

# CAN'T ERASE OUR JUDEO-CHRISTIAN PAST

*This is the article that appeared in the May 2024 edition of Catalyst, our monthly journal. The date that prints out reflects the day that it was uploaded to our website. For a more accurate date of when the article was first published, check out the news release, [here](#).*

Militant secularists would like to erase our religious heritage, but they are clearly in over their heads. Our nation's Capitol abounds with Judeo-Christian iconography, so much so that it overwhelms attempts to cancel it.

- The dome of the U.S. Capitol was inspired by the dome of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, as well as St. Paul's Cathedral in London.
- The Supreme Court building is modeled after a Roman temple.
- St. Joseph's church on Capitol Hill was built in 1868.
- The Jefferson Building of the Library of Congress features *The Court of Neptune Fountain*; it resembles a grotto.
- The west end of the Mall—from the U.S. Capitol to the Lincoln Memorial—has a statue of Lincoln surrounded by comments he made about his respect for God. At the far end of the Mall, the Supreme Court, the Library of Congress, and the Capitol building have inscriptions honoring our Judaic heritage.
- Within the Capitol there are statues of Catholic priests and nuns and medallions of Pope Innocent III and Pope Gregory IX.
- On the first floor of the Main Reading Room in the Library of Congress there is a statue of St. Paul.
- In the Library there is a quote from the Book of Proverbs and a reference to God from Shakespeare.
- There is a chapel in the U.S. Capitol. Moreover, prayer meetings for Senators and Congressmen are commonplace throughout.
- Crucifixes abound in the Capitol.

- On the front doors of the Capitol are pictures of Franciscans with rosaries, symbolizing the history of Columbus.
- In the Rotunda, there is a painting of Hernando De Soto and his armies standing on the banks of the river rejoicing, as well as a depiction of priests planting a cross.
- There is also a painting in the dome of the burial scene of De Soto depicting a Mass being celebrated; a barge is carrying his body for burial in the Mississippi. A priest is shown holding a crucifix during burial prayers.
- In front of the Federal District Court, across from the National Gallery of Art, there is a depiction of pilgrims praying before a cross—a splendid recognition of religious liberty.
- On the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and 7th St. N.W. is the Temperance Fountain with the inscription of Temperance, Charity, Hope, and Faith. Nearby is a quote from St. Paul.
- Near the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, engraved on the sidewalk, there is the *56 Signers of the Declaration of Independence Memorial* with an inscription referencing our “firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence.”
- There is a frieze on the Supreme Court Building that depicts Moses.
- The entrance doors to the Supreme Court, made of oak, have the Ten Commandments engraved on each lower portion of each door.
- Inside the Supreme Court, right above where the Justices sit, there is a display of Moses and the Ten Commandments.

These are just some of the tributes to our Judeo-Christian heritage found in Washington, D.C. Noticeably absent are tributes to the contributions made by secularists. Small wonder.

*P.S. To read more about this issue, see One Nation Under God: Religious Symbols, Quotes, and Images in Our Nation's Capitol, by Fr. Eugene F. Hemrick.*

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# FLAWED SURVEY DEMONIZES CHRISTIANS

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A new poll on LGBT rights was published in March by the Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI), a left-wing outfit with a reputation for crafting politically skewed surveys. Its most prominent researcher, sociologist Robert P. Jones, is well known for demonizing so-called Christian nationalists.

PRRI recently released its 2023 American Values Atlas report, "Views On LGBTQ Rights In All 50 States." It offers more proof that the aforementioned flaws are extant. As a sociologist and a Catholic leader, Bill Donohue has great interest in this subject.

First a word about LGBT people (there is no need to add a "Q"—it stands for Queers and is therefore a redundancy).

The typical LGBT person is a young Democrat with no religious affiliation. This makes perfect sense.

Transgenderism, the ideology that falsely holds that the sexes are interchangeable, is a culturally induced phenomenon that is more attractive to young people than older Americans. Democrats are mostly liberals, and as such they have an expansive view of sexuality. Secular-minded persons reject nature, and nature's God, and are therefore easy bait for transgender influencers.

To put it differently, the older a person is, the less likely

he is to buy into this mad idea. Republicans tend to be conservatives and are therefore more immune to trendy fashions unhinged from reality. Religious Americans appreciate nature, and nature's God, and are thus inhospitable to militant secular ideas.

There are two aspects of the survey that deserve a riposte.

One of the questions asked respondents was whether they supported or opposed "allowing a small business owner in your state to refuse to provide products or services to gay or lesbian people if doing so would violate their religious beliefs."

This is a dishonest question. In fact, it is a red herring designed to make religious persons look intolerable.

It is dishonest because PRRI knows that this issue, which was broached in two similar Colorado cases that wound up in the Supreme Court, had nothing do to with denying homosexuals products or services because of their sexual orientation. It had to do with the religious rights of Christians being violated for having to *affirm conduct* they could not in good conscience do.

Neither Jack Phillips nor Lorie Smith ever denied serving a customer who was gay or lesbian. Phillips sold them cakes and Smith serviced their websites. But when Phillips was asked to personally inscribe a wedding cake for two men, he refused. Smith issued a preemptive strike by publicly stating that she would not provide web services celebrating gay weddings. The high court agreed with them, noting the obvious religious liberty issues involved.

PRRI, following Jones' obsession with Christian nationalism, claims that those who believe that America was founded as a Christian nation and should return to its moorings are a threat to democracy.

If someone were to say that America was founded as a secular nation and should become even more secular, would it be fair to say that this person is a threat to democracy? Of course not. One may disagree, but to assert that we are on the verge of a despotic secular regime would be as irresponsible as saying that Christian nationalists are about to establish a theocracy.

PRRI is not simply reporting survey results—it is setting the political table for liberals.

For example, Politico, a mostly responsible liberal media outlet, seems to go off the rails when it comes to Christian nationalism. Last month it maintained that if Trump wins in November, his allies are ready to infuse Christian nationalism in his second administration. It claimed to have the evidence to buttress its position, yet it conceded that “The documents obtained by Politico do not outline specific Christian nationalist policies.” That’s because there are none.

Heidi Przybyla wrote a piece for Politico last month that set off the alarms. The issue was the conviction, shared by millions of Americans, and encoded in the Declaration of Independence, that our rights come from God, not from government (that was what Stalin, Hitler and Mao believed). This simple observation was enough to send her into orbit. Now it would have come as a shocker to Jefferson, who was not exactly a religious guy, that he was a Christian nationalist.

PRRI knows what it is doing. None of what they did was a mistake. Which is why they are not to be trusted.

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# PUBLIC CONCERNED ABOUT LOSS OF RELIGION

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Is it a good thing, or a bad thing, for a free society to have a vibrant role for religion? The Founders, not all of whom were practicing Christians, were unanimous in their conviction: the public role of religion is indispensable to the crafting of a free society. The American people in 2024 seem to agree.

In a recent survey by Pew Research Center, 80 percent of Americans say that religion's role in American life is shrinking, and most conclude that it is not a good thing. This is significant given that this is the highest percentage ever recorded in a Pew survey on this issue. It was also found that 57 percent of Americans express a positive view of religion's influence in American life.

The survey did not ask why it is not a good thing for religion's role to recede, but it is likely that it has something to do with the fact that the inculcation of religious values has a stabilizing effect on individuals, and hence on society. Also, character building, which is essential to citizenship, is facilitated by religion. Unfortunately, American society has become more unstable and character building has become more difficult.

Another bad sign: the faithful are in a precarious state. Almost half, 48 percent, say there's "a great deal" of or "some" conflict between their religious beliefs and mainstream American culture (up from 42 percent in 2020). In fact, 3-in-10 (29 percent) now think of themselves as religious

minorities. This is what we would expect from an increasingly secular society—religious Americans are in an uneasy spot.

The public looks to the president of the United States to defend the faithful. Indeed, 64 percent say it is important for the president to stand up for religious Americans. Interestingly, most don't believe that either Trump or Biden is very religious: the figures are 13 percent and 4 percent, respectively. This is striking given that Biden has gone out of his way to hawk his Catholic credentials.

While Americans are concerned about the declining effect of religion on society, they are wary about extremists, and not just religious extremists. They do not support those who are too aggressive in pushing either a religious or a secular agenda. This is prudent: extremists are not a good role model.

Regarding this issue, it is interesting to note that secularists—atheists, agnostics and the religiously unaffiliated—are more likely to say that conservative Christians have gone too far with their agenda (72 percent) than Christians are to say that liberals who are not religious have gone too far with their agenda (63 percent). This helps to explain why the faithful believe there is a tension between their beliefs and the mainstream American culture. In short, it seems likely that they are feeling the pinch of militant secularists.

Secularists have made a lot of hay lately over the threat of so-called Christian nationalists. But if these people were really the threat that secularists say they are, the majority of Americans wouldn't say they have never heard or read about Christian nationalism. So much for this bogeyman. It would be more accurate to say that it is not those being charged as extremists who are the problem; it is those making the charge.

The survey also found that while most Americans don't want Christianity to be the official religion, a plurality (44

percent) of those who think this way nonetheless believe the federal government should promote Christian moral values. There is nothing inconsistent with this view. In fact, it is identical to the beliefs of the Founders: they did not want an established church, but they also maintained that the nation would benefit by advancing *Christian-inspired* values.

It would be instructive to learn what Americans consider secular values to be and why they are not supportive of them. The findings would no doubt prove to be enlightening, both for the faithful and for secularists.

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## BIGOTED PLAYWRIGHT IS DEAD

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Christopher Durang died on April 2nd. In its obituary on the homosexual anti-Catholic playwright, the *New York Times* predictably treated him with admiration, saying he had an “impish wit.”

The most anti-Catholic, and celebrated, play that Durang ever wrote was “Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You.” The *Times* obit branded it “an absurdist lacerating one-act” play. It said not a word about its vicious portrayal of Catholicism.

When the play was first performed in New York City, many prominent non-Catholics labeled it anti-Catholic, including the Anti-Defamation League and the National Conference of Christians and Jews.

Here is what we previously said about the play.



“The play features a malicious nun who is confronted by four of her former students. All of them are obviously dysfunctional, a condition directly traceable to their Catholic upbringing. The play not only manages to mock virtually every Catholic teaching, it goes after Jesus with a vengeance—from the Nativity to the Crucifixion; the Virgin Mary is similarly disparaged. In the end, the nun shoots and kills two of her ex-students.”

The *New York Times* knows all about the anti-Catholicism that marks “Sister Mary Ignatius,” but it is not offended.

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## TRADITIONALISM SCARES LIBERAL CATHOLICS

[Bill Donohue](#)

Liberal Catholics joined with the Catholic haters in slamming Kansas City Chiefs’ Harrison Butker after he touted traditional Catholic moral theology in his commencement address at Benedictine College on May 11. The bigots are easy to understand: they believe in nothing but themselves and hate everything about Catholicism. Liberal Catholics don’t hate their religion but they are embarrassed by traditionalists.

There is nothing that makes liberal Catholics more nervous than being lumped together with traditionalists. I’ve seen this first-hand for decades. Fr. Andrew Greeley was perhaps the most famous liberal Catholic who got the jitters whenever a Catholic critic said that Catholics were close-minded (meaning they ascribe to orthodoxy). He made it clear that he never wanted to be associated with them.

Catholic bashers can produce the most vulgar artwork, sing the most obscene lyrics, tell the most insulting jokes—all aimed at Catholic teachings or the clergy—and they will rarely upset liberal Catholics. Why not? They want their secular allies to praise them for having an open mind.

No one ever called Fr. Greeley parochial. His sex novels won him the applause of the secular elites, which is why he never stopped writing them; he made sure he would never be thrown in the same bin with conservative Catholics.

The latest example of this phenomenon occurred when a writer for *America* took the side of Butker's critics.

Butker's speech was too much for Zac Davis, an associate editor at *America*, a Jesuit publication. He began his piece by quoting the Associated Press, which called it "A step back in time." He also quoted the NFL for saying the speech violated its "commitment to inclusion," a commitment which obviously does not *include* the right of Butker to espouse Catholic teachings at a Catholic school. Davis added, "In secular outlets, Mr. Butker's discussion of gender roles caught the most attention."

Notice the obsession with secular elites. This is exactly the way liberal Catholics think. Nothing is more important than winning their affirmation. Always insecure, their fawning of secular elites is astounding.

A few years back, Chris Cuomo interviewed me a couple of times on CNN. At one point he said that some Catholics don't want to be associated with me. I responded by saying I don't like being associated with your brother, Andrew (who is Catholic); he was then governor of New York but was subsequently forced out of his job after a series of unseemly allegations. In other words, because I am a conservative Catholic, liberal Catholics want to distance themselves from me lest they get tagged as "close-minded."

There is a related problem for liberal Catholics. Most are not championing abortion rights, but most do not want to be labeled pro-life either. That's because the last thing they want to do is lose the admiration of secular elites, virtually all of whom are pro-abortion. They would rather sit on the sidelines before ever condemning abortion.

If only liberal Catholics felt the same way about abortion as they do racism, the pro-life cause would deepen. But they don't. They see abortion as unfortunate but racism as obscene. Both are obscene.

It is striking to see people like Whoopi Goldberg and Bill Maher speak in defense of Harrison Butker while the Catholics at *America* criticize him. Looks like not all members of the secular elite are hopeless. Wish we could say the same about all Catholics.

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## NORAH O'DONNELL MISREPRESENTS THE POPE

[Bill Donohue](#)

In her CBS interview with Pope Francis, Norah O'Donnell made it appear that the pope approves of homosexuality. He does not. This is a serious misrepresentation.

She mentioned, in a voiceover, that during an impromptu press conference in 2013, "he spoke on the subject of homosexuality." She quoted him as saying, "Who am I to judge?" She also quoted a more recent remark, "Homosexuality is not a crime."

The latter comment is not in question. But she only quoted a portion of his former remark. Worse, she implied that he was speaking about homosexuality. He was not.

On his trip back from Brazil in 2013, Pope Francis was asked about a particular priest, Monsignor Battisa Ricca. He had been accused, but not convicted, of homosexual encounters. The pope said in reply, "If someone is gay and he searches for the Lord and has good will, who am I to judge him?"

It should be clear that the pope was not talking about homosexuality, which is behavior, but about someone's sexual orientation, which is a condition. Conduct and status are not identical: being a homosexual and practicing homosexuality are two different things.

Had O'Donnell not left off the last word of the pope's remark, namely "him," it would be obvious that he thought it inappropriate to judge a person because he is straight or gay. He was not endorsing sodomy.

She is not the first to misrepresent what the pope said in this interview, but given the high profile that CBS is giving it, it is startling to see how sloppy the reporting is. That's assuming it was a mistake.

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## PEARL JAM SINGER UNLOADS ON BUTKER

[Bill Donohue](#)

When Kamala Harris recently dropped the *F-bomb*, in her sitting capacity as vice president of the United States, her descent to the gutter was noticed by millions. But when low-class rockers call Harrison Butker a “f\*\*king p\*\*\*\*y,” it is par for the course. Butker has been condemned by anti-Catholic bigots for giving a Catholic speech at a Catholic college. The latest to chime in is Eddie Vedder.

Who is Eddie Vedder? Never heard of him. But I have heard of Pearl Jam, and he is their lead singer. Not knowing anything about him, I wondered if he was a pro-abortion, pro-transgender, former or current alcoholic and/or drug user, who is filthy rich. That was the extent of my internet search. Guess what? I was right about everything.

Vedder’s love for abortion is so strong that in 1992 he scrawled “PRO-CHOICE!!!” in bold letters on his bare left arm during a performance on “MTV Unplugged.” In 2020, he confessed to the *New York Times*, “my thinking about abortion germinated from personal experience.” We can only guess what that means, and quite frankly it’s best we don’t know. We do know that while he doesn’t value innocent human life, he does value the rainforest; he is a generous donor to its preservation.

When North Carolina and Tennessee objected to allowing boys to compete with girls in sports, and shower together, Vedder went ballistic. Nice to know what angers him.

According to one music source, “Pearl Jam members were known to drop acid or smoke pot.” Vedder was also known for his heavy drinking and chain smoking.

Vedder bought a home for \$34 million. That was a generation ago, in 1990. Today his net worth exceeds \$100 million. No doubt he hates white privilege.

This is just the kind of guy we would expect to attack Butker.

Oh, yes, he proudly exclaims that people like him are “more

tolerant, they're more understanding [and] more emphatic of others." Excluding, of course, the unborn, women, girls, and Catholics.

Why is it that it is always the tolerant ones who are the biggest Stalinists?

Contact Pearl Jam's publicist, Sarah Seiler:  
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## Catholic Connection

*Bill in the News (Catholic Connection): Bill discusses the recent attack on Catholic NFL football player, Harrison Butker, with Teresa Tomeo. To listen, click [here](#). (Bill begins at 16:15 minute mark)*

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## WE ARE CLUELESS IN COMBATING SUICIDE

[Bill Donohue](#)

The latest data show that a record number of Americans are committing suicide. Almost 50,000 killed themselves in 2022, up by 2.6 percent from the year before. We have a mental health crisis on our hands, but we are failing to address it properly.

A third of students have considered quitting in the last six months, citing mental health concerns. Among college students, two-thirds of bachelor's degree students who have considered pausing their studies mention personal mental health reasons, such as emotional stress.

So what are colleges doing about it? What is the government doing about it? We know what to do but we refuse to do it.

We have known for a long time that those who take their religion seriously are the least likely to suffer a mental health crisis. Conversely, the more secular the person is, the more likely he is to have such a problem. But given the prevailing anti-religious climate on campuses, and the proverbial government aversion to religion, those who are suffering are being ill-advised. If they are lucky, they're told to get a therapy dog.

Harvard School of Public Health reported in 2020 that women who attend weekly religious services are 68 percent less likely to die "deaths of despair"—suicide, drug overdose and alcohol poisoning—than others; men are 33 percent less likely.

As I reported in my 2015 book, [\*The Catholic Advantage: Why Health, Happiness and Heaven Await the Faithful\*](#), those who regularly practice their religion are much more likely to be healthy, physically and psychologically, than secularists. They are also more likely to be happy. Importantly, given that they are more likely to exhibit altruistic tendencies, chances are they have a leg up getting into heaven.

Unfortunately, the number of Americans who identify with a religion is lower now than ever before. Approximately 30 percent answer "none" when asked what their religious affiliation is (they are the so-called nones). This alone explains why millions of these people continue to suffer mental health problems, having nowhere to turn (save for Fido) for relief.

Worse, when they seek relief, the therapists are not likely to encourage them to rethink their religious status. For example, the least religious of all professors are psychologists: 50 percent report being an atheist and 11 percent identify as agnostic. In short, they are more likely to be a liability than an asset.

No organization that deals with suicide is more clueless in dealing with it than the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In its section on "Risk and Protective Factors," it lists all kind of things—from chronic pain to criminal problems—but not a word about eschewing religion. Similarly, it addresses ways to protect against suicide risk, but never lists religion as a resource.

In the section "Prevention Strategies" it mentions "Provide for therapeutic approaches," but has not a word to say about anything resembling a religious-based program.

Not only is the CDC afraid to mention how religiosity (religious beliefs and practices) affects our mental health, much of its advice is politically skewed.

The CDC reports that the largest increase in suicide, 8.1 percent, was among those 65 or over. Also, men are 50 percent of the population but makeup nearly 80 percent of suicides: their rate is four times higher than the rate among females. Men who are 75 and over have the highest suicide rate of any age group in the country. Moreover, non-Hispanic white men have the highest suicide rate compared to other racial and ethnic groups.

Hardly a day goes by without some news story reporting that "people of color" and women have higher rates of illness from one condition or another than white men—and we must act now to help them!—but when white men are committing suicide at a higher rate than anyone else, no one is there to plead their case. This is a national disgrace.



The kinds of jobs men have explains it all. Those who work in mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction have the highest suicide rate, followed by those who work in construction, other services (e.g., automotive repair), agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, transportation and warehousing.

How can it be, then, that the CDC attributes suicide and suicidal behavior to such problems as racism and discrimination? Their own data show that white men have the highest suicide rate. In fact, the only ones witnessing a decrease in suicide are American Indian/Alaska Native people.

This is so typical of the liberal establishment—they see racism everywhere, even in instances that are contradicted by the data. Evidence doesn't matter—politics does.

If we were serious about suicide we wouldn't treat religion as if it were a problem. It's an elixir.

It needs to be said, however, that we shouldn't recommend a relationship with God for purely health reasons. If religion isn't taken seriously, it belittles its meaning. Religion should not be used simply as a tonic, but we should also not shy away from touting its many benefits.

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## Epoch Times

*Bill in the News (Epoch Times): To watch Bill Donohue's 5/19/24 appearance on Epoch Times TV, click [here](#).*