

# MISSION CREEP IN LEFT-WING ORGANIZATIONS

[Bill Donohue](#)

What happens when an organization achieves its goal? It either folds or it develops a new one. The March of Dimes was founded to cure polio, and when the Salk vaccine proved effective, those who worked there could have declared victory and packed up their bags and left. But they didn't. Instead, they chose a new mission: combating birth defects and infant mortality.

When it comes to civil rights organizations, this situation is much trickier.

Prejudice and discrimination exist in many quarters of America. People are still treated unfairly on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, sex, age, disability, and the like, but in almost every instance there has been much progress. A related, though separate, issue is the perception of progress. It is entirely possible for people of one demographic group or another to feel they are still treated unfairly when objective measures prove otherwise.

The progress made by minorities and women—in every aspect of society—is undeniably impressive. So much so that organizations founded to protect their civil rights have often experienced mission creep. Flush with money, they find themselves treading into new territories, seeking to address the latest civil rights issue. It helps enormously when big bucks are involved.

A case in point is the discovery of LGBT rights by organizations that were never founded—even remotely—to deal with this issue. But the fact that they are spending so much more time addressing the gay and transgender agenda is a sign that they have made tremendous progress in achieving their

original goal. But they will never admit it. Victim advocates need victims.

For a majority of these groups, their shift to LGBT issues began in the late 2000s and early 2010s. At this point, the issue of gay rights, particularly marriage equality, was beginning to become a major civil rights issue. Soon the issue of transgender rights took center stage.

The following organizations have drifted into the LGBT arena. They are listed chronological in terms of when they embraced gay and transgender rights.

#### *NAACP Legal Defense Fund*

Year founded: 1940

Original mission: To secure laws that advance racial equality.

First mention of LGBT advocacy: 1990s.

Actions taken: Starting in 1996, it filed amicus briefs in cases that affected the rights of lesbians and gay men. It later fought for marriage equality.

#### *Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights*

Year founded: 1950

Original mission: The Conference's original mission was "grounded in commitment to social justice and the firm conviction that the struggle for civil rights would be won not by one group, but through coalition." It focused mostly on civil rights for African Americans.

First mention of LGBT advocacy: 2003

Actions taken: Its first foray defending LGBT rights came in 2003 when it applauded the Supreme Court's decision in *Lawrence v. Texas*, which offered new rights for gays and

lesbians.

### *NAACP*

Year founded: 1909

Original mission: To fight for racial equality.

First mention of LGBT advocacy: 2008

Actions taken: In 2008 the NAACP's California state chapter opposed the state's Proposition 8. It later defended marriage equality.

### *National Urban League*

Year founded: 1910

Original mission: To fight for racial equality.

First mention of LGBT advocacy: 2009

Actions taken: Its first goal was to fight for the Hate Crimes Prevention Act.

### *ADL*

Year founded: 1913

Original mission: To combat anti-Semitism.

First mention of LGBT advocacy: 2010

Actions taken: It filed an amicus brief in a marriage equality case.

### *National Women's Law Center*

Year founded: 1972

Original mission: To fight for the rights of women.

First mention of LGBT advocacy: 2012

Actions taken: In October 2012, it released a fact sheet on Title IX protections for LGBT and gender non-conforming students. It later became more active in combating discrimination.

*The Ruth Bader Ginsburg Center for Liberty at the ACLU*

Year founded: In 1972, Ruth Bader Ginsburg founded the Women's Rights Project at the ACLU. In 2010, the Center for Liberty, which included the Women's Rights Project, was established. In 2020, the Center was renamed the Ruth Bader Ginsburg Center for Liberty.

Original mission: To fight for women's rights, principally abortion rights. It has since taken up the cause of gay and transgender people.

First mention of LGBT advocacy: 2015

Actions taken: To fight for passage of the Equality Act.

It is one thing for sister organizations to form coalitions; it is quite another when they engage in mission creep. But when there isn't enough work for employees to do, they must find new avenues to explore. Add to this the lure of foundation money, and the temptation is irresistible.

One more thing. Notice none of these left-wing civil rights organizations ever experience mission creep by taking up the cause of anti-Catholicism. That is not a civil rights issue that exercises them.

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# POPE FRANCIS AND THE POOR

Bill Donohue

Here's a thought experiment.

There are two teachers. One is known for his compassion for struggling students, but he is not a gifted teacher, and as a result his students do poorly in school. The other is known as lacking in compassion, but he is a gifted teacher, and as a result his students do well in school.

There are two doctors. One is known for his compassionate bedside manners, but he is not a gifted doctor, and as a result his patients suffer. The other lacks bedside manners, but is regarded as a gifted doctor, and as a result his patients thrive.

Ideally, we would all like to be served by compassionate and competent teachers and doctors, but when given the choices afforded by the thought experiment, who would really choose the compassionate yet incompetent teacher or doctor over their insensitive yet competent counterparts?

No one doubts that Pope Francis showed great compassion for the poor. Indeed, that is one of the most heralded aspects of his legacy. But his harsh criticisms of capitalism, and his affinity for socialism, must be taken into account.

It is undeniably true that capitalism has done more to induce upward social mobility and alleviate poverty than any economic system in history. It is also undeniably true that socialism has proven to be the greatest generator of poverty in the world.

In capitalist countries, the leaders may talk more about economic efficiency than the interests of the poor, yet their free market policies invariably prove beneficial to them. The

leaders in socialist countries talk a great deal about the interests of the poor, yet their statist policies invariably prove harmful to the poor.

In short, rhetoric means little in the end if the policies that are pursued result in failure.

When Mao took over in 1949, he dressed like a peasant and talked incessantly about the plight of the poor. Meanwhile, he owned 50 villas, and devastated the economy with his socialist policies.

When Fidel Castro, an affluent lawyer, took over in Cuba in 1959, he dressed down and talked incessantly about the plight of the poor. Meanwhile, he lived the high life and devastated the economy with his socialist policies.

When the Sandinistas took over in Nicaragua in 1979, they donned fatigues and talked incessantly about the plight of the poor. Meanwhile, they live in palaces and have devastated the economy with their socialist policies.

When Nicolás Maduro took over in Venezuela in 2019, he talked incessantly about the plight of the poor. Meanwhile, he is living a luxurious lifestyle and has devastated the economy with his socialist policies.

Pope Francis meant well in showing compassion for the poor. But his understanding of economics was not his strong suit, and the economic policies he championed did more to punish the poor than help them. On that score, the next pope has to do better.

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# GERMAN BISHOPS DISPUTE THERE ARE TWO SEXES

[Bill Donohue](#)

“In creating men ‘male and female,’ God gives man and woman an equal personal dignity.” That is what the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches. Pope Francis not only agreed with this fundamental Catholic tenet, he said that those who deny there are only two sexes, male and female, are fostering a false anthropology.

Evidently, the German bishops disagree. Indeed, they also disagree with Pope Francis’ proclamations on gender ideology, which he called “demonic.”

In a special handout prepared by the German Bishops’ Conference that was recently published, the bishops made clear their vision of humanity. Indeed, the title of their document, “Blessings for Couples Who Love Each Other,” says it all.

“Couples who love each other” obviously applies to same-sex couples. Indeed, it also applies to father-daughter and mother-son couples. That may not be their intent, but this is what happens when being “inclusive” becomes an obsession.

It gets worse. The handout speaks to extending blessings to “couples in all the diversity of sexual orientations and gender identities [that] are part of our society.”

This means there is a sexual orientation that extends beyond heterosexual and homosexual. The German bishops should tell us what it is. It also means there are more than two gender identities. They should name them. In both instances, it would be helpful if they provided us with pictures of these people so we know what they look like.

In all seriousness, the dissemination of this handout comes at a critical juncture in the Church's history. We are on the cusp of electing a new pope, and Catholics everywhere are anxious to know what direction the voting cardinals want to take us.

Will they ratify the African Catholic vision of sexuality, which emphasizes fidelity to the Church's teachings? Or will they opt to ratify the German Catholic vision, which rejects those teachings?

There is a reason why Catholic attendance in Germany is abysmal. In a vain attempt to be "inclusive," the bishops' conference has unwittingly alienated orthodox Catholics, making them feel *excluded*. By contrast, Catholic attendance in most parts of Africa is surging, and that is due in no small way to its embrace of traditionalism.

Bishops who are prepared to believe there are a multiplicity of sexual orientations and gender identities are not only rejecting the teachings of the Catholic Church, they are rejecting what science affirms. Moreover, they are driving the faithful to exit the Catholic Church. Strike three.

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## **“The World Over with Raymond Arroyo”**

Bill Donohue shares his thoughts and reflections on the life and legacy of the late Pope Francis and how his down to earth persona shaped the tenor of his entire papacy. To watch, click [here](#).

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# Fr. MARTIN DISTORTS TRUTH ABOUT DISSIDENT NUN

[Bill Donohue](#)

Fr. James Martin, the Jesuit champion of gay and transgender rights, has a column in today's *New York Times* that is intellectually dishonest. I will be very specific.

He cites the case of Sister Jeannine Gramick as testimony to Pope Francis' outreach to "L.G.B.T.Q. people." He notes that "Her saga began in 1999, during the papacy of St. John Paul II. That year, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, later to become Pope Benedict XVI, barred Sister Gramick and the Rev. Robert Nugent, two Americans, from ministering to 'homosexual persons.'" He goes on to say that Pope Francis met with Gramick and praised her for her work.

It is not clear how much Pope Francis knew about Gramick. At the time, I assumed he was given a selective interpretation of her work, which is why I accused his handlers of "[manipulating](#)" him. In any event, Fr. Martin gives the impression that Benedict is the ogre. In fact, what he did was long overdue. Here is what happened. [See my book, [The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse: Clarifying the Facts and the Causes](#), for the citations.]

In 1999, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, written by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, issued a "Notification Regarding Sister Jeannine Gramick, SSND, and Father Robert Nugent, SDS." It was directed at the work of New Ways Ministry (NWM), which was founded by Gramick and Nugent in 1977.

Ratzinger noted that in 1984, "James Cardinal Hickey, the

Archbishop of Washington, following the failure of a number of attempts at clarification, informed them [NWM] that they could no longer undertake their activities in that Archdiocese. At the same time, the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and for Societies of Apostolic Life ordered them to separate themselves totally and completely from *New Ways Ministry*, adding that they were not to exercise any apostolate without faithfully presenting the Church's teaching regarding the intrinsic evil of homosexual acts."

Ratzinger then detailed the many attempts by Church officials to persuade Gramick and Nugent to abide by Church teachings on this subject. He concluded that they "are permanently prohibited from any pastoral work involving homosexual persons and are ineligible, for an undetermined period, for any office in their respective religious institutes."

Three years later, in 2002, Archbishop Tarcisio Bertone, Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, wrote that "New Ways Ministry does not promote the authentic teaching of the Catholic Church."

In that same year, Archbishop Thomas Kelly of Louisville told organizers of the group's conference that they should not celebrate the Eucharist at the NWM event. Following suit in 2007 was St. Paul-Minneapolis Archbishop Harry Flynn: he barred NWM's national conference from celebrating the Eucharist.

In 2010, Cardinal Francis George, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, stated that he can assure Catholics that "in no manner is the position proposed by New Ways Ministry in conformity with Catholic teaching and in no manner is this organization authorized to speak on behalf of the Catholic Church or to identify itself as a Catholic organization."

In 2011, Cardinal Donald Wuerl of the Washington Archdiocese,

and chairman of the Committee on Doctrine, joined with Oakland Bishop Salvatore Cordileone, and chairman of the bishops' Ad Hoc Committee on the Defense of Marriage, issuing an affirmation of Cardinal George's denunciation of NWM.

For Fr. Martin not to make mention of any of this is to completely distort the record. He was also wrong not to mention that Gramick continued to defy Church teachings as late as a few years ago. On January 7, 2022, she said that in 1999 the Vatican wanted her and Nugent "to say that homosexual activity is objectively immoral and that we personally believed that. And I could not do that."

Worse, Gramick showed more sympathy for the greatest child rapist priest in American history, Father Paul Shanley, than she did his many victims. For decades, the Boston priest raped males of all ages, and he liked to blame the victims, famously saying, "the kid is the seducer."

In 2005, Gramick said that she "grieved for this man I had not seen in almost 20 years, but whose principles and whose advocacy for the downtrodden I had applauded for three decades." Journalist Maureen Orth, who was married to "Meet the Press" host Tim Russert, was horrified by what she said, adding that she interviewed nine of Shanley's victims, and that Gramick never spoke to one of them.

Pope Benedict XVI acted honorably when, as a cardinal, he called out Sr. Jeannine Gramick. To imply otherwise is scurrilous.

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# **DEFENDING PRIESTS' RIGHTS; AMICUS BRIEF FILED IN NJ**

The Catholic League has filed an amicus brief in New Jersey defending the rights of priests. We are represented by the Pittsburgh office of Leech Tishman; our attorney is Russell Giancola. The lead attorneys for the case are from Cooper Levenson in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

This case began almost seven years ago. Following the Pennsylvania grand jury report in 2018, the Attorney General in New Jersey, launched an investigation of the clergy who worked in the state's dioceses. Prosecutors wanted a grand jury empanelled but the Diocese of Camden objected, saying they had no authority to do so. It is the Camden Diocese that we are defending.

The Diocese of Camden is on solid grounds. In New Jersey, grand juries are established to investigate public agencies such as prisons and police departments. Targeting private individuals or private institutions are not permitted. Therefore, to go after the Catholic clergy—investigating alleged molestation of minors dating back to 1940—is unwarranted.

In May, 2023, Superior Court Judge Peter Warshaw took the side of the Camden Diocese. He said that state law allows special grand juries to investigate public officials or government agencies, not a private entity like the Catholic Church or individual priests. He also questioned the fairness of the probe: the accused priests will not be given a chance to defend themselves. Judge Warshaw said this amounts to a “hit-and-run.”

Subsequently, the New Jersey Supreme Court ordered the records unsealed and agreed to hear arguments in the case in April.

This means our lawyers must act with dispatch.

A grand jury allows no cross examination so the accused have no legal recourse when their names are bandied about in the media. This is outrageous, and it is doubly outrageous when we note that, as always, it is the Catholic Church that is being targeted. It is never some other religion and it sure isn't the public schools, the source of sexual abuse today.

On a related note, we have complained for decades about the decision made by dioceses in the United States that post the names of accused priests on the internet or in some other public spot. No other institution does this—just the Catholic Church. But in March, Pope Francis formally rejected this practice. Henceforth, dioceses are discouraged from publishing such a list.

Priests should have the same rights as every other American, but they do not. Due process demands that they are assumed innocent until proven guilty. Also, most of the bad apples are dead or are no longer in ministry. So this grand jury is a sham.

We will keep you posted.

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## **SATANISTS STRIKE AGAIN**

In March, a Kansas-based group, The Satanic Grotto, announced that it was planning to hold a “Black Mass” on grounds surrounding the Kansas State Capitol in Topeka at the end of the month.

The Satanic Grotto admitted that the purpose of the “Black Mass” is to engage in blasphemy targeted at Catholics. On

Facebook, it said, “We will be performing rites to the Black Mass and indulging in sacrilegious blaspheme [sic].”

We contacted the governor and the entire Kansas legislature, advising a course of action.

While it is true that blasphemy is generally seen as protected speech under the First Amendment, in *Lynch v. Donnelly* (1984), Chief Justice Warren Burger explicitly said that the Constitution “affirmatively mandates accommodation, not merely tolerance, of all religions, and *forbids hostility to all* (our italics).”

Every Christmas season, the Catholic League receives a permit to display a nativity scene in Central Park. Central Park, unlike property near City Hall, is considered a public forum, a place where freedom of expression carries no appearance of government endorsement.

Ergo, for the government of Kansas to allow an event on the grounds of the statehouse—the express purpose of which is to insult Catholics—might give the impression that it is endorsing this sacrilege. It would therefore be party to the kind of “hostility” to religion that the Supreme Court said was unconstitutional.

We suggested that an alternative site be chosen.

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**Bill Donohue to Newsmax: Next Pope Must Clear Up Confusion**

# Left by Francis

*Bill in the News (Newsmax): Donohue emphasized that “when people see that, they say, Wait a minute – can we get rid of this confusion, can we get some clarity here? Because we need a greater coherence of vision and whoever comes in next, that hopefully will be the principle job that he has to do.”* [READ MORE HERE](#)

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## THE QUEERING OF AMERICA

**William A. Donohue**

On his first day in office, President Trump issued an executive order declaring there are only “two sexes, male and female.” It says a lot about our society that this even has to be said. This same phenomenon—denying the existence of human nature and Biology 101—exists throughout western civilization. At bottom, this is a war against God. It is a war the deniers cannot win.

Those promoting the fiction that there are an endless number of sexes, which they incorrectly call genders, are overwhelmingly rich, white, liberal, secularists with postgraduate degrees. No wonder it is their children who are the most likely to call themselves something other than male or female. (For more on this, see my book, *Cultural Meltdown: The Secular Roots of Our Moral Crisis*.)

The latest Gallup poll shows that 9.3 percent of Americans now identify as “LGBTQ+” persons. This is in stark contrast to what the Trump administration is doing. The National Park

Service recently changed the Stonewall National Museum website to only refer to lesbian, gay and bisexual, hence the designation LGB.

This upset Kathy Hochul, the Catholic governor of New York; she said it was "cruel." No matter, transgender people have been eliminated. To be frank, they never existed (sex is binary). Also, the "Q" is redundant and the "+" is plain dumb.

Gallup tells us that 1.4 percent of Americans say they are lesbians; 2.0 percent claim to be gay; 5.2 percent identify as bisexual; 1.3 percent believe they are transgender; there are a few other odd categories. Among the so-called LGBTQ+ population, Gallup found that 56.3 percent identify as bisexual and 13.9 percent believe they are transgender.

Who are the most likely to claim they belong to this population? Young people, girls, Democrats, liberals, and those who live in cities or the suburbs. Why is this not surprising?

In the 12 years that Gallup has been tracking this issue, those who identify as "LGBTQ+" has tripled. This suggests that this phenomenon has everything to do with culture, not biology. To put it simply, we are witnessing the queering of America.

If anyone doubts that this is a culturally induced condition, consider that young people in California are 40 percent more likely to identify as transgender than the national average. It is not a coincidence that California is one of the most liberal states in the nation.

Transgenderism is flowering in colleges for the same reason. Liberal professors, most of whom are militant secularists, are indoctrinating their students with this mind-altering poison. At Brown University, four in ten students (38 percent) say they are "LGBTQI+." The "I" stands for intersex, which is another fiction. While it is true that there is a rare

disorder that allows for both male and female genitalia, all of those people are intrinsically male or female—there is no third form.

Between 2010 and 2023, the gay and lesbian population increased by 26 percent, and the percentage identifying as bisexual increased by 232 percent. Those identifying as “other sexual orientations” within the so-called LGBTQ population increased by almost 800 percent.

These people are in serious need of professional help, making the parents of prospective college students wonder whether they should consider enrollment in a community college or a trade school. Why send your kid to an Ivy League school where he may come home at Thanksgiving giving thanks to his discovery that he is a girl?

Fortunately, the Trump administration is not putting up with this madness.

On February 19, The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued an official statement defining sex as an immutable biological classification of male or female. HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. explained, “This administration is bringing back common sense and restoring biological truth to the federal government. The prior administration’s policy of trying to engineer gender ideology into every aspect of public life is over.”

HHS defines a female to be “A person of the sex characterized by a reproductive system with the biological function of producing eggs (ova).” Accordingly, it defines woman to be “An adult human female.” (Are you listening Ketanji Brown Jackson?) A male is defined as “A person of the sex characterized by a reproductive system with the biological function of producing sperm.” Accordingly, it defines man as “An adult human male.”

This may come as a shocker to the Washington Post—it published

an incredibly irresponsible piece on the same day of the HHS ruling denying that sex is binary—but to most Americans not drugged with ideology it makes perfect sense. The newspaper continues with the fiction that “Sex is widely understood to refer to a label assigned at birth,” when, in fact, it is simply recorded at birth. No one “assigns” our sex—it is determined exclusively by our father and can be detected in utero.

The queering of America serves no legitimate interest. It only serves to encourage the agenda of severely addleheaded men and women, as well as those who are profiting from them either ideologically or financially.

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## **WHY THE NEED TO BASH OPUS DEI?**

**Bill Donohue**

Opus Dei is loved by millions of Catholics all over the world for its yeoman efforts in getting Catholics to practice their religion more seriously. Founded in 1928 by a Spanish priest, Josemaria Escrivá, it is a spiritual home to lay Catholics and clerics who are committed to living the faith on a daily basis; most are laypersons. Escrivá was canonized by Pope John Paul II in 2002.

Militant secularists, and many so-called progressive Catholics, hate Opus Dei. Why? It symbolizes everything they detest: it is unashamedly Catholic, orthodox, and wildly successful.

The latest effort to trash Opus Dei is a book by Gareth Gore,

Opus. Like so many who hate the organization, he is caught up in the mystique of Opus Dei. He can't understand why men and women are drawn to an entity that is so deeply religious, especially given the decidedly secular bent of western civilization.

To be sure, Opus Dei is one of the most countercultural organizations in the world: it openly rejects the secular playbook promoted by the ruling class. This is not lost on Simon & Schuster.

The publisher flags the book by saying Opus Dei opposes "reproductive freedom" and "LGBTQ+ rights." Correct. Practicing Catholics defend life from the moment of conception to natural death; they understand marriage to be the exclusive union of a man and a woman; and they know that sex is binary. In other words, Catholic teachings are in harmony with what nature ordains and science decrees. Gore disagrees with nature and science.

Why is it that many authors who abhor Catholicism are so sloppy in their writings? Is it because they know they will get a cheerful reception from their ilk and will therefore not be held accountable for their errors? This was certainly true of my old debating partner, Christopher Hitchens. He was extremely well read and very bright, but he was also a lousy researcher. His misstatements of facts about Mother Teresa were astounding.

Gore is another sloppy writer. Indeed, he is worse than Hitchens. His book is strewn with hyperbole, innuendo and out-and-out falsehoods. Yet he had the audacity to say in an interview that his book is "100 percent correct." Here are a few examples of his inattention to detail.

"During a trip to Nicaragua, the pope refused to let one cardinal kiss his ring because he had disobeyed a papal order." But Ernesto Cardenal was not a cardinal—he was a

priest. More important, he was Minister of Culture who worked for the communist dictator, Daniel Ortega, the Sandinista thug who has impoverished and enslaved the people of Nicaragua (he is still doing this today). With good reason did Saint John Paul II rebuke him.

Gore says that Mother Teresa of Calcutta attended the beatification of Saint Josemaria—she did not. Also, when he died the servants did not have to be awoken in the middle of the night to make preparations—he died in the middle of the day.

The well respected Catholic Information Center in Washington, D.C. has not been staffed by an Opus Dei priest for the past forty years; that didn't happen until 1992. Gore also says that there are "hundreds of similar centers around the world." In fact, there are only two.

Gore can't get over how financially successful Opus Dei is. So what? Does anyone complain about Harvard's outsized endowment? It has well over \$50 billion. To show how truly sloppy he is—his editors are just as remiss—he writes that "millions of dollars were spent on a huge school-building program across Spain." Yet his footnote refers exclusively to summer camps!

It is to be expected that Gore would not pass up the chance to trot out a case of the sexual abuse of minors. But when he cites the case of a married layman who was guilty of molestation, accusing Opus Dei of never reporting it, he is showcasing his sophomoric research. The abuse occurred in the man's home and Opus Dei never knew about it.

An Opus Dei member, Bob Best, is said to have given Escrivá a gift, which the founder then "handed it to some Spanish bankers, who used it to sign a check to pay for a new Opus Dei project." Wrong. The gift was given to Opus Dei members, not "bankers." This is incontestable—there is a tape of the exchange. Also, Best did not join Opus Dei when he was in high

school; he joined when he was at Villanova. Another error: Gore tries to link the *Culture of Life Foundation* to Opus Dei, but there is no institutional connection.

Just as easy to disprove is the canard about Opus Dei “recruiting” members, instructing them to keep their vocation secret, not even telling their families. Gore says this is part of the founders “instructions” given to Opus Dei members. Wrong again. There is no mention of this in the “instructions.”

Some years ago it was rumored that FBI director Louis Freeh was an Opus Dei member. This has been definitively proven to be false, yet Gore continues to say it was “widely rumored.” His ignorance is stunning.

Malice, not ignorance, is at work when Gore portrays the late Cardinal George Pell as a pedophile. As anyone who knows anything about this issue, the fabricated charges against Pell were thrown out of court. Indeed, he was unanimously acquitted. I have personally written a great deal about this subject, and I find mindboggling that Gore’s editors would allow him to promote this invidious falsehood.

It is so typical of left-wing writers to malign the Catholic Church for reaching out to young people, depicting such efforts as something nefarious. Gore does the same to Opus Dei.

We learn that young people are not attracted to Opus Dei because of what it stands for; they are “recruited” and “captured” by its adult members. Gore must be thinking of the way left-wing college professors manipulate and recruit unsuspecting students, indoctrinating them in the latest Marxist iteration.

It is equally obnoxious for Gore to accuse Opus Dei of “swindling” people. Like every voluntary organization, Opus Dei raises funds to pay for its expenses. When the ACLU raises

money, it's seen as something routine, if not noble. But according to Gore, when Opus Dei raises money, they do so by asking donors to "come up with lists of people who could be swindled." This is libelous.

Gore makes no bones about his politics. "For all its talk about allegiance to the Vatican, the Church, and the teachings of Jesus Christ," he writes, "Opus Dei seems unconcerned that many of the conservative forces it now embraces in the United States are openly hostile to the pope—even going so far as to undermine his authority and plot against him."

Leaving aside the conspiratorial tone—no one is "plotting" against the pope—it is true that many conservatives, including non-Catholics, have been less than enthusiastic about some of the things the pope has said. For example, he is openly hostile to market economies, refuses to condemn Communist China's crackdown on Catholics, and has portrayed conservative Catholics, especially those attracted to the Latin Mass, as pariahs.

More significant, it is rich to read Catholic bashers complain about conservative critics of the pope. They have been trashing Church teachings on marriage, the family, ordination, celibacy and sexuality for decades, and their treatment of Pope Benedict XVI and John Paul II was often brutal, yet today they call for everyone to fall in line—perhaps because they perceive the current moment as more favorable to their views.

Gore mentions *The Da Vinci Code* many times in his book. In doing so he gives credence to the book as if it were a work of non-fiction. This is nonsense. This matters because he insists that his book is "100 percent correct." Thus does he give cover to the falsehoods in *The Da Vinci Code*.

I have written extensively on this issue. The fact is that the book by Dan Brown, and the movie that was based on it by Ron Howard, is a work of fiction.

Brown begins his book with a page titled, "Facts." Listed as "facts" are three demonstrably false and defamatory statements. Brown's first "fact" alleges that a secret society, the Priory of Sion, kept alive the story that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married. But the fact is this tale was exposed as a hoax that was made up in the 1950s by an anti-Semite Frenchman (who was sent to prison for fraud).

The second "fact" alleges that a "religious sect" called Opus Dei was an evil organization. This tells us everything we need to know about Brown.

The third "fact" is the most malicious: it claims that historical documents show that the divinity of Jesus was forged in fourth century. Pure nonsense.

There are 25 references to the divinity of Christ in the Gospels and more than 40 references in the New Testament. Not only that, the letters of Paul were written in the 40s and 50s—earlier than the Gospels. All of these writings are much closer to the time of Jesus than the so-called Gnostic Gospels, and even those books—which were excluded from the New Testament—regard Jesus to be the Son of God.

It is important to note that even fair-minded liberal reviewers of Gore's book see right through his agenda. That is why Matt Murray, the executive editor of the *Washington Post*, took issue with his "rather partisan" approach, saying it sometimes comes across as a "slog." Indeed, Murray says that "Gore can't hide his disdain for the founder." This accounts for his "snarky" style and his "tone of snideness." Gore's disdain also extends to questioning "truths," which is why he puts the word in quotes.

When this review was published, Gore went ballistic, invoking obscenities. Instead of defending his work, he chose to berate Murray for taking "time out of his busy schedule to basically say that my book doesn't include enough positive stuff about

Opus Dei.”

With good reason does Murray say that “some chapters read more like a prosecutor’s brief” than a fair assessment of Opus Dei. This leads him to conclude that the book lacks a “nuanced understanding of the organization.” Gore greets this criticism with indignance, but that doesn’t prove Murray wrong.

It is said that education can conquer ignorance. Not if it is willed. Ideologues are not persuaded by empirical evidence, data, and logic. They are informed by a set of tightly woven ideas that are impervious to reason.

To be fair, there are conspiratorial kooks on the right who claim bogeymen are trying to undermine America. However, they are mostly without effect, owing to their notorious stupidity. But those on the left, especially those who write books which appear to be well sourced, are not so easily identified. That’s why they are a much bigger menace.

Historian Arthur Schlesinger, Sr. once said that anti-Catholicism is the nation’s “last acceptable prejudice.” Gareth Gore’s book is the latest proof that he was right.