

The Church is Right about Same Sex Attraction

The Ruth Institute's free report "[Refuting the Top 5 Gay Myths](#)"

Jennifer Roback Morse, Ph.D. and D. Paul Sullins, Ph.D.

If you thought that persons who are sexually attracted to the same sex must be gay or lesbian and can only enjoy intimacy in same-sex relations, you would be mistaken. No that thinking this would be your fault. In the onslaught of secular media and the sometimes fumbling responses of Catholic leaders, Catholic teaching on same sex attraction is about as misunderstood as it is controversial.

The Church has been reluctant to refer to individuals as "gay" or "lesbian," as if their patterns of attractions define a person's identity. The Church also teaches that homosexual temptations are not the same as homosexual acts. At root, the Church always affirms, and our deathly culture almost uniformly denies, that same-sex attracted people can, to their benefit, resist and change homosexual behavior. No one need be locked into sin.

Scientific research strongly supports the Church's view. Studies of the human genome and of identical twins have cast serious doubt on the often-heard claim that sexual orientation is an innate immutable trait, comparable to race. Furthermore, social science research going back to the 1990's has found that people can, and often do, change their patterns of sexual attractions and behaviors. Yet, as with a lot of research that supports the Church, these studies have been vigorously suppressed by secular academics and journals. Persons who have changed sexual orientation are functionally invisible in cultural and policy debates, including the debates over so-

called conversion therapy.

The Ruth Institute, a pro-family organization in Lake Charles, Louisiana, decided to do something about this, in a project called Leaving Pride Behind. We sought out and surveyed people who once would have called themselves “gay” or “lesbian” but no longer do. We gathered a sample of 183 men and women who filled out an extensive survey about their journeys into and out of an LGBT experience or identity. We asked questions about religion, child abuse and various types of therapy. We asked “before and after” questions about patterns of sexual attractions and behaviors.

Fr. Paul Sullins, Ph.D., Senior Research Associate at the Ruth Institute, has just published the first round of data analysis from this survey, in *Cureus*, a peer-reviewed Springer Nature journal. This paper shows:

1. Same-sex attractions can often, though not always, change, more so for women than for men. Almost nine in ten women in the sample (88%) had changed sexual attraction from mostly or fully homosexual to mostly or fully heterosexual. Fewer men, but still a sizable minority (39%), had experienced this much change in attractions.
2. Regardless of how much their attractions changed, all of the individuals in this sample had almost completely eliminated their same sex behavior. 100% of men and women reported “slight” or no same sex behavior.
3. Therapy can help, but is not necessary, to change sexual orientation. General therapy, not necessarily focused on changing same sex attraction, was more helpful for some individuals in reducing same sex attraction than therapy with a distinct goal of reducing same sex attraction. And therapy with the explicit aim of changing sexual orientation sometimes reduced other psychologically troubling issues, for instance, depression for women and self-harm for men.

The studies purporting to “prove” therapy is dangerous never include people who have “left pride behind” and usually exclude women. In other words, they evaluate change therapy by looking only at people who failed to change. What kind of grade would marriage counseling get if we only asked people who subsequently divorced? This is why our study is so important, to show the many successes from sexual orientation therapy.

Our findings show that the world-wide drive to ban all forms of sexual reorientation therapy is deeply misguided. Women who experience persistent same sex attraction are the most likely to benefit from this therapy. Denying women therapy, based on studies that only include men, is patently unfair. Therapy that does not have the explicit goal of reorienting sexual desires can sometimes result in a reordering of desire. Sweeping bans on “conversion therapy” will likely have a chilling effect on even this type of therapy.

The drive to ban Sexual Reorientation Therapy under the tendentious label of “conversion therapy,” assumes no one can change their sexual orientation, and that even the efforts to change are intrinsically harmful. Every single person in our survey is a standing rebuke to these assumptions.

This is why the entire gay lobby goes into overdrive to discredit them. “You must be lying about living a chaste life.” “You were not really gay in the first place.” And so on.

Our study does not claim to be representative of the entire relevant population. We honestly have no idea how well our sample represents the experiences of everyone who has ever been plagued with unwanted same sex attraction and has left them behind, or who has made substantial changes in their behavior. At this point we are satisfied with showing that these are real people whose stories deserve to be part of the international conversation about “conversion therapy.”

The thoughtful responses from this group of people show that people can indeed change their behavior, feelings and self-understanding. Continuing to ignore them as if they did not exist is simply not acceptable. Our culture tells someone with same-sex attraction that they are locked into a destructive identity from which there is no escape. They don't really believe this, or they wouldn't outlaw efforts to try to change. Catholic truth offers something better: a liberation from besetting sin to live a life of freedom and holiness. Rather than be tangled in fruitless sexual desires, it is possible, as many have found, to Leave Pride Behind.

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MAMDANI'S DIAMOND FETISH AND THE BRITS

[Bill Donohue](#)

On April 29, Zohran Mamdani, the Marxist millionaire Muslim Mayor of New York City, met briefly with King Charles in Manhattan. He later said that if he had had a moment alone with him, he probably would have told him to return the Koh-i-Noor diamond to India; the British acquired it in 1849. The 105-carat diamond is now part of the British Crown Jewels.

Why is it important to Mamdani that the diamond be returned to India? It matters to him because in his ideologically charged mind, the Brits are the bad guys. They were colonialists,

weren't they? True enough. But the Muslims who had it before them were barbarians, weren't they?

What about the Pakistanis and the Afghans? They say they deserve to have the gem, and their case cannot easily be dismissed. Why doesn't Mamdani mention them? Because his mother is from India?

The history of the diamond begins with Zahir-ud-din-Babur. He and his followers invaded India in 1526 and established the Islamic Mughal dynasty. He was a descendant of Genghis Khan, and at the ripe old age of twelve he ascended to the throne. Not a peaceful man, he conquered one region after another. Indeed, he took over what is today Pakistan, Bangladesh and eastern Afghanistan.

According to Anita Anand and William Dalrymple, who wrote a book on this subject, "it's impossible to know exactly where the Koh-i-Noor came from and when it first came into the Mughals' possession." That being the case, it makes sense that multiple claims of ownership would exist.

Though Zahir-ud-din-Babur had nothing to do with the coveted diamond, his Mughal dynasty did. The authors say that in 1628 Mughal ruler Shah Jahan commissioned "a magnificent, gemstone-encrusted throne." It took seven years to make; the diamond was lodged at the very top, surrounded by rubies, garnets and other jewels.

The year before Shah Jahan commissioned the jewel, he defeated his youngest brother and crowned himself emperor. He was involved in one military operation after another, and he came out on top when he killed all of his surviving brothers.

The Islamic Mughal's reign ended when Persian ruler Nader Shah invaded Delhi in 1739. He proved to be one of the most powerful rulers in Iranian history. His empire was enormous and he made Shia Islam the state religion of Iran.

He was also a mass murderer, responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands of people. In addition, he was a notorious rip-off artist: he stole so many gems that it took 700 elephants, 4,000 camels and 12,000 horses to pull it. As for the Koh-i-Noor, he wore it as an armband. When he fled, he took the diamond with him, traveling to modern-day Afghanistan.

The diamond did not return to India for 70 years. After decades of bloody wars among competing rulers, it was returned to India and claimed by Sikh ruler Ranjit Singh in 1813. When he died in 1839, years of non-stop violence followed. It was after the bloodshed stopped that the British laid claim to it, securing a legal transfer.

In other words, there are many heirs to the Koh-i-Noor. Everyone who once possessed it said it was theirs to keep. Until the next conquerors claimed it. It is therefore presumptuous for Mamdani to say that the British should give it back to India.

The British colonialists were the last to possess it. If this is unfair, how fair was it for Muslim warriors to claim ownership? How fair is it that the Pakistanis don't have it today? What about the Taliban in Afghanistan? Shouldn't they have first dibs?

The problem with Mamdani is his childlike innocence in assessing historical quarrels. The fact is that history is strewn with injustice and no one comes to the table with his hands clean. But in Mamdani's Marxist mind, there are good guys and bad guys, victimizers and victims, and in this case the British colonialists are the bad guys and the Muslim barbarians are the good guys.

Mamdani reeks of self-righteousness. There are winners and losers in history, and only a fool believes the losers are always morally superior to the winners.

REPORT ON ANTI-CHRISTIAN BIAS NAILS IT

[Bill Donohue](#)

The report by the Trump administration's Task Force on Anti-Christian Bias is commendable. It lays out, in great detail, the extent to which Christians have had their First Amendment rights violated by the Biden administration, as well as by some states.

None of this is news to the Catholic League—we provided a trove of documents to the Task Force and I personally met with one of the top lawyers working in the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice (DOJ)—but it is important that the public learn just how malicious the Biden administration was in its treatment of Christians.

The report correctly notes that there was a different worldview between that of Christians and that of the operatives in the Biden administration. But that was true when President Obama was in office, yet he did not brand Catholics who opposed abortion, gay marriage and sex-reassignment surgery as “domestic terrorists.” That is not a small difference.

The Biden DOJ was not content to see its policies prevail; rather, it was driven by a desire to *punish* Christians with whom they disagreed with. Here are ten examples.

- When dossiers are prepared on pro-life Christians, and information is collected on their children, that is nefarious.
- When a judge is labeled a “very Catholic magistrate,”

that is treacherous.

- When a Christian nurse is forced to participate in an abortion, that is malicious.
- When a Christian family is told it cannot be foster parents because they disagree with gender ideology, that is wicked.
- When Catholics are restricted from going to Mass because of unproven, and unevenly applied, restrictions due to a health scare, that is indefensible.
- When pro-life protesters are treated as if they were violent thugs, that is despicable.
- When gay pride flags are flown at the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See, that is unconscionable.
- When Christians' parental rights are violated by educators, that is reprehensible.
- When pro-life students are told to remove their religious symbols when they enter a federal building, that is outrageous.
- When the religious rights of Christians are put on the chopping block by secular zealots, that is pernicious.

The Biden administration targeted Christians in a way that is unprecedented. That Biden called himself a "devout Catholic" makes his machinations all the more astounding.

While this is bad enough, the disinterest in reporting on this by the mainstream media is more than distressing—it is totally irresponsible. If it were some other demographic group that was being profiled by the federal government—one of the protected classes—all hell would break loose.

The Task Force did its job. But our job at the Catholic League is not over. When vigilance atrophies, so do our rights. It's not in our DNA to let that happen.

“EWTN Live”

Bill Donohue discusses his new book *Christianity in the Crosshairs: Ruling Class and Radicals Find a Common Enemy* on “EWTN Live.” To watch, click [here](#).

MAMDANI’S QUEST TO RAPE THE RICH

[Bill Donohue](#)

Besides an insatiable appetite for control, what defines the Left is an equally insatiable appetite for envy. No one epitomizes these vices today better than New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani, a young Muslim man born to privilege who has never had a real job.

He recently stuck his face into a camera and said, “When I ran for mayor, I said I was going to tax the rich. Well, today we’re taxing the rich.” He had his proverbial snarky grin on his face, delighted with his decision to fleece the upper class. If he had any integrity, he would include himself and his parents in his rape-the-rich game.

Mamdani has made it plain that he supports the “abolition of private property.” Or as he likes to put it, “If there was any system that could guarantee each person housing—whether you call it the abolition of private property or you call it a statewide housing guarantee—it is preferable to what is going on right now.”

Calls for the “abolition of private property” are what made

Karl Marx famous. It is a basic tenet of communism. Now if Mamdani were honest, he would have to rid himself of his private property holdings, and those of his uber-rich parents. They all sing from the same communist playbook, but in real life they are capitalists par excellence.

Mamdani loves private property so much that he owns four acres of land in Jinja, Uganda. It is worth an estimated \$250,000. Not bad for a plot of land with nothing on it (at least for the moment). As one Ugandan told a reporter, "One thing for sure is that Zohran owns not only one land here, but many." He may not be required to report private property holdings that do not generate income, so he can skirt scrutiny. This is the kind of capitalist trick that if done by others would drive him mad.

The working class can barely afford to pay for one wedding, but Mamdani had no problem paying for three of them. The biggest one was in Uganda. He made sure to keep the riff-raff far away. He hired heavily armed men and masked special forces to guard his family's estate, making ICE agents look angelic.

Mommy and daddy are filthy rich. Mira Nair is an international filmmaker and Mahmood Mamdani is a Columbia University professor. He makes \$300,000 a year, which is not exactly chump change, especially for a Marxist. She is worth an estimated \$5 million. She sold her Manhattan apartment in 2019 for \$1.45 million.

Family holdings in Uganda are extensive, going beyond Jinja. Their prize possession is a luxury 5-bedroom villa on two acres of land. It has a pool, gardens and a spectacular view of Lake Victoria. It is worth more than 1 million dollars.

Despite all his loot, Mamdani wants to rape the rich. He is not driven by justice—he is driven by envy. Envy is not identical to jealousy. The jealous want what others have; the envious want to deprive others of what they have. That defines

Mamdani.

The Catholic Church considers envy to be one of the seven capital sins. Robert Nisbet, the great American sociologist, got it right when he said, "Of the seven deadly sins, of all states of the human mind indeed, envy is the basest and ugliest. It is also the most corrosive of spiritual and moral fiber in the bearer and the most destructive of the social fabric."

It is bad enough that Mamdani stokes the flames of envy, but what makes him even more detestable is his rank hypocrisy. Pope Francis did not know him, but he knew of his ilk. "Hypocrites are people who pretend, flatter and deceive because they live with a mask over their faces and do not have the courage to face the truth."

Mamdani doesn't have the courage to tell the truth about his enormous wealth. Instead, he pretends to be one of the masses. But he never was and he never will be. He is a nepo-baby foreign investor who is not subject to the consequences of his own economic policies. "Do as I say, not as I do" never sounded more obscene.

IS SHARIA A FRIEND OR FOE OF LIBERTY?

[Bill Donohue](#)

Sharia is the law that is derived from Islamic texts and traditions. Whether it is more of a friend or foe of liberty is disputed, but both sides can't be right.

On March 20, the *New York Times* ran an editorial taking aim at President Trump's "Islamophobia." Without assessing its merits, what interests the Catholic League is whether its interpretation of Sharia is correct. It defines it as "a set of principles, based on the Quran, that guide life for Muslims, much as biblical precepts guide Christians and Jews." "Extreme versions" exist, it allows, "including Afghanistan and Iran."

Agreeing with the *Times* is the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the Muslim civil rights organization.

Sharia, it says, "plays the same role in Islam that canon law plays for Catholics and halacha plays for Jews, a voluntary moral compass, not an alternative legal code." It goes on to say that "Like other faith communities in the US and elsewhere, we see no inherent conflict between normative values of Islam and the US Constitution and Bill of Rights."

A week prior to the *Times* editorial, Rep. Mike Johnson, Speaker of the House, expressed his concern about those who "come to a country and not assimilate but to impose Sharia law." The problem there, he notes, is that "Sharia law is in conflict with the Constitution."

Agreeing with Johnson is the European Court of Human Rights.

In 2003, the Grand Chamber ruled that "It is difficult to declare one's respect for democracy and human rights while at the same time supporting a regime based on sharia, which clearly diverges from Convention values..." Similarly, according to Islamic scholar Robert Spencer, Sharia law is "contrary to America's founding principles and may violate federal law and the Constitution."

Islamic texts may not settle the issue, but they do not seem to support the position taken by the *Times* and CAIR.

The Quran (5:44) declares that failing to "judge by what Allah

has revealed” makes one a disbeliever. This would appear to render the U.S. Constitution subordinate to Sharia. Furthermore, the Traveller, a classic Islamic manual of Islamic law, notes that “Jihad is a communal obligation.” At best, this affirms the need for a militaristic struggle; at worst it is a call to arms.

Leaving aside the scholarly debate, what matters in the end is how Sharia is interpreted by those who implement it.

Freedom House annually reports on the state of freedom worldwide, rating every country as Free, Partly Free, or Not Free. Almost all the countries with a Christian majority are rated Free or Partly Free, and all but one with a Muslim majority (Senegal) are rated Not Free or Partly Free. That says it all.

It is undeniably true that the more fully Sharia is implemented, the greater the threat to civil liberties. In other words, in its purist form, Sharia is wholly incompatible with the tenets of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. But Christianity is not.

The three nations which have full Sharia implementation are Iran, Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia. They enforce Sharia as the sole or primary source of all law, including Islamic text legal punishments (amputation, flogging, stoning) and capital penalties for apostasy, blasphemy, adultery, and theft.

Islamic Republic of Iran

Freedom House:

Iran’s constitution requires all laws to conform to Twelver Shia (Ja’fari) Sharia. Islamic text legal punishments are authorized and regularly applied. Iran’s constitution recognizes only Zoroastrians, Jews, and “Christians by birth” (Armenians, Assyrians, etc.) as protected minorities with limited rights. All others, plus converts, are treated as

threats to the Islamic state. Apostasy and blasphemy are punishable by death.

- Iran holds regular elections, but they are not free or fair. The unelected Guardian Council vets and disqualifies candidates, and real power lies with the Supreme Leader and unelected institutions that control the security forces, judiciary, and economy. Media are heavily censored, journalists are arrested or killed, and independent. The judiciary is not independent and serves as a tool of repression: arbitrary arrests, torture, unfair trials, and executions are common.

Afghanistan

Freedom House:

- Since overthrowing the elected republican government in August 2021, the Taliban has ruled Afghanistan as an Islamic Emirate with Sharia as the sole legal framework. The Taliban leader exercises unlimited authority by decree, with no constitution in place. Islamic text legal punishments are enforced nationwide. No non-Islamic public worship is permitted, and apostasy carries a death sentence. Women are almost entirely excluded from public life, including education and employment.
- All political parties and opposition groups are banned. There are no elections, no representative bodies, and no independent media.

The conclusion is obvious: Sharia is the enemy of liberty. We enjoy our freedoms precisely because of our Judeo-Christian heritage.

DON'T FORGET SPLC'S ANTI-CATHOLIC LEGACY

[Bill Donohue](#)

Racism is a curse, and it is therefore understandable that news stories about the corrupt Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) are focused on its funding of the Ku Klux Klan. What is frequently overlooked is its record of targeting Christians, especially Catholics.

Todd Blanche, the acting attorney general, nailed it when he said SPLC was guilty of “manufacturing racism to justify its existence.” That’s akin to firefighters setting fire to a row of houses so they can put it out, and then demanding an increase in salary and benefits. SPLC has also invented anti-Catholicism to serve its political agenda.

Eleven charges have been brought against SPLC by a federal grand jury, including six counts of wire fraud, four counts of bank fraud and one count of money laundering. It paid at least \$3 million to eight individuals, including those linked to the Klan and neo-Nazi groups. While there is no evidence that it paid anti-Catholics, it is undeniably true that it worked to promote anti-Catholicism.

SPLC has long attacked those who stand for traditional moral values. It has a “hate map” on its website that details those groups it labels as “hate groups.” Besides naming a handful of small wacky right-wing groups, it includes reputable conservative organizations such as Alliance Defending Freedom, Family Research Council and Moms for Liberty. None of these are hate-mongers. The real hate-mongers are those like SPLC who smear responsible entities.

Guess who SPLC denies are “hate groups”? Antifa and Black Lives Matter. Antifa is a loosely knit bunch of urban

terrorists, and Black Lives Matter is a racist bunch of thugs. But not to SPLC. "Designating Antifa as Domestic Terrorist Organization Is Dangerous," and "Black Lives Matter Is Not a Hate Group." The violence these two groups have engaged in is well documented. By contrast, the conservative organizations it cites as "hate groups" have never threatened, harmed or killed anyone.

SPLC does not list the Catholic League as a "hate group," per se, but it has several listings of us. To take one example, we defended President Trump's banning of trans persons from the military. It was horrified when I said, "Kudos to Trump for banning men and women who switch their genitals from the military. The armed forces are not a lab for sexual engineers."

It is telling that it blames me for promoting hatred because I have objected to publicly funded artistic displays that show large ants crawling all over Jesus on the Cross. I am the problem for objecting, not the bigots who defile Christ. And so on.

It also got bent out of shape when I commented on an animal shelter that resisted a dog owner's request that his pet be euthanized because the owner thought the animal was homosexual. To which I said, "Being gay is not only a bonus for humans these days, it is a definite plus for dogs as well." Normal people laugh; abnormal people go berserk.

On a more serious note, SPLC has a history of objecting to bigots who hate Jews and blacks, but it has nothing to say when learning that the same person is also anti-Catholic. That does not offend them.

The granddaddy of them all is when it advised the Biden Justice Department how to sabotage Catholicism.

The FBI, under Biden, conducted a spy operation on traditional Catholics. It did not monitor dissident Catholics who are pro-

abortion. No, it only went after those who were—in its own words—“pro life,” “pro-family,” and who “support the biological basis for sex and gender distinction.” They were literally called “domestic terrorists.”

Guess who the Biden FBI leaned on for advice? SPLC. To be sure, there were some FBI agents who warned against using SPLC as a reliable source, but they were overruled. The FBI-SPLC connection was aimed at spying on traditional Catholics so they could smear their reputation and thereby undermine their efforts. Just as SPLC “manufactured racism to justify its existence,” it manufactured anti-Catholicism to justify its existence.

A more despicable organization would be hard to find. It was morally bankrupt from the beginning.

SPLC was founded by Morris Dees. He was fired in 2019. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, some two dozen employees sent a letter to the board of directors before the news broke of Dees’ firing. They said that “internal ‘allegations of mistreatment, sexual harassment, gender discrimination, and racism threaten the moral authority of this organization and our integrity along with it.’”

Perversely, Dees championed himself as the enemy of white supremacy, yet his own people said he was a racist. But now we know he was not alone in hating blacks. To wit: SPLC likes to grease the Klan.

Similarly, Dees was not the only one responsible for eviscerating the integrity of SPLC. He had nothing to do with declaring war on Catholics. That was left to his successors.

SPLC is positive proof that “The fish stinks from the head down.” Lock ‘em up!

RELIGIOUS PROFILING IN R.I.; PRIESTS TARGETED

Rhode Island is the latest state to demonstrate its selective interest in combating the sexual abuse of minors. It is *only* interested in probing the Catholic clergy, having zero interest in probing the clergy in every other religion. Furthermore, it has no interest in investigating the on-going crisis in the public schools.

When blacks are subjected to disproportionate stops by the police, it is called racial profiling. What Rhode Island is doing to priests is religious profiling. Yet the media are silent about this egregious injustice. They wouldn't be silent if the Attorney General, Peter Neronha, investigated sexual harassment on the job, selecting *only* reporters to probe.

Neronha's report, released on March 4, covers cases of alleged abuse dating back to 1950. It found that 75 accused members of the clergy (66 of whom were priests) were responsible for victimizing 300 minors.

Guess what else Neronha found? What every other investigation has found: 83 percent of the victims were male, and 74 percent of them were postpubescent. This means that homosexuals did most of the damage. Get it straight: When adult males have sex with postpubescent males, it's called homosexuality, not pedophilia. But don't expect Neronha or the media to report on this fact. The cover-up continues.

When did this happen? As always, it was during the sexual revolution. It was in the 1960s and 1970s when the lion's share of the offenses took place.

The last time there was a known instance of the sexual abuse of minors by the Catholic clergy in Rhode Island was 15-years ago in 2011. When was the last time a minor was violated in their public schools? Last year, when a school bus monitor allegedly sexually abused three special needs students. One was in kindergarten.

Is Neronha going to tackle the public schools? He should. Major studies on Rhode Island's public schools reveal that it is consistently ranked among the worst in the nation in dealing with the sexual abuse of minors.

The AG's report reads as though the sexual abuse scandal is ongoing in the Catholic Church and that Neronha's office did yeoman work in uncovering it. Wrong on both counts. We are talking about old cases where the bad guys are either dead or have been kicked out of ministry. *Not one of the 75 members of the clergy mentioned in the report is in active ministry.* Moreover, it was the Diocese of Providence that did most of the data gathering, without which Neronha could not have issued his report.

We blanketed the Rhode Island media and lawmakers about this injustice. We also contacted approximately 140 parishes in the state.

LOU HOLTZ R.I.P.

University of Notre Dame icon Lou Holtz died on March 4 at the age of 89. He led the football team to an undefeated season in 1988, winning the national championship. But to those who knew him, he was also a model of what a Catholic gentleman should be.

Noted Notre Dame historian Fr. Bill Miscamble said Holtz “loved the Blessed Mother and, as he deemed it, *her* school. The football program was not ancillary to Notre Dame’s Catholic mission but integrated into it.”

He is right. Holtz told his players that “I firmly believe that Our Lady on the Dome will watch out for you. Spend some time at the Grotto, and you’ll discover that this school is special.”

EWTN and Fox News star Raymond Arroyo said the day after Holtz died that “He will not only be missed by his family and friends, but by colleagues, players, the communities and those of us touched by his friendship and leadership.”

Bill Donohue met Holtz at a speaking engagement that they both participated in and came away admiring his positive outlook and deep faith. “This was a man on a mission, and no one was going to stop him.”

Holtz spent eleven years at Notre Dame and energized those around him to persevere in the face of adversity and always put their faith in God. There are very few like him today, which is why his legacy needs to be treasured.

NOTRE DAME’S PROBLEM IS NOT UNIQUE

The University of Notre Dame is not only one of America’s best institutions of higher education, it is also seen, for the most part, as an authentically Catholic institution.

That is why it was so disconcerting to read that a professor,

Susan Ostermann, was named director of the Liu Institute for Asia and Asian Studies. She is not someone who happens to be “pro-choice”—she is a pro-abortion zealot.

Any person who falsely claims that the pro-life movement has “its roots in white supremacy and racism,” and condemns crisis pregnancy centers as “anti-abortion propaganda sites,” belongs working at Planned Parenthood, not Notre Dame. Planned Parenthood, of course, was founded by a bona fide white supremacist, Margaret Sanger.

Ostermann didn't get the job by mistake. She got it with the approval of the president, Fr. Robert Dowd, provost John McGreevy and the dean of the Keough School of Global Affairs, Mary Gallagher. Dowd claims he was “blindsided” by the appointment. That's strange. Did he not know that his predecessor, Fr. John Jenkins, publicly rebuked Ostermann for championing the pro-abortion cause? Surely McGreevy and Gallagher must have known.

The good news is that the blowback was ferocious and ultimately forced Ostermann to go back to the classroom. Led by the brilliant historian, Fr. Bill Miscamble, and the courageous Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Kevin Rhoades, the case was made to reject her appointment. Some twenty bishops, including Archbishop Paul Coakley, president of the bishops' conference, joined the fight, as did many students and alumni; those who have been given awards at Notre Dame also registered their objections. So it ended well. But problems remain, and Notre Dame is not unique among Catholic schools.

I taught at a nominally Catholic college for 16 years, and witnessed firsthand how uncommitted many administrators and faculty are to the teachings of the Catholic Church. In fact, some were openly hostile to Catholicism, and this included the nun who ran the school. But La Roche College in Pittsburgh (now a university) is not atypical.

Georgetown University, a premier Catholic institution, has two pro-abortion student clubs on campus. Moreover, student government officials have sought to punish students who accept the Church's teachings on marriage. It also employs a professor who justifies rape and slavery, provided the rapists and slavemasters are Muslim.

Thankfully, Notre Dame is not like Georgetown. But its central problem is still extant. There are two main reasons why a pro-abortion extremist came close to being promoted: one is ideological and the other is a matter of identity.

While it is oversimplified to say there are social justice Catholics and pro-life Catholics, there is more than a measure of truth to it. Catholic teachings on the poor, the needy, the rejected, and immigrants are seen as being in the liberal camp; those that stress abortion, euthanasia, marriage, the family and sexuality are seen as being in the conservative camp. Both are expressions of Catholicism.

It has become abundantly clear that social justice Catholics are soft on abortion. That's being kind. Quite frankly, many of them—indeed most—do not regard abortion as “intrinsically evil,” which is the way the Church defines it. They see it as unfortunate. The Church also says racism is “intrinsically evil.” On that they agree. In short, racism upsets them infinitely more than abortion.

Are there Catholics in the conservative camp who are soft on racism? No doubt there are, but in my experience there are far fewer of them than there are liberal Catholics who are soft on abortion.

The other problem is not ideological; it is matter of identity. Unfortunately, many Catholic professors and administrators are uneasy being identified as Catholic in higher education circles. To be exact, they have a deep-seated need to win the affirmation of secular elites. At bottom, they

are not comfortable in their Catholic skin.

They know the way secular elites look at Catholics of a more traditional stripe, and they are scared to death of being thrown in with them. In other words, their reluctance to defend conservative moral teachings—even when they don't disagree with them—is done to win the blessings of secular elites, in and out of education. That's how insecure they are about their Catholic identity.

Christian Smith, a Notre Dame sociologist, recently wrote an article in *First Things* explaining why he left the school. He says the Catholic identity problem is due to three things, one of which is a strong desire to secure “mainstream acceptance by ‘peer institutions’: Duke, Northwestern, Vanderbilt, Washington University in St. Louis, Emory, Rice, Stanford, NYU, and the like.” He says “Notre Dame desperately wants to belong to this club.” Regrettably, this leads many to low ball their Catholicism.

Notre Dame will be challenged again, and it will come from within. But as long as it has enough faculty, students and alumni who are vigilant—and there is no question about that—it will never lose its reputation as a truly great Catholic institution of higher learning.