

# **“DEVOUT CATHOLIC”**

Ed Martin is an attorney and a Trump appointee who has done some very good work over the years, but he got himself into a pickle with Georgetown University after he raised questions about its diversity and inclusion policies. The school went after him for allegedly overstepping his boundaries. This is interesting, but it is not the reason we are mentioning it.

There was a news story by CBS News that struck us as pure Catholic-baiting. Here is the tweet that Bill Donohue did on this issue.

CBS News reports today that attorney Ed Martin, a Trump appointee, is the subject of an ethics investigation concerning his handling of an incident at Georgetown University. It was noted by reporter Sarah N. Lynch that Martin is “a devout Catholic.” We don’t recall CBS talking about “devout Methodists,” “devout Jews,” or “devout Muslims.” Nor does CBS talk about “devout secularists.” Just “devout Catholics.” So telling.

We would also like to know how CBS measures devoutness!

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# **ST. PAT’S NYC PARADE STILL BANS PRO-LIFERS**

Eleven years after the first gay group marched in New York City’s St. Patrick’s Day Parade, pro-life Catholics are still not allowed to march. The elites who run the parade are once again showing how little respect they have for the parade’s origins, which are rooted in Catholicism.

From 1762 to today, no homosexuals were ever barred from marching in the St. Patrick's Day Parade. Beginning in the early 1990s, it was gays who *falsely claimed victim status* because they were not allowed to march *under their own banner*. Neither were any other demographic or ideological group, including pro-life Catholics. This explains why from the mid-1990s to the mid-2010s, Bill Donohue went on radio and TV saying the parade was no more anti-gay than it was anti-pro-life (he had been asked by parade officials to be their unofficial spokesman). That all changed in 2015.

In the late summer of 2014, Donohue was asked by parade organizers if he would object if a gay group were allowed to march under its own banner in 2015. It was their parade, he said, but he had his integrity to protect: If gays can march under their own banner, then pro-life Catholics must be treated the same way. Donohue was told by John Fitzsimons, a lawyer whom he considered to be a friend, not to worry—they would be included as well.

Fitzsimons lied. In short order, John Lahey, president of Quinnipiac University and vice chairman of the parade committee, announced that OUT@NBCUniversal, a group of gay NBC employees, would be marching (the chairman of the parade, John Dunleavy, a retired transit worker, was pushed aside by the elite sharks on the committee).

Lahey said other gay groups could also apply. More important, he said that no pro-life groups would be marching. Having been double-crossed, Donohue pulled the Catholic League contingent from marching; we had been doing so for two decades.

So how did OUT@NBCUniversal get a monopoly on marching, when other gay groups wanted in? The NBC group never had to apply—it was selected. All the others were denied. The NBC group was chosen because another member of the parade ruling class, Francis X. Comerford, was the chief revenue officer at NBC and NBC televised the parade; he was also a former grand

marshal of the parade. He made sure he got his boys to march, and no one else.

Why, after all these years, are pro-life Catholics not allowed to march under their own banner? John Aidan Byrne is the head of Irish Pro-Life USA. For the last decade he has petitioned the organizers of the St. Patrick's Day Parade in New York City to allow his group to march under their own banner, but he has been summarily denied. He did so again recently. One parade organizer told him, "Ask City Hall."

This is a deceitful dodge. City Hall does not run the parade. As the Supreme Court said in 1995, in a unanimous decision, this is a private parade and the organizers set their own rules. End of story. Or at least it should be. The only reason it is not the end of the story is because parade elites see no PR bounce from letting pro-life Catholics march. But they will lay down with gays, and in doing so they get what they really want—the applause of secular elites, whom they emulate.

In other words, although the parade celebrates its Irish Catholic origins, the potentates who run it want to neuter its Catholic roots. This explains why they don't want pro-life groups to march, but are fine with gay groups. They know, as well as everyone else, that no religion has stood more consistently for the rights of the unborn than Catholicism. That's why they distance themselves from pro-life Catholics—it invites secular elites to think they are like them. And that is not something they can stomach.

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**MAMDANI                      RIPS                      OFF                      ST.**

# PATRICK'S DAY

New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani made an 11th-hour decision to march in the St. Patrick's Day Parade, an event he previously eschewed for political reasons. But he couldn't resist bringing his politics to bear at a breakfast he hosted at Gracie Mansion, kicking off the St. Patrick's Day festivities.

Mamdani's obsession with demonizing Israel was on full display. He whined about the "deafening silence from so many" about the "genocide" in Palestine. Thus did he hijack St. Patrick's Day celebrations by turning them into a radical Muslim rant.

He fooled no one by inviting the former president of Ireland, Mary Robinson, to be there. She is a hard-core leftist who not only sides with the enemies of Israel, she sides with the enemies of the Catholic Church on matters sexual.

Mamdani is a master of the politics of victimization. He delighted his left-wing Irish friends by saying, "The story of the Irish, both in Ireland and in New York City, is at one time a story of oppression, of subjugation, and of discrimination."

This is the mentality of the Left—they see oppression everywhere. But this is *our* day, not his, and it is a joyful one. His interest in exploiting our day for his own political capital is sickening.

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# CHURCH INVASION IN ST. PAUL; WE RESPOND WITH VIGOR

The church invasion that took place at Cities Church on January 18 in St. Paul, Minnesota was a flagrant violation of constitutional law, federal law and common decency. It is the kind of behavior associated with totalitarian regimes, not democracies. Yet the outcry from all quarters—government, religious, civic, educational, the media—was miniscule.

The purported cause for action was to register disapproval of David Easterwood, one of the pastors of this Southern Baptist church; he heads the local office of ICE.

Nine of the church invaders were charged with entering the church “in a coordinated takeover-style attack,” and for engaging in “acts of oppression, intimidation, threats, interference, and physical obstruction.” The indictment alleges that “the pastor and the congregation were forced to terminate the Church’s worship services,” and had to flee out of fear for their safety.

One of the defendants disrupted the church service by screaming, “This ain’t God’s house. This is the house of the devil.” He got in the face of a mother and her two young children, chiding her for not supporting the church invasion. He said to child congregants, “Do you know your parents are Nazis? They’re going to burn in hell.”

One of those arrested was Don Lemon. The former journalist and failed CNN pundit claims he was a disinterested observer, and not part of the organized protest.

The indictment says otherwise. Lemon met at a shopping center with all the other defendants to make plans about invading the church. He did not just stumble on the scene of the crime. Instructions were given by the organizers of the invasion; one

of those arrested admitted Lemon was in on the planning. Also, he tried to intimidate the pastor and obstructed congregants from leaving the church.

The list of politicians and civil rights organizations that have nothing but contempt for the right to worship is astounding. See p. 4.

Notice that none of them even give a nod to the egregious violation of the "free exercise of religion." They are framing this as purely a free speech issue.

In response to this incredible assault on religious liberty, the Catholic League embarked on a four-prong campaign: we asked the public to support Rep. Buddy Carter's House Resolution condemning the church invasion; we contacted President Trump's Religious Freedom Commission; we contacted the Department of Justice; we asked President Trump to support funding for enhanced police protection of Christian churches (97% of the deadly incidents in a house of worship that occurred between 2000 and 2024 were in Christian churches).

The timid response to the church invasion is troubling. We responded with vigor.

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## **RUSSELL SHAW R.I.P.**

Russell Shaw, a prolific Catholic spokesman and author, has died at the age of 90. He was the former Secretary for Public Affairs of the National Catholic Bishops/United States Catholic Conference.

Last year he told Bill Donohue he was not doing well, and asked if he would still promote his latest book, *Turning*

*Points: How Thirteen Remarkable Men and Women Heard God's Call and Responded to It.* He was delighted to endorse it.

Russ served on the board of directors of the Catholic League in the 1990s, and then moved to our board of advisors. Donohue used to joke with him that he is a “walking encyclopedia of Catholicism.” It wasn’t much of a stretch.

Russ had a reserved manner, but it belied a fierce devotion to his calling, namely to accurately and passionately discuss the affairs of the Catholic Church, past and present. His commitment to the mission of the Catholic League—fighting anti-Catholicism—was never in question.

When the notorious ABC-TV show, “Nothing Sacred,” aired in the late 1990s, some on our board of directors questioned whether we should be hammering away at it. Not Russ. He stood by Donohue’s side, knowing how pernicious this dissident-happy portrait of Catholicism was. ABC, a Disney product, tried to stop our attacks on the show, but did not prevail. We eventually won and the show was withdrawn.

Russ will be missed. His legacy is secure and the Catholic Church is its beneficiary.

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## **NORMALIZING OBSCENITIES**

A Catholic League staffer was recently having dinner with friends at a New York steakhouse when she witnessed a table of several mature women talking loudly, some of whom were throwing around the “f-word” with abandon.

It used to be that such language would be heard in pubs, but not in pricey restaurants, much less by women in their senior

years. But times have changed. The dumbing down of language, just like the dumbing down of virtually every other standard of decency, has become the norm. President Trump, and Biden before him, have certainly made their contributions to this end.

We can blame the entertainment industry and the media for normalizing obscenities. Movies have long featured expletives, but now TV shows and the mainstream media are following suit.

Recently, I was reading a news story in the *New York Times* on the anti-ICE protest in Minneapolis. It quoted the Minneapolis mayor, Jacob Frey, saying the government's position was "bull -- --," I have been reading this newspaper for decades, and I honestly don't recall reading this word spelled out in a news article before. Then I read the next sentence. It quoted Frey telling ICE to "get the f-out of Minneapolis"; the obscene word was printed in full.

The next night, I heard Fox News host Greg Gutfeld complaining how insincere the anti-ICE protesters are about the welfare of illegal aliens. He said, "they don't give two s-s about these people." He was not censored. The show airs at a time when children watch TV. And this is not the first time Fox has lowered its standards.

Then I read an op-ed by John McWhorter, a linguist who teaches at Columbia University, in the *New York Times*. He was celebrating the increased use in public of the "f-word." He said, "I actually think it's a positive development." He opined, "The normalization of the word...is a sign of maturity in American English." Ironically, he chose not to spell it, instead referring to it as the "f-word." He concluded saying he was "happy" that we are "getting to the point where we can all speak the way we think and live."

What about the "n-word"? Would McWhorter, who is black (I happen to admire his work on race), celebrate its invocation

on TV and in newspapers? If not, why not? Why wouldn't it be a sign of maturity?

A number of years ago on CNN I was objecting to the display of some obscene artistic display when the host smugly chided me for not respecting free speech, the way the cable channel does. I immediately challenged him, saying they would not allow me to say the "n-word" on TV, only I actually said the word. I smiled, but he didn't, when they – rightfully – censored me. "See," I said.

We decided to find out how some of the big media have been handling this issue. We looked at AP (Associated Press), the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. They all have a "Standards" or "Stylebook" section that addresses this issue. While they generally don't print obscenities, they make exceptions. What is crystal clear is that in recent times all three are more likely to spell out the "f-word" than the "n-word."

Why are liberal elites more likely to find the "n-word" offensive than the "f-word"? They certainly don't object when blacks call each other the "n-word"; it is done in song all the time.

Good parents and teachers should teach their children how offensive both words are. Unfortunately, fewer appear to be doing so, and one reason why is because the frequent invocation of these words in public has a way of sanitizing them. We are more upset about a high school football team adopting a Native American tribal name as its mascot than we are mature women screaming the "f-word" in a public establishment. Moreover, calling a team the "Indians" is seen as hate speech, but telling those who object to "f—" off is okay.

Why should this matter? Every survey in this century on the subject of civility and the moral order shows that Americans –

across all demographics – are genuinely concerned about what has been happening. Things are going south. When people treat linguistic offenses like pedestrian commentary, they are letting their guard down. By itself such a phenomenon will not change our cultural landscape, when it is coupled with other attempts to normalize deviancy, it certainly does.

In the 1990s, Daniel Patrick Moynihan warned that “we have been redefining deviancy so as to exempt much conduct previously stigmatized, and also quietly raising the ‘normal’ level in categories where behavior is not abnormal by any earlier standard.” Agreeing with him in his *American Educator* article, “Defining Deviancy Down,” was John Cole. As an example of what Moynihan noted, he said were increased incidents of “profane and abusive language” targeted at teachers by their students. Today, matters are much worse. Cursing out a teacher is defended by some as free speech.

Normalizing obscenities is not worth celebrating. It only increases the coarseness that has engulfed our society.

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## **JUSTIFYING THE CHURCH INVASION**

### ***Prominent Politicians***

#### **Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey (MN-D)**

He called the arrest of those who invaded the church a “gross abuse of power.”

#### **Rep. Ilhan Omar (MN-D)**

Omar condemned the arrests tied to the Cities Church protest,

calling them a “clear violation of the Constitution.” She demanded that Don Lemon and others be released immediately and described the invaders as “lawful protesters.”

**Sen. Chuck Schumer (NY-D)**

“Once again, the administration is behaving no differently from the police states and authoritarian regimes across history—they’ve arrested a journalist for the crime of doing his job.” He added, “Don Lemon should be released and the frivolous charges against him dropped.”

**Rep. Hakeem Jeffries (NY-D)**

“The Trump administration’s arrest of Don Lemon and other journalists is a disgraceful affront to the First Amendment and a corrupt weaponization of the criminal justice system.” He opined, “There is zero basis to arrest Don Lemon.”

**Gov. Gavin Newsom (CA-D)**

“Putin would be proud.”

**Rep. Nancy Pelosi (CA-D)**

She said Don Lemon has “become the face of the First Amendment.”

**Rep. Jasmine Crockett (TX-D)**

“This administration has declared open war on the First Amendment.”

**Sen. Chris Van Hollen (MD-D)**

He condemned Trump for arresting “journalists for doing their jobs.”

**Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass (CA-D)**

She urged her supporters to “register the seriousness of this

assault on democracy.”

**Rep. Dan Goldman (NY-D)**

“Putin’s America is here. I’m confident Don will prevail, but make no mistake: the First Amendment is under its greatest threat since our founding.”

**Rep. Katherine Clark (MA-D)**

“A journalist was arrested by Trump’s DOJ for doing his job. This is a blatant attack on our First Amendment.”

**Rep. Shontel Brown (OH-D)**

“Don Lemon’s work is protected by the First Amendment. This arrest is chilling, outrageous, and wrong. He should be released immediately.”

**Rep. Ami Bera (CA-D)**

“Don Lemon’s work as a journalist is protected by the First Amendment. His arrest is another chilling example of the Trump administration weaponizing the federal government against its critics. Don must be released immediately.”

**Sen. Cory Booker (NJ-D)**

“Don Lemon has been on the ground in Minnesota like hundreds of others doing the vital work of covering Trump’s lawlessness and chaos. These charges should be dropped and he should be released.”

**Minnesota Attorney General**

Keith Ellison (MN-D)

He described the storming of the church as “First Amendment activity.”

**Rep. Adelita Grijalva (AZ-D)**

She did not find anything appalling about the behavior of the radicals storming the church, arguing “they have the right to go in there,” and as far as she is concerned, “churches have always been an open door.”

### ***Prominent Organizations***

#### **ACLU**

“These arrests are the latest in a series of attacks by the Trump Administration on the First Amendment’s guarantee of a free press.”

#### **Amnesty International**

It demanded the release of Don Lemon, calling his arrest “a critical threat to our human rights.”

#### **Constitutional Accountability Center**

It said this was the latest in the Trump administration’s “shocking assaults on the First Amendment.”

#### **Freedom From Religion Foundation**

The arrest of Lemon represents “a dangerous escalation of government overreach.” It also said, “It’s also an unconstitutional prioritization of certain pastors and religious institutions over the civil liberties of citizens.”

#### **GLAAD**

“The freedom of the press is a cornerstone of American democracy, but that pillar is being shockingly eroded by government intimidation.”

#### **Legal Defense Fund**

It charged the Trump administration with “disdain for free and open press.” It said, “This attempt to suppress and intimidate journalists for reporting on facts and events...is an alarming

further descent into authoritarianism.”

### **NAACP**

“The NAACP demands the immediate release of Nekima Armstrong and her fellow protesters. The only reason the FBI and DHS arrested them is that they didn’t like what they had to say.”

### **PEN America**

“The arrest of independent journalist Don Lemon is yet another blatant violation of press freedom and the First Amendment.”

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# **NOTHING IS MORE COUNTERCULTURAL THAN LENT**

We live in a world where self-absorption reigns supreme. Accordingly, the concept of self-denial is incomprehensible to most, and an anathema to others. Yet this is what Lent means. It is the most countercultural idea in America, and indeed in the entire Western world. That’s because we’ve lost our moorings, which are grounded in Christianity.

The dominant culture celebrates self-indulgence, not self-denial. Drug users are only one example.

The streets of New York abound in smoke—the sweet smell of marijuana is everywhere. This is also true in many urban areas, as the pace of legalization quickens. Some, like the editorial board of the *New York Times*, which supported legalization, are now shocked to learn that a record number of Americans are hooked on drugs, jamming hospitals and driving recklessly. Habitual users are psychotic, functioning like zombies. Their non-stop vomiting should be a wake-up call, but

it isn't. This is the cost of "liberation."

The dominant culture also celebrates gambling, yielding similar results.

We not only can bet on games, we can bet on each play. Bookies have been replaced by phones, and allegiance to the home team is waning as the only thing that matters is winning. Some ballparks, like the home of the Washington Commanders, even have betting stations for fans too bored to simply watch the game. A growing number of young men are addicted to gambling, finding themselves deeper in debt. This is the cost of "liberation."

Many young women chose sex to satisfy their craving for self-indulgence. If they wind up pregnant, they find their "solution" at a Planned Parenthood clinic. Young promiscuous men are just as irresponsible, looking to medical technology to rid themselves of their self-induced diseases. This is the cost of their "liberation."

Self-denial is admittedly not easy, and it is more difficult in societies that glamorize self-indulgence. But it is a virtue that actually does liberate.

One way to show someone that we love them is by making sacrifices that redound to their benefit. Making sacrifices requires a degree of self-denial, giving up something to aid someone else. Mother Teresa could not have comforted those in her employ without great sacrifice, and it was her capacity for self-denial that allowed her to prevail.

Like any virtue, self-denial atrophies if it is not practiced, the results of which are inauspicious for everyone. A society that views self-denial as oppressive is nurturing narcissism, not selflessness. Yet that is what we are doing, led, as always, by the ruling class.

Self-indulgence is not only self-destructive, it is ultimately

anti-social. We are all affected by those who allow their appetites and passions to conquer them, and that is why it is incumbent on those who occupy mantles of moral authority—clergy, parents and teachers—to welcome Lent, regardless of their religious convictions.

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## **MAMDANI STIFFS CATHOLICS FOR THIRD TIME**

Representatives of the clergy from several religions were present at the inauguration of Zohran Mamdani. But no Catholic priest was there.

Representatives of the clergy from several religions were present at Mamdani's Interfaith Breakfast on February 6. But no Catholic priest was there. Significantly, the UJA-Federation of New York, the New York Board of Rabbis and the Anti-Defamation League, all of which had previously sponsored this meeting, declined to do so this year.

The mayor of New York City traditionally attends the installation of the new archbishop of New York, but Mamdani—who was invited—ghosted the event. The installation began a few hours after the Interfaith Breakfast at the New York Public Library; it is a short walk up Fifth Avenue to St. Patrick's Cathedral.

He could easily have been there. Instead, he attended to business as usual.

One in three New Yorkers are Catholic, making them the largest faith community in the city. Mamdani's professed interest in diversity and inclusion obviously hits a brick wall when it

comes to Catholics. He wants nothing to do with them.

He is already in trouble with Jewish New Yorkers. He blames Israel, not Hamas, for the terrorist attack on October 7, 2023, and to this day he says Israel has no right to exist. This explains why he wants to cripple the Israeli economy by supporting the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement. To top it off, he is purging his administration of Jews who are pro-Israel, replacing them with Jews who are anti-Israel.

His animus against Catholics is not as clear cut. But given his rabid support for abortion, gay marriage and transgenderism (including the child abuse inherent in sex-reassignment surgery for minors), it makes sense that he wants nothing to do with Catholics either.

Mamdani has been in office for just over a month, and already he is signaling to Catholics that they are not welcome. He is also telling Jews that either they side with him in bashing Israel, or they, too, can take a walk.

This is shaping up to be something serious, the likes of which New Yorkers have never experienced. Stay tuned.

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## **ST. JOHN'S UNIV. REJECTS TURNING POINT**

Turning Point USA, founded by Charlie Kirk, has been denied a chapter status at St. John's University. The student government at the Queens, New York campus did not give any reason, requesting that they reapply. But they have already been denied twice, and without cause.

There is reason to believe that a political bias may be in play. Instead of focusing on whether the club was a good fit at St. John's, attention turned to how it would respond to a potential backlash on campus.

St. John's hosts a LGBTQ+ Center, one that is expressly committed to norms and values that are counter to Catholic teachings. Was anyone worried about a potential backlash when it was instituted? The Vincentian school also features a "Lavender Graduation," which not only sanctions segregation on campus, it gives succor to students who reject Catholic moral teachings.

Charlie Kirk was an advocate for civil discourse on campus. That was his trademark. Why any school, especially a Catholic one, would find fault with that boggles the mind. St. John's idea of inclusion clearly extends to the LGBTQ cause, but not the cause of free speech.