

JESUIT COLLEGES HAVE A FREE SPEECH PROBLEM

[Bill Donohue](#)

The Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE) periodically does a study of some colleges and universities, rating them on their tolerance for free speech. The 2025 report on 251 schools found that the University of Virginia ranked #1 and Harvard ranked #251.

Jesuit schools generally do poorly, and the latest study is no exception. Fordham ranked 234, Marquette was 235 and Georgetown came in at 240. Other Jesuit institutions did better: Creighton was 144, Boston College placed 189 and Loyola of Chicago ranked 209.

Other Catholic institutions of higher education did not fare very well. The University of Notre Dame placed 167, Villanova was 185, the University of Dayton registered 192, DePaul was 201, and Duquesne placed 222.

It is striking that Georgetown, year in and year out, is the least tolerant of free speech of any Catholic college or university. It is also home to two pro-abortion clubs, one at the undergraduate level and one in the law school.

There was a time, perhaps 50 years ago, when Jesuit schools were considered the cream of the crop. No more. They may still have a good reputation, but from a free speech perspective it is largely unearned. While there are many other academic indices that are important, if free speech is not valued, it raises serious questions about the extent to which indoctrination, not education, is the norm.

Parents of high school students looking at a Catholic school upon graduation may want to consult the FIRE study.

MEDIA COVER FOR COMEY'S THREAT

[Bill Donohue](#)

When patrons tell bartenders it is time to “86” that guy at the end of the bar, they mean he’s drunk and should be cut off. In other contexts, it might mean to nix, or to cancel, someone. It might also mean something more serious.

When James Comey aligned seashells to read, 86 47, he knew what he was doing. He sent a message to those who loathe the man who has survived two assassination attempts. It is hardly a stretch to conclude that—given his well-known hatred of our 47th president—that this was his way of signaling his wish that someone try again. After all, this is not virgin territory for Comey: he is the former Director of the FBI and he knows what to “86” someone means; he surely wasn’t suggesting that the teetotaler be cut off at the bar.

Some in the media, still burning with rage that Trump won, are covering for Comey by pretending he is being misunderstood.

“Ex-FBI Director James Comey Posted a Picture of Seashells. Now He’s Being Probed for ‘Threats’ to Trump.” Yahoo lied. No one would care if Comey simply took a picture of seashells. But that is not what he did.

Similarly, the BBC posted, “Ex-FBI Boss Investigated for Seashell Photo as Threat to Trump.”

Many media outlets, including ABC News, are saying that Merriam-Webster defines to “86” someone or something means to “get rid of” someone or something. True enough. In this

instance, the someone is the president of the United States. Comey needs to be asked: What did he think would happen if someone took him seriously and tried to “get rid” of Trump?

In some popular circles, to “86” someone is to kill him. Indeed, *Cassell’s Dictionary of Slang* says “to 86” means “to kill, to murder; to execute judicially.”

Comey has previously shown himself to be an extremely embittered man. Now he has proven to be beyond reckless—he is salivating over the death of President Trump.

Those who think this is an exaggeration need to explain why a majority (55 percent) of self-identified “left of center” adults recently told Network Contagion Research Institute pollsters that [murdering Trump is justified](#). Comey is playing with fire, and he knows it. He’s not a dumb man.

SMEAR MERCHANTS ATTACK POPE LEO XIV

Bill Donohue

Few things excite the media more than a juicy sex story about Catholic priests, no matter how half-baked the story is. The latest iteration of this phenomenon came on the day Cardinal Robert Prevost became Pope Leo XIV. Wasting no time claiming he is guilty of covering up priestly sexual abuse was SNAP (Survivors Network for those Abused by Priests).

On May 8, it slammed the new pope for the way he addressed accusations of priestly sexual abuse in the United States and Peru. Indeed, six weeks before he was elected, this [totally](#)

[discredited](#) association of anti-Catholic activists filed a complaint with the Vatican saying that Cardinal Prevost “[harmed the vulnerable](#).” The facts prove otherwise.

In 2000, when Father Prevost was the provincial supervisor in Chicago for the Augustinians, he allowed a suspended homosexual priest who had been accused of sexually abusing minors to reside at a rectory not far from a Catholic school. Father James Ray lived there with other priests and restrictions were placed on him.

Two years later, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops issued the Dallas reforms, new guidelines dealing with clergy sexual abuse. It was then that Ray was removed from the Augustinian residence, as well as from public ministry. [He was tossed from the priesthood in 2012](#).

Now it is legitimate to question the decision to place Ray near a school, but to jump to the conclusion that this was an egregious dereliction of duty is absurd. Had Ray been put up in a hotel in a deserted part of town, Prevost’s critics would say he was left unsupervised.

The more intricate case is the one dealing with three sisters from Peru. [SNAP says](#), “When Prevost was Bishop of Chiclayo, three victims reported to civil authorities in 2022 after there was no movement on their canonical case filed through the diocese.” They claim he “failed to open an investigation, sent inadequate information to Rome, and that the diocese allowed the priest to continue saying mass.”

None of this is true. Here’s what happened.

In April 2022, [three sisters made accusations](#) about two priests to church authorities about sexual abuse (inappropriate touching) dating back to 2007 when they were minors. The bishop of Chiclayo was Msgr. Robert Prevost.

Contrary to what SNAP reports, [the priest was removed](#) from the

parish where he worked and prohibited from exercising his ministerial duties.

Also contrary to what SNAP reports, Prevost met with the women in April 2022 and [encouraged them](#) to take their case to civil authorities. Meanwhile he opened a canonical probe. He also offered them psychological help.

In July 2022, [Prevost contacted](#) the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith after the investigation was completed. A Vatican probe found that the allegations lacked sufficient evidence to warrant further action. Moreover, the statute of limitations had long expired. [In addition](#), the civil investigation was also dismissed for lack of evidence and because the statute of limitations had expired.

The women weren't satisfied and registered another complaint. [The diocese responded](#) by sending further documentation to the Vatican. (In April 2023, Msgr. Prevost was named Prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops in Rome.)

In November 2023, Ana Maria Quispe, the oldest of the sisters, contended that both [the civil and ecclesiastical courts were wrong](#). She started a social media campaign to keep her account alive.

The case was then [reopened](#) by the Apostolic Administrator in Chiclayo, addressing her complaint. Victims were summoned to meet but Quispe never showed up.

Meanwhile, there was another development happening, one which SNAP is deadly silent on.

In April 2024, after [Archbishop José Eguren](#), a member of an ultra-conservative movement, the Peruvian Sodalitium of Christian Life, was ousted—he was accused of abuse and financial wrongdoing—accusations of a Cardinal Prevost coverup percolated.

To understand why Prevost was being accused, consider the role that Fr. Ricardo Coronado played. In May 2024, Coronado, a canon lawyer, took up the women's cases. He was associated with this extremist movement and was widely believed to have engaged in [corruption, violence and sexual abuse](#).

In August 2024, the Peruvian Bishops' Conference issued a [public statement](#) saying Coronado could no longer practice canon law. He was accused of having a sexual relationship with a consenting adult.

Off-the-record comments against Coronado continued to surface from Augustinian priests. [They maintained](#) that he "despised" Prevost and that he was guilty of "a pattern of sexually inappropriate and aggressive behavior."

In January 2025, Pope Francis and Cardinal Prevost met with one of the group's abuse victims. Weeks before he died, [the pope dissolved the movement](#).

[Pedro Salinas](#), a noted Peruvian journalist who knows this issue well, said Prevost played "an extremely important role" in ending it. In fact, he said, "The campaign of disinformation and discrediting Robert Prevost's career has always come from the source of Robert Prevost, Archbishop Euren."

Having written a book on this subject, [The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse: Clarifying the Facts and the Causes](#), I can say with confidence that the accusations of a coverup by Cardinal Prevost are false. If anything, Pope Leo XIV acted fairly and with dispatch.

FATHER GORDON J. MACRAE ON SNAP'S DECEPTION

This article was originally written by Fr. Gordon J. MacRae on [Beyond These Stone Walls](#) in May 2018

If there exists a Catholic priest still in denial about the agenda of SNAP, it's because he has lived with his head in the sand blind to the threat lying in wait for him.

In 2009, at the same time I began writing for *Beyond These Stone Walls*, Catholic League President Bill Donohue invited me to write a feature article for the Catholic League Journal, *Catalyst*. My article, "[Due Process for Accused Priests](#)," began by describing an important phenomenon.

In 2002, just as the national story of Catholic priests and sexual abuse emerged out of Boston to sweep the country, psychologist Daniel Kahneman was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics for his work on a phenomenon called "availability bias." It revealed the power of the media to not just report the news, but to reshape it to fit media bias, to cultivate it, to take a story's small microphone and turn it into a megaphone.

Activist organizations have trained people to harness this force to sway what others adopt as a bias. It is not new, just newly analyzed. One of the most potent deployments of "availability bias" is one I have quoted before in these pages. It comes from *Mein Kampf*, the 1926 book by Adolf Hitler that gave rise to the Nazi party in Germany:

"The great mass of people will more easily fall prey to a big

lie than to a small one."

After my 2009 *Catalyst* article was published, I was subjected to an open assault by David Clohessy, Executive Director of the activist organization, SNAP, the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests. Matt Abbott at Renew America forwarded my article to Mr. Clohessy and invited a response posted at Renew America entitled, "[Imprisoned Priest, Sex Abuse Victim Clash.](#)"

David Clohessy was obviously perturbed by what I exposed about the lawsuit settlement process and how it is advanced and cultivated by "self-serving contingency lawyers and various agenda driven groups using scandal for their own ends." Mr. Clohessy had long derided Church officials for entering into secrecy agreements to keep settlement amounts from public view.

On January 17, 2017, former SNAP employee Gretchen Rachel Hammond filed a lawsuit against SNAP in the Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois. Ms. Hammond had been SNAP's Director of Development before leaving the organization and filing her lawsuit. The named parties in the suit included David Clohessy, SNAP's Executive Director, and Barbara Blaine, SNAP's founder and president, and a member of SNAP's board of directors.

Ms. Hammond's lawsuit alleged that she was a victim of retaliatory discharge for questioning the allegedly corrupt practices of this organization. These included claims that SNAP and its leaders received substantial kickbacks in the form of "donations" from attorneys to whom SNAP officials referred clients or potential clients.

The lawsuit exposed that lawyers in California, Chicago, Seattle, and Delaware made major "donations," some of them in six-figure amounts, and that SNAP leaders "concocted a scheme to have other attorneys make donations to a front foundation"

to mask “attorneys’ kickbacks” to the organization.

The lawsuit also alleged a pattern of collusion between SNAP officials and plaintiff lawyers to maximize publicity for the purpose of fueling bigger payouts. It accused SNAP officials of callous disregard for the real interests of real sexual abuse survivors. Among the lawsuit’s other allegations were these:

- SNAP engaged in a commercial enterprise motivated by its directors’ and officers’ personal and ideological animus against the Catholic Church.
- SNAP conducted business premised on farming out abuse survivors as clients for specific attorneys who file lawsuits and collect settlements from the Catholic Church.
- Attorneys routinely gave SNAP confidential plaintiff claims and other privileged information in order for SNAP to maximize payouts with sensational press releases.
- SNAP claimed that it existed to provide support for survivors of clergy sexual abuse, however at all relevant times, SNAP did not have a single grief counselor or rape counselor on its payroll. SNAP would ignore survivors who reached out to SNAP for legitimate counseling.
- Ms. Hammond alleged that she was told by SNAP official Barbara Dorris to ignore calls from survivors who were seeking only counseling.
- Despite accepting funds for counseling and aiding survivors of sexual abuse, SNAP squandered those funds to advance its own interests and those of its leadership.

- SNAP set out to deliberately jeopardize the ability of accused priests to receive due process and fair trials.
- In 2011, SNAP oversaw fundraising for a charge brought against Pope Benedict XVI at the International Court at The Hague; however SNAP used the funds to pay for lavish hotels and other extravagant travel expenses for its leadership.

The Fallout

When the lawsuit became public, David Clohessy resigned as Executive Director, and SNAP founder and president, Barbara Blaine also resigned. They have since settled the lawsuit by a secrecy clause just like the ones for which Mr. Clohessy had railed against Catholic bishops over the last two decades.

After the settlement, others among SNAP's more notorious leaders also resigned as reported by David F. Pierre, Jr. at *The Media Report* in "[SNAP R.I.P.](#)" Barbara Dorris, who replaced David Clohessy as Executive Director, and Regional Director Joelle Casteix both resigned. Among the revelations uncovered by David Pierre was that SNAP published the email addresses and personal phone numbers of accused priests to generate harassment.

Ms. Hammond's lawsuit was only one of several brought against SNAP, but it was the one that appeared to finally expose what had long been suspected of SNAP and its leaders. Simultaneously in 2017, Father Joseph Jiang, a priest of the Archdiocese of St. Louis, filed a defamation lawsuit against SNAP.

Charges brought against Father Jiang were heavily promoted by SNAP leaders who, as they do whenever a priest is accused, issued a public call for anyone else who wants to accuse the priest. When Father Jiang passed a polygraph test [I did, too, by the way, twice] the charges were dismissed in 2015.

In 2016 a federal judge ruled that SNAP made false statements against Father Jiang “negligently and with reckless disregard for the truth.” SNAP and the parents of the minor who had falsely accused him settled the lawsuit.

As part of its settlement, SNAP issued a public apology, but the ever complicit news media failed to mention that SNAP was forced to do so in the wake of a false claim and lawsuit. SNAP’s apology, written by its legal counsel, included this statement:

“The SNAP defendants never want to see anyone falsely accused of a crime. Admittedly, false reports of clergy sexual abuse do occur. SNAP apologizes for false or inaccurate statements... its representatives made which in any way disparaged Father Joseph Jiang.”

In reporting this story, some Catholic media outlets continued to refer to SNAP as “a victims’ support group” or “a victim advocacy group.” It’s a bad habit that blindly gives legitimacy of purpose to SNAP which it does not have, and has never had.

Pope Benedict’s “Crimes Against Humanity”

The most important and visible source exposing SNAP’s corruption and reckless disregard for truth is a document by Catholic League President Bill Donohue entitled, “[SNAP Implodes](#).” It provides a comprehensive and compelling account of the path of destruction SNAP and its leaders have left in the Church and priesthood under the false guise of advocating for real victims.

Among the most manipulative of David Clohessy’s “advocacy” was an instruction to accusers to attend SNAP press conferences. To play on the emotions of reporters, Clohessy urged those awaiting settlements to “display holy childhood photos” before the news cameras, and... “If you don’t have compelling holy

childhood photos we can provide you with photos of other kids that can be held up for the cameras.”

If that doesn't infuriate Catholics who have any regard left for truth, then what would? SNAP had a much worse perversion of justice than was first hyped, and then covered up, by the news media. It was the most destructive publicity stunt SNAP and its leaders have devised or condoned to date.

Both Bill Donohue and the Hammond lawsuit cited this one (see the final bullet point in Ms. Hammond's lawsuit above). What they do not reveal is that SNAP used the false case against me to help bring it about.

I first wrote of this story in October 2011 in [“SNAP'S Last Gasp! The Pope's Crimes Against Humanity.”](#) That was before I even knew that I was a part of this story. In 2011, SNAP and the Center for Constitutional Rights – located at 666 Broadway in Manhattan – jointly filed a “crimes against humanity” charge against Pope Benedict XVI at the International Criminal Court.

The ICC is an independent judicial institution with the power to hold trials and impose sentences for the most serious crimes of international concern: genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. The ICC was approved by international treaty in 1998 and officially came into being on July 1, 2002, after 60 countries ratified the treaty.

The court is headquartered in The Hague, The Netherlands. Of interest, in May of 2002, President George Bush declined to sign the treaty and refused to allow the ICC to have jurisdiction over United States cases. So SNAP's target was not U.S. Catholic priests and bishops, but the Pope himself.

SNAP duped the left-leaning Center for Constitutional Rights to compose and file the briefs with information provided by SNAP in collaboration with plaintiff lawyers hoping for a precedent to tap Vatican assets in their never-ending quest

for big bucks. I first learned of my involvement in this story from an article by journalist JoAnn Wypijewski, in "[Spotlight Oscar Hangover: Why 'Spotlight' Is a Terrible Film](#)." Here is an excerpt:

"The Center for Constitutional Rights [CCR] . . . joined with SNAP to file a grotesque brief to the International Criminal Court demanding 'investigation and prosecution' of the Vatican for crimes against humanity... To CCR's shame, Father [Gordon] MacRae is specifically mentioned in that brief with respect to allegations... which prosecutors threw in at sentencing but for which there is no evidence according to the lead detective in the case [as] cited by [Dorothy] Rabinowitz."

SNAP, apparently in retaliation for my *Catalyst* articles calling for independent investigation of dubious claims, fed information to the Center for Constitutional Rights that would fuel a case against the Vatican. They made no attempt to contact me or my defense, nor did they contact [Dorothy Rabinowitz at The Wall Street Journal](#) who researched and published extensively on the same story, but with a polar opposite conclusion.

And SNAP did this without attempting to contact James Abbott, the former FBI Special Agent who spent three years investigating this case before dismissing it as a fraud. ([Agent Abbott's affidavit](#) is cited at the end of Ryan MacDonald's recent post, "[#MeToo & #HimToo: Jonathan Grover & Father Gordon MacRae](#)" which also lays out the fraud behind this story).

In the end, to its great credit, the International Criminal Court declined to accept jurisdiction or the crimes against humanity charge against Pope Benedict XVI, but that was no surprise. Everyone involved knew that this fiasco would go nowhere, and it was never really SNAP's goal. It was merely a publicity stunt for David Clohessy and SNAP to heighten pressure for quick and lucrative financial settlements.

The people who terrorized American Catholic priests for the last quarter century are gone now. Their fraud is exposed. Their coffers are empty. Their leaders have fled. In "[SNAP Implodes](#)," Catholic League President Bill Donohue summed up what I had come to know at a very personal level in this moral panic that SNAP promoted and extorted for profit over the last 25 years:

"SNAP officials function as borderline gangsters out to destroy innocent persons. It is motivated by hate and exploits the very people it claims to serve. Justice demands that it be shut down by the authorities before it does any more harm."

Note from Father Gordon MacRae: Once again, you would serve the cause of truth and justice if you share this post and ask your contacts to do the same.

POPE LEO XIV CITES AI AS A FORCE TO RECKON WITH

[Bill Donohue](#)

Cardinal Robert Prevost chose to be known as Pope Leo XIV partly because he identified with Pope Leo XIII's interest in meeting the challenges of the industrial revolution. Today, he says, the technological challenge comes from AI, or artificial intelligence. He warns that it poses "new challenges for the defense of human dignity, justice and labour."

This condition was foreseen by Romano Guardini. His book, *The End of the Modern World*, was published in 1956, and what he had to say was ominous.

“Something has come up that has not existed before,” he told a gathering of students, “the unity of inhumanity and machine.” He was referring to the confluence of state control with the power of technology. In particular, he foresaw a situation where the technological society would eliminate “the personality of the human being,” creating a society where evil triumphed and morality and ethics were sidelined.

Guardini was an Italian-born German Catholic priest and theologian.

More recently, in 2020, the Vatican’s Pontifical Academy for Life issued a joint statement with representatives from IBM, Microsoft, the United Nations and the Italian government; *Rome Call for AI Ethics* sought to ground AI discussions in a moral framework. In January 2025, the Vatican released a document, *Old and New*, that issued guidelines on how to approach this subject, insisting that AI must serve humanity and uphold human dignity.

Pope Francis did not mince words on the challenges that AI posed. “We have to accept that technological products are not neutral, for they create the framework which ends up conditioning lifestyles and shaping social possibilities along the lines dictated by the interests of certain powerful groups.”

Francis’ concerns were legitimate. Yuval Noah Harari is one of the central figures associated with the World Economic Forum (WEF), the organization of global elites who are accountable to no one, yet wield enormous power. He predicts that AI and genetic engineering will “enable parents to create smarter or more attractive children.”

He does not address how this may impact the rest of society. Nor does he say what happens if AI falters and not-so-smart children are born.

The man’s arrogance is stunning. He envisions a society where

AI will replace the Scriptures and create unified “religions that are actually correct.” He believes AI can “even write a new Bible.” He gloats that “In a few years, there might be religions that are actually correct...just think about a religion whose holy book is written by an AI.”

It is a tribute to Pope Leo XIV that he has wasted no time in fingering AI as a moral issue that needs to command the attention of Catholics. We need to establish an array of ethical speed bumps for the WEF elites, lest their militant secularism prevail.

Catholic Connection

Bill in the News (Catholic Connection): Bill discusses newly elected, Pope Leo XIV, with Teresa Tomeo. To listen, click [here](#). (Bill's segment begins at 50:55)

POPE LEO XIV IS NOT FRANCIS II

Bill Donohue

Lots of people are wondering whether Pope Leo XIV is a reformer in the same vein as Pope Francis, or more of a traditionalist like Francis' two predecessors. It depends on the issue, but to those who think he is a clone of Francis, they are wrong. Importantly, he is not an ideologue.

It is striking to see some celebrating what they claim is a “woke” pope, while others are bemoaning that he is one. Neither is right. Beware: All the alarms going off are false.

An article published on Alternet is cheering “Our New Woke Pope.” Why? Because he criticized Vice President J.D. Vance for saying love should begin with loving your family, then others.

Then Cardinal Robert Prevost, an Augustinian priest, said on X that “J.D. Vance is wrong: Jesus doesn’t ask us to rank our love for others.”

It is absurd to conclude from this that the new pontiff is a “woke” pope. Vance was saying love must be set in proper order, and many Catholic theologians agree. No matter, theological disputes are common in all religious circles, but standing alone they do not make anyone “woke.” This is simply a childish way to politicize matters.

Then we have far-right commentator Laura Loomer. She is branding our new pope “woke” and a “Marxist.” She is badly educated.

To show how crazy those on the extreme left and right are, consider what *The Nation* is saying. It is a left-wing publication that championed Stalin, the genocidal maniac. They are raising the flag for Pope Leo XIV because they see in him what Pope Leo XIII stood for during his pontificate.

The Nation is right to say our new pope identifies with Leo XIII, but they are wrong to say that the late nineteenth and early twentieth century pope was a social justice warrior in the left-wing tradition. They are heralding him for his “sharp critiques of capitalism.” Maybe if they actually read the 1891 encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, they wouldn’t sound so silly.

Pope Leo XIII wrote this encyclical eight years after Marx’s death in 1883. He foresaw the horrors that Marx’s ideology

would deliver. He said that “ideal equality about which they entertain pleasant dreams would be in reality the leveling down of all to a like condition of misery and degradation.” He also made the case for private property, which is hardly an expression of socialism.

Orthodox Catholics will be happy to learn that Pope Leo XIV is strongly pro-life. He is opposed to abortion, euthanasia and assisted suicide. He is also pro-marriage and the family, properly understood.

He has criticized in no uncertain terms the “homosexual lifestyle” and “alternative families comprised of same-sex partners and their adopted children.” This is great news for practicing Catholics—the ones in the pews who actually pay the bills—but not for dissidents. He has also condemned gender ideology being taught in the schools of Peru. “The promotion of gender ideology is confusing, because it seeks to create genders that don’t exist.” As such, he opposes the exploitation of sexually confused young people.

On immigration, Leo is much more in the liberal camp. He is opposed to the Trump policies and has even criticized the president of El Salvador for his crackdown on illegal immigration. How the heads of state are supposed to deal with those who are crashing their borders, causing misery for its citizens, is something he may have to address.

Is Pope Leo XIV a Republican, a Democrat or an independent? He’s a Republican. A registered Republican in Illinois, he pulled the GOP lever in the 2012, 2014 and 2016 elections. But apparently he did not vote in the 2016 general election and chose to vote by absentee ballot in 2024. It appears he is more of a Bush Republican than a Trump Republican. But he is certainly not a “woke” or “Marxist” activist.

If some progressives who wanted Francis II are not expressing dismay in public, don’t be fooled. It is because they want to

have entrée with the new pope. The Left exists for one thing—power—and they are masters at deceiving people.

It looks like practicing Catholics will have in Pope Leo XIV someone they can rally around.

NEW POPE IS WELL-KNOWN ABROAD

Bill Donohue

The voting members of the College of Cardinals elected an Augustinian priest, Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost, to be the new pontiff. He chose the name Pope Leo XIV.

While he is the first American pope—he was born in Chicago—he is not well known to most American Catholics. That is partly because the 69-year old spent many years as a missionary in Peru. What helped him enormously with his fellow cardinals was his previous assignment as prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops.

In that role he advised Pope Francis on the appointment of bishops around the world; he also dealt with the resignation of bishops. Thus was he able to know many high-ranking clerics in faraway parts of the world, places that most westerners have never been to. That gave him a strategic advantage over the other cardinals in the election of a new pope. He clearly was more of an international cleric than an American one.

On issues that are of interest to many Catholics, he is not in favor of ordaining female deacons, never mind being an enthusiast for women priests. But when it comes to many other issues, not much is known about where he stands. For example, when it comes to making priestly celibacy optional,

restricting the Latin Mass, and the Vatican-China accords, he has not been forthcoming.

However, it is reported that he has shown some support for *Fiducia Supplicans*, the Vatican document that allows for select blessings of gay couples. That got Pope Francis into a lot of trouble, especially with the African bishops. He will have to be more specific about his position.

He will also have to answer a barrage of questions about two cases of clergy sexual abuse that he has been accused of mishandling.

The first occurred in 2000 when he allowed a homosexual priest in Chicago who was convicted of sexually abusing boys to stay in a residence near a Catholic elementary school; he never told the school administration about him. Also, the convicted molester, Father James Ray, was allowed to function as a priest, until he was later removed.

To this day, Prevost has declined to discuss this issue.

While the case of Father Ray occurred a few years before the Dallas reforms were issued, a more recent case, involving three sisters, raises new questions.

In 2022, when Prevost was the bishop of the Peruvian Diocese of Chiclayo, the girls say that when they reported being sexually abused by a priest, he failed to investigate it. They also say that they were never called by an investigator to hear their side. Prevost disputes these charges.

Did Pope Francis know about any of these accusations of mishandling sexual abuse cases? There is no evidence that he did. However, he did know about very serious cases of sexual abuse—some sacrilegious in nature—that his fellow Jesuits were involved in and he did not act with dispatch to seek justice.

Two strong supporters of Prevost are Father James Martin, the

most famous advocate for homosexuals and transgender persons, and Austen Ivereigh, a vocal fan of Pope Francis.

If there was one cardinal who rallied for Prevost more than any other it was Cardinal Oscar Maradiaga from Honduras; he was known as Francis' "vice pope." When news broke in 2018 that former Cardinal Theodore McCarrick was involved in serial sexual abuse cases—he is the most disgraced American prelate in American history—Maradiaga blasted those who made a big deal about it. He called it a "private matter." He has also been accused of covering up a homosexual "epidemic" in his diocesan seminary.

Catholics pray that Pope Leo XIV will be able to demonstrate just how wrong his critics are. Meanwhile, he has much to celebrate. Congratulations to our new pope!

"The News on Merit TV"

On Thursday, May 8, Bill Donohue discussed the Conclave on Merit TV's "The News on Merit TV." While he was on the air, the broadcast captured the white smoke coming from the Sistine Chapel. To watch the interview, click [here](#).

MOTHERHOOD YIELDS HAPPINESS

[Bill Donohue](#)

As we approach Mother's Day, it is inspiring to note that mothers are among the happiest persons on earth.

Interestingly, this has nothing to do about being a woman: It is women who have families who are the happiest. Indeed, the obverse is also true: single women are among the least happy.

The most authoritative data on social wellbeing is found in the United States General Social Survey. Each year since 1972, it asks men and women how happy they are. What the researchers found is that women report being less happy each year. So what accounts for the change?

The feminist revolution in the 1960s explains a good part of this societal shift. It gave way to greater women's equality in law, education and the workplace. Indeed, the gains have been impressive. But why has this not translated into greater happiness? More pointedly, if women went forward in achieving educational and occupational success, why have they gone backwards in achieving happiness?

Neuroscience News reported on this subject in 2023, and what they found is startling.

"Something strange is going on in women's happiness research. Because despite more freedom and employment opportunities than ever before, women have higher levels of anxiety and more mental health challenges, such as depression, anger, loneliness and more restless sleep. And these results are seen across many countries and different age groups."

Equality before the law is a noble goal, but its relationship with happiness is tenuous at best. We know from a mountain of evidence that happiness is best achieved when people's interactions with others are positive, and this begins in the family. To put it differently, social bonds matter more than stock bonds.

Women, in general, may not be as happy today as they were compared to women who lived before the 1970s, but it remains true that married women with children fare well. For example, we know from the results of the General Social Survey in 2022

that men and women who have the benefit of a spouse and children are the most likely to report being "very happy" with their lives.

Importantly, it was also revealed that among married women with children between the ages of 18 and 55, 40 percent reported they are "very happy," compared to 25 percent of married childless women, and just 22 percent of unmarried childless women.

The idea that motherhood yields happiness is consistent with Catholic teachings. As Saint John Paul II said, women are called by their nature to be mothers; it is part of their "feminine genius" to serve their children. Furthermore, their calling is to "humanize humanity," a task that signifies their unique abilities.

It is undeniable that the feminist revolution played a major role in accounting for the declining happiness of women. Not by accident was it led by women intellectuals who devalued masculinity and motherhood, often viciously so.

Betty Friedan led the way by deriding the housewife's dependence on her husband; she contended that women lived vicariously through their husbands and children. Women had become so infantile, she said, that their passive existence resembled a "comfortable concentration camp." The feminine mystique, she maintained, "has succeeded in burying millions of women alive."

Friedan, of course, lived a pampered lifestyle. She was bored and unhappy. But she was not representative of most women. Millions of women found happiness in suburbia, and millions of working-class and poor women desperately wanted to live in her "comfortable concentration camp."

Other feminists at that time made Friedan look conservative.

Shulamith Firestone declared that "pregnancy is barbaric,"

saying it is unfair that “half the human race must bear and rear the children.” Vivian Gornick contended that to be a housewife was to be in “an illegitimate profession.” Linda Gordon insisted that “the nuclear family must be destroyed.” Gloria Steinem pleaded that we have to “abolish and reform the institution of marriage.” And Kate Millett said we must abolish all “traditional sexual inhibitions and taboos.” No wonder she spent many years in the asylum.

All of these women lived dysfunctional lives and were miserably unhappy.

So what exactly was it about the feminist revolution that led to such a sharp increase in women’s unhappiness? For one, those who led it were more interested in women’s autonomy than they were in enhancing their happiness. Importantly, radical feminist ideas were not limited to the classroom—they found expression in law and public policy.

From this perspective, it was better for women not to be married so they could achieve success in the workplace. In other words, feminists cared not a fig about what made women truly happy. If they had, they would have encouraged them to get married and have a family. They did just the opposite.

It is a very bad sign for society that the marriage rate and the birth rate have fallen. But at least for women who are mothers, and who put their children first, it is comforting to know they have a happiness advantage over the rest of us. Happy Mother’s Day.