

CORONAVIRUS' EASTER MEANING

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the Easter meaning of coronavirus:

"It is in the sense of deaths a bad week," said Dr. Anthony Fauci. "At the same time, as we're seeing an increase in deaths, we're seeing a rather dramatic decrease in the need for hospitalizations."

It is more than apropos that the number of deaths from coronavirus should peak during Holy Week, and especially on Easter weekend: It is an expression of the meaning of Easter. Similarly, the news that more are leaving hospitals than entering is also a sign of Easter.

Christianity is an optimistic religion. The Middle English (English as spoken during the late Middle Ages) origin of Good Friday means "Holy" Friday. It is, of course, marked by the sorrow of Christ's crucifixion. This bad news was followed by the good news of His resurrection on Easter Sunday.

This, then, is the Easter meaning of coronavirus: the bad news of thousands of deaths is being followed by the good news of its abatement.

New York Archbishop Timothy Dolan understands the meaning of Easter better than anyone. After Christ was crucified, he says, it "seemed we could never smile again...But, then came the Sunday called Easter! The sun-S-U-N-came up, and the Son-S-O-N-came out as He rose from the dead. Guess who had the last word? God!"

The coronavirus will be defeated. There is a reason why hope is a theological virtue—it is the right tonic for times like this.

Happy Easter!

BIGOTS OPPOSE FUNDS FOR RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on opposition to federal funding of religious groups affected by the coronavirus pandemic:

The apostles of inclusion always draw the line when it comes to houses of worship and religious non-profits. They have done so again now that religious non-profits qualify for financial assistance from the Small Business Administration. This bothers them: they want to discriminate against these entities.

The Trump administration does not believe it is proper to discriminate against any organization in the distribution of funds attendant to the coronavirus pandemic. American Atheists calls this an “unconstitutional giveaway” and Freedom From Religion Foundation says it is “alarmed” by the policy. Neither can match the bigotry of Charles Pierce, the veteran religion hater (he has a special hatred of all things Catholic) who writes for *Esquire*.

Pierce objects to the funding of religious groups, saying it is unconstitutional “even if the Supreme Court’s Papist majority” may think otherwise. He has much in common with nativists and the Ku Klux Klan—they routinely called Catholics “papists.”

Pierce is angry that there are five Catholics on the Supreme Court. Yet proportionately there are more Jews: Jews are two percent of the population but make up a third of the high court, while Catholics are a quarter of the population and make up a little over half. No one but an anti-Semite objects

to having three Jews on the Supreme Court, and no one but an anti-Catholic bigot is livid over having five Catholics.

It does not help the bigot's case for him to invoke James Madison's *Memorial and Remonstrance* as support for his position. If he were better read, he would know that Madison's statement was nothing more than an argument against the government's granting tax support *for only one religion*. Hence, Madison is on the side of the Trump administration.

Indeed, if the bigot knew something about the Founding he would know that the same Congress that passed the First Amendment accepted the third article of the Northwest Ordinance without emendation: "Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and happiness of mankind, schools and the means of learning shall forever be encouraged."

As Walter Berns said, "It is not easy to see how Congress...could promote religious and moral education under a Constitution that promoted 'the absolute separation of church and state' and forbade all forms of assistance to religion."

Kudos to the Trump administration for its policy of inclusion and its rejection of intolerance and discrimination.

PELL'S RELEASE TRIGGERS BACKLASH

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on critics of Cardinal George Pell:

Most people are normal and desire justice. Abnormal people

prize revenge. A case in point is the reaction to the release of Cardinal George Pell from an Australian prison. Normal people are happy with the news, but there are always the abnormal ones.

Neither the *Boston Globe*, *New York Times* nor the *Washington Post*—the three most critical newspapers of the Catholic Church—put the Pell story on the front page (the latter two buried it on p. 19), but it is a sure bet they would have had his conviction been upheld.

The first reaction to the acquittal of Cardinal Pell from the *New York Times* was to hammer the justice system in Australia. There is too much secrecy in their system, the two reporters said. They are right. The Australian courts are not nearly as transparent as the American courts. But if this were a problem, why did the newspaper not sound the alarms when the vector of change was moving against Pell? Why did they wait to register a complaint only when he won?

The reporters cited as an example the court's decision to pull from bookstores a work by Louise Milligan, *Cardinal: The Rise and Fall of George Pell*. The judge wanted to avoid a contempt of court charge.

Who is she? Milligan is a hero in anti-Catholic circles in Australia, which are quite big. Speaking of Pell, she once said, "He's a man for years was telling the rest of us how to live our lives—not the least how to live our sex lives." There it is again: It's always sex that drives Church haters over the edge. For them, the three most dreaded words in the English language are "Thou Shalt Not."

The first article Milligan ever wrote about Pell appeared in the April 16, 2001 edition of the *Australian*. It was about gay fascists who tried to storm St. Patrick's Cathedral in Melbourne. They were screaming, "George Pell, Go to Hell." Like Milligan, the gays objected to his defense of Catholic

moral theology. [NOTE: Australian media are now reporting that “Rot in Hell Pell” and “No Justice” were scribbled on the doors of St. Patrick’s Cathedral in Melbourne following Pell’s acquittal.]

BishopAccountability is the favorite source of left-wing journalists who don’t like the Catholic Church. It’s idea of priestly justice is to leave the names of exonerated priests on its website, suggesting to readers they may be guilty. One of its officials, Anne Barrett Doyle, said in relation to Pell’s release that “it is distressing to many survivors, the decision doesn’t change the fact the trial of the powerful cardinal was a watershed.”

One can almost hear her groan. Not a word about putting an innocent man in solitary confinement for crimes he never committed. It was a watershed, alright—it was one of the most egregious cases of injustice ever endured by a high-ranking member of the Catholic hierarchy.

SNAP (Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests), which the Catholic League played a major role in crippling in the United States, spoke for its Australian members saying, “We are dismayed and heartbroken that Cardinal George Pell has successfully challenged his conviction for sexually abusing two choirboys and will be freed from prison.” In other words, justice doesn’t matter. Punishing the Catholic Church is what matters. They are abnormal.

Voice of the Faithful, another mostly moribund American letterhead, said, “The court’s ruling leaves clergy abuse survivors and supporters wondering where justice lies.” This proves once again that this pitiful band of elderly Catholic dissidents was never interested in Church reform. Justice, according to them, is when the person they hate gets punished, independent of his innocence. They are abnormal.

We stand with what Pope Francis tweeted right after Cardinal

Pell was freed.

“In these days of #Lent, we’ve been witnessing the persecution that Jesus underwent and how He was judged ferociously, even though He was innocent. Let us #PrayTogether today for all those persons who suffer due to an unjust sentence because of someone had it in for them.”

CARDINAL PELL IS A FREE MAN

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the release of Cardinal George Pell from prison:

Cardinal George Pell’s conviction on five counts of sexual abuse has been unanimously overturned by Australia’s High Court. He was never guilty of these charges in the first place and is now a free man. The decision by the High Court cannot be challenged.

Pell has suffered greatly and has been the victim of outrageous lies. He has been smeared, spat upon, and forced to endure solitary confinement for crimes he never committed.

This was a sham from the get-go and should never have made its way through the Australian courts.

Pell was charged with abusing two boys in 1996. One of the boys overdosed on drugs but not before telling his mother—on two occasions—that Pell never abused him. The other boy’s accusation was undercut by the dead boy’s account: they were allegedly abused at the same time and place. There were no witnesses to an offense that supposedly took place after Mass in the sacristy of a church.

Here is what the High Court said about this matter. “The

assumption that a group of choristers, including adults, might have been so preoccupied with making their way to the robing room as to fail to notice the extraordinary sight of the Archbishop of Melbourne dressed 'in his full regalia' advancing through the procession and pinning a 13 year old boy to the wall, is a large one." That is putting it mildly. It is preposterous.

We at the Catholic League have been defending Cardinal Pell for many years. Here's a chronological list of my public statements in defense of him, all of which are available on our website.

- "Cardinal Pell Should Sue For Libel," March 12, 2013
- "Unsubstantiated Accusations," April 10, 2013
- "Yanked!" February 9, 2016
- "CNN Op-Ed On Sexual Abuse Is Flawed," June 30, 2017
- "The Washington Post Is At It Again," July 5, 2017
- "The New York Times Piles On," July 7, 2017
- "Cardinal Pell Acquires Top Lawyer," July 11, 2017
- "The War on Cardinal Pell," July 20, 2017
- "Foes of Cardinal Pell In High Gear," July 25, 2017
- "Media Cast Wide Net In Pell Case," July 26, 2017
- "Australia's War On Christian Kids," July 31, 2017
- "Australian Abuse Report Deeply Flawed," October 2, 2017
- "Media Bias Against Cardinal Pell," January 8, 2018
- "Cardinal Pell's Ordeal Continues," April 17, 2018
- "Cardinal Pell's Hearings Were An Eye-Opener," April 24, 2018
- "Cardinal Pell Pleads 'Not Guilty,'" May 1, 2018
- "Can Cardinal Pell Ever Get A Fair Trial?" May 16, 2018
- "Washington Post Columnist Gets It Wrong," December 14, 2018
- "Cardinal Pell's Appeal Is Justified," February 26, 2019
- "Rolling Stone's Dishonest Hit On Cardinal Pell," March 19, 2019
- "Cardinal Pell Victimized," August 21, 2019

- “Cardinal Pell And Brett Kavanaugh; Two Defamed Catholics,” September 30, 2019
- “Measure Of Justice For Cardinal Pell,” November 13, 2019
- “Cardinal Pell Targeted Again,” April 2, 2020

This has been a terrible Lenten period with the coronavirus pandemic, but Lent 2020 will also be remembered by Catholics as one of great joy: Cardinal Pell has finally been exonerated. Those who tried to destroy him—and there were many all over the world—will have to answer one day for what they have done.

HANDLING PRISONS AMID CORONAVIRUS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the issue of prisons and coronavirus:

On April 6, Pope Francis weighed in on how to handle crowded prisons during coronavirus. “Where there is overcrowding—many people there—there is a danger, in this pandemic, that it will end in a serious disaster. We pray for those responsible, for those who have to make decisions in this, to find a right and creative way to solve the problem.”

The Holy Father’s remarks are very much in the Catholic tradition. He identified a problem and called for us to pray for those charged with handling it. He did not get into the weeds instructing public officials how to proceed. He understands how tricky this issue is: We have to balance public health with public safety. This demands prudence, the most cardinal of the cardinal virtues.

On April 3, U.S. Attorney General Bill Barr asked the director of the Bureau of Prisons to expand efforts to release prisoners because of “emergency conditions.” He asked Michael Carvajal to “move vulnerable inmates out of these institutions.” But he did not say to just open the doors and let them free. He prudentially called for these select prisoners to be moved to home confinement. Barr, who is Catholic, is acting very much in accordance with the pope’s expectations.

Now contrast the Catholic approach with that of left-wing politicians and activists.

On March 31, it was reported that New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio had already released 900 inmates from the city’s jails, with plans to release hundreds more. They are not going to home confinement—they are free to go wherever they want. Subsequently, the mayor pushed for radical bail reform: it has allowed hardened criminals to take to the streets, many of whom have committed violent crimes.

On March 18, the ACLU wrote a letter to Attorney General Barr pleading with him to release a large group of prisoners, including those who are pregnant (it would no doubt assist these women to abort their child—another civil liberties right). Several state chapters have since called for inmates to be released. As we might expect, the ACLU’s credibility on this issue is shot.

On February 2, two days after President Trump banned travel from China to the U.S., the ACLU said his decision would “do more harm than good.” It now looks foolish. Indeed, if it had gotten its way, many more innocent persons would now be dead.

We know what the ACLU really wants: it wants to abolish prisons. In 1972 the ACLU launched its National Prison Project, an operation established to protect the constitutional rights of prisoners. Philip Hirschkop was one

of its most active officials, and three years earlier he set the tone for this effort when he co-wrote a piece in the *Virginia Law Review* titled, "The Unconstitutionality of Prison Life." Yes, he wanted to abolish all prisons. That ACLU mentality hasn't changed.

Not to be outdone, we have "Squad" congressional members Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Rashida Tlaib, and Ayanna Pressley writing a letter on March 9 to the director of the Bureau of Prisons outlining their concerns for prisoners. Pressley actually called for the "compassionate release" of federal inmates. She did not say whether releasing serial murderers and rapists without a trace of compassion would suffice.

Thank God we have a pope who exercises more prudence and common sense than these left-wing activists and politicians.

Catholic group slams de Blasio for questioning Christian charity's New York coronavirus field hospital

Bill In The News (Fox News):

A conservative group on Friday accused New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio of being anti-Christian after he questioned whether the 68-bed field hospital set up in Central Park by Samaritan's Purse, an organization run by Franklin Graham, would treat all patients equally.

William Donohue, the president and CEO of the Catholic League

for Religious and Civil Rights, slammed de Blasio and several other New York leaders for questioning the motives behind Graham's gesture. [READ MORE HERE](#)

DE BLASIO FEARS “CHRISTIAN VIRUS”

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the growing tide of criticism directed at Rev. Franklin Graham's assistance to New Yorkers:

Rev. Franklin Graham could have chosen to simply ask his people to pray for New Yorkers hit hard with coronavirus. But instead he recruited 72 doctors, nurses and other medical personnel from Samaritan's Purse, an evangelical group, to set up a 68-bed facility in Central Park; it is operated in partnership with the Mount Sinai Health System and is equipped with ten ventilators.

How was he received? Many New Yorkers welcomed Graham's efforts, but some have reviled him. Militant secularists have bombarded him with vitriol, including such notables as New York State Senator Brad Hoylman and playwright Paul Rudnick. Hoylman called Graham a “notorious anti-gay bigot” and Rudnick branded him a “vicious homophobe.”

Hoylman should not throw stones. In 2018, he wrote an insulting anti-Catholic tweet. I slammed him for it and he quickly called me to apologize. I accepted it. But he should know better. As for Rudnick, he is known for his filthy anti-Christian play, “The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told.” So he has no leg to stand on—he knows a thing or two about bigotry.

All of this attack on Graham stems from his belief that the institution of marriage was designed for the only two people who can naturally make a family, namely a man and a woman. Up until about a week ago yesterday, figuratively speaking, every normal person believed the same, all over the world.

Anyone is free to disagree with Graham, but to portray him as a hater is malicious. Graham explained who his medical staff serves. "We do not make distinctions about an individual's religion, race, sexual orientation, or economic status." More important, *there is zero evidence that any of his ministries discriminates against anyone.*

No one is to blame for these attacks on Graham more than New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio. When he first learned of the relief efforts of Samaritan's Purse he acted as if New York had been invaded by a hostile force.

"I said immediately to my team that we had to find out exactly what was happening. Was there going to be an approach that was truly consistent with the values and the laws in New York City, that everyone would be served and served equally?" He wasn't done. "We're going to send over people from the Mayor's Office to monitor" the park facility. That is the mindset of an authoritarian.

What makes de Blasio's attack on Graham most despicable is his failure to take coronavirus seriously. His record is an utter disgrace. Consider the following.

- "While de Blasio said he will announce new restrictions on large gatherings in the coming days, leaders in other cities and states across the U.S. have already enacted measures to slow the spread of the infectious disease." [foxnews, 3-12]
- "New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio said Saturday he plans to keep schools in the country's largest school system open as long as possible, standing in stark

contrast to the majority of the country's largest city school districts and governors in more than a dozen states who have shuttered their entire K-12 education systems to stem the spread of the coronavirus." [usnews, 3-14]

- "De Blasio's decision to keep New York City's schools open goes against guidance released Friday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which recommended that all schools close for a period of six to eight weeks, especially in states with high numbers of cases." [usnews, 3-14]
- "New York City is one of the few large school districts left in the country that has yet to cancel classes due to the coronavirus outbreak and the teachers that run the classroom say they're 'furious,' according to Facebook posts and statements from the teachers themselves." [nbcnews, 3-15]
- "New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio started rebuffing any effort to close schools last week saying, 'we are going to do our damndest to keep the schools open.' By the end of last week, the second and third largest education systems, Los Angeles and Chicago, had announced the suspension of classes. Several large states such as Florida and Ohio have announced the cancellation of classes, too. On Sunday, it was announced that Nassau and Suffolk county schools will be closed for two weeks." [nbcnews, 3-15]
- "'Because of his irresponsible decision to keep the public schools open, Mayor Bill de Blasio can no longer assure the health and safety of our students and school communities,' wrote Michael Mulgrew, president of the United Federation of Teachers, in an email to its members. 'The mayor is recklessly putting the health of our students, their families and school staff in jeopardy by refusing to close public schools.'" [nypost, 3-15]

This same delinquent mayor is now worried that someone who is sick with coronavirus may catch the "Christian virus," simply because he was attended to by one of Franklin Graham's volunteer corps of medical professionals. Is he paranoid? Or just a bigot?

De Blasio is an embarrassment. No wonder his presidential bid fell flat. Who in his right mind would want him to run anything?

Contact the mayor's communications director, Wiley Norvell:
wnorvell@cityhall.nyc.gov

CARDINAL PELL TARGETED AGAIN

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on new charges against Cardinal George Pell:

No Catholic figure has been more victimized by bogus charges of sexual abuse than Cardinal George Pell. Now two other accusers have come forward, and their stories don't pass the smell test any more than the others did.

Pell is in prison awaiting a decision on his appeal for allegedly abusing two boys in 1996. One of the boys, who died of drug overdose, told his mother on two occasions that it was all a lie—he was never abused by Pell. This makes suspect the charge of the other boy: they were allegedly abused at the same time and in the same place. They have no witnesses, nor will anyone vouch for them. The latest charges are just as spurious.

Two men who lived in the same orphanage in the Australian city of Ballarat, Victoria have now come forward to make

accusations of sexual abuse against Pell; the alleged offenses took place in the 1970s.

In 2016, Victoria police contacted Bernie [his surname is being withheld by reporters] and Philip Clarke as part of their investigation of Pell. Their allegations, along with others, were either withdrawn, dismissed or dropped.

Clarke now says Pell inappropriately touched him in a YMCA swimming pool. When he was contacted by the Victoria police and asked if Pell had ever abused him, he had a chance to nail Pell, but he never did. He says he didn't want to have any part of it at that time, but now he has changed his mind.

Brett O'Neill was a regular at the same pool during this time. He says he never saw Pell do anything wrong. "No...if something had been a bit out of whack with George," he said, "I think our parents would have got involved. If they had thought that there was something not right, they would've been in the change rooms."

Bernie's story is even more suspect. He says Pell inappropriately touched him while showering at the orphanage run by the Sisters of Nazareth. But it was established during the 2018 hearings at Melbourne's Magistrates' Court that Pell had only been to Nazareth House once. That was in 1980 when it was closing. The current head of the Sisters of Nazareth told the media that she has no knowledge of Pell ever being at the home.

Why didn't Bernie tell the cops his story when he was interviewed by them? He claims the psychological pressure of having to deal with a trial was too much for him, but not anymore. He's good to go.

The timing of these revelations is more than curious—they are scandalous. The High Court of Australia will deliver its ruling on Pell's case in Brisbane on April 7.

In other words, these men never came forward before, did not tell their tales to the police when they were interviewed, and just now decided to go public, one week before the High Court's ruling. Conveniently, Bernie was featured on an ABC-TV program (Australia) that just aired.

The vendettas against Cardinal Pell are astonishing. Please keep him in your prayers as we approach Holy Week.

THE PLIGHT OF FALSELY ACCUSED PRIESTS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on priests who recently had accusations made against them dropped:

In 1987, Raymond Donovan, former Secretary of Labor under President Ronald Reagan, was acquitted of charges that he conspired with the mafia for a business transaction. When he walked out of court a free man, he was asked by the media how he felt. He famously quipped, "Which office do I go to get my reputation back?"

The same question is being asked by falsely accused priests, though they don't garner much attention from the media. Ask yourself this: How many times have you seen an exonerated priest interviewed on TV?

Everyone knows when charges are made against a priest—it's all over the news—but aside from a few stories about priests whose case has been tossed, there isn't much interest in detailing what these men have gone through. It's sexy to report accusations; it's unattractive to report acquittals.

The following is a list of priests in the first quarter of 2020 whose case was either found to be unsubstantiated by a church review panel or was thrown out by the courts.

- A Valley County, Nebraska jury found Fr. John Kakkuzhiyil not guilty of first-degree sexual assault. He was accused of forcible sexual assault of a woman in 2018. ["Priest Cleared of Sexual Assault," www.theindependent.com, January 9]
- Two Buffalo priests, Monsignor Peter J. Popadick and Fr. Paul M. Nogaro, were returned to ministry after the Diocese of Buffalo was unable to substantiate allegations of child sexual abuse against them. The accuser refused to cooperate with the diocese. ["2 Buffalo Diocese Priests Accused of Sex Abuse Returned to Ministry," *Buffalo News*, January 18]
- Another Buffalo priest, Fr. Roy T. Herberger, sued his accuser for lying about charges of sexual abuse against him (the accuser is suing the diocese but not the priest); the priest is charging him with slander. The alleged offense took place in the 1980s and no charges were made until 2018. The accuser said he was a student at St. Ann School in the mid-1980s, but there is no record he ever attended the school. Herberger said "there is no proof, no evidence, not even an inkling, just an accusation and all of a sudden, people like me are put on the front page of papers, picture, name on television, and I mean, that's just not fair." ["Priest Files Defamation Suit Against His Accuser," *Buffalo News*, January 23]
- A Kentucky priest, Fr. David Glockner, was accused of inappropriately touching two teenage girls, and had the charges dropped both by an independent investigation by his religious order and a grand jury. ["Northern Kentucky Catholic Priest Cleared of any Wrongdoing," www.cincinnati.com, February 5]
- Paul Angelicchio was reinstated by the Diocese of

Syracuse after it was determined that charges of sexually abusing a boy in the early 1980s could not be substantiated. The accuser refused to cooperate with the diocese. ["Accused Priest Reinstated by the Diocese," *Post-Standard*, February 6]

- In September, 2019, a Wisconsin judge dismissed one of six counts of sexual misconduct against Fr. William A. Nolan, and the jury found him not guilty of the remaining counts. But the Diocese of Madison commenced its own investigation of him and in March, 2020 it deemed all allegations against him not credible. ["Priest Accused of Sex Abuse Cleared by Madison Diocese," www.gazettextra.com, March 7]
- Hugh Lang, former schools superintendent of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, had his conviction of February 6 tossed when an Allegheny County judge agreed with a post-sentencing motion filed by his attorney. The initial judge, who was removed from the bench over alleged racist remarks, was found to have erred when he allowed spurious evidence to be used against the priest. ["Ex-Pittsburgh Priest Accused of Sexually Abusing Child Has Conviction Tossed," www.triblive.com, March 9]
- An independent investigation of an Augustinian priest from Andover, Massachusetts, Fr. Peter Gori, found charges of sexual abuse from 30 years ago to be unsubstantiated. The accuser could not recall details of what happened, and his account was at variance with facts about the priest's assignment history. The attorney for the accused is Mitchell Garabedian of "Spotlight" fame; he has had previous cases against priests thrown out. ["Andover Priest Reinstated After Sexual Abuse Investigation," www.bostonglobe, March 30]

Then there is the case of Fr. John Onderko from Illinois. The 83-year-old priest was removed from ministry by the Diocese of Peoria for alleged sexual abuse dating back decades ago. He says he was never told of the accusations, which he denies. He

has sued the diocese saying he was denied due process.
["Accused Priest in Rock Island Sues Peoria Diocese,"
<https://qctimes.com>, March 10]

As Ray Donovan put it, how do these priests get their reputation back?

CUOMO SHOULD NOT EXTEND WINDOW FOR VICTIMS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue is appealing to New York Governor Andrew Cuomo not to extend the deadline for the Child Victims Act. To read his letter, click [here](#).

*Contact Melissa DeRosa, secretary to the governor:
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