

WASHINGTON STATE WEIGHS ATTACK ON CONFESSIONAL

[Bill Donohue](#)

The state of Washington is considering a House and Senate bill that would bust the seal of the confessional, without doing anything to check the sexual abuse of minors.

To read my letter, click [here](#).

TRUMP NAMES TASK FORCE ON ANTI-CHRISTIAN BIAS

[Bill Donohue](#)

President Donald Trump announced today that he is forming a new Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty. To accomplish this goal, he appointed Attorney General Pam Bondi to chair a task force to “eradicate anti-Christian bias.”

“The mission of this task force will be to immediately halt all forms of anti-Christian targeting and discrimination within the federal government,” Trump said. He specifically cited the Department of Justice, the FBI and the IRS, but he also said the probe will extend to other agencies.

More than any other organization in the nation, the Catholic League has documented anti-Christian prejudice and discrimination. To cite one example, we have a very detailed list of abuses that took place under the Biden administration. We will be happy to share our work with Attorney General Pam

Bondi.

The scourge of Christian bashing, which Catholics, in particular, have had to endure is astounding. While some Republicans have contributed to this plague, the overwhelming attacks on Christians have come from members of the Democratic Party. We have the evidence and we will make sure the Trump administration has it as well.

BUTTIGIEG FLEES WORLD OF THEY/THEM/THEIRS

[Bill Donohue](#)

Pete Buttigieg, the former Secretary of Transportation, is known in LGBTQ circles as the self-described “Pronoun Warrior.” But now the homosexual politician has removed the “He/Him” pronouns from his social media account. This has gravely upset those who still live in the world of “They/Them/Theirs.” They have every right to be angry. What he has done is traitorous.

What broke? Buttigieg wants to be either the next governor or senator of Michigan. He is a native of Indiana but there is no future for the failed mayor of South Bend there, so he laid anchor in Traverse City, Michigan in 2022. Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer is term limited, and cannot run again in 2026. Senator Gary Peters has said he will not run again in 2026. So Buttigieg sees a few openings.

He could, of course, run for office by not abandoning his “Pronoun Warrior” reputation. But he is well aware that millions of Americans are turned off by this stunt. He also

knows that Trump has tapped into this angst with great effect, constantly reminding voters that the Democrats are the "They/Them/Theirs" Party.

A recent *New York Times*/Ipsos poll provides further evidence that transgender politics is running out of steam. When respondents were asked what issues matter most to them, they said immigration, the economy and healthcare. When asked what matters most to Democrats, they answered abortion, LGBTQ issues and climate change. In other words, the Democrats are wildly out of touch with the average American.

Buttigieg knows this which is why he is downplaying his radical LGBTQ stance. But he can't run from the past. For example, he still insists he is married to a man. That, however, is a legal fiction: his "marriage" may be recognized by the positive law, but it is not recognized by the natural law. To wit: a man can have a wife but he is denied by nature, and nature's God, from having a husband. Similarly, two men cannot have a baby, though they may acquire a baby born as a result of a normal heterosexual union.

Just three years ago, CNN host Fareed Zakaria was blasted by left-wing pundits and activists for saying the Democratic Party is too obsessed with "pronouns." The year before, Chasten Buttigieg, who still insists he is married to the former "Pronoun Warrior," got ripping mad at those who refuse to respect the fabricated pronouns favored by the LGBTQ crowd. He went so far as to say that for these people, using the "wrong" pronouns can do great damage.

LGBTQ activists concur. The website gaythrive says "Misgendering someone (using incorrect pronouns) can cause distress and perpetuate feelings of exclusion." It also says that "disrespecting someone's pronouns can have profound emotional impacts."

This raises the question: Now that Pete Buttigieg is running

away from his “Pronoun Warrior” legacy, will he be so insensitive as to disrespect those who prefer to be identified as “They/Them/Theirs”? What about those who go by “Ze/Zir/Zirs,” or “Xe/Xem/Xir”? Both sets of pronouns are liked by those who don’t identify as either male or female. We also need to hear from his partner Chasten about this.

There is a sizable Muslim population in Michigan, and they are not exactly big fans of this insanity. Good luck trying to win their vote. Unlike many Christians, Muslims are not inclined to normalize abnormalities.

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS ADVISES CHURCH ON SCANDAL

[Bill Donohue](#)

In violation of a court order, someone leaked some 300 email exchanges between the New Orleans Saints and the Archdiocese of New Orleans that show how the football team provided public relations advice to the archdiocese on cases of priestly sexual abuse. The emails were given to the Associated Press, the *New York Times* and the *Guardian*; other media outlets now have them as well.

This is a story that is largely contrived. No charges of illegal behavior have been made by anyone against any party to this story. Moreover, it is hardly breaking news that elites in one sector of society offer advice to elites in another sector of society. So what gives?

Mark Florio of NBC Sports aptly notes that “it appears that the violation [of the court order] was conducted to create

maximum embarrassment for the Saints. Strategically, it's smart. The Saints are hosting the Super Bowl on Sunday. The Monday morning of Super Bowl week traditionally becomes a perfect spot to drop a nugget that will get attention, since it's usually slow. Until, of course, the [NFL] Commissioner commences his annual Super Bowl press conference."

Commissioner Roger Goodell has already downplayed this "story."

It is well known in New Orleans that its owner, Gayle Benson, is a devout Catholic who is on good terms with New Orleans Archbishop Gregory Aymond. Indeed, it was Aymond who introduced Benson to her husband; he has since passed away. So it is to be expected that friends would do what friends do, and offer advice on how to handle a problem.

What prompted the email exchange was a news story in 2018 about a deacon and schoolteacher who had been accused of sexual abuse and was removed from ministry in 1988, yet was still involved at a New Orleans church. When Aymond found out he said he was "utterly surprised and embarrassed." It was then that Greg Bensele offered to provide "crisis communications" to the archdiocese; he is the Saints senior vice president of communications. Subsequently, a 2020 lawsuit revealed that the football team offered public relations advice to the archdiocese.

Most of the accusations are about offenses that took place decades ago. We know from the most authoritative sources that the overwhelming number of cases took place between the mid-1960s and the mid-1980s, and that the offenders are either dead or have been kicked out of the priesthood. There are almost no cases of abuse taking place today, whether it be in New Orleans or anywhere else.

It should also be noted that the Associated Press is wrong to report that the offending priests were pedophiles. They were

not. Over 8-in-10 were homosexuals, men who had sex with postpubescent males. Only 3.8 percent were pedophiles. The data from researchers at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice are conclusive.

The one outstanding question in this instance is whether some names of the accused that were released by the Archdiocese of New Orleans in 2018 were removed from the list. The *New York Times* says "it is not clear if names were actually removed from the list." James Gulotta, a lawyer for the Saints, says no Saints employee was involved in creating the list.

The big media have no business feeling emboldened about this story. Their record of covering up sexual abuse crimes has been well detailed (see my book, [*The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse: Clarifying the Facts and the Causes*](#)). Take the *New York Times*.

In 2017, when four female journalists accused *Times* reporter Glenn Thrush of sexual misconduct, there was no independent investigation; the probe was done in-house. Dean Baquet, the executive editor of the paper, decided his behavior did not deserve termination. Instead, Thrush was allowed to undergo counseling. He still writes for the *Times*.

Yet when the Catholic Church does not act with dispatch, the editorial board slams them.

The same year that accusations were made against Thrush, three women accused Michael Oreskes of sexual harassment. Two of the alleged incidents occurred in the 1990s, when Oreskes was the Washington, D.C. bureau chief. At the time, Jill Abramson, who would later become the executive editor for the *Times*, was deputy to Oreskes. She admitted that she knew of his alleged offenses but did nothing to stop them.

Wouldn't it be interesting if the mainstream media did a story on how deeply involved local and state public officials are in working with public school officials in handling cases of

sexual abuse in the schools? It is well known that the teachers unions generously grease the Democrats.

So if the “story” on the Saints and the New Orleans archdiocese merited the front page in the *New York Times*, below the fold, a story of this kind surely deserves an above the fold spot, if not a spread.

We don’t have to wait and see—it will never happen.

VANCE IS RIGHT ABOUT CHRISTIAN LOVE

[Bill Donohue](#)

J.D. Vance makes a commonsensical comment about a Christian notion of love and immediately he is subjected to condemnation. Here is what he said that has “progressives” so upset.

“There’s this old school—and I think it’s a very Christian concept, by the way—that you love your family and then you love your neighbor and then you love your community and then you love your fellow citizens and your own country, and then after that you can focus and prioritize the rest of the world.”

He also said, “A lot of the far left has completely inverted that. They seem to hate the citizens of their own country and care more about people outside their own borders. That is no way to run a society.”

As we shall see, Vance was right about what he said about Christian love. Regarding his quip about the far left hating

America, it does not need to be defended—it is axiomatic. Indeed, it is one of their most defining characteristics.

Father James Martin was one of Vance's more prominent critics. He said Vance's comment about love "misses the point of Jesus' Parable of the Good Samaritan." But it is Martin who has missed Vance's point: he never mentioned Jesus or the Good Samaritan. As he made clear when asked about his critics, Vance defended himself by referencing *ordo amoris*, or ordered love.

Vance was not taking issue with the biblical injunction to "love thy neighbor as thy self." This obligation is found in the Old Testament (Leviticus 19:18), as well as in the New Testament (Mark 12: 28-34). He understands that our "neighbor" means everyone. He is simply offering a practical understanding of the locus of love: it should *begin* with our family, and then extend outwards.

The idea of "ordered love" is indeed a Christian conception of love. It was given to us by Saint Augustine. "*Virtus est ordo amoris*," he wrote, which means virtue is the order of love, or love set in proper order. Vance is also right to say that this is an "old school" observation. In the First Letter to Timothy (5:8), it is written that "whoever does not provide for relatives and especially family members has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."

Vance said that "the idea that there isn't a hierarchy of obligations violates basic common sense. Does [anyone] really think his moral duties to his own children are the same as his duties to a stranger who lives thousands of miles away? Does anyone?"

Practically speaking, we are limited in the number of people we can be friends with, never mind love.

Anthropologist Robin Dunbar has done the most extensive work on this subject; his research includes hunting and gathering

societies. He found that humans are capable of having 15 good friends, 50 friends, 150 meaningful contacts, 500 acquaintances and 1500 people that we can recognize. Therefore, loving thy neighbor is a tall order, one most likely to be achieved by loving our family members, and then embracing those outside our family unit.

Vance's remark about the "far left" caring more about people they don't know than their fellow Americans is incontestable. The champions of humanitarianism as identified by the "far left" are Rousseau and Marx.

Rousseau had five illegitimate children, refused to even give them a name, never mind support them. Marx impregnated his maid and made his colleague, Engels, assume paternity of his son, Freddy. But both of them proclaimed great love for mankind.

Rousseau and Marx set the table for left-wing Americans: they are the least generous persons in the nation, as measured by charitable giving and volunteering. The most generous are practicing people of faith. It's not hard to figure out. The former believe it is the job of government to help the poor, not individuals. Religious Americans see it as their job.

Mother Teresa understood what Vance was saying; she also knew that people like Rousseau, Marx and their ilk were phonies. "It is easy to love those who live far away," she said. "It is not always easy to love those who live right next to us."

It may be that the reaction against Vance has less to do with what he said than it does with who he is: he is a young convert to Catholicism, a conservative, and Vice President of the United States. Ergo, Christians on the left have their antennas in the stratosphere looking for anything he says that they can pounce on. They are off to a lousy start.

THE POLITICS OF THE “NAZI SALUTE”

Bill Donohue

At an Inaugural rally on January 20, Elon Musk raised his hand in a celebratory moment to salute the crowd. He was instantly accused of making the “Nazi salute.” Now he has been outdone by what happened to Calvin John Robinson. He has been fired for making the same gesture.

Who is this man? Until yesterday the 39-year-old black man was a priest in the Anglican Catholic Church (ACC) in the UK. But he had his license revoked and is no longer a member of the ACC. His crime? On January 25, he waved to the crowd at the National Pro-Life Summit in Washington, D.C. But his bosses weren’t convinced he was waving. They said that “many have interpreted [it] as a pro-Nazi salute.”

The ACC did not say who these people are who can identify a fascist by the way he waves his hand. Nor did they provide an estimate of how many believed he was making a Nazi salute. Maybe if they took the time to ask the pro-life crowd what they thought, they might have learned that his hand waving was seen as nothing more than a friendly gesture.

The ACC’s official statement on this incident is revealing. “While we cannot say what was in Mr. Robinson’s heart when he did this, his action appears to have been an attempt to curry favor with certain elements of the American political right by provoking opposition.”

This is simply dishonest. They could have learned what was in his heart—all they had to do was talk to him. But they chose

not to. So they speculated, attributing to him the most scurrilous interpretation.

Let's face it. Father Robinson's crime was being heralded by a crowd of American conservatives. That's why they gave him the boot.

Robinson is self-described Evangelical Catholic who is proud to be a conservative. He is not only pro-life, he opposes gay marriage, the ordination of women, critical race theory and Black Lives Matter. In left-wing circles, that's enough to label him a fascist. No hand waving is needed.

What is the difference between a friendly hand-waving gesture and a "Nazi salute"? Consider the pictures below.

Why are Musk and Robinson giving the "Nazi salute," but Barack, Elizabeth Warren, Hillary and Kamala are not? Snopes, the left-wing "fact checkers," has an answer. On January 25, they titled their article, "No, These Politicians Did Not Make the Same Gesture as Elon Musk."

Snopes is careful not to say that Musk was definitely giving the "Nazi salute," but it implies that he was. By contrast, it is cock-sure that the four American liberals are innocent.

Speaking of the latter, Snopes says those "images were taken out of context from speeches in which each politician was making an unrelated gesture, including waving or raising their [sic] hand to make a point. Their language, demeanor and the wider context of the video shows the gestures cannot be interpreted as Nazi salutes."

Why is Musk not accorded the same assessment? Weren't photos of his hand taken out of context? Why were the four liberals waving to the crowd but he wasn't? What language did he use that was Nazi-like? What was Nazi-like about his demeanor? For that matter, what exactly does Nazi "demeanor" look like?

Those who don't like Obama, Warren, Hillary and Kamala invariably refrain from calling them Nazis. But many of those who don't like Musk can't resist branding him a Nazi. And now there is a new "Nazi" on the block, Calvin John Robinson.

It's one thing to disagree with your adversaries; it's quite another to demonize them.



CHRISTMAS BATTLE ENSUES; WE PREVAIL

In recent years the Christmas wars have subsided, though each year there are some ugly incidents. This year we got involved in what could have been a legal showdown, but ended mostly on

our terms.

On December 12, we were contacted by a Catholic League member who sought to have a nativity scene displayed in the lobby of his cooperative building in Larchmont, New York, a town in Westchester.

The lobby had a Christmas tree and a menorah. His request was denied. When he was told that the nativity scene was a religious symbol and could not be displayed, he pointed out that the menorah was also a religious symbol. He was told they didn't see it that way.

That same day, Bill Donohue wrote a letter to the Property Manager, sending a copy to the president of the board of directors and a Catholic League attorney (see p. 4). The letter was sent priority mail, UPS, and was delivered by 10:00 a.m. on December 13.

They were given until December 17 to answer. We heard from their lawyers that day. The board of directors of the Coop decided to pull the Christmas tree and the menorah from the lobby, thus making the charge of religious discrimination moot.

There are three ways they could have ruled on this issue: allow the nativity scene; pull the menorah; or keep the menorah and prohibit the nativity scene. The first two options are declarations of neutrality, treating the Christian and the Jewish symbols equally. The latter would have triggered a lawsuit.

We hasten to add that the two neutral decisions are not morally equal. To allow both religious symbols would be an expression of tolerance. To deny both is an expression of intolerance. They chose the intolerant route.

They would rather deny Jews their rights before extending equal rights to Christians. Telling.

Atheist organizations and Satanic groups were busy in other parts of the country.

Atheists in Rhode Island tried to compete with a traditional Christmas display by featuring an array of silly secular symbols in the state capitol. A pagan ministry sought to march in a Christmas parade in Parkersburg, West Virginia, backed by an atheist group.

Satanists in Iowa hosted the “Satanic Holiday Joy at the Iowa State Capitol,” and another band of Satanists installed a demonic idol in the plaza across from the New Hampshire state house in Concord.

These people are full of hate, which is the opposite of what Christmas is—a demonstration of love.

We were happy to have played a role in sending these folks a message—Christians will not shy from defending themselves.

ABBOTT DID IT

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott’s decision in March of 2021 to launch Operation Lone Star—bussing migrants from Texas to cities across the nation—turned out to be one of the most consequential issues affecting the 2024 presidential election. What he did was to turn a regional issue into a national one. That was a stroke of sociological genius.

Washington D.C. and New York City were targeted in the first wave, with bus after bus arriving in Union Station and Port Authority, respectively. Chicago and points west were next up.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis also played a vital role. His decision to fly migrants to Martha’s Vineyard—home to wealthy

supporters of President Biden's open border policy—hit a chord: The illegal aliens were moved out of the liberal paradise with dispatch.

Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey got into the act, bussing migrants to the nation's Capitol. All participants signed a waiver that their free trip was voluntary.

If these governors had not acted, there would have been little sympathy in most parts of the country for their plight. After all, the citizens in most states were never threatened by those who crashed our borders, so they had no reason to take this issue as seriously as those who were impacted.

Gov. Abbott did what he had to do—he had to shock the conscience of the nation. He sent a message to his critics: everyone needs to have some skin in the game.

WE ARE WITNESSING A CULTURAL SHIFT

William A. Donohue

Cultures change, sometimes slowly, sometimes quickly. The changes are sometimes positive, sometimes negative, sometimes a little of both. The reasons why they change are multiple. In short, there is no such thing as a cultural template or a cultural iron law. They vary. That said, it appears we are in the throes of a cultural shift.

In the last century, we had two world wars and both brought about dramatic changes in the culture. After the Great War (as the first one was initially called), western nations witnessed

relaxed social mores. The cabaret society was popular on both sides of the Atlantic: nightlife and entertainment, much of it risqué, brought relief after the war. Prohibition in the U.S. was resisted in urban centers, and was eventually repealed.

World War II saw a massive influx of women into government and private sector jobs. Racial integration of the armed forces proved to be a bellwether of things to come. From the mid-1940s to the mid-1960s, American society was marked by stability: there was virtually no inflation, marriages were strong and church-going was commonplace.

From the late 1960s to the early 1980s, the counterculture challenged traditional norms throughout society. Standards fell in school, boardrooms and bedrooms. The feminist movement, fueled by anger, was more revolutionary than reformist. Sexually transmitted diseases and drug use spiked. In short, promiscuity subverted the stability of the 1950s.

Two things happened in 1981 that represented a cultural shift: Ronald Reagan became president and AIDS was discovered. He was a voice of traditional morality and AIDS put a brake on sexual experimentation. A modicum of stability reigned.

The next shift occurred in the latter part of the 2000s. The Obama administration signaled a departure from the kinds of religion-friendly policies that marked previous administrations. Identity politics became all the rage. The Biden administration took this to another level, beginning with the selection of Kamala Harris as vice president.

The Biden-Harris team launched a massive attack on boundaries: inflation and the national debt soared; immigrants by the millions crashed our borders; crime exploded; the ruling class embraced gender ideology; and attacks on religion reached a new level.

The Trump landslide represents another cultural shift. He won not simply because the domestic and foreign policies of Biden-

Harris were a proven failure. He won because the ruling class didn't settle for giving the cultural pendulum a gentle push—they gave it a wild swing.

Woke culture—the idea that traditional moral norms and values are inherently offensive—has created havoc in school, the workplace and in families. No social order can survive if its culture is under constant assault, and it is this reality that accounted for Trump's stunning victory. The American people threw down the gauntlet, seeking a return to normalcy.

After the election, the *New York Times* interviewed many Trump voters. One stuck out in my mind. A 52-year-old woman said she had never voted for a Republican before, but this time she did. She cited one major factor: her son isn't learning anything in school, and that is because his class is heavily populated with the children of illegal aliens who can't speak a lick of English. This was a direct consequence, she noted, of the Biden-Harris policies.

The signs of a cultural shift are everywhere. Identity politics is being challenged in corporations and universities: both are pulling back on DEI standards (diversity, equity and inclusion). Mayors that allowed thugs to destroy their cities—in the name of protesting racial injustice—are cracking down. Schools that abandoned standards are reinstituting them. Voters who approved resolutions to legalize hard drugs have rescinded them. The pushback against gender ideology is real and will continue. And our border will soon be secure again.

It's too bad it took pushing our culture to a crisis level before those who promoted these policies got a good slap in the face. Every policy that worked to undermine traditional mores was bound to fail. Even the village idiot knew that defunding the police would only generate more crime. The shame of it is that the village idiot proved to be smarter than those who unnecessarily created this mess—the mostly wealthy white secularists with post-graduate degrees.

This is a good time for the clergy and the laity to exercise their religious muscles and become reengaged in society. The culture is ripe for a return to commonsensical policies, the kind that imbue Catholic moral theology and social teachings. We don't need more imbecilic experimentations: we know what works and what doesn't.

This cultural shift will not proceed without resistance. Those responsible for sabotaging our society—and that is exactly what they did—occupy many important seats of power, and they will not go quietly into the night.

That's where we come in. No administration can effectively transform society without significant help from non-governmental sources. Our number-one goal is to defend and promote religious liberty, but to do this we must take on those who seek to undermine it. We're ready to roll.

YEAR IN REVIEW 2024

Michael P. McDonald

2024 will go down in American history as a pivotal year. The people standing for tradition, reason, and faith fought to reclaim their country, and the Catholic League was right there in the thick of it.

By far, the biggest story of 2024 was the presidential election, and as history unfolded, we tirelessly worked to educate Catholics on the critical issues at stake.

To this end, we published a report on the religious liberty policies of Donald Trump and the Biden-Harris administration. We noted how Trump was pro-religious liberty and never

supported groups hostile to Catholics. We could not say the same for Biden-Harris and found their record sorely lacking. Our comprehensive report did more to educate Catholics on this subject than any other document put out by other organizations.

We additionally pointed out Harris' outright hostility to Catholics on several occasions. She stiffed Catholics this year by refusing to go to the Al Smith Dinner. While serving in the Senate, she was openly hostile to judicial nominees who were faithful Catholics. As California Attorney General, she crippled pregnancy resource centers and targeted pro-life activists.

While Harris had problems with Catholics that upheld the teachings of the Church, in her corner was a whole slew of Catholic dissidents. We called out these rogues.

Ultimately, Trump decisively won the election, in large part thanks to him carrying approximately 58 percent of Catholics. Moving forward, the work will turn toward ensuring that the safeguards for religious liberty are as robust as they can be. To that end, Bill Donohue urged Supreme Court Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito to resign early in the new Trump administration so they can be replaced by younger justices who will protect the court's religion friendly majority for years to come. Bill also raised concerns over Robert F. Kennedy's departures from Catholic teachings and the prudence of appointing him as Secretary for Health and Human Services.

While Trump's victory represents a return to tradition and commonsense, the opposition went down swinging. In 2024, we saw a concentrated effort from the federal and state governments targeting Catholics and other people of faith.

We called out the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network after the Federal agency flagged "the purchasing of books (including

religious texts)” as a sign of extremism. We also went after the Department of Justice (DOJ) for using the FACE Act to punish peaceful pro-life activists while giving a pass to violent pro-abortion radicals.

The FBI continued to stall in revealing the truth behind its probe of Catholics from 2023. Even after DOJ Inspector General Michael Horowitz released a report on the matter, several critical questions remained. For now, it appears that our doggedness to uncover the whole truth has at least curtailed the worst of it. Hopefully, the new administration can definitively put this issue to rest.

Another area we battled with the FBI was the release of Audrey Hale’s manifesto. In 2023, Hale, a woman who falsely believed she was a man, attacked the Christian Covenant School in Nashville, killing six people including three children. For over a year, the FBI withheld the manifesto from the public. Normally, such documents are released right away. We hounded them to disseminate the manifesto.

When it was finally released, it was clear why the FBI kept it hidden for so long. The manifesto showed that Hale was a very sick person, and her woes were further compounded by identifying as transgender.

We also pushed back on the Department of Homeland Security after it came to light that an internal advisory board recommended flagging those who served in the military, are religious, and support Trump as potential extremists and domestic terrorists.

We proved Biden’s White House and the media were wrong to insist the ban on religious symbols at the annual “egg roll” party was in line with previous administrations. We found evidence to the contrary highlighting their deception.

Another disturbing trend was how the Biden administration used Orwellian language to influence public thought and sideline

traditional Catholic values. We issued a report examining this.

On the state level, perhaps the greatest display of anti-Catholicism came from Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer. While wearing a "Harris Walz" hat, Whitmer mocked the Eucharist by placing a Dorito on the tongue of a kneeling Liz Plank, a podcaster. We led the charge against Whitmer, alerting all Catholic parishes in Michigan of her horrendous act. We created such a media firestorm that she was compelled to put out a statement.

In the statement, Whitmer tried to say she was not mocking the Eucharist. Instead, she was championing the CHIP Act also insisting that no one was kneeling. Of course, this was a flimsy excuse and photographic evidence quickly proved she was lying. We did not fall for it and jumped back into the fray to confront her dishonesty.

We also called out a dangerous ballot initiative in New York that would trample parental rights and religious liberty. We mobilized Catholics across the state to vote no on Proposition 1. Bill wrote an excellent booklet highlighting the adverse impact the initiative would have, and we sent the booklet to important stakeholders in the Empire State. Unfortunately, New York is too far gone, and Proposition 1 passed.

Joining the government in targeting Catholics came a large swath of characters from all walks of life.

Twice in 2024, anti-Catholic activists defiled St. Patrick's Cathedral. In the first instance, LGBT radicals hijacked the cathedral to stage a funeral mocking Catholic traditions for a man who falsely claimed to be a woman. Then again, during the Easter Vigil Mass, protesters invaded the cathedral screaming "Free Palestine" and holding a banner that read "SILENCE = DEATH." In both instances, we called out the crashers and the media, which either ignored the story or tried to frame the

radicals as the victims.

After Harrison Butker, the kicker for the Kansas City Chiefs, spoke in defense of traditional Catholic values at Benedictine College, he was criticized by the NFL and slammed on social media. We happily came to Butker's defense with greater effect than any other Catholic organization.

The Olympics' opening ceremony featured a skit mocking the Last Supper starring transgenders. We wasted no time in contacting International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach and other officials around the world, targeting the Olympics' sponsors, and calling out those telling us it was not intended as an insult to Catholics.

Additionally, we called out the NBA for its selective interest in "human rights." While the league claims to promote social justice in America, it partners with China, one of the worst persecutors of Christians.

We also confronted the Freedom from Religion Foundation (FFRF) after they tried to intimidate us. The atheists complained to the IRS that we "engaged in unlawful political campaigning." We were undeterred, because we did nothing wrong, and promised to continue to publicly hammer anti-Catholic bigots.

Meanwhile, a coordinated effort by Christian bashers attempted to discredit Trump nominees Pete Hegseth and Mike Huckabee. We exposed the bigots targeting these men for their faith.

All of these attacks were not just acts of random bigotry. The secular left needs to weaken the power of the Church and the resolve of individual Catholics to advance their agenda, particularly on the issues of abortion and transgenderism.

In 2024, the media covered for the pro-abortion extremists in the Democratic Party. Repeatedly, we were told there was no such thing as late-term abortions by the "fact checkers" and the talking heads.

Even during the presidential debate between Trump and Harris, and again during the vice presidential debate between JD Vance and Tim Walz, who as governor of Minnesota signed a law which repealed protections for infants born alive following a botched abortion, the pundits lied saying that late term abortions are “misinformation” and babies born alive receive lifesaving care following an abortion.

The worst was the *New York Times*, which omitted the relevant portion of the sentence that proved Walz repealed safeguards for newborn babies.

We routinely pointed out the truth to correct these false narratives.

There was also a lot of action on transgenderism. The secularists went on a tear trying to advance this cause. Across the country parents and religious people saw their rights eroded so that men and women can pretend to be the opposite sex. In several instances, parents lost custody of their children or children were permitted to “transition” without parental consent. Additionally, faithful Catholics and Christians were denied the opportunity to provide loving homes to children in need.

Fortunately, we may have reached a tipping point on this issue. Across Europe, many nations have pulled back on their support for transgenderism. Closer to home polls throughout the year showed people rejecting this anti-scientific ideology.

We struck while the iron was hot with an ad blitz at both the Republican and Democratic conventions calling on both parties to commit to protecting children from this insanity. We also showed our support for those who realized they were hoodwinked by transgenderism and have decided to “detransition.” Look for more of these people in the year to come.

We also fought back on several other key issues and scored

critical victories in the process.

We exposed the myth of “Christian nationalist” violence comprehensively showing that the “violence” often cited has almost nothing to do with Christianity. It is just a fraudulent attempt to silence Catholics.

We set the record straight after the *Washington Post* published a report on abuse at Catholic-run Indian boarding schools in the United States. We thoroughly tore apart the erroneous conclusions.

When the media was totally silent about a report by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops noting the almost complete eradication of clergy sexual abuse, we highlighted this good news.

Bill also released his new book *Cultural Meltdown: The Secular Roots of Our Moral Crisis*, and our documentary “Walt’s Disenchanted Kingdom” won its ninth award.

We continued displaying our life-sized nativity scene in Central Park. Additionally, we arranged for a billboard this year in Madison, Wisconsin, home to FFRF. Our ad took aim at them for their mockery of Christmas with their Winter Solstice exhibit. We also defended a Catholic League member who wanted to display a Nativity alongside a menorah but was denied. The building decided to do the equal but intolerant thing and removed all displays. Meanwhile, around the country, atheist and satanic groups tried to dilute Christmas, but we pushed back.

We achieved great things this year, but it is only the beginning. It will take time to utterly route the secularists that maligned and marginalized Catholics in the last few years. The cultural forces that engendered these attacks remain potent and will attempt to corrode our values in the future. The culture war cannot be won in a single election cycle. It takes years of dedicated effort. The forecast for

2025 looks brighter. However, there is still work to be done, and the Catholic League will be there to see it through.

Michael McDonald is the Catholic League's Communications Director.