deviant, sinful or that they can or should change their sexual orientation or gender identity." He had volunteered for more than 10 years at the facility.

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# **Media**

**October 2**

**Roseburg, OR** – Here is what Chris Harper-Mercer said to his victims just before he killed them at Umpqua Community College: “Are you Christian?” After they stood up he said, “Good, because you’re Christian, you are going to see God in just about one second.” He then shot them. Another eyewitness account said that after he asked if they were Christian, “then they were shot in the head. If they said no, or didn’t answer, they were shot in the legs.”



The following media outlets were among those that reported on this story but initially did not mention that Christians were singled out:

- ABC World News Tonight
- CBS Evening News
- NBC Nightly News
- PBS News Hour
- New York Times
- USA Today
- Slate
- Salon
- Gawker
- Daily Beast
- Yahoo
- Huffington Post
- Associated Press [This accounts for why so many papers across the nation made no mention of Christians in their early reporting.]

If African Americans or Muslims had been singled out, President Obama would have gone ballistic, Al Sharpton would have been calling for street rallies, and CAIR would have been asking for congressional investigations. But because Christians were cherry picked for murder, there was no call to



arms. Indeed, many major media outlets weren't even telling the truth. It's obvious—"Christian Lives Don't Matter"—either here or abroad.

## **Internet**

### **March 18**

Facebook rejected an online advertisement from the makers of the independent film "I Am A Christian." "Are You Christian?" the ad asked, "Stand up and declare, Yes, I Am A Christian!!!" Facebook responded that the ad "wasn't approved because it doesn't follow Facebook's Advertising Guidelines for language that is profane, vulgar, threatening or generates high negative feedback." Facebook later clarified, "We've found that people dislike ads that directly address them or their personal characteristics such as religion."

### **April 8**

Jewishbusinessnews.com posted an article about a lawsuit over anti-Catholic remarks allegedly made by a businessman. Amazingly, the reporter who wrote the article made patently anti-Catholic remarks himself. We protested and secured a sincere and extensive apology from the media outlet's president.

According to the lawsuit, the businessman said, "You don't really believe Jesus was born to a Virgin Mother, or are you that big of a moron?" He was also accused of saying, "Is it that stupid Ash Wednesday again? You better not come to work with ashes on your head." The victim sued for \$5 million for harassment that led to a hospitalized panic attack.

Jewishbusinessnews.com wrote about this story, mistaking the virgin birth for Mary's Immaculate Conception. The reporter wrote the following:

"To be fair, generations of Jews have found that story hard to swallow, but, hey, if old man Joseph the carpenter took her word for it, who are we to argue. Still, to us Jews it always

sounded like a good recovery line when you start showing. Certainly better than the classic, 'I fell for it' folks use in emergency rooms. 'God put it there' is much classier."

Less than two hours after the Catholic League issued a press release about the Jewishbusinessnews.com article, Sima Ella contacted Bill Donohue:

*Dear Friends,*

*I am so sorry. I was not aware of this unbelievable issue, until you brought it to my attention and I read it with my own eyes. I fully understand your feelings; I would feel the same as you. I took the article down immediately. Please, please accept my sincere and heartfelt apologies—we are a lot better than that.*

*Sincerely,*  
Sima Ella

Donohue responded: "Rarely have I seen a quicker and more sincere apology than this. All is forgiven. It is important that Catholic-Jewish relations remain good, especially these days. Case Closed."

### **April 13**

Rabbi Shmuley Boteach, in a post on [observer.com](http://observer.com), trotted out the discredited thesis that Pope Pius XII was "silent" during the Holocaust. In fact, he went even beyond this falsehood, accusing Pius of having been "a collaborator with the Nazi government." To do so, of course, he had to ignore the testimony of prominent media and Jewish leaders of the time, who credited Pope Pius with being a singular voice who did not remain silent. The *New York Times* for example, on Christmas Day, 1941, called Pius "a lonely voice in the silence and darkness enveloping Europe this Christmas." A year later, the *Times* said, "This Christmas more than ever he [the pope] is a lonely voice crying out of the silence of a continent."

Boteach accused the pope of watching silently when the Gestapo in 1943 rounded up the Jews of Rome. But one of the world's experts on the Holocaust, the recently deceased Sir Martin Gilbert – author of *Never Again: A History of the Holocaust* – said just the opposite. “[W]hen the Gestapo came to Rome in 1943 to round up the Jews,” he attested, “the Catholic Church, on his [the pope’s] direct authority, immediately dispersed as many Jews as they could.”

## **June 14**

On the online magazine Salon, Jeffrey Tayler, an editor at *The Atlantic*, attacked U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia as being “of unsound mind and unfit to serve” because of his Catholic faith, and went on to attack religious believers in general as suffering from “faith-derangement syndrome (FDS).”

In an undisciplined screed, Tayler went on to attack Catholics generally, whose priests he termed “pedophile pulpитеers of your creed [who] have...warped[ed] the minds of their credulous ‘flocks’ for two millennia.” He accused Pope Francis of sheltering child rapists and suggested that “what we ought to do is send in the vice squad” for him. He also opined “we should certainly send out notice that the votaries of the bizarre Catholic cult are to stay well away from our children.”

## **June 24**

Susan Warner, in an article on the Gatestone Institute’s website entitled, “The Scorpion, The Frog and The Pope,” attacked Pope Francis for recognizing the Palestinian state, saying, “The Pope’s declaration inspires the already hate-infested Palestinians to commit murder with a symbolic pontifical blessing.” She characterized the history of the Catholic Church as “a two-thousand year old story of anti-Judaism, conspicuous by frequent massacres, murders, forced conversions, torture, pogroms, expulsions, demonization and other unspeakable acts of violence and offense.” She tied anti-Semitism to Catholic theology and asked the rhetorical

question, “Is the Catholic Church, like the scorpion, simply standing against the Jewish state because it is part of the Church’s DNA?”

## **August 24**

On the online magazine Salon, Jeffrey Tayler, an editor at *The Atlantic*, attacked the Catholic Church and its clergy at length, expressing a hope that the United Nations Convention Against Torture would lead to worldwide arrests and possibly executions of Catholic priests: “Courts may well decide that the sexual abuse of children constitutes torture, which could lead to sweeping arrests depopulating the ranks of the Catholic clergy, with shackled priests making perp walks the world over. One hopes a Nuremberg-style tribunal can be set up for them – with Nuremberg-style punishments.”

He also, much less luridly, attacked evangelicals. He called for the end of tax exemption for religious organizations, lamenting the loss of billions of dollars to “federal coffers,” called on his readers to urge presidential candidates to desist from professing their faith on the campaign trail, and concluded: “We need to act on the strength of our convictions, which must exceed in firmness the determination of the faith-deranged to impose their will on us.”

## **Movies**

*The following article is the Catholic League’s official response to the movie, “Spotlight”:*

### **SHINING THE LIGHT ON “SPOTLIGHT”**

**Bill Donohue**

The movie “Spotlight” is bound to spark more conversation about the sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church. Unfortunately, much of what the American public knows about this issue is derived from the popular culture, something this film will only abet. Therefore, the time is ripe to revisit

what the actual data on this subject reveals.

When the *Boston Globe* sent the nation reeling in 2002 with revelations of priestly sexual abuse, and the attendant cover-up, Catholics were outraged by the level of betrayal. This certainly included the Catholic League. The scandal cannot be denied. What is being denied, however, is the existence of another scandal—the relentless effort to keep the abuse crisis alive, and the deliberate refusal to come to grips with its origins. Both scandals deserve our attention.

### *Myth: The Scandal Never Ended*

When interviewed about the scandal in 2002 by the *New York Times*, I said, “I am not the church’s water boy. I am not here to defend the indefensible.” In the Catholic League’s 2002 *Annual Report*, I even defended the media. “The *Boston Globe*, the *Boston Herald*, and the *New York Times* covered the story with professionalism,” I wrote.

A decade later things had changed. In the Catholic League’s 2011 *Annual Report*, I offered a critical assessment of the media. “In a nutshell,” I said, “what changed was this: in 2011, unlike what happened in 2002, virtually all the stories were about accusations against priests dating back decades, sometimes as long as a half-century ago. Keep in mind that not only were most of the priests old and infirm, many were dead; thus, only one side of the story could be told. Adding to our anger was the fact that no other institution, religious or secular, was being targeted for old allegations.”

It became clear that by 2011 we were dealing with two scandals, not one. Scandal I was internal—the church-driven scandal. This was the result of indefensible decisions by the clergy: predatory priests and their enabling bishops. Scandal II was external, the result of indefensible cherry-picking of old cases by rapacious lawyers and vindictive victims’ groups. They were aided and abetted by activists, the media, and

Hollywood.

Regarding Scandal II, more than cultural elites were involved. "In 2011," I wrote, "it seemed as if 'repressed memories' surfaced with alacrity, but only among those who claimed they were abused by a priest. That there was no similar explosion of 'repressed memories' on the part of those who were molested by ministers, rabbis, teachers, psychologists, athletic coaches, and others, made us wonder what was going on."

The steeple-chasing lawyers and professional victims' organizations had a vested economic interest in keeping the scandal alive; the former made hundreds of millions and they, in turn, lavishly greased the latter. But it wasn't money that motivated the media and Hollywood elites to keep the story alive—it was ideology.

To be specific, the Catholic Church has long been the bastion of traditional morality in American society, and if there is anything that the big media outlets and the Hollywood studios loathe, it is being told that they need to put a brake on their libido. So when the scandal came to light, the urge to pounce proved irresistible. The goal was, and still is, to attenuate the moral authority of the Catholic Church. It certainly wasn't outrage over the sexual abuse of minors that stirred their interest: if that were the case, then many other institutions would have been put under the microscope. But none were.

There is no conspiracy here. What unfolded is the logical outcome of the ideological leanings of our cultural elites. Unfortunately, "Spotlight" will only add to Scandal II. How so? Just read what those connected with the film are saying.

Tom McCarthy, who co-wrote the script with Josh Singer, said, "I would love for Pope Francis and the cardinals and bishops and priests to see this [film]." Would it make any difference? "I remain pessimistic," he says. "To be honest," he declares,

"I expect no reaction at all."

Mark Ruffalo plays a reporter, and, like McCarthy, he says, "I hope the Vatican will use this movie to *begin* to right those wrongs." (My italic.) He is not sanguine about the prospects. Indeed, he has given up on the Church.

The view that the Catholic Church has not even begun to "right those wrongs" is widely shared. Indeed, the impression given to the American people, by both the media and Hollywood—it is repeated nightly by TV talk-show hosts—is that the sexual abuse scandal in the Church never ended. Impressions count: In December 2012, a CBS News survey found that 55 percent of Catholics, and 73 percent of Americans overall, believe that priestly sexual abuse of minors remains a problem. Only 14 percent of Americans believe it is not a problem today.

Commentary by those associated with "Spotlight," as well as movie reviewers and pundits, are feeding this impression. But the data show that the conventional wisdom is wrong. The fact of the matter is that the sexual abuse of minors by priests has long ceased to be an institutional problem. All of these parties—Catholics, the American public, the media, and Hollywood—entertain a view that is not supported by the evidence. "Spotlight" will only add to the propaganda.

In 2002, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) commissioned researchers from the John Jay College of Criminal Justice to conduct a major study of priestly sexual abuse; it covered the years 1950 to 2002. It found that accusations of the sexual molestation of minors were made against 4,392 priests.

This figure represents 4 percent of all Catholic priests. What was not widely touted is that 43 percent of these allegations (1881) were unsubstantiated. To qualify as "unsubstantiated" the bar was set high: the allegation had to be "proven to be untruthful and fabricated" as a result of a criminal

investigation.

In other words, roughly 2 percent of priests were likely guilty of molesting minors. Accusations proven to be false should carry no weight in assessing wrongdoing, yet the fabrications are treated by the media as if they were true. It must also be said that this rate of false accusations is much higher than found in studies of this problem in the general population.

More than half of the accused priests had only one allegation brought against them. Moreover, 3.5 percent accounted for 26 percent of all the victims. As computed by professor Philip Jenkins, an expert on this subject, the John Jay data reveal that "Out of 100,000 priests active in the U.S. in this half-century, a cadre of just 149 individuals—one priest out of every 750—accounted for a quarter of all allegations of clergy abuse."

These data give the lie to the accusation that during this period the sexual molestation of minors by priests was rampant. It manifestly was not. Even more absurd is the accusation that the problem is still ongoing.

In the last ten years, from 2005 to 2014, an average 8.4 credible accusations were made against priests for molestation that occurred in any one of those years. The data are available online at the USCCB website (see the reports issued for these years). Considering that roughly 40,000 priests could have had a credible accusation made against them, this means that *almost 100 percent of priests had no such accusation made against them!*

Sadly, I cannot name a single media outlet, including Catholic ones, that even mentioned this, much less emphasized it. The Catholic News Service, paid for by the bishops, should have touted this, but it didn't. This delinquency is what helps to feed the misperception that the Church has not even begun to



deal with this problem.

In 2011, researchers from John Jay issued another report, "The Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States, 1950-2010." While the document was often critical, it commended the Church for its forthrightness in dealing with this problem. "No other institution has undertaken a public study of sexual abuse," the report said, "and as a result, there are no comparable data to those collected by the Catholic Church." Looking at the most recent data, the report found that the "incidence of child sexual abuse has declined in both the Catholic Church and in society in general, though the rate of decline is greater in the Catholic Church in the same time period."

So much for the myth that the Church has not yet "begun" to address this issue. Every study by the John Jay researchers shows that most of the abuse took place between 1965-1985. This is not hard to figure out: the sexual revolution began in the 1960s and fizzled out by the mid-1980s. Libertinism drove the sexual revolution, and it hit the seminaries as well, especially in the 1970s. Matters slowed once AIDS was uncovered in 1981. It took fear—the fear of death—to bring about a much needed reality check.

### *Myth: Celibacy is the Root Cause*

On October 28, 2015, a columnist for the *Boston Globe* wrote an article about "Spotlight" titled, "Based on a True Story." Similarly, script writer Tom McCarthy said, "We made a commitment to let the facts play."

No one disputes the fact that predatory priests were allowed to run wild in the Boston Archdiocese; the problem was not confined to Boston, but it was the epicenter. That molesting priests were moved around like chess pieces to unsuspecting parishes is also true. Ditto for the cover-up orchestrated by some bishops. This is the very stuff of Scandal I. Where the

factual claims dissolve, however, is when the script claims to know what triggered the scandal.

“Spotlight” made its premiere on September 3 at the Venice Film Festival. A review published by the international French news agency, AFP, noted that “in Spotlight’s nuanced script, few in the Catholic hierarchy have shown any inclination to address whether the enforced celibacy of priests might be one of the root causes of the problem.”

The celibacy myth was debunked by the John Jay 2011 report. “Celibacy has been constant in the Catholic Church since the eleventh century and could not account for the rise and subsequent decline in abuse cases from the 1960s through the 1980s.” But if celibacy did not drive the scandal, what did? The John Jay researchers cite the prevalence of sexually immature men who were allowed to enter the seminaries, as well as the effects of the sexual revolution.

There is much truth to this observation, but it is incomplete. Who were these sexually immature men? The popular view, one that is promoted by the movie as well, suggests they were pedophiles. The data, however, prove this to be wrong.

When the word got out that “Spotlight” was going to hit the big screen, Mike Fleming, Jr. got an Exclusive for Deadline Hollywood; his piece appeared on August 8, 2014. The headline boasted that it was a “Boston Priest Pedophile Pic.” In his first sentence, he described the film as “a drama that Tom McCarthy will direct about the *Boston Globe* investigation into pedophile priests.” This narrative is well entrenched in the media, and in the culture at large. Whenever this issue is discussed, it is pitched as a “pedophile” scandal. We can now add “Spotlight’s” contribution to this myth.

One of the most prominent journalists on the *Boston Globe* “Spotlight” team was Kevin Cullen. On February 28, 2004, he wrote a story assessing a report issued by the National Review

Board, appointed by the USCCB, on what exactly happened. He quoted the head of the Board's research committee, well-respected attorney Robert S. Bennett, as saying it was not pedophilia that drove the scandal. "There are no doubt many outstanding priests of a homosexual orientation who live chaste, celibate lives," he said, "but any evaluation of the causes and context of the current crisis must be cognizant of the fact that more than 80 percent of the abuse at issue was of a homosexual nature."

Bennett was correct, and Cullen knew it to be true as well. "Of the 10,667 reported victims [in the time period between 1950 and 2002]," Cullen wrote, "81 percent were male, the report said, and more than three-quarters [the exact figure is 78 percent] were postpubescent, meaning the abuse did not meet the clinical definition of pedophilia." One of Bennett's colleagues, Dr. Paul McHugh, former psychiatrist-in-chief at Johns Hopkins University, was more explicit. "This behavior was homosexual predation on American Catholic youth," he said, "yet it is not being discussed." It never is.

So it is indisputable that the *Boston Globe* "Spotlight" team knew that it was homosexuality, not pedophilia, that drove the scandal. Yet that is not what is being reported today. Indeed, as recently as November 1, 2015, a staff reporter for the *Boston Globe* said the movie was about "the pedophile priest crisis." This flies in the face of the evidence. In fact, the John Jay 2011 report found that less than 5 percent of the abusive priests fit the diagnosis of pedophilia, thus concluding that "it is inaccurate to refer to abusers as 'pedophile priests.'"

The evidence, however, doesn't count. Politics counts. The mere suggestion that homosexual priests accounted for the lion's share of the problem was met with cries of homophobia. This is at the heart of Scandal II. Even the John Jay researchers went on the defensive. Most outrageous was the voice of dissident, so-called progressive, Catholics: It was

they who pushed for a relaxation of sexual mores in the seminaries, thus helping to create Scandal I. Then they helped to create Scandal II by refusing to take ownership of the problem they foisted; they blamed “sexual repression” for causing the crisis.

So how did the deniers get around the obvious? Cullen said that “most [of the molested] fell victim to ephebophiles, men who are sexually attracted to adolescent or postpubescent children.” But clinically speaking, ephebophilia is a waste-basket term of no scientific value.

Philip Jenkins once bought into this idea but eventually realized that the word “communicates nothing to most well-informed readers. These days I tend rather to speak of these acts as ‘homosexuality.’” Jenkins attributes his change of mind to Mary Eberstadt, one of the most courageous students of this issue. “When was the last time you heard the phrase ‘ephebophile’ applied to a heterosexual man?” In truth, ephebophilia is shorthand for homosexuals who prey on adolescents.

Even those who know better, such as the hierarchy of the Church, are reluctant to mention the devastating role that homosexual priests have played in molesting minors. In April 2002, the cardinals of the United States, along with the leadership of the USCCB and the heads of several offices of the Holy See, issued a Communiqué from the Vatican on this issue. “Attention was drawn to the fact that almost all the cases involved adolescents and therefore were not cases of true pedophilia” they said. So what were they? They were careful not to drop the dreaded “H” word.

Further proof that the problem is confined mostly to gay priests is provided by Father Michael Peterson, co-founder of St. Luke’s Institute, the premier treatment center in the nation for troubled priests. He frankly admits, “We don’t see heterosexual pedophiles at all.” This suggests that virtually

all the priests who abused postpubescent children had a homosexual orientation.

The spin game is intellectually dishonest. When adult men have sex with postpubescent females, the predatory behavior is seen as heterosexual in nature. But when adult men have sex with postpubescent males, the predatory behavior is not seen as homosexual in nature. This isn't science at work—it's politics, pure and simple.

I have said it many times before, and I will say it again: most gay priests are not molesters but most molesting priests have been gay. It gets tiresome, however, to trot this verity out every time I address this issue. That's because it means nothing to elites in the dominant culture. Just whispering about the role gay priests have played in the sexual abuse scandal triggers howls of protest.

There is plenty of evidence that Hollywood has long been a haven for sexual predators, both straight and gay. The same is true of many religious and secular institutions throughout society. But there is little interest in the media and in Tinsel Town to profile them. They have identified the enemy and are quite content to keep pounding away.

There is no doubt that the *Boston Globe* "Spotlight" team deserved a Pulitzer Prize for exposing Scandal I. Regrettably, there will be no Pulitzer for exposing Scandal II.

## **Music**

### **January 23**

Singer Lady Gaga and her friends from her Catholic high school were celebrating a bachelorette party. They got drunk, wrecked the hotel room, ate like pigs, pole danced all night, and celebrated with phallic symbols: from the cake in the shape of a penis to the penis-shaped candles, the gals got as raunchy as it gets.

The pop star made sure to point out the Catholic roots of the girls' friendship in her Instagram posts. "We love our girl so much we will be getting her drunk for the next 48 hrs #catholicschoolgirlsdoitbest" read one post, "Lord help the parents of Catholic school girls" read another.

## **September 9**

**Montreal, Canada** – In Montreal to kick off her latest tour, Madonna launched into the obscene lyrics from her song "Holy Water," ripped off her skirt to reveal a skimpy nun's habit, and started to pole dance. She then used one of her dancers—also dressed as a nun—to ride like a surfboard. Then the dancers lined the stage to act out the Last Supper, with Madonna as the central focus.

## **Newspapers**

### **January 12**

**Newark, OH** – The *Newark Advocate* published a cartoon by Milt Priggee titled "Pope Justifies Terrorist's Attack on Charlie Hebdo." The cartoon shows four gravestones representing the people killed inside a Jewish grocery store. A thought bubble above one headstone reads "Did you hear the pope understands why the terrorists attacked?"

### **February 1**

**Los Angeles, CA** – On January 17, a crowd of 15,000, many of them young people, took to the streets of Los Angeles to participate in the first "One Life" march, a demonstration in support of the rights of unborn children. On February 1, ten people demonstrated outside the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels to protest the proposed canonization of Father Junípero Serra, the priest who brought Christianity to California.

The *Los Angeles Times* ignored the former, even though the demonstration was held one block from its headquarters, but published an article highlighting the latter group.

The non-event protest was the work of the ill-named Mexica

Movement. In fact, there is no movement: there is just a handful of Christian-bashing, European-hating activists. In 2000 the group mustered “a few dozen members” for a protest of Elton John. In other words, 15 years ago this rag-tag group marshaled more activists than it did last February. Some “movement.”

The few who protested Father Serra showed how low-class they are when they compared the priest to the devil and Los Angeles Archbishop José Gomez to Hitler. For good reasons, Gomez is well-liked by minorities, though his few detractors garner the news. Shame on the L.A. Times for profiling them.

## **April 29**

**Kansas City, MO** – Yael T. Abouhalkah, editorial writer for the notoriously anti-Catholic *Kansas City Star*, lectured Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, about his decision to have Bishop Robert Finn preside at two ordinations in the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph. Finn had recently resigned as Bishop of Kansas City-St. Joseph, and Naumann was the apostolic administrator of that diocese. Archbishop Naumann was celebrating the ordination of priests in his own diocese the same day as the ordinations in the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph. That is why he asked Bishop Finn—a bishop in good standing in the Catholic Church, whose success in galvanizing significant numbers of bright and able men to the priesthood makes him the envy of bishops in much larger dioceses—to preside over the ordinations in his former diocese. This upset Abouhalkah a great deal. He called the decision to empower Bishop Finn to preside over the ordinations “repulsive” and “reckless.” Bill Donohue called his condemnation malicious, obscene and intrusive, pointing out that Catholics no more report to the *Kansas City Star* than its employees report to the Catholic Church.

## **May 31**

**New York, NY** – New York *Daily News* columnist Linda Stasi, writing about abuse allegations against former House Speaker

Dennis Hastert, wrote the following: "Hastert looks like every pervy child predator priest and pastor with his creepy, pasty skin, wavy white hair and benevolent grin."

## **July – August**

**Philadelphia, PA** – Over the summer, Waldron Academy, an independent Catholic school in the Philadelphia area, decided that it could no longer employ its director of religious education because it had become publicly known that she was involved in a lesbian "marriage." A protest raged all summer against the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, even though it does not run this school. Even more bizarre, the critics were led by a group of anti-Catholics who are funded by an atheist billionaire.

The media, led by the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, gave legitimacy to this contrived protest. The *Inquirer* ran a dozen stories on this incident, all of them in support of Margie Winters, the fired teacher. Most of the stories appeared on the front page of the B section, and a few made it to p. A1. Although the issue seemed like a clear-cut case of a private sectarian organization enforcing its own house rules, the media and activist organizations kept up a relentless pressure against the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and Archbishop Charles Chaput.

## **July 19**

**New York, NY** – The *Forward*, a Jewish newspaper of some reputation, published a gratuitous nasty piece by Anna Katsnelson entitled "I Am a Fugitive from a Catholic School." Katsnelson told us how her Jewish parents elected to place her in a Catholic elementary school in New York. Along the way we learned about the Holy Eucharist, which she disrespectfully compared to matzo, attendance at Mass, religious instruction, the nuns, etc. She casually boasted of receiving the sacraments of the Eucharist and Confirmation without any belief on her part.

She expressed disappointment with her parents for subjecting



her to Catholicism, complaining that they should have known more about the Inquisition before sending her to the school. "Although there was no Judas cradle, Spanish donkey, head crusher or rack in her office," Katsnelson writes, "the local Torquemada of my junior high school was not below chastising me for chewing gum and interrogating me about my pseudo-Christian identity." Moreover, the nuns tried to instill chastity, something she said backfired. For good measure, she added that "Catholic schoolgirls dressed like sluts in training."

### **August 9**

**New York, NY** – The Associated Press (AP) joined the ranks of press outlets obsessed with the story of the lesbian school teacher who was fired from an independent Catholic school in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. In the fourth AP story on this non-story, reporter Maryclaire Dale misrepresented what Pope Francis said about gays, and then accused Philadelphia Archbishop Charles Chaput of "wading into the issue." It must be said that AP was the one who was guilty of "wading into the issue"—not the man whose job it is to discuss schools in his archdiocese.

### **September 15**

**Paris, France** – The French magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, notorious for its vile offenses against the sacred beliefs of Muslims, Christians and Jews, published two disgusting cartoons mocking the death of little Aylan Kurdi, the three-year-old Syrian boy whose body washed up on the shores of Turkey during the Syrian refugee exodus. One cartoon showed a little boy's body washed up on shore, next to a fast food billboard advertising two kid meals for the price of one, with the caption, "So close to making it." The other cartoon showed a Jesus figure walking on water, with a child's body upside down in the water next to him. The Jesus figure said, "Christians walk on water"; the drowning child said, "Muslim children sink." And the caption read, "Proof that Europe is Christian."

## **Radio**

### **January 29**

The “Imus in the Morning” radio show featured guest Rob Bartlett doing his impression of Pope Francis where he implied priests were sexual deviants. While wearing a white skullcap and speaking in a mock Italian accent Bartlett discussed a toy designed by the Vermont Teddy Bear Company inspired by the film “Fifty Shades of Grey”: “So what is this I hear, Vermont Teddy Bear has got a Fifty Shades of Grey bear? How do you take a cute sweet little thing and exploit it for your own twisted sexual appetite? I’m asking myself the very same thing, I’m trying to get some of these priests into another line of work.”

### **February 12**

Rob Bartlett returned as a guest on the “Imus in the Morning” radio program, which is simulcast on the Fox Business Network, to do his impression of Pope Francis. Imus, and his producers, allowed Bartlett to engage in an extended rant, pretending to speak as Pope Francis. It was a mixed bag: some of it was funny; some of it was plain stupid; and some of it crossed the line.

It is not clear whether it is Bartlett’s ignorance or malice that best explains his ugly comparison of bondage, domination, and sadomasochism—ala “Fifty Shades of Grey”—to mortification, a method of Christian asceticism practiced by some Catholics in service to virtuous living. Either way, he unnecessarily offended Catholics.

### **February 13**

The “Bill Handel Morning Show” on KFI Radio, an ABC affiliate in Los Angeles, obscenely mocked the pope:

Bill Handel: “Do you think the pope masturbates?”

Gary Hoffman [co-host]: “No.”

Michelle Kube [producer]: “No I don’t think...”

Handel: "I'm willing to bet there have been times when..."

Hoffman: "He's tearing that little fella right now."

Handel: "I think so too."

Kube: "Oh stop it."

Handel: "Now, if he doesn't masturbate, do you think the pope has wet dreams? Where that cassock of his, he wakes up in the morning and there's the old stain there. What do you think?"

Hoffman: "Yes."

Handel: "OK."

Hoffman: "Not now. Probably when he was a teenager."

Handel: "Oh come on."

## **February 20**

Rob Bartlett, a regular guest on "Imus in the Morning," did an impression of Pope Francis on the radio show. The segment mocked gay priests.

Bartlett: "I'm Pope Francis, the real Pope Francis, all you bishops named Francis don't take no chances. Keep your pants up, keep your pants up."

He then spoke about the Oscars:

Bartlett: "I see the 'Boyhood' because a lot of the bishops are very excited to see it. I don't know why."

## **Television**

### **January 5**

The host of "Late Night with David Letterman" on CBS took a shot at the pope's new appointment of cardinals. Letterman pretended to have a video of the pope notifying a new cardinal of his selection. A clip was then shown of Michael Sam, the failed homosexual football player, crying when he was selected in the draft to play in the NFL. Sam is then shown kissing his boyfriend. Then the screen went black and "Please Stand By" was posted, along with an image of the pope and some crosses.

### **January 7**

Bill Maher was a guest on ABC's "Jimmy Kimmel Live." Talking about accusations of sexual assault by celebrities, Maher discussed the accusations against Michael Jackson, but made a gratuitous reference to Catholic priests: "I don't know [if the accusations are true]. What I think happened, he was a little grabby grabby under the covers, which is wrong. It is. That is a crime to grabby grabby, but it's not like, you know, what Catholic priests were doing."

### **January 16**

On his HBO show, "Real Time with Bill Maher," the host criticized Pope Francis' comments on insulting people of faith. Maher then made a vulgar remark about the pope. "He's dead to me now. Oh yeah, f\*ck the pope."

### **January 22**

"Reign" on the CW Network, a weekly drama based on the story of Mary, Queen of Scots, debuted its winter premier. The episode "Getaway" included a Catholic cardinal who was using the Swiss Guard to hunt members of a rival group. The cardinal is gay and is shown in bed with his male lover. The other characters plot against the cardinal by branding his lover with their symbol, forcing the cardinal to choose between having his lover killed as a heretic or exposing himself as gay.

### **January 29**

In only the second week on the air, Comedy Central's new show, "The Nightly Show with Larry Wilmore," attacked priests. The host introduced the topic about the New England Patriots team supposedly deflating footballs during games. Wilmore said he was not going to make any ball jokes, but instead invited comedians Ricky Velez and Mike Yard to make them.

Velez: "A priest, a rabbi and two deflated balls walk into a bar."

Yard: "What happened?"

Velez: "The priest immediately fondles the deflated balls."

## **February 2**

The host of "The Nightly Show with Larry Wilmore" on Comedy Central made gratuitous jokes about Jesus during a segment about obesity.

Wilmore: "It's true, even if you go to church you see a P90X version of Jesus on the cross. Right? [Jesus is shown on the cross with a 6-pack. Nervous laughter from audience.] I mean talk about cross-fit, am I right? Am I right Christian ladies?"

Wilmore then immediately issued a mock apology for insulting Jesus:

Wilmore: "I'd like to issue an apology to my Christian ladies. 'My mockery of Jesus, though accurate, was way out of line. Unlike the Michael Moore blah blah blah, et. al.' My point is, if Jesus looked like this [a fat Jesus on the cross is shown] More Galifianakis than Caviezel..."

## **February 10**

On the Fox sitcom "The Mindy Project," Mindy Kaling, who stars in the show in addition to writing and directing it, has learned that she is pregnant and is trying to tell her Catholic boyfriend Danny, played by Chris Messina. In this scene, they insult loyal Catholics, and mock the Church's teaching on masturbation.

## **February 21**

Comedy Central debuted a stand-up act produced by Kevin Hart. The show featured comedian Keith Robinson. Robinson introduced his tirade by stating how easily offended people have become these days to what others say.

"Even criminals have the nerve to be sensitive about what the hell you say to them. Pedophiles don't want to be called pedophiles. They want to be called priests."

The audience responded with nervous laughter. "That was a

delicious joke. I don't give a damn about what nobody say [his illiteracy], that was a delicious joke."

Robinson then attacked someone who didn't clap, wondering "What the hell is your problem?" He then asks, "Are you Catholic, sir? Did a priest ever get to you? Put some baby oil on your feet so you couldn't run in the marble hall?"

## **February 26**

On NBC's "Law and Order: Special Victims Unit" there was a gratuitous mention of sex and the Vatican. The detectives were investigating complaints that a 79-year-old man was being sexually abused by his new younger wife. The man denied the abuse and implied he married the younger woman because he was deprived of sex while working at the Vatican. He said "My third wife took up with a bartender because I got distracted by my book on the pope. Now you spend 6 months at the Vatican, and you see what happens to your testicles."

## **March**

After the fourth episode of this season's Netflix program, "House of Cards" aired, Bill Donohue asked those who receive our news releases to contact Jonathan Friedland, VP, Corporate Communications at Netflix, and ask him to explain why the character who played the president of the United States, Frank Underwood, found it necessary to spit on the face of Jesus and then knock the crucifix to the floor, smashing it to bits.

## **March 5**

Comedy Central aired another attack on the church during its game show "@Midnight." The contest featured Neal Brennan responding to a question by host Chris Hardwick about confession. "Forgive me father for I have sinned, I went to Catholic school growing up. While I was never molested, I did f\*ck a few priests." Not surprisingly, Brennan won the contest.

On the premier of his own show, which aired January 19, 2014,

Brennan commented that he went to Catholic school for 12 years. "No, I didn't get molested, I f\*cked a few priests, but I didn't get molested."

### **March 10**

"The Mindy Project" on Fox took a totally gratuitous stab at Catholicism, and mocked the Eucharist. Mindy's boyfriend, Danny, invited the local priest over for dinner, and lied to him telling the priest that Mindy was Catholic. "Why would you lie and tell him that I was Catholic? I don't have a Catholic bone in my body, except yours" Mindy replied mocking the Church's teachings on sex.

### **April 2**

The host of CBS' "Late Show with David Letterman" made ten jokes about the pope's annual physical: all of the comments were attributed to the attending physician. The joke listed as #1 was: "I know you don't use it, but I still have to take a look at it."

### **April 3**

On Good Friday, David Letterman joked about the pope's physical on his CBS "Late Show." Letterman attributed the pope's weight gain to "a little too many Communion wafers."

### **April 5 – May 10**

PBS aired "Wolf Hall" a six-part television mini-series adapted from Hillary Mantel's novel of the same name. The mini-series was originally produced for the BBC in England. Mantel is a bitter ex-Catholic who admits the aim of her novel is to take down the image of St. Thomas More popularized by the film "A Man for All Seasons."

Thomas More is presented as a religious zealot who condemns anyone opposed to the Church. While Thomas Cromwell, who prosecuted More, is a sensible, pragmatic man who gets things done.

### **April 6**

On the night after Easter, Chris Hardwick, the host of Comedy Central's game show "@Midnight," took a shot at Jesus' resurrection: "Jesus woke up from a nap and now all sins have been wiped clean to make room for even more heinous ones. Whatever you did doesn't matter so you can go out and be a d\*ck for another 365 days."

### **April 10**

During a previous show, Bill Maher had compared former "One Direction" singer Zayn Malik to one of the Boston bombers. The Council on American-Islamic Relations objected to the Muslim stereotype. Responding to that criticism Maher said, "It turns out Zayn Malik is a Muslim. Neither I nor anyone on our staff knew that. How could we? The whole joke is I don't know who the f\*ck he is. I don't know his relation or his birthday or his favorite food because I don't spend every waking hour obsessing over teenage boys like a Catholic pries- [Maher cuts himself off] I mean like a 12-year-old girl."

### **April 24**

During this episode of "Real Time with Bill Maher" on HBO, Maher lashed out at Pope Francis and Jesus in a particularly vulgar way. Discussing the Armenian genocide, Maher said, "You know who said it's a genocide? The pope. The pope was like f\*\*\* yeah it's a genocide. The pope has huge balls. You would too if you were 78 and never had sex." Maher's assault on the Eucharist was vile. He spoke about a toaster that can customize a burnt image of your face on it. When an image of Jesus was shown on the screen, Maher asked, "What kind of needy loner says, 'hey look at that bread you're eating, it's really me.'"

### **May 13**

Reza Aslan, the Iranian-American religion scholar who once converted to Christianity, then later back to Islam, is so offended by Christians in America celebrating Christmas, that his response is to deliberately offend Christians. On "The Daily Show" Jon Stewart, citing a Pew Research Center study



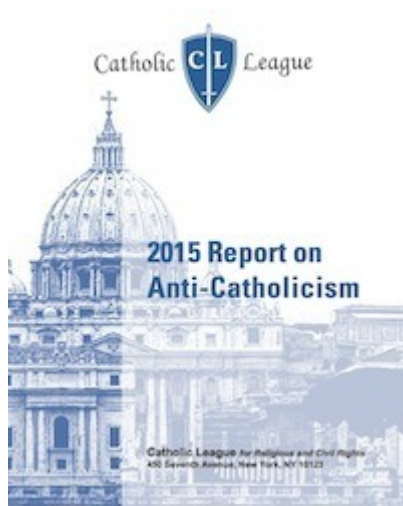
that found 7 in 10 Americans identify as Christians, cracked that that means you have a 30 per cent chance of offending someone when you wish them a Merry Christmas. “As a Muslim,” Aslan responded, “whenever someone wishes me a Merry Christmas I am obligated to say ‘f\*ck you.’”

## September 28

“The Daily Show” began with a voiceover: “After being greeted by the president, the vice president and an adoring crowd at Andrews Air Force Base, he [Pope Francis] was whisked away in a tiny Fiat dwarfed by the Secret Service vehicles surrounding him.” Host Trevor Noah then said “That’s a tiny car. Somebody’s compensating. I’m saying the pope has a huge c\*\*k [bleep]. That was a joke. That is a joke. And what a waste.”

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# Papal Visit



The most historic Catholic event of the year was Pope Francis’ visit to the United States. While it occasioned much goodwill, and overall very fair media coverage, there were some notable exceptions. A selection will be recounted in this section.

We anticipated that the media would give high profile to surveys of Catholics showing that many disagree with Church teachings on a variety of subjects. We got in front of this issue by commissioning our own survey. We chose Kellyanne Conway’s organization, The Polling Company, to do the survey.

We also knew that the decision by Pope Francis to canonize Father Junípero Serra, a courageous 17th century defender of human rights for Indians, would ignite a backlash from radical activists and revisionist authors. That is why Bill Donohue wrote an 18-page booklet defending the pope's decision. He chose an easy to read Q&A format to debunk many myths about this Franciscan priest. It was widely distributed and widely praised.

Bill Donohue and Vice President Bernadette Brady-Egan met Pope Francis on September 23 in Washington, D.C. They are grateful to Catholic University President John Garvey and Washington Archbishop Cardinal Donald Wuerl for arranging the meeting.

Everywhere Pope Francis went he flagged religious liberty; it was his most consistent theme.

He opened his trip by addressing religious liberty at the White House, arguing that we are called "to preserve and defend that freedom from everything that would threaten or compromise it." That he did so in the company of President Obama, at the White House, was critically important. If there were any doubt about what he meant by those words, it was removed altogether when he made his unscheduled visit to the Little Sisters of the Poor later that day.

By embracing this order of nuns, Pope Francis laid down an unmistakable marker: He has rejected efforts by the Obama administration to force Catholic nonprofit organizations to pay for, or even sanction, abortion-inducing drugs in their health care plans.

The pope also met privately with Kim Davis, the Kentucky county clerk who refused, on religious grounds, to issue a marriage license to a gay couple. "Thank you for your courage. Stay strong." These words by the pope need no interpretation. Moreover, his invocation of conscience rights as a fundamental human right can only be read as a statement against the

Supreme Court decision legalizing gay marriage. These two unscheduled meetings by Pope Francis should convince everyone that he is an ardent advocate of life, religious liberty, and marriage (properly understood).

The next day, he admonished the Congress of the necessity of “safeguarding religious freedom.” At the U.N. he emphasized “religious freedom” again, calling attention to “natural law.” He saved his most extensive remarks on this subject for Philadelphia.

In Philly, Pope Francis spoke outside Independence Hall, summoning the crowd to embrace an expansive interpretation of our first freedom. “Religious liberty, by its nature,” he said, “transcends places of worship and the private sphere of individuals and families.” Thus did he shoot down the Obama administration’s position that we should be satisfied with freedom to worship. Similarly, the pope lashed out at attempts “to reduce it [religious freedom] to a subculture without the right to a voice in the public square....” He wanted a full-throated exercise of religious expression, one that is not marginalized by secular elites.

Aboard the plane on his way home, Pope Francis was asked about Kim Davis. He stated that “conscientious objection is a right—it is a human right.” He added that all human beings are entitled to human rights, including conscience rights.

### **August**

Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), a rabidly pro-abortion Catholic, sent a letter to Pope Francis – signed by 93 of her House Democratic colleagues – that urged him to focus on certain topics when he addressed Congress Sept. 24. Not content to have him speak in general terms about concerns like economic justice or the environment, they wanted him to advance specific items on their agenda, like paid sick leave, a higher minimum wage, and climate change. Nowhere, of course, did they

express openness to what he might have said on marriage, family or the sanctity of life.

A front page story in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* asked why there was just one session on LGBT issues at the World Meeting of Families. That's easily answered: the event featured over 100 speakers, and gays comprise 1.6 percent of the population. That seems proportionate. Moreover, Bill Donohue's analysis of the program yielded five areas of interest: theological, demographic, sexuality, challenges to the family, and family adversity. In each of these areas, the meeting explored a number of issues. For instance, demographic issues included "Family and Demographic Dynamics in the World"; "Blended Families"; "Hispanic Families"; "Immigrant Families"; "Women in the Family"; "The Elderly"; and "Grandparents." Challenges to the family included "Parents as Primary Catechists"; "Growing in Virtue"; "Fostering Vocations in the Home"; "Interfaith Marriage"; "Health Finances"; "Infertility"; and "Disabilities." Given the tremendous variety of topics for the World Meeting of Families to explore, the only segments of society that were unhappy with the program were gays and their allies in the media.

The *Philadelphia Inquirer* also featured a story about LGBT dissident Catholics turning to Methodists for recognition. It is hardly surprising that the World Meeting of Families Congress, which was being hosted by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, insisted that this Catholic event feature Catholic speakers. Yet the *Philadelphia Inquirer* still treated as breaking news the rejection of groups that have publicly professed their rejection of key Catholic teachings.

The four dissident Catholic LGBT groups that were invited to hold forth at a local Methodist church were:

- New Ways Ministry whose leaders were "permanently removed" from any "pastoral work involving homosexuals" under Pope John Paul II. Three U.S. cardinals have also

said that it is a phony Catholic group.

- Dignity USA, which has also been blasted by bishops. In 2015, to show what side it was on, it featured as its Keynote Speaker, Dan Savage, the most obscene anti-Catholic in the nation.
- Fortunate Families, which refuses to accept Catholic teachings on homosexuality and marriage.
- Call to Action, whose members have been excommunicated in some dioceses. It has been in rebellion against the Church for decades.

An article in the *Trentonian* by L.A. Parker argued that Pope Francis should not come to the United States for a papal visit if he did not apologize for Jared Fogle, a former spokesperson for the fast food chain known as Subway, for having sex with minors. To demonstrate why the pope should apologize, Parker trotted out “Billy,” a guy who claimed to have been molested by Philly priests and teachers.

While warning cities who hosted the papal visit to respect church-state separation, Americans United for Separation of Church and State said nothing about the letter that Rep. Rosa DeLauro and 93 of her House Democratic colleagues sent to Pope Francis urging him to advance specific items on their legislative agenda. While Americans United actively opposes religious voices exerting influence on public policies, they apparently saw no problem with these government officials using their offices to try and influence a religious leader.

Americans United for Separation of Church and State sent a letter to officials and federal agencies warning that during previous papal visits, government officials tried to divert taxpayer money for religious purposes and said this could not happen during Pope Francis’ visit that occurred in September. In the letter, Americans United said “[G]overnment bodies must not provide any aid to a Pope’s religious activities that goes beyond the provision of services—such as police, safety and security—that are regularly given for comparable public events

of a similar size.”

Freedom From Religion Foundation sent a letter to New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio that was critical of the city’s ticket giveaway contest for the pope’s procession through Central Park. FFRF’s letter concluded by advising the city to stop the ticket giveaway right away and requested a response from Mayor de Blasio. FFRF stated “By singling out this event for a ticket giveaway, NYC appears to be endorsing Pope Francis’ sectarian religious message. This practice violates the well-established constitutional principle that the government must remain neutral toward religion.”

A homosexual media lobbying organization known as GLAAD issued a guidebook called “The Papal Visit.” GLAAD is not a Catholic group. In fact its release of a papal guidebook for journalists is perverse, given its history of applauding anti-Catholic plays and movies and of condemning Catholics who defend the Church. The papal guidebook listed eight lay Catholics who the media should beware of. As Bill Donohue said, it speaks well for both of them that they never forget him.

### September

Prior to the pope’s visit, anti-Catholic groups were selling the false notion that there is a “stark contrast between the Roman Catholic hierarchy and the laity,” and that “These bishops and cardinals are often greatly out of step with what the vast majority of Catholics believe.” The Catholic League-Polling Company survey done prior to the pope’s visit clearly contradicted this assertion. It showed faithful Catholics in support of the leadership role of the hierarchy as set forward by Christ himself and reiterated throughout the history of the Church.

The Freedom from Religion Foundation (FFRF) and Americans United for Separation of Church and State took various steps

to limit the public's access to Pope Francis during his visit to the United States. Americans United threatened a lawsuit if the city of Cape May, NJ went ahead with plans to broadcast the pope's September 27 Mass from nearby Philadelphia at the Cape May Convention Hall. FFRF opposed New York City's giveaway of tickets to see Pope Francis in Central Park September 25. They also protested the pope's meeting with inmates at the Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility in Philadelphia September 27, and the inmates being permitted to hand carve a chair to present to the pontiff even though they had volunteered to do so.

In an article in the *Washington Post* that was syndicated in other papers, conservative columnist George Will—an atheist—whose latest cause is assisted suicide, said “He [the pope] stands against modernity, rationality, science and, ultimately...open societies.” The Holy Father, Will opined, is known for emitting “clouds of sanctimony.” More important was his twisting of the pope's position on materialism to mean that he is anti-electricity.

In an op-ed in the *Boston Globe*, long-time Catholic dissident Garry Wills comforted himself with the thought that there are two Churches: “Other Church,” which is the hierarchy, and “Our Church,” which is everyone else. It is the former, of course to whom Jesus gave his authority. Moreover, if Wills were to read the Catholic League-Polling Company survey of Catholics, it would have burst his bubble about the faithful being in rebellion against the Magisterium.

The least friendly administration to religion in history invited a collection of pro-abortion nuns, Catholic gay activists, assorted dissidents and religious rebels to attend Pope Francis' visit to the White House. These included gay Catholic blogger Aaron Ledesma; Catholic gay activist and Church critic Nicholas Coppola; and Sister Jeannine Gramick, co-founder of the Catholic dissident group New Ways Ministry, who in 1999 was barred by the Vatican from working in ministry

to homosexuals. Also attending were Gene Robinson, the first openly gay Episcopal bishop, and Sister Simone Campbell, leader of the "Nuns on the Bus" who actively campaigned for Obamacare with its blatant pro-abortion provisions. Members of GLAAD, the Catholic dissident group Dignity and various LGBT leaders also attended.

The Empire State Building did not light its towers in honor of Pope Francis. Instead, it acknowledged the opening night gala of the New York Philharmonic. In doing so, Anthony Malkin, the principal owner of the iconic building, showed his true colors once again: his disdain for Catholics is palpable. Malkin is, of course, most known for stiffing Mother Teresa on the anniversary of her centenary.

Radio host Michael Savage revealed to his listeners that it is tragic "to see a pope arise out of nowhere who espouses the very communistic principles that the church opposed." He accused Pope Francis of promoting "the same philosophy" as the church's persecutors and warned "Oh, beware the enemy within. He's everywhere. He's everywhere now." Savage then said "Just make sure he's not inside your own heart. You have to fortify yourself with knowledge. Knowledge is power and knowledge is really the only thing you have left against these con men and shysters who would steal your very freedom."

Progressive Secular Humanist and CEO/founder of the popular Facebook page "Progressive Secular Examiner," Michael Stone, wrote an article for Patheos.com titled "Pope Fatigue: Celebrating a Morally Bankrupt Institution is Wrong" in which he said "Pope Francis is a marvelous showman—a genius at public relations and media manipulation who has successfully hustled the media, and the public at large." He accused the pope of being "guilty of perpetuating the institutional immorality of the Catholic Church." Stone argued "In addition to being anti-gay, anti-trans, anti-birth control, anti-woman and anti-free speech, Pope Francis continues to protect and enable pedophile priests while presiding over a Catholic



Church still fighting to keep accused sex abusers from going to trial."

As thousands gathered around a video screen to watch the papal Mass at 15th Street and JFK Boulevard, a man holding a sign filled with Bible verses near a security checkpoint shouted various profanities, as well as "The Pope is an antichrist!" followed by "Priests are child molesters!" and finally "Idolaters!" The man then said "I rebuke you!" and "Turn from your sin and follow Christ!"

During the much anticipated papal Mass, anti-Catholic protests occurred throughout the city and counter protestors arrived to drown out the sounds of the anti-Catholic protestors. On 19th Street and Callowhill, people yelled obscenities on microphones as well as "You don't have a God." On the other hand, a man drowned out protestors exclaiming "Pope Francis is the Antichrist" with bagpipes.

Rutgers University's student-run newspaper "The Medium" published an article after the pope's visit to the U.S. titled "I KINDA WANT TO F\*\*\* THE POPE." In the article, the author said "Call me crazy, but after this weekend I kinda want to f\*\*\* the Pope." The author went on to say "Really, I want to feel the Pope inside my soaked p\*\*\*\*." Moreover, "I want to feel his papal fingers pulling my hair as he shoved his d\*\*\* down my throat." "I know it may be frowned upon, since he has taken the oath of celibacy" it later read.

Charles P. Pierce at Esquire called Pope Francis' meeting with Kim Davis "a sin against charity" and the "dumbest thing this pope has ever done."

He went on to characterize it as a "hamhanded blunder."

Gay activist Michaelangelo Signorile ripped the pope as "a more sinister kind of politician," one who "secretly supports hate."

We released a compilation of some of the most egregious expressions of anti-Catholicism from the right as well as the left during the papal visit:

- Ann Coulter tweeted that the Catholic Church was “largely built by pedophiles.” This is the kind of comment we might expect from the likes of Bill Maher, her good friend.
- “The Pope is a Lying Whore.” That’s the way the maniacs at the Westboro Baptist Church greeted the Pope. A few protesters from this group showed up in Philadelphia with signs that read, “Pervert Pope Francis.”
- Freedom From Religion Foundation loves abortion and hates the Catholic Church, so it was fitting that it spent over \$200,000 in full-page ads condemning the church. Sounding like 19th century nativists, the atheists sounded the alarms in the New York Times warning us of “A Dangerous Mix.” What was so scary? The Pope’s speech before the Congress. On the same day, in the Washington Post, the same crazies blasted the Congress for inviting the leader of the “aggressively homophobic, patriarchal and undemocratic religion.”
- Violence was more than threatened when vandals wrote “Saint of Genocide” on a headstone at the Carmel Mission in California where Saint Junípero Serra is buried. They poured green paint on a statue of this champion of human rights (the Pope canonized Father Serra the previous week), splashing headstones with blood-red paint; only the headstones of people of European descent were targeted by the racists.
- Alex Jones is known for dabbling in conspiracies, so it came as no surprise that this radio talk-show genius would accuse the Pope of hiring mercenaries to shield him from immigrants.
- Meanwhile, the deep-thinkers at Charisma News were raising the question, “Why so Many People Think Pope Francis is the Antichrist” Similarly, some guy named Tom

Horn showed up on the online “Jim Bakker Show” wondering whether the Pope was “demonically inspired.”

- George Will showcased his brilliance on all matters Catholic when he lambasted the Pope for allegedly standing “against modernity, rationality, science and, ultimately . . . open societies.”
- Judge Andrew Napolitano went off the rails when he accused the Pope of changing the church’s longstanding teaching that abortion is murder. He is factually wrong—nothing of the sort ever happened. Worse, he threw dirt at the Pope by branding him a “false prophet.”

## **CATHOLIC LEAGUE SURVEY OF CATHOLICS**

### *Introduction*

Over the summer, the Catholic League commissioned a survey of Catholics, in anticipation of the media surveys we knew would precede the Holy Father’s visit to the United States. In addition to the usual questions, we probed issues that the media generally ignore. We also dug deeper, seeking a more comprehensive examination of Catholic attitudes and beliefs.

### *Methodology*

In the first week of August 2015, The Polling Company, headed by Kellyanne Conway, conducted a nationwide scientific survey of 1,000 Catholics. They were randomly chosen from telephone sample lists, using both landline and cell phones.

Sampling controls ensured proportional representation of Catholic adults, drawn from such demographic data as age, gender, race and ethnicity, and geographic region. Data were weighted slightly for age and race. The findings are accurate at the 95% confidence interval, with a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1%.

### ***Findings***

## *Role of Catholicism*

Respondents were asked about their religious formation. Childhood lessons were identified by 56%, while teachings from Catholic schools were cited by 45% of those questioned. Most striking, 70% of those who spent 11+ years in Catholic schools cited education as a primary source of Church teachings.

Asked to choose from a list of characteristics about what constitutes a good Catholic life, the majority chose “living an honest and moral life” and “helping your neighbor.” African Americans, 59%, and widowers, 63%, were more likely to choose the latter.

Roughly 68% of Catholics say their commitment towards their faith has not been altered in any significant way in the recent past. Those who are the most educated tended to feel the most excited about or committed to their Catholic faith; those who rarely attend Mass were the least excited.

A staggering 95% of Catholics say their faith plays a significant role in their everyday lives. When it comes to the impact that their faith has on their political decisions, 69% reported that their Catholicism matters. Nearly half of Catholics, 48%, believe that if more people practiced the teachings of the Catholic Church, our society would be better off. Those who attend Mass more than once a week, 72%, are the most likely to agree with this proposition.

## *Pope Francis, the Bishops, and the Media*

The findings show that 83% of Catholics approve of the overall job that Pope Francis has done. He gets his highest approval ratings from African Americans, 93%, and those who have a post-graduate education, 92%. Similarly, 79% say that he has changed the Church for

the better, drawing more support from women than men.

Catholics would prefer that the bishops stick mostly to internal Church matters; 64% feel this way and only 27% think they should address public policy. But the more a Catholic attends Mass, the more likely he is to say the bishops should speak out more about policy issues.

When it comes to the pope, however, things are different. A plurality of 48% prefer that he speak to public policy matters; 45% say he should address mostly internal Church concerns.

Respondents were asked about their reaction to media coverage of papal events. "During the previous Pope's visit to the United States, Pew Research found that during the week of Pope Benedict's visit, over half of the news coverage on the Pope focused on the clergy sex abuse scandal. Knowing this, do you think that the media coverage is mostly fair or mostly unfair toward the Catholic Church?"

Nearly six in ten, 58%, said that the media coverage was mostly unfair; 34% said it was mostly fair.

One of the issues that the Catholic League has been quite critical about over the years is the media habit of including non-Catholics in polls about Catholicism. We had pollsters ask respondents if they had ever heard of a survey that asked non-Jews and non-Muslims if they agree with the teachings of Judaism or Islam. Not surprisingly, 90% said they never heard of such a poll.

By a margin of 52% to 39%, respondents agreed that "Gay couples receive more respectful/favorable treatment in popular culture like books, TV and movies than do Catholic figures like priests and nuns."

*Catholic Church Teachings*

The media are obsessed with issues of sexuality when writing about the Catholic Church. Too often, in their surveys, they ask simple “yes or no” questions, thus eliciting information that is not particularly useful. We allowed for a more nuanced approach.

Our survey found that roughly four-out-of-five Catholics at least partly accept the Church’s teachings on abortion.

To be specific, respondents were asked if they agree with the Church that “all life is sacred from conception until natural death, and the taking of innocent human life, whether born or unborn, is morally wrong.”

“I accept part of this teaching but not all” was the response of 39%, and 38% said, “I accept this teaching completely.” Conservatives and those with 11+ years of Catholic education were more likely to subscribe to the Church’s teaching.

When asked to identify themselves as pro-life or pro-choice, 50% said they were pro-life and 38% said they were pro-choice. But it appears that even among those who say they are pro-choice, few are zealots.

For example, 17% said abortion should be prohibited in all circumstances; 17% said it should be legal only to save the life of the mother; and 27% said abortion should only be legal in cases of rape, incest or to save the life of the mother. That’s 61% who are mostly pro-life.

Among those who are pro-choice, only 5% said that abortion should be allowed for any reason and at any time; 4% said any reason was okay but there should be none after the first six months of pregnancy; and 17% said abortion should be legal for any reason, but not after the first three months of pregnancy. That’s 26%

who are mostly pro-choice.

Another way of looking at it is to consider how many are happy with current abortion law. In the U.S., abortion is allowed for any reason and at any time; we have the most liberal abortion laws in the world. The survey data yield an impressive finding: if only 5% agree with current law that means that 19 out of 20, or 95%, of Catholics disagree with the status quo.

When it comes to marriage, 58% believe it should be between a man and a woman only; 38% do not agree. Those from the Northeast are the most liberal on this; frequent church-goers the most conservative

On the subject of women priests, 58% say they agree that the Church should ordain women as priests; 36% disagree (African Americans and those widowed were the most likely to disagree). Even though a majority are okay with women priests, the data indicate that what is being measured is more of a preference than a demand: just 35% say they agree strongly that women should be priests. Which means that two-thirds either oppose women's ordination or it doesn't mean that much to them.

This last interpretation of the data may be too generous. It is not at all uncommon for people to be conflicted: on the one hand, they want the Church to change certain teachings; on the other hand, they admire the constancy of Church teachings.

In the black-and-white world of the media, there is no interest in probing the respondent's conscience. This may make for good commentary, but it lacks a scientific basis.

Here's an analogy Bill Donohue often uses when speaking to the media. If asked if he would prefer "God Bless America" to the "Star Spangled Banner" as our national

anthem, he would choose the former. That's his preference. But is he going to get exercised about it if there is no change? Of course not. Similarly, when Catholics are asked whether they want the Church to change its teachings on certain subjects, they may say yes, but few are prepared to take to the streets over it.

It is because of these concerns that Donohue crafted a question to get right to the heart of this issue.

Respondents were asked if the Catholic Church should "remain true to its principles and not change its positions," or should it "change beliefs and principles to conform to modern customs?" The majority, 52%, agreed that the Church should not change; 38% disagreed. It is likely that some of those who are okay with women priests also admire the steadiness of the Church's teachings. This becomes even more apparent when the issue of the conflicted Catholic is teased even further.

Here is the actual question, and the responses, that address this issue:

- 31% – I differ with the Catholic Church's position on some issues but the Catholic Church shouldn't change its beliefs or positions just because of public opinion
- 28% – I agree with most every position the Catholic Church takes and the Catholic Church should remain true to its principles and not change its position
- 26% – I differ with the Catholic Church's position on some issues and the Catholic Church should modernize its beliefs by changing its position to reflect current public opinion
- 9% – I disagree with most every position the Catholic Church takes and the Catholic Church should absolutely change its positions to reflect modern day beliefs
- 2% – None of the above



- 4% – Don't know; cannot judge

This data indicate that 6-in-10 Catholics want the Church to stay true to its principles; only 35% want it to conform to modern culture. Again, this suggests that many of those who might differ with the Church on women priests, or some other issue, also prefer a Church that doesn't change with the winds of the dominant culture.

This is nothing new. In a 1995 survey of Catholics, commissioned by the Catholic League, we asked an almost identical question. It yielded practically the same results.

### *Religious Liberty*

By a healthy 2-1 margin, Catholics support laws that protect religious liberties. To be exact, 63% oppose compelling private businesses to provide services that violate their religious beliefs; 30% are not opposed. When asked specifically about forcing wedding-related businesses to provide services like taking photos or baking cakes for same-sex marriages if it violates their religious beliefs, 62% say it is mostly unfair; 29% say it is fair.

Similarly, 60% agree that "Religious freedom laws are only meant to protect religious freedom, and the threat of these laws is exaggerated by the media and allies." Only 32% believe that religious freedom laws are worrisome.

Respondents were also questioned about the Health and Human Services mandate. They were asked if they agree or disagree with the federal government forcing Catholic organizations "to pay for health care coverage that covers contraceptive drugs, including those that can destroy a human embryo, even if it is against their religious beliefs?" Fully 68% disagreed; only 27% agreed.

### *Conclusion*

It is entirely legitimate for survey researchers to question Catholics about their religion, probing their beliefs and attitudes. But when non-Catholics are asked to pass judgment on Church teachings and/or no attempt is made to distinguish between practicing Catholics and non-practicing Catholics, the results are ineluctably skewed towards a more critical outcome. This explains why the Catholic League survey was conducted: we sought a more accurate picture of the status of Catholicism today.

## **WHY FR. SERRA DESERVES TO BE CANONIZED**

**Bill Donohue**

*This article is adapted from Bill Donohue's longer piece, "The Noble Legacy of Father Serra"; it is available online.*

### **Who Was Father Serra?**

Junípero Serra was born on the Island of Majorca, off the coast of Spain in 1713, and died in Monterey, California in 1784. Partly of Jewish ancestry, this young and sickly boy applied to enter the Order of St. Francis of Assisi; he became a Franciscan in 1731.

He is known as the greatest missionary in U.S. history, traveling 24,000 miles, baptizing and confirming thousands of persons, mostly Indians (in 1777 the Vatican authorized Serra to administer the sacrament of confirmation, usually the reserve of a bishop). He had but one goal: to facilitate eternal salvation for the Indians of North America.

### **Were the Indians Perceived as Being Inferior?**

Culturally, the Indians appeared inferior, but they were not seen as racially inferior. Take, for example, the Chumash Indians of Southern California, the first California Indians to be contacted by Spanish explorers. When the Franciscans first met them, they were struck by how different they looked and behaved. The women were partially naked and the men were

totally naked. Serra, in fact, felt as though he was in Eden.

Moreover, the Indians had no written language, and practiced no agriculture. They lived by hunting, fishing, and gathering. They ate things that the missionaries and the soldiers found bizarre, including roots, seeds, birds, horses, cats, dogs, owls, rats, snakes, and bats. These primitive habits, along with other practices, convinced them that changes had to be made.

### **How Did Father Serra Get Along with the Indians?**

For the most part, they got along well. This had something to do with the fact that the Catholic Church led the protests against inhumane treatment of the Indians; the Spanish crown ultimately agreed with this position. It cannot be said too strongly that the primary mission of the Franciscans was not to conquer the Indians, but to make them good Christians. The missions were supposed to be temporary, not some permanent take over.

The Indians drew a distinction between the way the Spanish soldiers treated them and the way the Franciscans did. So when some Indians would act badly, the soldiers blamed them and sought harsh punishments. The priests, on the other hand, saw murderous acts as the work of the Devil. Also, the soldiers were always anxious to take land from the Indians, but they were met with resistance from the priests.

Both the colonial authorities and the missionaries vied for control over the Indians, but their practices could not have been more different. With the exception of serious criminal acts, Serra insisted that all punishments were to be meted out by the priests. While he did not always succeed in challenging the civil authorities, he often did, the result being that the Indians were spared the worst excesses.

The Franciscans also sought to protect Indian women from the Spaniards. The missionaries carved out a very organized

lifestyle for the Indians, keeping a close eye on attempts by Spanish men to abuse Indian women. The Friars segregated the population on the basis of sex and age, hoping to protect the females from unwanted advances. When sexual abuse occurred, it was quickly condemned by Serra and his fellow priests.

### **Was it Violence that Decimated the Indians?**

No. What killed most of the Indians were diseases contracted from the Spaniards. According to author James A. Sandos, "Indians died in the missions in numbers that appalled Franciscans." He describes how this happened. "When Spaniards in various stages of exploration and expansion entered into territory unacquainted with disease," he writes, "they unwittingly unleashed disease microbodies into what demographers call 'virgin soil.' The resulting wildfire-like contagion, called 'virgin soil epidemics,' decimated unprotected American Indians populations." Professor Gregory Orfalea is no doubt correct to maintain that it is doubtful if Serra ever understood the ramifications of this biological catastrophe.

### **Isn't It True that the Clergy Flogged the Indians?**

By 21st century standards, flogging is considered an unjust means of punishment, but it was not seen that way in the 18th century. Fornication, gambling, and the like were considered taboo, justifying flogging.

Serra, who never flogged anyone (save himself as an expression of redemptive suffering), admitted there were some excesses, but he also stressed something that is hard for 21st century Americans to understand: unlike flogging done by the authorities, when priests indulged the practice, it was done out of love, not hatred. "We, every one of us," Serra said, "came here for the single purpose of doing them [the Indians] good and for their eternal salvation; and I feel sure that everyone knows that we love them."

There is also something hypocritical about using 21st century moral standards to evaluate 18th century practices. Abortion-on-demand is a reality today and that is barbaric.

### **Some Contend that the Indians Were Treated the Way Hitler Treated Jews?**

This is perhaps the most pernicious lie promoted by those who have an animus against the Church. Hitler committed genocide against Jews; there was no genocide committed by Serra and the Franciscans against the California Indians. Hitler put Jews in ovens; the missionaries put the Indians to work, paying them for their labor. Hitler wanted to wipe out the Jews, so that Western civilization could be saved; the priests wanted to service the Indians, so that they could be saved.

Sandos pointedly refutes this vile comparison: "Hitler and the Nazis intended to destroy the Jews of Europe and created secret places to achieve that end, ultimately destroying millions of people in a systematic program of labor exploitation and death camps. Spanish authorities and Franciscan missionaries, however, sought to bring Indians into a new Spanish society they intended to build on the California frontier and were distressed to see the very objects of their religious and political desire die in droves. From the standpoint of intention alone, there can be no valid comparison between Franciscans and Nazis."

Moreover, as Sandos writes, even from the standpoint of results, the comparison fails. "Hitler intended to implement a 'final solution' to the so-called Jewish problem and was close to accomplishing his goals when the Allies stopped him. In contrast, neither Spanish soldiers nor missionaries knew anything about the germ theory of disease, which was not widely accepted until late in the nineteenth century."

Those who make these malicious charges know very well that Jews never acted kindly toward the Nazis. They also know, or

should know, that acts of love by the Indians toward the missionaries are legion. No one loves those who are subjecting them to genocide.

### **Were the Indians Treated as Slaves?**

No. The historical record offers no support for this outrageous claim. Slaves in the U.S. had no rights and were not considered human. The missionaries granted the Indians rights and respected their human dignity.

It is also unfair to compare the lifestyle of the Indians to slave conditions in the U.S. "The purpose of a mission was to organize a religious community in isolation that could nourish itself physically and spiritually. Surplus production was to feed other missions and local towns and presidios. Profit was never a consideration, unlike plantations, where profit was the purpose and reason for their creation."

### **Did the Missionaries Eradicate Indian Culture?**

No. While missionary outreach clearly altered many elements of Indian culture, as Orfalea notes, "the fact is, the California Indian did not disappear. From the low point at the turn of the [20th] century (25,000 remained), the Indian population has grown to well over 600,000 today, twice what it was at pre-contact." Indeed, today there are over one hundred federally recognized California tribes with tribal lands, with many others seeking recognition.

Not only did the missionaries not wipe out the native language of the Indians, they learned it and employed Indians as teachers. Some cultural modification was inevitable, given that the missionaries taught the Indians how to be masons, carpenters, blacksmiths, and painters. The Indians were also taught how to sell and buy animals, and were allowed to keep their bounty. Women were taught spinning, knitting, and sewing.

“Although many historians once thought that Indian culture had been eradicated in the missions,” Sandos says, “anthropologists and other observers have provided evidence to the contrary.”

### **Should Serra Be Made a Saint?**

The evidence which has been culled for over 200 years, from multiple sources, is impressive, and it argues strongly for including Father Serra in the pantheon of saints.

A total of 21 missions were established by the missionaries, nine of them under the tenure of Serra; he personally founded six missions. He baptized more than 6,000 Indians, and confirmed over 5,000; some 100,000 were baptized overall during the mission period. Impressive as these numbers are, it was his personal characteristics that made him so special.

“To the Indian,” Orfalea writes, “he [Serra] was loving, enthusiastic, and spiritually and physically devoted.” His devotion was motivated by his embrace of Christianity and his strong sense of justice. To put it another way, his love for the Indians was no mere platitude. “Love thy neighbor as thyself” was routinely put into practice; he knew no other way. But it was his humility, coupled with his merciful behavior, that distinguished him from all the other missionaries.

Serra was so merciful that he said, “in case the Indians, whether pagans or Christians, would kill me, they should be pardoned.” This was not made in jest. He insisted that his request be honored as quickly as possible, and even declared, “I want to see a formal decree” on this matter.

Father Serra deserves to be made a saint. He gave his life in service to the Lord, battled injustice, and inspired everyone who worked with him to be a better Christian. That Saint Junípero Serra will now inspire people all over the world is a certainty, and a great testimony to his noble legacy.

*Pope Francis canonized Blessed Junípero Serra on September 23 outside the National Shrine in Washington, DC.*

### **SCORE ONE FOR OUR SIDE ON FR. SERRA**

In early July, the California state legislature announced that it would postpone a vote on the proposal to remove the statue of Fr. Junípero Serra from the U.S. Capitol. A few weeks later, California Gov. Jerry Brown, while attending an event in the Vatican, flatly said, "We're going to keep his statue in Congress. It's done as far as I'm concerned." We are happy to report that we had a hand in this outcome.

At the beginning of the summer this issue was anything but settled. California State Senator Ricardo Lara was responsible for authoring the proposal to remove the statue, but after a massive campaign protesting his decision, he requested that the vote be postponed. He cited Pope Francis' upcoming visit as the reason for the postponement.

California Assemblyman William P. Brough and Sen. Pat Bates welcomed the good news. According to a joint statement released by Brough and Bates, "Debating such a bill just before the pope's visit would have conveyed a terrible message to him and millions of Catholics around the world, contradicting California's reputation as a tolerant and welcoming place for all people."

"Now that the California legislature has agreed to a delay," Bill Donohue said at the time, "perhaps they can take this opportunity to reconsider the proposal and drop the matter entirely. The Catholic League has contended that the opposition to Fr. Serra's statue rises out of misunderstandings of his work and legacy. It was to correct such misunderstandings that I published the booklet, *The Noble Legacy of Fr. Serra*; it was distributed to interested parties in California and beyond."

In the run-up to the vote, we blanketed California with copies



of Donohue's booklet. John Liston, executive director of Serra International, wrote to him expressing his gratitude. "I think it went a long way in assisting the California legislature to suspend the vote to remove the statue of Fr. Serra from Statuary Hall," he said.

We are grateful to Gov. Brown for laying anchor on this matter. As we have continually argued, Fr. Serra deserves to be honored, not vilified. He was the most prominent person to champion human rights for American Indians. That is why he was canonized by Pope Francis on September 23.

### **NEW YORK TIMES MALIGNS SAINT; NO EVIDENCE PROVIDED**

On September 30, when Bill Donohue read a *New York Times* front-page story on Saint Junípero Serra, he could hardly believe his eyes. The 17th century priest, who championed the rights of Indians, had just been canonized by Pope Francis the week before. So it came as a shock to read that he was accused of torturing Indians.

As Catholic League members know, in anticipation of the expected controversy over Father Serra, Donohue authored a booklet on him a few months ago. He read widely on the Franciscan priest, and published his findings in *The Noble Legacy of Father Serra*; he used a Q&A format to make his research easily accessible to readers. In all his readings, Donohue never found a single scholar who ever accused Father Serra of torturing Indians.

The reporter who wrote this story, Laura M. Holson, offered this remarkable sentence: "Historians agree that he [Serra] forced Native Americans to abandon their tribal culture and convert to Christianity, and that he had them whipped and imprisoned and sometimes worked or tortured to death."

Donohue readily concedes that the Indians were not treated justly. But it was the Spanish conquerors, not the Franciscans, who were responsible for the worst excesses.

Indeed, Father Serra's heroism, which led to his canonization, is largely a function of his opposition to Indian maltreatment. It was he who insisted that the Indians should be treated with the dignity afforded all human beings.

On the day the story appeared, Donohue emailed the reporter asking her to provide evidence that "Historians agree" that Father Serra had Indians "tortured to death." [His letter and all the subsequent exchanges he had with *Times* officers is laid out below in chronological order.]

As you can see, none of the parties at the newspaper were able to answer his one question: Who are these historians? Yet they refused to run a correction.

No one disputes that radical activists, racists, and anti-Catholics have made wild and unsubstantiated accusations against the Franciscans. But there is a difference between these agenda-ridden ideologues and scholars. The latter would be expected to provide evidence, and that is why the charge that "historians agree" that Father Serra was a barbarian is complete nonsense. If this were true, the *Times* would be able to name them.

Finally, it must be said that Vatican scholars pored over thousands of documents related to Father Serra and released a 1,200 page position paper on him. They would never recommend for sainthood anyone who ever authorized the torturing of innocent persons.

### **NY TIMES PIECE ON FR. SERRA NEEDS CORRECTION**

**October 1**

*The following news releases explain the exchange between Bill Donohue and the New York Times.*

*The top story (below) was Donohue's first response—it was sent the day of the news story on September 30. After a day went by and he heard nothing, he went public with his complaint on*

*October 1. After a week went by and he heard nothing from either the "Corrections" editors or the public editor, he issued his second news release (the bottom one) on October 7. On the next page is the final exchange that occurred on October 8; it was published as a press release on October 9.*

Donohue emailed the following letter to *New York Times* reporter Laura M. Holson about her article, "Sainthood of Serra Reopens Wounds of Colonialism in California":

*You said that "Historians agree" that Fr. Serra had Indians "tortured to death." I have done research on Serra and written about him, yet I know of no historian who makes such a claim. Please name them. I can name many who never made such a claim.*

[Donohue listed the following ten books as evidence that Fr. Serra never tortured Indians: *Junípero Serra: California's Founding Father* by Steven Hackel; *Converting California: Indians and Franciscans in the Missions* by James Sandos; *Life and Times of Fray Junípero Serra, Volumes 1-2* by Maynard Geiger; *Junípero Serra: California, Indians, and the Transformation of a Missionary* by Rose Marie Beebe and Robert Senkewicz; *Journey to the Sun: Junípero Serra's Dream and the Founding of California* by Gregory Orfalea; *Saint Junipero Serra: Making Sense of History and Legacy* by Christian Clifford; *Junípero Serra: A Short Biography* by Kerry Walters; *A Cross of Thorns: The Enslavement of California's Indians by the Spanish Missions* by Elias Castillo; *Life of Ven. Padre Junípero Serra* by Francis Palou; *Francisco Palou's Life and Apostolic Labors of The Venerable Father Junípero Serra, Founder of The Franciscans* by Francisco Palou and C. Scott Williams.]

Holson never responded. As a result, Donohue asked for an entry in the "Corrections" section of the newspaper, and he also contacted the public editor. This is a serious issue: when a reporter blithely says that "Historians agree," readers take it that there is at least a consensus among historians

about the subject. But such is not the case on this issue. The only persons given to such an accusation are radical activists, not professional scholars.

Not one of them accuse this saintly priest of torturing Indians. Holson quoted Steven Hackel in her article, and though he has been somewhat critical of Fr. Serra, he never made such a claim. The one person who said torture took place, Elias Castillo, never indicted Fr. Serra. None of the other books come even close to accusing Fr. Serra of torture. Quite simply, it is a lie.

**NEW YORK TIMES SMEAR OF FR. SERRA STANDS**  
**October 7**

After the *New York Times* ran a front-page story that smeared St. Junípero Serra, repeated attempts to have the paper correct the record failed.

On the day that Laura M. Holson's news story appeared, "Sainthood of Serra Reopens Wounds of Colonialism in California," Bill Donohue sent her the following email:

*You said that "Historians agree" that Fr. Serra had Indians "tortured to death." I have done research on Serra and written about him, yet I know of no historian who makes such a claim. Please name them. I can name many who never made such a claim.*

The following day Donohue contacted the "Corrections" section of the paper, as well as the public editor, sending them the above email. He also said, "Ms. Holson has not responded. Assuming she cannot name historians who have made such a claim, I am requesting that this merit inclusion in the 'Corrections' section of the *Times*."

One week went by after Donohue's email to these two parties, and still no response. Moreover, he wrote them again, sending the previous emails: "Please let me know if I can expect a correction to Ms. Holson's story. If her account is accurate,

she should be able to name the historians who say that Fr. Serra tortured Indians. This story is particularly important because Pope Francis just canonized Fr. Serra when he was in DC. Thank you.”

Another day passed, and still no reply. This is yellow journalism at its worst. When Donohue submits paid ads to the *Times*, he is often asked to identify his sources. Yet it accepts hit jobs like Holson’s. The fact is there is no list of historians who claim Fr. Serra tortured Indians, and the *Times* knows it. The Catholic League sent this news release to a wide audience.

### ***NEW YORK TIMES REMAINS DEFIANT ON SERRA***

The following exchange occurred on October 8:

Dear Mr. Donohue:

You might have been busy with your news release of October 1 and did not have a chance to keep up with Laura Holson’s coverage of the shooting in Oregon. She began filing from Oregon last Friday. So while our editors discussed your complaint when it was received, we waited to go over it with Ms. Holson until she had reached the point where she was not inundated with her coverage of that horrific event.

Certainly you have very strong views on this issue and have written extensively on it. But after many discussions, a review of past *Times* coverage and other resources, I agree with Ms. Holson’s editors that “historians” is accurate, and therefore no correction is required.

At one point you sent us a list of books you considered to be “the authoritative books on Fr. Serra.” Ms. Holson had already reviewed the writings of some of the historians you cited in that list.

If I thought having an extended conversation on this would

help, I would be happy to. But after re-reading your correspondence, I cannot think of anything we could do or say that would convince you that our coverage was fair and complete – or that the reference to “historians” is accurate.

We respect your opinion and I hope you will respect our decision – even if you do not agree with it. If nothing else, rest assured that your points have been thoroughly reviewed and a great deal of time has been put into making this decision.

Sincerely,  
Greg Brock  
Gregory E. Brock  
Senior Editor for Standards  
The New York Times

Dear Mr. Brock,

Thank you for taking my complaint seriously. I have just one question: Who are the “historians” who claim that Fr. Serra tortured Indians?

Sincerely,  
Bill Donohue

*We at the Catholic League take great pride in providing readers with factual material; we are always ready to back up our work with evidence. It is one thing to offer an opinion, quite another to make unequivocal statements of a condemnatory nature in a news story. That is exactly what the New York Times did. Worse, it is considered the newspaper of record.*

*The Times only made matters worse when its Senior Editor for Standards took the side of the reporter **without identifying the historians who claim that Fr. Serra tortured Indians to death.***

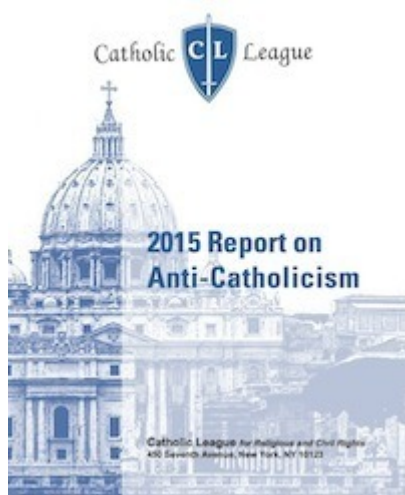
*We are disappointed that this incredible fabrication was not*

*challenged by others. Surely there are scholars and members of the Catholic Church who are in a position to know that what the Times said cannot be substantiated. That said, we are happy that we didn't miss the opportunity to challenge them.*

*Bill Donohue*

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## The War on Christmas



*The animus against Christmas manifests itself in a myriad of ways, and 2015 was no exception.*

*The anti-Christmas bigots from the Freedom From Religion Foundation threatened a lawsuit against a small Minnesota town because it displayed a nativity scene in a public park. For 23 years, no one in Wadena complained about the crèche in Burlington Northern Park, but after the atheist group made public its threat, along came one resident to complain. The town's lawyer agreed that the display was illegal, and the city council obliged by authorizing its removal.*

*Bill Donohue wrote an open letter to the city council asking them to reconsider their decision. "There is nothing unconstitutional about putting a nativity scene on public property as long as it is considered a public forum," he said. He further observed that this park was a public forum because*

*it hosts all kinds of community activities. He offered by way of example the Catholic League's nativity scene in Central Park: it has never been challenged, and that's because the park is a public forum. While high court rulings on city-owned crèches are more complicated, they can still pass constitutional muster.*

*We are pleased to say that a local resident picked up on this idea and successfully erected a crèche in a park. It was also great to learn that residents of Wadena responded by displaying a record number of manger scenes on private property.*

*We played a role in beating back the Christmas foes in several instances, but none was more satisfying than our input in the University of Tennessee (UT) case.*

*The Office of Diversity and Inclusion at UT issued guidelines indicating which kinds of "holiday" celebrations would be tolerated, and which would not be. All parties, the multicultural gurus said, should be absent any "emphasis on religion or culture." They did not say how it was possible to celebrate a holiday without also celebrating that part of the culture from which it springs.*

*Best of all was their admonition not to hold "a Christmas party in disguise." They can hold gay pride celebrations all year long, but they cannot tolerate Christmas parties, even if held in a speak-easy.*

*Bill Donohue pulled the Catholic League staff to work overtime on this issue. We contacted every Tennessee lawmaker who has anything to do with education, as well as other public officials, calling for an investigation into the workings of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. We also notified all the other legislators—those who do not deal with education. We blanketed the Tennessee media.*

*We were pleased to hear of the support we received from some*



*of the lawmakers. We also were happy that the Tennessee media picked up on our work, including newspapers on the UT campus. Most of all we were delighted that our protest led to the guidelines being withdrawn; we were gratified that the person most to blame for this decision was removed from making such rulings again.*

#### **UNIV. OF TENNESSEE ABRIDGES CHRISTIAN RIGHTS**

Bill Donohue wrote the following letter on December 4 to all members of the Tennessee Legislature whose responsibility it is to monitor education.

Hon. Dolores Gresham  
Chair, State Senate Standing Committee on Education  
301 6th Avenue North  
Suite 308 War Memorial Bldg.  
Nashville, TN 37243

Dear Senator Gresham:

As president of the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization, it is my responsibility to monitor, and respond to, instances of defamation and discrimination against Catholics. We work closely with many evangelical organizations, as well, so our reach extends to all Christians.

My reason for writing concerns the University of Tennessee's Office of Diversity and Inclusion's statement on Christmas celebrations. To say it is obnoxious is an understatement: it expresses an animus to Christianity, and therefore to Christians, that is palpable.

My doctorate is in sociology, and I spent two decades on the board of directors of the National Association of Scholars. So my concerns transcend the interests of religion. I approach this issue as both a civil rights leader and as an educator.

After receiving criticism from public officials for the statement, "Best Practices for Inclusive Holiday Celebrations in the Workplace," the University is now saying that this is not a policy: it is just a list of suggestions. It does not matter. What matters is that it (a) creates a "chilling effect" on free speech, (b) engages in viewpoint discrimination, and (c) creates a hostile environment for Christians. These conditions are not only offensive, they have grave constitutional implications.

Among the most egregious "suggestions" is the first one: "Holiday parties and celebrations should celebrate and build upon workplace relationships and team morale *with no emphasis on religion or culture. Ensure your holiday party is not a Christmas party in disguise.*" (My italics.)

Do the people who wrote and approved this statement realize what they are saying? It is positively impossible to celebrate a holiday without also celebrating culture, and in many instances, religion. To wit: All holidays are ineluctably grounded in culture. Moreover, the heart of any culture is religion. Indeed, the word holiday means "holy day." This is not an issue of constitutional law—it is a matter of competence. Why are taxpayers funding the salaries of employees who are sociologically illiterate, especially given the fact that their charge is to administer cultural events?

Other "suggestions" are equally astonishing. "Holiday parties and celebrations should not play games with religious and cultural themes—for example, 'Dreidel' or 'Secret Santa.'" Since when has it been the business of any university office, especially on a state campus, to discourage students from playing innocent religious and cultural games?

It hardly exaggerates to say that such "suggestions" have a "chilling effect" on the free speech rights of Christians. Unlike other segments of the student population, they cannot be assured that the manner in which they choose to express

themselves, especially at Christmastime, will be looked upon with approval by school administrators. The implication is, of course, that the best way to avoid trouble is to muzzle any expression that might be seen as untoward by campus officials.

The holiday “suggestions” are also constitutionally suspect because they do not apply equally to all students. For example, last February, during Black History Month, the University sponsored an event titled, “Black History Month Program: A Century of Black Life, History, and Culture.” From my perspective, such an event should be welcomed. But this raises a serious issue: Why is it acceptable for black students to celebrate their culture, but not Christians? After all, Christians are being told not to have events that emphasize “religion or *culture*.” (my italics.)

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion has a “Cultural and Religious Holidays Calendar” that lists many religious events, covering many religions, throughout the academic year. Yet when it comes to the application of the draconian holiday “suggestions,” they are not inclusive: they are targeted almost exclusively at Christians (there is a stricture warning Jews not to play “Dreidel” games—it does not say who might be offended, other than the authors of this dictum).

These are examples of viewpoint discrimination, a condition that violates the First Amendment. Quite frankly, it is not legal for a state entity to single out one religion for special consideration, especially when the directive seeks to limit constitutionally protected speech.

In 1984, in the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Lynch v. Donnelly*, it was held that the Constitution “affirmatively mandates accommodation, not merely tolerance of all religions, and forbids hostility toward any.” It can be reasonably maintained that the effect, if not the intent, of these “suggestions” is to create a hostile environment for Christians.

I am calling upon all members of the Tennessee legislature that have committee assignments dealing with education to empanel a body that would critically assess the policies of the University of Tennessee's Office of Diversity and Inclusion that touch on religion and free speech issues. There is obviously something seriously wrong. For a state institution to promote policies that are inimical to Christianity—or any religion—is unacceptable. That these policies are driven by an alleged concern for tolerance makes the need for such an investigation all the more compelling.

Thank you for your consideration.

### **CONCESSIONS GRANTED**

The edict issued by the University of Tennessee's Office of Diversity and Inclusion effectively banning Christmas celebrations on the campus drew the ire of local and federal public officials, students, faculty, and alumni. From Bill Donohue's perspective, it was not only offensive to Christians, it was constitutionally suspect.

Following Donohue's issuance of the above letter, requesting of all members of the Tennessee state legislature who are responsible for education issues that they establish a panel to "critically assess the policies of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at the University of Tennessee," Chancellor Jimmy G. Cheek announced that the offensive "suggestions" had been taken down; they no longer appear online. In addition, the person who wrote them, Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion Rickey Hall, has been "counseled" by his superiors. Furthermore, he will no longer be permitted to write any guidelines for this office.

This announcement makes sense, but it is disingenuous of Chancellor Cheek to maintain that the problem was purely a matter of "poorly worded communications." It was not. The problem is deeper—it stems from a mentality that is common to

all university offices that are charged with advancing diversity and inclusion. To be specific, there is a built-in intolerance for Christianity, in particular, and for Western Civilization, in general.

The steps taken by the University of Tennessee are reassuring, but more needs to be done. Donohue has stood by his call for a probe of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

### **November 19**

**Washington, DC** – The midseason finale of the Shonda Rhimes show, “Scandal,” featured Olivia Pope, played by Kerry Washington, having an abortion. While her child was being aborted, “Silent Night” played in the background; the show ended with a self-satisfied Pope listening to “Ave Maria.”

### **November 26**

**Detroit, MI** – On Thanksgiving Day, Jex Black-more, the national spokesman for The Satanic Temple, poisoned her child, in utero, and then posted a blog bragging about her abortion. This is the face of Satanism that the media refuses to profile.

### **December**

**Tallahassee, FL**– This Christmas season, we witnessed a surge in Satanic attacks. Until two years ago, Satanists were never bothered by the presence of a menorah on public property in Tallahassee. But when Christians decided to erect a nativity scene at the Florida state Capitol, they went wild: they succeeded in getting a Satanic display on state grounds. Though neither Christians nor Satanists displayed their symbols in the Capitol rotunda, Satanists warned Christians that if you dared to erect a crèche, they will counter.

**Las Vegas, NV** – Catholic churches in Las Vegas were stormed by an organized band of crazed evangelicals known as Koosha Las Vegas. They invade churches during Mass, shouting at parishioners to repent. “Pope is Satan!” “Mary is a Satan!”

“Stop worshipping the idols!” “Idols are not going to save you!” “You need Jesus Christ!” Police confirmed at least three incidents.

Catholic school students were also being harassed. “If you look at the Catechism of the Catholic Church and you look at the Scriptures,” the bigots screamed, “you know why God hates this religious system.”

The Catholic League asked the Office of The Sheriff at the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department to arrest any person who storms a Catholic church, or any house of worship. They need to be prosecuted with the full force of the law. Swift action followed our intervention. As the Las Vegas Review-Journal reported, a police press conference on the matter “came a day after the New York-based Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights called on supporters to demand increased protection from Clark County Sheriff Joe Lombardo.” The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department assured the public, in writing, that it was “investigating these incidents” and “taking this matter seriously.”

## **December 2**

**Marlborough, NH** – The school superintendent in Marlborough, New Hampshire, Robert Malay, banned use of the word “Christmas” from all Christmas events, including celebrations at the local American Legion post. He said he was constitutionally obligated to censor Christmas. This, of course, is a lie.

Instead of pleading with Malay to reconsider his decision, Bill Donohue contacted him and asked him to follow through on his convictions. Donohue suggested that he contact the United States Congress and demand that it rescind Christmas as a national holiday. Not unexpectedly, he did not get back to Donohue.

Following the Catholic League’s intervention, however, Malay

apologized to American Legion Post Commander John Fletcher, both privately and on a local radio show. He said he planned to review the policy.

### **December 11**

**Harrisonburg, VA** – “Mary Did You Know” is a song that could not be tolerated at James Madison University. Lyrics include, “Mary, did you know that your baby boy would save our sons and daughters?” It also contains lyrics which note that when Mary kisses her baby, she has “kissed the face of God.”

This song was to be sung at the annual “Unity Tree” [read: Christmas tree] lighting ceremony. But after the song was banned, the students who were to sing it refused to sing any songs at this event.

Bill Wyatt, associate director of communications at the school, explained the decision to muzzle the free speech of these students. “JMU is a public university, so because it was a school-sponsored event, the song choice needed to be secular.” He is wrong. There is no law banning religious songs from being sung at public schools.

### **December 13**

**Detroit, MI** – CNN aired a very sympathetic show on Satanism. It even allowed an un-named mother—she is a Satanist—to blame Christianity for her gay son’s suicide, providing no evidence whatsoever. Worse, she was enticed by reporter Lisa Ling to do so. “Do you blame the church?” “Oh, yes, absolutely,” the Satanist said.

### **December 15**

**Johnson County, KY** – The superintendent in charge of schools in Johnson County, Kentucky censored all references to religion in this year’s Christmas celebrations. Specifically, he banned a presentation of “A Charlie Brown Christmas” at one school, and ordered another not to allow “Silent Night” to be performed. He said he was following the advice of school

district attorneys.

In Bill Donohue's letter to Superintendent Thomas Salyer, he pointed out that the U.S. Supreme Court let stand a 1980 ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, *Florey v. Sioux Falls*, that conditionally permitted religious themes at Christmas assemblies. Pursuant to this ruling, the Sioux Falls School District allowed Christmas presentations of a religious nature to be performed as long as they were presented "in a prudent and objective manner and as a traditional part of the cultural and religious heritage of the particular holiday." This is a reasonable, and not very high, bar to clear.

Who's to blame for this yearly debacle? There is much blame to go around. For example, the U.S. Supreme Court has not definitively ruled on this issue, allowing for some degree of uncertainty. To be sure, school officials such as Superintendent Salyer are neither required nor forbidden from allowing assemblies of a religious nature. But if anything, the ruling in *Florey v. Sioux Falls* empowers them to permit these annual events.

It's time school attorneys got up to speed on this issue. There is no legal reason to ban bona fide Christmas performances in the schools.

## **December 24**

**Oklahoma City, OK** – On Christmas Eve, a Satanist and registered sex offender, Adam Daniels, pledged to pour blood over a Virgin Mary statue in front of a Catholic church in Oklahoma City. He admitted that his display, "Virgin Birth is a Lie," was aimed at the Catholic Church.

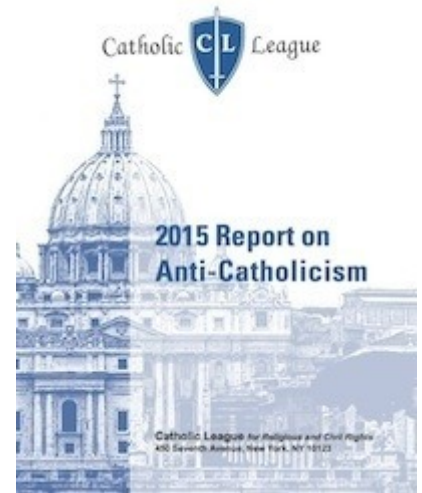
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# Miscellaneous

## January 21

**San Gabriel, CA** – A surveillance video showed a man walking through the cemetery of the San Gabriel Mission methodically destroying statues and gravestones with religious imagery. Two statues of Jesus were knocked down, one was beaten with a rock severing the arms and head. The vandal used a garden hose as a lasso attempting to pull down a third statue. A tombstone with an image of Jesus on it was destroyed, and a cross was broken off of another statue. The San Gabriel Mission was founded by St. Junípero Serra in 1771, and was vandalized a week after Pope Francis announced his canonization.



## February 23

**Woodstock, IL** – Marian Central Catholic High School hosted the regional high school girls basketball tournament. The championship game was won by Woodstock High School, a local public school, when they defeated another public school. Following the game, the players of Woodstock High School attached a Barbie doll to one of the crucifixes in the Catholic school's gym. The girls, still in uniform, were seen pointing at the cross, smiling and laughing at the Barbie doll – the team's symbol of "girl power" – stuck to the crucifix.

When the photo surfaced on social media Woodstock High School's athletic director issued an apology, and reached out to administrators of the Catholic school. "Our intent was certainly not to insult, or denigrate, Marian Central and its family," Glen Wilson said in a statement. "We apologize that the act could solicit a perception of disrespect to faith, one's school or the community they represent," said Wilson.

## **February – June**

**Tucson, AZ** – A pair of burglars stole chalices from Our Lady Mother of Sorrows Catholic Church, Ambrose Catholic Church and Saint Pius X Catholic Church, as well as burglarizing a synagogue. The pair was arrested and police were progressively recovering the stolen property and returning it to the owners.

## **March 18**

**Buffalo, NY** – A thief stole the tabernacle filled with consecrated hosts from the altar at St. Martin of Tours parish. The 40 pound tabernacle was made of bronze and was valued at up to \$5000. Police, and the church's pastor, speculated that the thief was a drug addict looking to sell the tabernacle for the value of the metal.

## **April 1**

**Walkerton, IN** – The owners of Memories Pizza had to close their doors for eight days after receiving a hostile reaction for agreeing with Indiana's religious liberty law. The O'Connor family has owned the pizzeria for nine years, and said it would not provide pizzas for a gay wedding. "We're not discriminating against anyone," explained Crystal O'Connor, "that's just our belief and anyone has the right to believe in anything."

Ms. O'Connor would have had no ground to stand on, either morally or legally, were she to say that her store would not serve gays. But she did not say that. In fact, she explicitly said she would never refuse gays. What she said is that if her family were to service a gay wedding, it would have to violate its sincerely held religious convictions.

Not only did Memories Pizza receive threatening phone calls, but anti-Christian comments and pictures of nude men were sent to the owners.

## **April 7**

**West Bloomfield, MI** – Two suspects were arrested after they

had been caught on camera breaking into St. Thomas Chaldean Catholic Church, damaging a collection box, and eventually breaking into a safe and taking funds set aside for military families. The thieves entered and left the church a total of 3 times. First unable to break open a collection box they returned with tools to try and fish money out of it. After locating a safe, they returned a third time with power tools which they used to open the safe and steal the money.

### **April 17**

In a not-so-veiled threat of economic reprisal, IBM sent a letter to Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal warning that a pending bill to safeguard religious freedom would create a "hostile environment" for the company's employees. Offering not a shred of evidence to substantiate its claim, IBM charged that Louisiana's Marriage and Conscience Act "legally protects discrimination based on same-sex marriage status," and would if enacted make it "much harder" for IBM "to attract talent to Louisiana." The Louisiana bill was simply based on a similar federal law as well as other state laws.

### **May 3**

**Norman, OK** – A statue of the Blessed Mother outside St. Thomas More church was vandalized with black paint. The face of the statue was covered in paint, and the word "Erzuile," a voodoo spirit, was left at the shrine.

### **May 6**

**New Orleans, LA** – A burglar was caught on camera breaking into a Catholic Community Center in the Faubourg Marigny. The man broke windows at the center, and stopped to cover a security camera with a rag, before ransacking two offices and stealing \$1,700 in donations from a safe.

### **May 19**

**San Francisco, CA** – A bronze statue of Jesus weighing more than 200 pounds was stolen from the garden in front of the Church of the Transfiguration on East Castro Boulevard.

## **May 28**

**Culver City, CA** – An NFL fan wrote to Steve Bornstein, the NFL's Chief Executive Officer and President, and copied the Catholic League, to complain of correspondent Albert Breer's repeated offensive use of Jesus' name in vain or as a profanity. Bill Donohue responded by writing to Mr. Bornstein, "Surely a conversation with Mr. Breer is in order: his repeated invocation of the name of Jesus in an offensive manner is not something that the NFL should tolerate."

## **May 31**

**Chicago, IL** – Saint Hyacinth School was broken into and the principal's office ransacked, while a safe containing more than \$5,000 was stolen. The school was slated to be closed on June 30, and the money had been raised for a scholarship fund to help enroll children in other Catholic schools when their facility closed.

## **May 31**

**Athens, OH** – St. Paul Catholic Church was broken into at night and the altar linens on all five altars set on fire. The fires damaged linens, altars and surrounding carpets but did not spread further. Police apprehended a suspect who confessed to the crime and was charged with aggravated arson.

## **June**

**Santa Fe, NM** – A statue of the Blessed Mother at Rosario Chapel was desecrated, with the eyes gouged out, rosaries hanging around its neck burned, and a pentagram carved into its forehead. When the vandalism was discovered, the statue was restored and it was reconsecrated during an annual procession on June 14 by the Archbishop of Santa Fe.

## **June 4**

**Torrington, CT** – A 33-year old man was charged with vandalizing St. Francis Church. After causing a disturbance in the garden, he entered the church and tipped over statues, candle holders and plants and did other damage. He then pulled

a fire alarm and fled. He was picked up shortly afterward and charged with desecration of property, criminal mischief and breach of peace.

## **June 12**

**Brooklyn, NY** – A bronze statue of the Blessed Mother that stood outside the parish house of St. Charles Borromeo Church was displaced and damaged. Security cameras caught one man wresting the statue from its pedestal while his companion filmed the incident on his cell phone. The statue had been commissioned from France in 1954; estimated damage may run as high as \$6000.

## **June 16**

**Dowagiac, MI** – A man broke into Holy Maternity of Mary Church and damaged doors, a window and other areas of the church, as well as damaging the safe in an apparent effort to break in. He was apprehended and faced a number of charges.

## **June 16**

**Covina, CA** – Sacred Heart Church and School in Covina were vandalized during the night, prompting administrators to cancel classes. The vandalism consisted of spray-painted tags, which included vulgarities, references to God and Satan, and drawings of body parts.

## **July**

**Providence, RI** – A wave of vandalism against churches saw spray-painted graffiti left at the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul and at St. Adalbert's Church, while at Our Lady of Rosary Church a granite pulpit was smashed and a rosary stolen from a statue of the Blessed Mother.

## **August 2**

**Las Cruces, NM** – A bomb was detonated in a trash can outside Holy Cross Catholic Church during Sunday Mass. This occurred about 20 minutes after another bomb had gone off in a mailbox near the administrative entrance of Calvary Baptist. There

were no injuries. No one claimed responsibility for the blasts and no motive is known.

### **August 23**

*Claremont, NH* – An 18-year-old man and juvenile companion broke into St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church and caused thousands of dollars worth of damage. The pair emptied fire extinguishers with the fire retardant powder settling into carpeting, pews, and books. They also entered the sacristy, where unconsecrated hosts were later found scattered on the floor; some had been chewed and spit out. Posted graffiti included "Satan was here." Both suspects were taken into custody. This marked the second time in three years the church had been targeted for vandalism.

### **September 28**

*Trenton, NJ* – The largest insurance company in New Jersey "schemed in secret" to purposely exclude Catholic hospitals from partaking in a new plan that will lure customers with cheaper premiums, said the president of the Catholic Healthcare partnership, Sister Patricia Codey. She cited religious discrimination as to why seven out of eight Catholic hospital systems were not permitted to join Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey's new line of health plans that will be made available in 2016. She highlighted how a majority of Catholic hospitals scored high on the Leapfrog's Group national safety record card.

### **September 29**

*Cambridge, MA* – A man dressed as a priest walked around the inside of St. Sava Serbian Church on Alewife Brook Parkway and committed a lewd act on the altar. Cambridge police spokesman Jeremy Warnick said "He stripped himself down to being naked and then performed a sexual act on the altar stage." According to police, the unidentified man entered the church around 3 a.m. and discovered the priest's clothes. He wore the clothes for 45 minutes prior to stripping down.