

DON'T FORGET SPLC'S ANTI-CATHOLIC LEGACY

[Bill Donohue](#)

Racism is a curse, and it is therefore understandable that news stories about the corrupt Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) are focused on its funding of the Ku Klux Klan. What is frequently overlooked is its record of targeting Christians, especially Catholics.

Todd Blanche, the acting attorney general, nailed it when he said SPLC was guilty of “manufacturing racism to justify its existence.” That’s akin to firefighters setting fire to a row of houses so they can put it out, and then demanding an increase in salary and benefits. SPLC has also invented anti-Catholicism to serve its political agenda.

Eleven charges have been brought against SPLC by a federal grand jury, including six counts of wire fraud, four counts of bank fraud and one count of money laundering. It paid at least \$3 million to eight individuals, including those linked to the Klan and neo-Nazi groups. While there is no evidence that it paid anti-Catholics, it is undeniably true that it worked to promote anti-Catholicism.

SPLC has long attacked those who stand for traditional moral values. It has a “hate map” on its website that details those groups it labels as “hate groups.” Besides naming a handful of small wacky right-wing groups, it includes reputable conservative organizations such as Alliance Defending Freedom, Family Research Council and Moms for Liberty. None of these are hate-mongers. The real hate-mongers are those like SPLC who smear responsible entities.

Guess who SPLC denies are “hate groups”? Antifa and Black Lives Matter. Antifa is a loosely knit bunch of urban

terrorists, and Black Lives Matter is a racist bunch of thugs. But not to SPLC. "Designating Antifa as Domestic Terrorist Organization Is Dangerous," and "Black Lives Matter Is Not a Hate Group." The violence these two groups have engaged in is well documented. By contrast, the conservative organizations it cites as "hate groups" have never threatened, harmed or killed anyone.

SPLC does not list the Catholic League as a "hate group," per se, but it has several listings of us. To take one example, we defended President Trump's banning of trans persons from the military. It was horrified when I said, "Kudos to Trump for banning men and women who switch their genitals from the military. The armed forces are not a lab for sexual engineers."

It is telling that it blames me for promoting hatred because I have objected to publicly funded artistic displays that show large ants crawling all over Jesus on the Cross. I am the problem for objecting, not the bigots who defile Christ. And so on.

It also got bent out of shape when I commented on an animal shelter that resisted a dog owner's request that his pet be euthanized because the owner thought the animal was homosexual. To which I said, "Being gay is not only a bonus for humans these days, it is a definite plus for dogs as well." Normal people laugh; abnormal people go berserk.

On a more serious note, SPLC has a history of objecting to bigots who hate Jews and blacks, but it has nothing to say when learning that the same person is also anti-Catholic. That does not offend them.

The granddaddy of them all is when it advised the Biden Justice Department how to sabotage Catholicism.

The FBI, under Biden, conducted a spy operation on traditional Catholics. It did not monitor dissident Catholics who are pro-

abortion. No, it only went after those who were—in its own words—“pro life,” “pro-family,” and who “support the biological basis for sex and gender distinction.” They were literally called “domestic terrorists.”

Guess who the Biden FBI leaned on for advice? SPLC. To be sure, there were some FBI agents who warned against using SPLC as a reliable source, but they were overruled. The FBI-SPLC connection was aimed at spying on traditional Catholics so they could smear their reputation and thereby undermine their efforts. Just as SPLC “manufactured racism to justify its existence,” it manufactured anti-Catholicism to justify its existence.

A more despicable organization would be hard to find. It was morally bankrupt from the beginning.

SPLC was founded by Morris Dees. He was fired in 2019. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, some two dozen employees sent a letter to the board of directors before the news broke of Dees’ firing. They said that “internal ‘allegations of mistreatment, sexual harassment, gender discrimination, and racism threaten the moral authority of this organization and our integrity along with it.’”

Perversely, Dees championed himself as the enemy of white supremacy, yet his own people said he was a racist. But now we know he was not alone in hating blacks. To wit: SPLC likes to grease the Klan.

Similarly, Dees was not the only one responsible for eviscerating the integrity of SPLC. He had nothing to do with declaring war on Catholics. That was left to his successors.

SPLC is positive proof that “The fish stinks from the head down.” Lock ‘em up!

RELIGIOUS PROFILING IN R.I.; PRIESTS TARGETED

Rhode Island is the latest state to demonstrate its selective interest in combating the sexual abuse of minors. It is *only* interested in probing the Catholic clergy, having zero interest in probing the clergy in every other religion. Furthermore, it has no interest in investigating the on-going crisis in the public schools.

When blacks are subjected to disproportionate stops by the police, it is called racial profiling. What Rhode Island is doing to priests is religious profiling. Yet the media are silent about this egregious injustice. They wouldn't be silent if the Attorney General, Peter Neronha, investigated sexual harassment on the job, selecting *only* reporters to probe.

Neronha's report, released on March 4, covers cases of alleged abuse dating back to 1950. It found that 75 accused members of the clergy (66 of whom were priests) were responsible for victimizing 300 minors.

Guess what else Neronha found? What every other investigation has found: 83 percent of the victims were male, and 74 percent of them were postpubescent. This means that homosexuals did most of the damage. Get it straight: When adult males have sex with postpubescent males, it's called homosexuality, not pedophilia. But don't expect Neronha or the media to report on this fact. The cover-up continues.

When did this happen? As always, it was during the sexual revolution. It was in the 1960s and 1970s when the lion's share of the offenses took place.

The last time there was a known instance of the sexual abuse of minors by the Catholic clergy in Rhode Island was 15-years ago in 2011. When was the last time a minor was violated in their public schools? Last year, when a school bus monitor allegedly sexually abused three special needs students. One was in kindergarten.

Is Neronha going to tackle the public schools? He should. Major studies on Rhode Island's public schools reveal that it is consistently ranked among the worst in the nation in dealing with the sexual abuse of minors.

The AG's report reads as though the sexual abuse scandal is ongoing in the Catholic Church and that Neronha's office did yeoman work in uncovering it. Wrong on both counts. We are talking about old cases where the bad guys are either dead or have been kicked out of ministry. *Not one of the 75 members of the clergy mentioned in the report is in active ministry.* Moreover, it was the Diocese of Providence that did most of the data gathering, without which Neronha could not have issued his report.

We blanketed the Rhode Island media and lawmakers about this injustice. We also contacted approximately 140 parishes in the state.

LOU HOLTZ R.I.P.

University of Notre Dame icon Lou Holtz died on March 4 at the age of 89. He led the football team to an undefeated season in 1988, winning the national championship. But to those who knew him, he was also a model of what a Catholic gentleman should be.

Noted Notre Dame historian Fr. Bill Miscamble said Holtz “loved the Blessed Mother and, as he deemed it, *her* school. The football program was not ancillary to Notre Dame’s Catholic mission but integrated into it.”

He is right. Holtz told his players that “I firmly believe that Our Lady on the Dome will watch out for you. Spend some time at the Grotto, and you’ll discover that this school is special.”

EWTN and Fox News star Raymond Arroyo said the day after Holtz died that “He will not only be missed by his family and friends, but by colleagues, players, the communities and those of us touched by his friendship and leadership.”

Bill Donohue met Holtz at a speaking engagement that they both participated in and came away admiring his positive outlook and deep faith. “This was a man on a mission, and no one was going to stop him.”

Holtz spent eleven years at Notre Dame and energized those around him to persevere in the face of adversity and always put their faith in God. There are very few like him today, which is why his legacy needs to be treasured.

NOTRE DAME’S PROBLEM IS NOT UNIQUE

The University of Notre Dame is not only one of America’s best institutions of higher education, it is also seen, for the most part, as an authentically Catholic institution.

That is why it was so disconcerting to read that a professor,

Susan Ostermann, was named director of the Liu Institute for Asia and Asian Studies. She is not someone who happens to be “pro-choice”—she is a pro-abortion zealot.

Any person who falsely claims that the pro-life movement has “its roots in white supremacy and racism,” and condemns crisis pregnancy centers as “anti-abortion propaganda sites,” belongs working at Planned Parenthood, not Notre Dame. Planned Parenthood, of course, was founded by a bona fide white supremacist, Margaret Sanger.

Ostermann didn’t get the job by mistake. She got it with the approval of the president, Fr. Robert Dowd, provost John McGreevy and the dean of the Keough School of Global Affairs, Mary Gallagher. Dowd claims he was “blindsided” by the appointment. That’s strange. Did he not know that his predecessor, Fr. John Jenkins, publicly rebuked Ostermann for championing the pro-abortion cause? Surely McGreevy and Gallagher must have known.

The good news is that the blowback was ferocious and ultimately forced Ostermann to go back to the classroom. Led by the brilliant historian, Fr. Bill Miscamble, and the courageous Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Kevin Rhoades, the case was made to reject her appointment. Some twenty bishops, including Archbishop Paul Coakley, president of the bishops’ conference, joined the fight, as did many students and alumni; those who have been given awards at Notre Dame also registered their objections. So it ended well. But problems remain, and Notre Dame is not unique among Catholic schools.

I taught at a nominally Catholic college for 16 years, and witnessed firsthand how uncommitted many administrators and faculty are to the teachings of the Catholic Church. In fact, some were openly hostile to Catholicism, and this included the nun who ran the school. But La Roche College in Pittsburgh (now a university) is not atypical.

Georgetown University, a premier Catholic institution, has two pro-abortion student clubs on campus. Moreover, student government officials have sought to punish students who accept the Church's teachings on marriage. It also employs a professor who justifies rape and slavery, provided the rapists and slavemasters are Muslim.

Thankfully, Notre Dame is not like Georgetown. But its central problem is still extant. There are two main reasons why a pro-abortion extremist came close to being promoted: one is ideological and the other is a matter of identity.

While it is oversimplified to say there are social justice Catholics and pro-life Catholics, there is more than a measure of truth to it. Catholic teachings on the poor, the needy, the rejected, and immigrants are seen as being in the liberal camp; those that stress abortion, euthanasia, marriage, the family and sexuality are seen as being in the conservative camp. Both are expressions of Catholicism.

It has become abundantly clear that social justice Catholics are soft on abortion. That's being kind. Quite frankly, many of them—indeed most—do not regard abortion as “intrinsically evil,” which is the way the Church defines it. They see it as unfortunate. The Church also says racism is “intrinsically evil.” On that they agree. In short, racism upsets them infinitely more than abortion.

Are there Catholics in the conservative camp who are soft on racism? No doubt there are, but in my experience there are far fewer of them than there are liberal Catholics who are soft on abortion.

The other problem is not ideological; it is matter of identity. Unfortunately, many Catholic professors and administrators are uneasy being identified as Catholic in higher education circles. To be exact, they have a deep-seated need to win the affirmation of secular elites. At bottom, they

are not comfortable in their Catholic skin.

They know the way secular elites look at Catholics of a more traditional stripe, and they are scared to death of being thrown in with them. In other words, their reluctance to defend conservative moral teachings—even when they don't disagree with them—is done to win the blessings of secular elites, in and out of education. That's how insecure they are about their Catholic identity.

Christian Smith, a Notre Dame sociologist, recently wrote an article in *First Things* explaining why he left the school. He says the Catholic identity problem is due to three things, one of which is a strong desire to secure “mainstream acceptance by ‘peer institutions’: Duke, Northwestern, Vanderbilt, Washington University in St. Louis, Emory, Rice, Stanford, NYU, and the like.” He says “Notre Dame desperately wants to belong to this club.” Regrettably, this leads many to low ball their Catholicism.

Notre Dame will be challenged again, and it will come from within. But as long as it has enough faculty, students and alumni who are vigilant—and there is no question about that—it will never lose its reputation as a truly great Catholic institution of higher learning.

NYC HOUSES OF WORSHIP NEED PROTECTION

Houses of worship need enhanced protection these days from anti-religious bigots. In recent times, virtually every major religion has had some of their houses of worship vandalized or invaded. Moreover, congregants have been subjected to taunts

and threats. At stake is the First Amendment right to freely practice our religion.

While this is a nation-wide problem, it is a pressing concern to New Yorkers. Jews, in particular, have been targeted more than any religious group. What happened last November was despicable. Two hundred protesters showed up outside Manhattan's Park East Synagogue holding vile anti-Jewish signs. They also yelled vicious comments at Jews going to synagogue, taunting them ferociously. This was totally unprovoked and totally indefensible.

Fortunately, the New York City Council elected a Speaker in January who is standing up against these bullies. Julie Menin is leading the fight against attacks on all houses of worship. Bill Donohue wrote to her expressing our support for her efforts, requesting we play an active role. She is being sent recent news releases we have written on this subject.

Included in this batch are statements Donohue has made about Mayor Zohran Mamdani. As you can see, his religious messaging is very troubling, and his penchant for hiring religious bigots is just as ominous. This does not bode well for the future, which is why the Catholic League supports Speaker Menin's call for legislation that would provide greater protection for houses of worship.

The First Amendment means nothing unless it is enforced. That means that those who seek to undermine religious liberty must be defeated. The Catholic League is delighted to join the fight.

February 27, 2026

Hon. Julie Menin
New York City Council Speaker
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Speaker Menin:

The leadership you have shown in combating anti-religious bigotry is commendable. As president of the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization, headquartered in New York City, I have not only fought anti-Catholicism, I have fought anti-Semitism, joining forces with Jewish allies on many occasions for over three decades.

Accordingly, I would like you to add the Catholic League to the list of organizations that support your efforts to protect houses of worship from being bullied, harassed and otherwise threatened. Freedom of speech is precious, but when it is invoked to inhibit another First Amendment right, namely the free exercise of religion, it is indefensible.

In particular, the attack on the Park East Synagogue last November was despicable, and I said so in print, on radio and on TV. Yet some New York City notables, such as Zohran Mamdani (before and after he won the mayoral race), have made light of it.

It would help if you could put us in touch with those on your staff with whom we can work. Thank you for your defense of religious liberty.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.

President

P.S. See enclosures

CHURCH INVASIONS ARE NOTHING NEW

The invasion of Cities Church in St. Paul, Minnesota rightly triggered a visceral response on the part of people across religious communities. These Nazi-like tactics have also taken place in Catholic churches and Jewish synagogues. If there is one Catholic church that is singled out for protest, it is St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City.

Here is a list of some of the famous invasions. We are not counting incidences committed by mentally disturbed people.

"Stop the Church" AIDS/abortion protest (December 10, 1989):

- During a Sunday Mass celebrated by Cardinal John O'Connor, members of the militant homosexual activist group ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power), and the Women's Health Action and Mobilization (WHAM!), infiltrated the cathedral as part of the "Stop the Church" demonstration. They disrupted the service by shouting slogans against the Church's opposition to abortion and sex education policies in public schools. They laid down in aisles, chained themselves to pews, and desecrated a consecrated Eucharist. Cardinal O'Connor was forced to abandon his sermon. Dozens of protestors were inside the church, and over 4,500 protesters demonstrated outside; over 100 were arrested.

Radio stunt (Aug. 15, 2002):

- "Shock jocks" Opie and Anthony encouraged listeners to have sex in risky places, and two of them had sex during the day in St. Patrick's Cathedral, on a holy day of obligation, in front of men, women and children. It was a staged event, arranged by the radio hosts: they had comedian Paul Mercurio inside the Cathedral so he could

give a graphic description of the stunt on his cell phone. The Catholic League contacted the FCC and Viacom, the media giant that owned the host station. In due course, the radio show was cancelled and the “shock jocks” were fired.

Animal-rights activists (March 27, 2016):

- Six animal rights activists from the group Collectively Free interrupted the noon Easter Sunday Mass during a moment of silence. They stood up and chanted “Easter is a time for love! No more shedding animal blood!” to protest animal exploitation and the consumption of Easter ham. One of the protesters was arrested.

George Floyd Protests (May 30, 2020):

- During the Black Lives Matter protests, protesters spray-painted the F-word, “BLM,” “NYPDCK” along with the phrase “no justice, no peace” on the facade of the Cathedral. One of the stairs was also spray-painted with George Floyd’s name. Two people were charged the following month for the crime.

New Year’s Protest (January 1, 2021):

- On New Year’s Day 2021, police officers responding to a protest on Fifth Avenue found the acronym “ACAB” tagged on the cathedral. Video from the scene shows protesters blocking two NYPD cruisers and banging on the hood of one, and shouting expletives at officers. No arrests were made.

Transgender Funeral (February 15, 2024):

- Cecilia Gentili was a man who falsely claimed to be a woman. He was also an illegal alien, a drug addict, a prostitute, a trans activist, and an atheist. At Gentili’s funeral service at St. Patrick’s Cathedral, transgender activists dressed as hookers, disrupted the

Mass by dancing in the aisles, sang “Ave Cecilia” when “Ave Maria” was sung, and shouted, “St. Cecilia, Mother of All Whores.” Cardinal Dolan ordered a Mass of Reparation be held as a response to this vile incident.

Gaza ceasefire protest (March 30, 2024):

- Three pro-Palestinian protesters affiliated with Extinction Rebellion interrupted the Easter Vigil Mass by standing front and center, unfurling a banner reading, “SILENCE = DEATH.” They shouted “Free Palestine” and demanded a ceasefire in Gaza. They were dragged out by security, and all three were arrested.

There have also been incredibly obscene incidents like the 1994 parade up Fifth Avenue marking the 25th Anniversary of the Stonewall riot. Men and women went naked in front of St. Patrick’s Cathedral, masturbated in the street, engaged in Satanic dances and extended their middle finger at the Cathedral.

Catholics who are angry about some issue do not act this way. But militant secularists have no respect for boundaries, do not believe in dialogue and are not averse to using violence to further their goals. They are a menace to society, and too many members of the ruling class refuse to condemn them.

PLAYING THE RELIGION CARD

It is true that we can never truly know what is in another person’s heart, but when a politician makes his religion a central aspect of his public persona, yet pursues policies that inherently contradict his faith, it raises serious questions. The following Democrats are clearly guilty of

playing the religion card when it suits them.

Being Religious

Former President Joe Biden

“My religion defines who I am.” He added, “I’ve been a practicing Catholic my whole life. And it has particularly informed my social doctrine.”

Rep. Nancy Pelosi

“I’m a Catholic, a devout, practicing Catholic. I take great comfort in my faith, come from a very Catholic family, largely pro-life.”

NYC Mayor Zohran Mamdani

“I am Muslim, and I refuse to apologize for this.” He added, “I will not change who I am....I will not change the faith that I am proud to belong to.”

Rep. Ilhan Omar

“I think my faith as a Muslim is very important.”

Catholic Church on Abortion

The Catechism of the Catholic Church clearly states: “Since the first century the Church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion. This teaching has not changed and remains unchangeable.”

Biden

He started out having mixed feelings about abortion, but in time he adopted the far-left position. As president, his administration used every available resource to promote abortion, even exploring novel ways to circumvent state laws restricting the barbaric practice.

Pelosi

She opposes laws that ban the killing of babies who are 80 percent born (partial birth abortion), and she has even won Planned Parenthood's highest award. Her extreme position on abortion, along with other major departures from Catholic teachings, earned her a ban on receiving the Eucharist from San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone.

Islam on Abortion

In general, the Islamic view favors the sanctity of human life over abortion. Most Muslim scholars apply the Quran's passages against the taking of innocent human life to the issue. This is true across many different schools of Muslim thought, and both Sunni and Shia Muslims generally disapprove of abortion.

Mamdani

He opposes any restrictions on abortion. That is why his voting record consistently receives a 100 percent score from Planned Parenthood.

Omar

She has been a co-sponsor of the Women's Health Protection Act in the last three sessions of Congress. This legislation seeks to remove most restrictions on abortion and removes religious exemptions.

Catholic Church on LGBT Issues

The Catechism of the Catholic Church clearly states that "homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered," and are contrary to the natural law. Further, the Catholic Church rejects transgenderism, which Pope Francis called "demonic."

Biden

In 2016, as vice president, he officiated a "gay wedding." As

president, he championed transgender procedures for minors and rescinded conscience protections to force Catholic doctors to perform these procedures.

Pelosi

She has supported legislation that would redefine marriage and has even gone so far as to say that same-sex marriage is “consistent” with Catholic teaching. Additionally, she champions transgenderism, including gender “reassignment surgeries” for minors.

Islam on LGBT Issues

In Islam, same-sex relationships are considered taboo. In 34 Muslim-majority countries, homosexual activity is illegal, and none of the 47 Muslim-majority countries recognize “gay marriages.”

Mamdani

He is a huge advocate of the radical LGBT cause. He supports transgender rights across the board and disagrees with the Islamic belief that there are only two sexes. He regularly attends gay events, including parades. He wants the LGBT curriculum to be mandatory in all New York schools, making no allowance for private or parochial schools. Mamdani has also pledged that he will spend \$65 million in taxpayer money for sex-reassignment surgery.

Omar

She supports men competing in women’s sports and is proud to march in the Twin Cities Pride Parades. She favors ending conversion therapy, calling it “a form of torture.” In 2023, as Muslim parents joined with their Christian and Jewish neighbors in Montgomery County, Maryland, to protest the school district’s decision to compel their children to participate in lessons which promoted LGBT themes. She co-

sponsored a resolution condemning their response.

Biden, Pelosi, Mamdani and Omar like to wear their religion on their sleeves while working to undermine core religious teachings on marriage, the family and sexuality. The media should hold them accountable but too often they give them a pass.

MET MUSEUM OF ART BOWS TO MUSLIMS

The Catholic League supports the accommodation of religion, whether it be in public or private venues. But we find it bizarre, if not troubling, when venues not known to accommodate religious expression decide to do so by singling out one religion. This is what the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City has done. The religion it is singling out is Islam.

On the first floor, in Room 961 of the Robert Lehman Collection, in between paintings of the Virgin Mary with baby Jesus, there is a standup sign that reads as follows:

For the month
of Ramadan
we invite you
to use this space
for prayer and
reflection

All are welcome

We have a hard time imagining the Met welcoming Catholics. But

if they did, we have a suggestion. Why not erect the following sign? For the 40 days of Lent, we invite you to use this space for prayer and reflection

All are welcome

What makes the Muslim-only policy even more inexplicable is how out-of-character it is. While the Met has long featured religious iconography, it also has a reputation of promoting raunch.

In October 2023, the Great Hall of the Met displayed gay bondage and sado-masochistic imagery. It used obscenities, and slogans such as, "May you fill yourself with lust," to describe what the *New York Post* said were "images of seemingly naked males with their genitals blurred out and men standing over other men who appear to be wearing dog collars."

One woman who spotted this "artistic creation" said, "I saw a wasteland 'Mad Max' scenario with people dressed in S&M gear and others who looked as if they were fornicating with the earth." She said a portrayal of women was so sick that "It looked Satanic and demonic to me."

Leaving aside the Met's fondness for gay sexual expression, why does it feel obliged to welcome Muslims during Ramadan but not Catholics during Lent? Is this its idea of multiculturalism? We have long known that this ideology has less to do with paying tribute to religious and ethnic groups outside our Judeo-Christian heritage than it does in devaluing it.

The Met's elite must feel very good about themselves. Their goal, no doubt, is to showcase their commitment to inclusion and diversity. But bowing to Muslims, by excluding Catholics,

shows how morally bankrupt their commitment really is.

MUSLIM WOMAN QUILTS TRUMP'S RELIGION PANEL

Sameerah Munshi quit President Trump's Religious Liberty Commission on March 13. She cited "two deeply troubling developments: the official removal of Carrie Prejean Boller for her deeply held beliefs about Palestine and the federal government's illegal war against Iran, undertaken without clear constitutional or congressional authorization."

The Council on American-Islamic Relations, (CAIR), rushed to defend both women, saying they were the ones who "actually stand up for religious liberty." They commended Munshi for her courage and said it was "unconscionable" that the White House would remove Prejean for her remarks on "Israel's genocide in Gaza."

On February 11, the Catholic League called for the Religious Liberty Commission to oust Prejean Boller; minutes later it did. We did so for reasons that both Munshi and CAIR refuse to acknowledge.

In Bill Donohue's news release about Prejean Boller, he noted that she is "a former Miss California and a convert to Catholicism. She does not run a Catholic organization, has no Catholic credentials as an author or instructor, and indeed represents no one but herself. For her to say, without qualification, that 'Catholics do not embrace Zionism' is presumptuous and arrogant."

It just wasn't just this remark that got Prejean Boller into

hot water. She blamed Jews for killing Christ, again without qualification, and was known to show up at meetings wearing a Palestinian flag pin. In other words, she is an activist, not someone sincerely committed to religious liberty.

Munshi's comment about the "illegal" war against Iran makes her sound sophomoric. There have been five wars declared by Congress in American history: War of 1812, Mexican-American War, Spanish-American War, World War I, and World War II. There is nothing illegal about U.S. operations in Iran.

We are delighted that both of these women are no longer on the panel. How they got by those doing the vetting remains a problem. For example, Munshi flashed "Free Palestine" on her social media platforms, and did so after October 7, 2023. That is when 1200 innocent Jewish men, women and children were slaughtered by Hamas. That should have been a red flag, but apparently it wasn't.

MODERN MAN'S MONSTROUS FALL

Kyle Nazareth

George J. Marlin, *Modern Monsters: Political Ideologues and Their War Against the Catholic Church* (St. Augustine's Press)

The Council of Trent, which refuted and condemned the errors of the Reformation, defined original sin as "the death of the soul." George J. Marlin's *Modern Monsters: Political Ideologues and Their War Against the Catholic Church* is the story of that death's modern resurrection. His thesis is that ideology is a fake religion: a rigid, abstract formula that promises worldly perfection by placing humanity in control of its destiny and nature. While faith looks beyond the finite

world to a higher reality, ideology turns inward, making man the measure of all things, and politics the tool of salvation.

Across thirteen chapters, Marlin traces how this project was carried out by a succession of thinkers – from Martin Luther and Niccolo Machiavelli through the utilitarians to G.W.F. Hegel and the totalitarians – each adding a new layer to the ideological tower of terror. Each chapter systematically surveys an ideology's core beliefs, its consequences for society, its incompatibility with Church teachings, and its targeting of the Church as the principal obstacle to its vision. The result is a comprehensive philosophical history of the West over the past five centuries, told from the Catholic perspective.

Marlin documents how each thinker explicitly rejected Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas. Read together, a deeper pattern emerges. The modern monsters' war on the Church is, at its root, a war on her intellectual heritage: Aristo-Thomism. This great synthesis of Aristotelian philosophy and Thomistic theology harmonized faith and reason into a unified vision of truth.

To introduce a few of Marlin's modern monsters:

Martin Luther: "Patient zero" in the rebellion against the Catholic Church. Luther's Reformation challenged Church authority and the supernatural law by championing salvation through faith alone, personal interpretation of Scripture, and individual spiritual sovereignty. This privatized religion, justified the divine right of kings, catalyzed the decline of Christendom, and gave rise to the secular liberal state and religious pluralism.

Luther was a nominalist, meaning he denied the existence of objective, universal truths. Consequently, he rejected the three pillars of natural law: man's free will and moral agency, nature's rational and observable order, and nature's

inherent purpose. To Luther, reason was pagan, logic had no place in theology, and the mind was a "whore." He despised Aristotle, whom he called "the destroyer of godly doctrine," and wanted his philosophy destroyed; he called St. Thomas' theology "dung" and branded him a heretic. Luther fired the opening shot in the war against the union of faith and reason.

Marlin shows that Luther was not merely a religious reformer but the architect of a new movement, creating the template for every subsequent ideologue. He quotes political theorist Dante Germino: "Luther prefigures the age of ideologies."

Niccolò Machiavelli: Marlin casts Machiavelli as the first fully modern political ideologue. A Renaissance thinker, Machiavelli believed not in God, but in power and chance. He completely liberated politics from Christian morality, denied the objectivity of truth, and replaced virtue with pragmatism: no "should," no "good," or "bad," only what works.

Where Luther attacked the Aristo-Thomist tradition from within theology, Machiavelli attacked it from without. Marlin writes that Machiavelli's explicit goal was "the liberation of man from the moral order taught by St. Thomas Aquinas." Luther severed the Church's spiritual authority from public life; Machiavelli went further, completely subordinating spiritual power to worldly power, creating the secular state, and making political glory the new highest good.

René Descartes: Descartes is the first of many Enlightenment thinkers that Marlin profiles. The father of modern philosophy, Descartes was a rationalist, meaning he held that knowledge comes from reason alone, making the individual mind, not God, the new foundation for knowledge. His "Cartesian revolution" shifted Western philosophy away from asking *what* something is (Aristo-Thomist metaphysics) to asking *how* we know (epistemology).

As a pivotal figure in the Scientific Revolution and the

inventor of analytic geometry, Descartes sought to explain all of reality through mathematical formulas and the scientific method. Mathematical reason replaced theology as the supreme science. Marlin observes that Cartesianism is the moment the human mind formally declared its independence from God, and philosophy appointed itself the replacement.

John Locke, David Hume, Jeremy Bentham, and John Stuart Mill: Locke was the father of liberalism and British empiricism, meaning he rooted knowledge in sense experience rather than Aristo-Thomist metaphysics. He also grounded individual rights in his own conception of God and natural law. Locke limited the state to protecting life, liberty, and property rather than guiding citizens toward the common good. Hume radicalized Locke's empiricism and demoted morality into mere feelings. Bentham and Mill reduced morality to a pleasure-pain calculus. Mill's non-harm principle, justifying coercion only to prevent harm to others, sidelined the common good in favor of individual preference. Their liberalism inflated mankind into its own supreme being, delegitimizing the Church's moral authority. Prioritizing individual preference over the common good paved the way for statism.

G.W.F. Hegel: Hegel is notoriously convoluted and nonsensical, so Marlin accurately characterizes him as a modernist heretic. Like his predecessors, Hegel rejected Aristo-Thomist metaphysics, but took the rebellion even further. He collapsed God into creation and put reality in a constant state of flux, a worldview closer to pantheism and Eastern mysticism than to Christianity.

Hegel's philosophy didn't merely reject the Church and natural law; it replaced them entirely. Hegel deified the state, calling it God on earth marching through history. The state became the source of rights, morality, and the final arbiter of truth. Hegel attributed these ideas to Protestantism. Marlin shows that the logical conclusions of this absolutization of the state are the communist and fascist

experiments of the twentieth century.

Overall, Marlin's project is ambitious, tracing over five centuries of ideological rebellion. He sticks the landing remarkably well, making dense philosophy accessible and turning what could be a dry chronology into a vivid indictment of modernity's monsters. Marlin's strength lies in his willingness to let major Catholic thinkers and ideologues speak in their own words. This gives the work a cumulative authority that a single voice could not achieve. His own prose shines brightly, artfully weaving insightful observations and historical anecdotes into a unified narrative greater than the sum of its parts.

Marlin's narrative makes clear that these modern ideologies are not discrete historical episodes, but successive waves of a single continuous movement. The collective evidence points toward a larger conclusion that the book never quite states outright: since the late Middle Ages, European history's revolt against the Catholic Church has been prosecuted specifically through the systematic dismantling of her intellectual heritage; the integration of faith and reason achieved by St. Thomas upon Aristotle's foundation.

The Reformation and Enlightenment are two sides of the same coin, different in their premises, yet united in their rebellion. Both struck at the same target: natural law, the ground where faith and reason meet. The Reformation toppled natural law's pillars from within Christianity – Luther's idea of original sin denied man's free will and moral agency, scripture alone and faith alone denied that human reason could understand nature, and his nominalism denied that creation had an inherent purpose. The Enlightenment did the same from outside Christianity by rejecting objective morality, advancing skepticism about knowledge beyond reason or the senses, and adopting the idea that reality is only material. Both framed faith and reason as mutually exclusive. These two halves of modernism converged in subjectivism and relativism,

making man a law unto himself. From this emerged the totalitarian dictatorships of the twentieth century and today's radical leftist politics.

Pope Benedict XVI, in his Regensburg Address, gave this crisis a name: "dehellenization," the gradual severance of Christianity from Greek thought. But to understand what was severed, we must understand what was built.

From Christianity's very beginning, God formed a union between Greek reason and biblical faith, Athens and Jerusalem, that mutually enriched each other. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, European Christians recovered the Greek philosopher Aristotle's key works from the Muslim world. Catholics recognize Aristotle was a "righteous pagan," whose natural reason reached out to God and readied the world to receive the Gospels. In his honor, a stained glass window in New York City's St. Vincent Ferrer Catholic Church depicts Aristotle with a laurel wreath that doubles as a green halo.

St. Thomas recognized Aristotle's genius, referring to him simply as "the Philosopher." He drew on much of Aristotle's philosophy to support his theology, "baptizing" Aristotle in the Catholic understanding. In doing so, St. Thomas achieved the perfect synthesis between faith and reason. He showed that natural reason can lead to faith's preambles: that God exists, there are laws of nature, and there is goodness, justice, and the common good. But only divine revelation can unveil faith's mysteries: the Trinity, Resurrection, and real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Though distinct in kind, these truths are one in origin, for God is the author of all truth.

The Church has affirmed St. Thomas' synthesis at the highest levels. At the Council of Trent, his *Summa Theologica* was placed on the high altar, second only to Sacred Scripture. In *Aeterni Patris*, Pope Leo XIII declared that reason, borne to its height by St. Thomas, can scarcely rise higher. In *Fides et Ratio*, St. John Paul II wrote that in St. Thomas' thinking,

“the demands of reason and the power of faith found the most elevated synthesis ever attained by human thought.” The Catechism of the Catholic Church echoes St. Thomas: “There can never be any real discrepancy between faith and reason, since the same God who reveals mysteries and infuses faith has bestowed the light of reason on the human mind. God cannot deny himself, nor can truth ever contradict truth.”

This is the Church’s intellectual heritage that every modern monster set out to destroy, which Marlin so painstakingly documents. So far, they are winning. Faith and reason are divorced, both fragmented and impoverished. Faith is seen as sentimental, irrational, and impotent. Reason, though capable of extraordinary technological feats, falters on the deepest questions: the meaning of life, death, man, and God. Humanity may have left the Garden of Eden, but we carried the apple with us, taking repeated bites ever since.

Modern Monsters is a comprehensive guide that Catholics must read to understand how we arrived at this cultural and spiritual moment. To reconcile what the monsters have divorced and restore the union of faith and reason, Catholics must once again study and teach the timeless and sound doctrine of St. Thomas in their personal lives, families, parishes, and universities so that they may defend the Deposit of Faith from another five centuries of chimerical attacks.

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