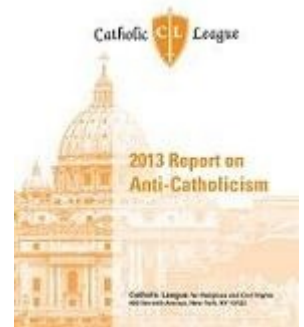


# PAPAL TRANSFER

To see the ad, "LEAD US, HOLY FATHER," that appeared on the op-ed page of the April 15, 2013 edition of the *New York Times*, click [here](#).



*Attacks on the pope are a staple of anti-Catholicism. But in 2013, with the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI and the election of Pope Francis, the pope bashers went into high gear. The following is a chronicle of our response to their attacks followed by a selection of the most egregious comments. Finally, Bill Donohue's analysis of the New York Times' biased coverage of cardinals who were to participate in the papal conclave.*

## The Resignation of Pope Benedict XVI

### **February 5: ANDREW SULLIVAN SHOULD NOT THROW STONES**

On February 4, Andrew Sullivan said Pope Benedict XVI "enabled and abetted the rape of children." On February 5, with regard to the revelations of old cases of priestly sexual abuse in Los Angeles, he asks, "How much did the Pope know? And who did he allow to rape and rape again?"

Sullivan may not know anything about rape, but he sure knows about prostitution and lethal sex acts. In 2001, he was outed for selling his body on the Internet. Hiding under the name RawMuscleGlutes, Sullivan posted his interest in having sex with men *who did not wear condoms*. That's right, his preference was to practice oral and anal sex with "bare back" men (guys who hate "safe sex"). It was ever so kind of him to disclose that he was HIV-positive.

## February 12: POPE NEVER “JOINED” HITLER YOUTH

The following persons and media outlets erroneously said that Pope Benedict XVI “joined” the Hitler Youth, without ever noting that it was compulsory:

### U.S.

AP Planner; John Patrick Shanley, *New York Times* blog; Huffington Post; *Philadelphia Daily News*; Regional News Network (it said his “defenders” argue he was drafted, implying that it is a rebuttable presumption); *Sun-Sentinel*; [thepeoplesvoice.org](http://thepeoplesvoice.org); [timminspress.com](http://timminspress.com); *Washington Post*.

### Canada

*The Globe and Mail*

### England

BBC; *The Guardian*; *The Independent*; *Metro*; [politics.co.uk](http://politics.co.uk)

### Ireland

*Daily Mirror*; *Irish Independent*

Here are the facts. Like all teenage boys in Nazi Germany, Joseph Ratzinger was forced to join the Hitler Youth. Unlike many others, he did not attend meetings and deserted when he was drafted into the German army. His refusal to attend meetings brought economic hardship to his family—it meant no discounts for school tuition. German left-wing intellectuals like Günter Grass and Jürgen Habermas also were conscripted into the Hitler Youth, yet no one ever accused them of voluntarily joining.

Rabbi David Rosen, director of interreligious affairs for the American Jewish Committee, said it is “rubbish” to suggest that the pope willfully joined the Hitler Youth. Following a complaint by us, even Bill Maher apologized in 2008 for making this pernicious accusation. In short, it is despicable for these journalists to smear the pope as a Nazi sympathizer.

## **February 12: HITCHENS IS BACK FROM THE DEAD**

Slate and Andrew Sullivan republished a hit piece by the late atheist Christopher Hitchens from 2010. It was vintage Hitchens: the man was a great polemicist but a third-class scholar. Facts never mattered to him.

Hitchens said the scandal “has only just begun.” Wrong. It began in the mid-60s and ended in the mid-80s. Current reports are almost all about old cases.

Hitchens said Munich Archbishop Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI) transferred an offending cleric to another parish. Wrong. Ratzinger’s deputy placed the priest in a new parish after he received therapy (the tonic loved by those pushing rehabilitation), and even the New York Times admitted there was no evidence that Ratzinger knew about it. By the way, there were 1,717 priests serving under him at the time.

Hitchens said Ratzinger wrote a 2001 letter to the bishops telling them it was a crime to report sexual abuse. Wrong. The letter dealt with desecrating the Eucharist, and the sexual solicitation by a priest in the confessional (the letter cited a 1962 document detailing harsh sanctions).

Hitchens said Ratzinger was obstructing justice when he crafted new norms on sexual abuse in 2001. Wrong. He actually added new sanctions and extended the statute of limitations for such offenses.

Hitchens said Ratzinger ignored accusations against Father Marcial Maciel. Wrong. It was Benedict who got him removed from ministry (he was too infirm to put on trial) and put his religious order in receivership.

In short, Hitchens’ hatred of Catholicism allowed him to swing wildly. That he should be resurrected by Slate and Andrew Sullivan made them all look incompetent, as well as vicious.

## February 13: "ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT" SMEARS POPE

Pope bashers came out of the woodwork, making it hard to keep up with all of them. But the vile hit piece on the pope that aired on ET was clearly one of the worst.

"The Pope's Past" began with correspondent Brian Ross complaining that many years ago he was slapped on the wrist by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. The occasion for this "brutality" was Ross' decision to badger the cardinal while the would-be pope was walking to a car. Ross said, "It actually stung." He did not say whether he was rushed to the local ER.

Next up was a promo for the documentary "Mea Maxima Culpa," a classic agit-prop film that is strewn with lies. Viewers learn that Pope Benedict XVI investigated, "but without much effect," the charges levied against Father Marcial Maciel. Another savant asks, "Did Benedict punish him in any way?" To which he exclaims, "No." Really? Then why was Benedict being credited by even his staunchest critics for removing Maciel from ministry and launching a Vatican take-over of his religious order?

The ET segment then said "the film implies that the pope...was at the epicenter" of the scandal. Agreed. That's all the film did was imply. When there was no evidence to support outrageous claims, mud-slinging is all that is left. Similarly, we learn that documents on priestly wrongdoing "are said to be kept in secret Vatican archives." More innuendo. Absent evidence, conjecture is the best they can do.

Then they rolled out the paranoid attorney Jeffrey Anderson, who said, "There is an enormous worldwide conspiracy—a cover-up at the highest level in the Catholic Church." Not mentioned was the fact that *all of his lawsuits to get the Vatican have failed*. Indeed, they have been laughed out of court.

ET owed Catholics an apology for this Mafioso-style propaganda exercise.

## February 14: ASSESSING THE POPE'S RECORD

Ex-seminarians and ex-priests offered the following assessments of the pope's record:

- **Garry Wills [ex-seminarian]:** "What we really need are no priests."
- **James Carroll [ex-priest]:** The pope "has seen only a solemn obligation to defend the church." [Italic added.]
- **Richard Sipe [ex-priest]:** "Certainly, he did a lot, but it was *all* reactionary." [Italic added.]
- **Daniel Maguire [ex-priest]:** The "scandal of the papacy [is] one of the last absolute monarchies in a democratizing world."

At the time, the Catholic League noted the disparity between the above negative comments and the gratitude expressed by Jews, Muslims, Protestants, and others. The following is a sampling of the sentiments that were expressed:

- **Ronald Lauder, president, World Jewish Congress:** "The papacy of Benedict elevated Catholic-Jewish relations to an unprecedented level."
- **Abraham Foxman, national director, Anti-Defamation League:** "He [the pope] was good for the Jews."
- **Rabbi Yona Metzger, Israel's chief Ashkenazic rabbi:** Benedict's papacy exhibited "the best relations ever between the church and the chief rabbinate."
- **Imam Hassan Qazwini, Islamic Center of America:** "I have so much admiration for the pope, for being honest and humble."
- **Nihad Awad, national director, Council on American-Islamic Relations:** "We offer the American Muslim community's best wishes to Pope Benedict XVI."
- **Geoff Tunnicliffe, secretary general, World Evangelical Alliance:** "I appreciate his [the pope's] courage of ideas...and his boldness in warning us of the dangers of moral relativism..."
- **Rev. R. Albert Mohler, president, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary:** "Pope Benedict has offered a brave and

intelligent defense of truth against a relativist tide.”

### **February 14: LETTERMAN, THE POPE, AND HIS SHRINK**

On February 11 and 13, David Letterman got a little too cute for us, which suggested a disturbing pattern.

On February 11, after twice saying the pope has “a chronic neck problem,” Letterman let loose with, “He’s got a chronic neck problem and apparently the chronic neck problem is for looking the other way so many times.” He then said the Vatican “is already holding auditions to see who might be the next pope and we have one of those auditions that’s going on.” Footage was then shown of acrobats taking off their shirts and then performing for the pope; he looked on while rock music was played.

Letterman said that besides looking for someone who was a biblical scholar and at least 60 years old, the Vatican was looking for “a guy who is good at transferring creepy priests.”

### **February 19: MAHER GETS DIRTY**

Speaking of Pope Benedict XVI, Bill Maher said on his HBO show “Real Time” that “Benedict told them he was going to resign because the Church needs a fresh young face. Somewhere other than a priest’s lap.” He then mocked the Church’s teachings, imploring Catholics to quit. He ended his rant by condemning Catholicism for being “hostile towards women,” comparing the Church to the Taliban.

### **February 22, 2013: DAN SAVAGE SAVAGES POPE**

Dan Savage savaged the pope on [slog.thestranger.com](http://slog.thestranger.com). Unable to mount a rational critique of Pope Benedict XVI, he settled for writing a headline that was almost as long as his “story.” It reads, “That Motherf\*\*\*ing Power-Hungry, Self-Aggrandized Bigot In the Stupid F\*\*\*ing Hat Announces His Retirement.”

Savage used the same headline in December 2012, save for substituting "Joins Twitter" for the last three words in his post of February 11.

Savage has a long history of trashing Catholicism, and he not only does it with impunity, he is rewarded for it. To wit: In 2011, he was invited to a White House reception for homosexuals. He said he arrived with his husband.

### **February 27: ANDREW SULLIVAN SMEARS POPE AGAIN**

Andrew Sullivan accused Pope Benedict XVI of being a homosexual. His evidence? The pope's "handsome male companion [Archbishop Georg Ganswein] will continue to live with him, while working for the other Pope during the day." Sullivan asked, "Are we supposed to think that's, well, a normal arrangement?"

The media were all abuzz about Sullivan's latest charge. There's nothing new to any of this. In 2010, he wrote that "it seems pretty obvious to me...that the current Pope is a gay man." What clinched it for him was "the Pope's mental architecture." By this he meant the pope's "frissy fastidiousness, the effeminate voice...the over-the-top clothing accessories," etc. Nice to know Sullivan indulges in gay stereotypes when it suits him. But if the pope emeritus were truly gay, why doesn't he have that prototypical gay lisp? Nor has anyone ever accused him of being a narcissist, another trait associated with homosexuals.

In any event, it's not hard to explain why Sullivan was out to smear Benedict again. Earlier he flatly said, "Evil remains at the heart of the Vatican." If he believed that, then it was easy to demonize the pope.

### **March 4: HBO'S PLEPLER NEEDS TO MOVE ON MAHER**

Richard Plepler is the CEO of HBO, and the Catholic League's dealings with him in the past have been cordial and

professional. But he has obviously allowed Bill Maher to continue with his anti-Catholic rants with impunity.

Maher said the pope and the cardinals are known to stick together “when you’re molesting kids.”

“I kid the cardinals. They chipped in. They got him a t-shirt that said, ‘I’m not retiring. I’m being put out to stud.’”

The pope, Maher commented, “said there were moments where it seemed like the Lord was sleeping. Wow! Sleeping. Or like the kids at Catholic summer camp—pretending to be asleep perhaps.”

### **March 8: STEWART GETS INTO THE GUTTER AGAIN**

Jon Stewart’s legacy is stained with anti-Catholic bigotry, a tradition he continued to uphold in “The Daily Show.” What started off with jabs against the cardinals and their chances of election began to devolve when a “Vatican Correspondent” called Communion a “cracker and juice ceremony.”

The segment continued its descent into the gutter with a vicious “report” on the Conclave that was full of double entendre; Stewart’s “Senior Vatican Correspondent” Samantha Bee likened the papal election process to the stages of sexual abuse.

Bee called the gathering of cardinals a “grope,” who took part in a “molestation,” which she claimed was the “liturgical name” of the voting process. That process, Bee said, was not complete until the cardinals reached a “fellatio,” (an “oral consensus”) culminating in “white smoke rising from the chimney.” When Stewart asked Bee if that was called an “ejaculation,” she mockingly responded with the word’s authentic definition, a short prayer.

Stewart’s return to the gutter was of no surprise, but perhaps he should have gotten his facts straight about the homosexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church: it ended almost three



decades ago. If he wanted to be current, he would have ripped on the sexual abuse taking place in Brooklyn's ultra-Orthodox Jewish community. But no, he saved his vitriol for Catholics.

### **Selection of Comments in Response to Resignation of Pope Benedict XVI**

*The following is a selection of the most egregious comments made in response to the announcement of the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI on February 11.*

**Adele M. Stan, AlterNet, February 11:** "Because of the rigging done to the College of Cardinals by Benedict's predecessor [sic], the next pope will likely be no less authoritarian, no less women-hating, no less gay-bashing, and no more reform-minded."

**Andrew Sullivan, The Dish, February 11:** "What fascinates me is whether he can now be prosecuted for 'crimes against humanity' for having enabled and concealed the rape of countless children in an institution under his direct authority."

**Andrew Sullivan, The Dish, February 11:** In a post titled, "The Fundamentalist Pope," he said, "Can someone point me to a moment when the Pope reproved the United States for endorsing and practicing torture? He uttered not a squeak when visiting the US. And where has he been on universal healthcare? We know where his bishops were: ignoring one vast moral leap for their usual sexual obsessions."

**Michael Brendan Dougherty, Slate, February 11:** "Pope Benedict set out to reform a Catholic Church in tatters—but failed."

**Rabbi Arthur Waskow, The Shalom Center, February 11:** "Pope Benedict does not deserve praise from any religious leader who sees women as worthy of full respect, fully capable of making moral decisions on their own and fully deserving of legal and religious support for their own religious freedom. Nor does he deserve praise from any religious leader who believes the

protection and sustenance of children is far more important than the protection of criminal priests."

**Dan Savage, [slog.thestranger.com](http://slog.thestranger.com), February 11:** "That Motherf\*\*\*ing Power-Hungry, Self-Aggrandized Bigot In the Stupid F\*\*\*ing Hat Announces His Retirement."

**Garry Wills, "The Colbert Report," February 11:** While promoting Wills' new book, *Why Priests? A Failed Tradition*, Colbert asked him why, according to him, the priesthood is a failed tradition. Wills responded: "Well, they continue to pretend to turn bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus, which didn't happen." When Colbert mentioned that the Eucharist is a "mystery," Wills said, "No, it's a fake."

**Chez Pazienza, [Huffington Post](http://Huffington Post), February 12:** "Maybe, if the world is lucky, the next pope won't be so stubborn in the face of overwhelming evidence of children being sexually abused by priests or even complicit in the cover-up of those priests' actions. Benedict's entire career, unfortunately, was tainted by the choices he made with regard to the sickening series of assaults throughout the years."

**Jan Phillips, [Huffington Post](http://Huffington Post), February 12:** The author wrote a poem called "If I Were Pope," in which he advocated homosexual marriage and the ordination of women as priests, among other things.

**Kristen Houghton, [Huffington Post](http://Huffington Post), February 12:** "The almost-unheard of step of resignation by a reigning pontiff has touched off a feeding frenzy of speculation. What's the real reason behind this act? Certainly the Catholic Church is under investigation, as is the pope himself, concerning the horrible, disreputable crime of pedophilia which has been pretty much swept under the expensive Vatican rugs, so to speak."

**Max Read, [Gawker](http://Gawker), February 12:** "Cardinal Peter Turkson is considered a frontrunner for the pontificate. Is he Peter the

Roman, after whose reign Rome will be destroyed and come to an end?"

**Margaret Carlson, Bloomberg, February 12:** "Under his leadership, the church continued to deny its perfidy."

**Dominic Holden, Slog, February 12:** "Leave it to Seattle's premier faggot-obsessed charlatan, the region's highest-profile crusader against gay rights, the Vatican's general in the war on 'feminist themes'—Seattle Archbishop J. Peter Sartain—to praise the '*fidelity*' of Pope Benedict XVI, a man so full of fidelity he leaves behind a papal smear of victims who say he conspired to cover up the Catholic Church's pedophilia escapades."

**Michael Moynihan, The Daily Beast, February 12:** "Indeed, if Benedict was the CEO of a powerful international, peddling a product that a significant population of the world couldn't live without, and presided over a continuing slide in that product's market share (for lack of a better phrase), he would have been relieved of his duties years ago...Perhaps there is little that Benedict could have done to reverse these trends, but his own commitment to deflecting criticism often looked to skeptics like criminal complicity....So let us hope that the next puff of white smoke will introduce Catholics to a more modern representative of God's will, one who believes that collars and vestments shouldn't provide immunity from prosecution, and who understands that obscuring past sins has caused irreparable damage to the Church."

**Soledad O'Brien, "Starting Point," February 12:** She described the movie "Mea Maxima Culpa," which attacks Pope Benedict XVI, as "riveting, absolutely riveting."

**CM Punk, Twitter, February 12:** "The pope resigned? I did nazi that coming."

**Joy Behar, "Say Anything" (CurrentTV), February 12:** She ignored the fact that the pope's participation in the Hitler

Youth was not voluntary, even when this was pointed out to her by one of her guests. "I'm not putting him down. I agree with that—there were plenty of kids who had to go into the Hitler Youth, or else probably go to jail. But of all the people, all the people they could have found, they found one that was in the Hitler Youth. Why? There are millions and millions of Catholics—plenty of cardinals could have filled the post. Why him? I'm just curious."

**Garry Wills, *New York Times*, February 13:** "The power structure will not be changed by giving it new faces. Monarchies die hard."

**Michelangelo Signorile, *Huffington Post*, February 13:** "The Vatican is losing its ugly crusade against homosexuality and other self-described secular 'ills,' and part of the problem (at least helping to accelerate its losses) appears to be Benedict himself."

**Ronnie Polaneczky, *Philly.com*, February 13:** "Pope Benedict could've used his nearly eight years of infallibility to open all church records to the light of day, to come clean about the extent of the cover-up and let the chips fall where they would've."

**Michele Somerville, *Huffington Post*, February 13:** "Before Monday, I had thought Ratzinger would leave the papacy horizontally, amid funerary pomp. I sometimes even thought he might leave in handcuffs, and be carted off to the Hague. I don't believe age or infirmity have much to do with this strategic exit. Deaf ears is what I think of when I think of Ratzinger and his departure from the throne. Deaf ears and a Ratzinger scurrying off his sinking ship."

**Sr. Louise Akers, "Jansing & Co." (MSNBC), February 14:** "I think the Catholic Church, the Roman Catholic Church, is probably one of the last bastions of sexism."

**Andrew Sullivan, *The Dish*, February 14:** "Evil remains at the

heart of the Vatican.”

**John Gehring, *USA Today*, February 17:** “Instead of silencing theologians and stifling debate, a new pope could let it be known that discernment and discussion are signs of a healthy, flourishing faith.”

**E.J. Dionne, *Washington Post*, February 17:** “It is time to elect a nun as the next pontiff.”

**Vin Mannix, *The Bradenton Herald*, February 17:** “Here’s the Vatican, its credibility compromised by the inability to effectively resolve its crisis with pedophilic priests, but it can castigate a group of devoted women whose history is truly doing God’s work.”

**Andrew Sullivan, *The Dish*, February 18:** “He knows more about the criminal conspiracy the Church was engaged in for decades than any other human being on earth. He knows the darkness within better than anyone else. Maybe he is withdrawing out of fear, trying to ensure his successor doesn’t open up the full files to the world. Or maybe he is doing this radical act to shake the system he knows by now is rotten to the core.”

**Michael D’Antonio, *Huffington Post*, February 19:** “For him [Pope Benedict XVI], seclusion in a Vatican convent provides a way to evade responsibility for his central role in protecting thousands of priests who raped children around the world.”

**Juan Madrigal, *The Poly Post*, February 19:** “Perhaps the exposure of these dark secrets could destroy Benedicts [sic] credibility—that is, the little he is still holding with his fingertips.”

**Mary Elizabeth Williams, *Salon*, February 19:** “He’s a frail old man whose life is nearing its end. And he will live those last days not as a pontiff, but as just another elderly priest, well protected from any possible punishment by an organization spectacularly well versed in shielding its own—the Catholic

Church.”

**Matthew Fox, Huffington Post, February 20:** In an article titled “The Dark Legacy of Pope Benedict XVI,” he wrote about his “relief that the masks covering the corruption of the papacy have at last been removed.”

**Editorial, Commonweal, February 20:** “Unfortunately, the courtly secrecy surrounding the deliberations to elect the next pope provides an all-too obvious reminder of the lack of transparency and accountability in the operations of the entire hierarchy.”

**Dan Avery, Queerty, February 20:** “Now, *should* the Pope be prosecuted for his part in one of the biggest coverups in modern history? Probably. But wishing don’t make it so.”

**David Wright, “Good Morning America,” February 25:** “...the papal election campaign is getting ugly...The Pope is an absolute monarch.”

**Joseph Bottum, Weekly Standard, February 25:** “His aging brought little new; he has been, all in all, a terrible executive of the Vatican. Not in San Celestino’s league, of course, but as bad as a pope has been for 200 years.”

**Loaded (UK), March:** The magazine cover of the April issue featured the words “For God’s Sake!” and “for men who should know benedict” [sic] together with a photo of a female glamour model scantily covered in a priest’s stole stitched with crosses.

**Monica Hesse, Washington Post, March 2:** An article highlighted “superprogressive” feminists and lesbians playing a board game attacking the papal election process. The headline read: “A papal conclave that thinks pink: Left out of official Catholic ritual, these women play the pope game at home.”

**David Clohessy, SNAP, March 6:** Clohessy released SNAP’s “dirty

dozen” list of cardinals who may be named a pope, citing those “who pretend the worst is over.”

## **The Election of Pope Francis**

### **March 13, 2013: MEDIA COVERAGE WITH AN AGENDA**

As the white smoke billowed out of the Sistine Chapel’s chimney announcing the selection of the new pope, CBS’ anchor asked reporter Mark Phillips, who was live in St. Peter’s Square, “What do you see?” Phillips responded that he saw two women who were wearing pins that read “ordain women.” Phillips then proceeded to interview the women about what they were looking for from the new, still unannounced, pope.

CBS and Phillips then provided both women with an opportunity to talk about the healing that the church needed from the abuse and the scandal, and how a reformer pope should be willing to open a dialogue and talk with women, particularly on the matter of women’s ordination worldwide.

Phillips continued the conversation by asking the women if they wanted a church that was more accessible to them. The response from one of the women was that the church needed to be more transparent and accountable when it comes to women’s issues, LGBT issues and reproductive health care, and welcome women’s voices into those issues.

In reality out of a crowd of tens of thousands of people, CBS and Mark Phillips managed to find two women who disagreed with the Catholic church on marriage, abortion, and women’s ordination and then give them substantial time to express their views while the world awaited the announcement of the new pope.

### **March 15, 2013: CRITICS OF THE POPE EMERGE**

Pope Francis has captured the goodwill, indeed the love, of millions around the globe, and the response is hardly confined

to Catholic circles. However, his critics were emerging, though none with any luck.

Mary Johnson, a former nun, told the MSNBC audience how “marginalized” gay and lesbian Catholics are. Catholic-bashing lawyer Marci Hamilton chimed in, commenting about the “sex abuse scandal that has scandalized the church over the past decade.” Any high school fact checker knows better: the timeline of the homosexual scandal was the mid-60s to the mid-80s.

*Washington Post* opinion writer Eugene Robinson wanted to know “what did the newly chosen Pope Francis do” about the right-wing dictatorship in Argentina’s “Dirty War”? An answer came from Adolfo Perez Esquivel, the 1980 Nobel Peace Prize winner: he said the pope “was no accomplice of the dictatorship.” Indeed, he firmly concluded, “He can’t be accused of that.” Others have written books praising the pope for his yeoman efforts in undermining the junta.

Miguel A. De La Torre, a professor at the School of Theology in Denver, condemned the pope for not changing “the social structure that creates poverty.”

### **March 18: SPEAK OUT? OR SHUT UP?**

No sooner had Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio been elected Pope Francis when the *Los Angeles Times* started reporting on his alleged “timidity” in fighting Argentina’s dictatorship during the Dirty War, 1976 to 1983. The newspaper also cited the rap that he was “too quiet” during this period. Similarly, the *New York Times* said that the pope is being accused of “knowing about abuses and failing to do enough to stop them.” What was particularly striking about their front-page story on this issue—the pope “faces his own entanglement with the Dirty War”—is that it took four journalists in four different nations to work on it.

Anyone who thinks these newspapers want a more vocal Catholic



Church would be wrong: it totally depends on the issue.

For example, when Cardinal Timothy Dolan accepted the invitation to speak at the Republican National Convention (he also closed the Democratic National Convention with a prayer), the *Los Angeles Times* said he should not have accepted because “lending his presence” sent the wrong message; he should have allowed “a local and lower-profile cleric to do the honors.” Right before the 2012 election, the same newspaper ran an editorial calling on the IRS to keep “politics out of the pulpit,” specifically citing as objectionable those bishops who spoke out against the Health and Human Services (HHS) mandate. In 2012, the *New York Times* branded the Catholic response to the mandate “a dramatic stunt, full of indignation but built on air.” A month before the election, it accused leaders of the Catholic Church of “making inflammatory allegations” about the HHS edict.

The *Los Angeles Times* and the *New York Times* wanted the bishops to check in with them so they could decide whether the Catholic Church should speak out or shut up. Fat chance.

### **Selection of Comments in Response to the Election of Pope Francis**

*The following is a selection of the most egregious comments made in response to the election of Pope Francis on March 13.*

**Luke Russert, Twitter, March 13:** “Before we slice and dice every political statement this Pope has ever made during his entire life...breathe, take it in.”

**Luke Russert, MSNBC blog, March 13:** “Instead of a Catholic faith where priests are expected to completely suppress their sexuality, an acknowledgement that many of the Church’s recent problems stem from the unnatural requirement of celibacy.”

**Eduardo Penalver, dotCommonweal blog, March 13:** In a post titled, “Popes and Dirty Wars,” he wrote, “I’m going to take a

break from my Lenten 'fast' from blogging to just note that it seems likely to me that picking a man as Pope who held a position of authority in the Church in Buenos Aires during Argentina's dirty war seems likely to dredge up some bad memories, and perhaps even a few inconvenient truths."

**Herndon Graddick, GLAAD, March 13:** "The *National Catholic Reporter* said Pope Francis called adoption by gay and lesbian people a form of discrimination against children. The real discrimination against children is the pedophilia that has run rampant in the Catholic Church with little more than abetting from the Vatican."

**Natasha Lennard, Salon.com, March 13:** "There's a new pope—Francis I—who unsurprisingly has terrible views on gay and reproductive rights."

**Huffington Post, March 13:** PAPA DON'T PREACH! "Pope Called Gay Marriage 'Destructive Attack On God's Plan'... 'Staunchly Opposes Abortion, Contraception'... Believes Gay Adoption Is 'Discrimination Against Children'... Accused Of Conspiring With Murderous Junta In Priest Kidnapping – OR He 'Saved Their Lives'"

2011 FLASHBACK:"'What Scandal If The First Pope Ever To Be Elected From The Americas Had Been Revealed As An Accessory To Murder And False Imprisonment'"

**Garry Wills and Sally Quinn, Washington Post On Faith blog, March 17, 2013:**

**Quinn:** "Do you think that the papacy, well, it certainly is not irrelevant to a lot of people now, but do you think it's headed in that direction?"

**Wills:** "Yeah, it is irrelevant to a lot of people and becoming more so, even to people who don't even recognize it. One of the reasons they don't recognize it, is that the priests...the bishops have to uphold what Rome says or they'll get their knuckles rapped, and priests have to agree not to go against

what Rome says. But they don't actually preach what Rome says."

**Garry Wills and Sally Quinn, *Washington Post* On Faith blog, March 19, 2013:**

**Quinn:** "What do you think should be done with the papacy? Do you think it should be abolished?"

**Wills:** "No, it should just fade into symbolic irrelevance, like Queen Elizabeth, you know. Keep his palace, gorgeous palace, keep his gorgeous costume, and don't have, have some kind of sentimental ties with the past. And the Vatican is good [sic] museum if you don't care about the Gospel."

### **Cartoonists Attack Papal Transfer**

#### **March 2**

The *Dayton Daily News* ran a Mike Peters cartoon depicting Pope Benedict XVI making the "V" signs with both hands, in reference to the gesture that President Richard Nixon made famous. The pope is shown saying, "I am not a pope." "Church cover-ups" is written in red on his cassock.

#### **March 13**

The *Delaware County Daily Times* ran a Jerry Holbert cartoon in which one panel, with the caption "Popes of the Past," showed a nameless pope from the back looking over a balcony and holding a papal cross. In the next panel, captioned "Pope of Today," the same figure is shown, with the words "Pope Francis" added. The figure is holding a dustpan in one hand and a broom in the other.

#### **March 17**

The *Denver Post* ran a Mike Keefe cartoon depicting a cardinal driving a popemobile splattered with dirt. The words "pedophilia," "scandal," and "abuse" are written in the dirt. One cardinal holds open the door to the popemobile. Another cardinal says, "He took the bus." The cartoon was a blatant attempt to smear the Church.

### **March 18**

The *Denver Post* ran a John Darkow cartoon attacking the Catholic Church. In the first panel, a cardinal is shown saying, "Now might be a good time to chart a future course between our declining traditional strongholds and more toward a modern world, broadening our appeal to women, gays and minorities!" The next panel zooms out to show an elephant labeled "GOP" standing next to the cardinal. "Tell me about it!" is written in a thought bubble coming from the elephant.

### **March 19**

The *Lexington Herald-Leader* ran a Lee Judge cartoon attacking the papal conclave. It showed the black smoke coming from a chimney with the caption, "the Vatican puts out more smoke." The words "everything will be different now" were written on the smoke.

### **March 20**

The *Portland Daily Sun* ran a Stuart Carlson cartoon showing a couple having a conversation at the breakfast table. The husband says, "I'm having a crisis of faith in an institution that's rife with ideological factions and intrigue, one that seems dysfunctional at times and rocked by scandals and corruption." The wife says, "I give up: Congress or the Vatican?"

### **March 24**

The *Miami Herald* ran a Jim Morin cartoon showing the pope waving in the popemobile that is driving by as two impoverished men holding bowls sit on the sidewalk in a side street. One says to the other, "We may be poor but we can be thankful we don't have to rebuild a bloated, hypocritical and corrupt Vatican bureaucracy."

### **March 26**

The *Miami Herald* ran a Dan Piraro cartoon showing a pope in a motor home with the following words: "AARP / American Assoc. of Retired Popes / 1 member strong".

## NY TIMES WAGES WAR ON CATHOLICISM

*The following analysis by Bill Donohue was published by Newsmax on February 27.*

On February 27, the *New York Times* ran a front-page story raising questions about some cardinals who will soon vote for the new Pope. Some of the cardinals have had accused priests serving under them, while others have been the subject of criticism by the Survivors Network for those Abused by Priests (SNAP).

However, the story by Laurie Goodstein contains factual errors, blatant omissions, and many sources who have damaged credentials.

Goodstein writes that the Pope “put children at risk by failing to report pedophiles or remove them from the priesthood.” This is thrice incorrect: (a) many priests have been removed from ministry under Pope Benedict XVI (b) children have not been put at risk and (c) pedophiles have never been the problem.

Rev. Marcial Maciel is rightly cited as “a pathological abuser and liar,” but for Goodstein to mention his name, while at the same time contending that the Pope never removed a molesting priest from ministry, is positively astonishing. Who does she think dumped Maciel in 2006? Moreover, the Pope not only removed him from ministry, he put the entire order of priests he founded, the Legion of Christ, in receivership.

Goodstein’s claims that children have been put at risk under the Pope, and that pedophilia is the problem, have been undercut by many scholars, including one she cites, psychology professor Thomas G. Plante. In his research on this subject, he found that “80 to 90 percent of all priests who in fact abuse minors have sexually engaged with adolescent boys, not prepubescent children. Thus, the teenager is more at risk than the young altar boy or girls of any age.”

In other words, the scandal – which ended more than a quarter-century ago (most of the abuse took place between the mid-60s and mid-80s) – rarely involved children. This finding is consistent with the work of the John Jay College of Criminal Justice: it found that less than 5 percent of molesting priests have been pedophiles. In almost every case, it has been homosexual priests hitting on teenage boys, the most common offense of which has been “inappropriate touching.”

Unfortunately, for politically correct reasons, even those who honestly collect the data, including Plante and the John Jay professors, are reluctant to discuss the role that homosexual priests have played in molesting minors. In fairness, it is important to keep in mind that while most of the molesting priests have been homosexuals, not pedophiles, most homosexual priests have never been molesters. That said, one of the reasons why this problem is almost non-existent today is because this Pope has made it very difficult for practicing homosexuals to enter the priesthood. The results are in the numbers: in the last 10 years, the annual average number of credible accusations made against over 40,000 priests has been in the single digits.

This particular part of the story carries added significance when we consider Mark Thompson’s baggage. On November 12, Thompson took over as the president of the *New York Times* Company. He did so following a trail of accusations that when he was the BBC chief, he failed to report on child rapist Jimmy Savile, the BBC icon who worked there for decades.

Thompson denies he ever heard about Savile’s predatory behavior. Yet last September, Thompson told his lawyers to write a letter on his behalf threatening The *Sunday Times* with a lawsuit if it ran a story implicating him in the Savile scandal. Most astoundingly, he then claimed he knew nothing of the letter’s contents! So when it comes to pointing fingers about a sexual cover-up, the *Times* should be the last to do so.

One of the most irresponsible critics of the Catholic Church on this matter is Judge Anne Burke. She is quoted by Goodstein as blaming every single cardinal for this problem. "They all have participated in one way or another in having actual information about criminal conduct, and not doing anything about it." Ideally, she should be sued for libel. But she knows that no cardinal is going to do that. So she continues to throw mud.

In 2006, Burke said priests are not entitled to constitutional rights. She argued that priests should be removed from ministry on the basis of one unsubstantiated accusation.

Anticipating an obvious wave of criticism, the judge said, "We understand that it is a violation of the priest's due process – you're innocent until proven guilty – but we're talking about the most vulnerable people in our society and those are children." But her alleged interest in child welfare did not allow her to say whether non-priests should be denied their civil liberties when accused of wrongdoing.

Goodstein drops Terry McKiernan's name as a credible source. He is the director of a website that tracks abuse cases. At a SNAP conference in 2011, he said, without a shred of evidence, that New York Archbishop Timothy Dolan was "keeping the lid on 55 names" of predator priests. This is an out-and-out lie: Dolan is not covering for any priest.

If Dolan were guilty, then McKiernan should be willing to disclose the names of these 55 priests. But he refuses to do so. This is typical of him. As with Burke, he has a different standard for accused priests: he said in 2011 that accused priests should be removed from ministry before an accusation is even investigated. Not surprisingly, when the John Jay study was released two years ago, McKiernan condemned it the day before it was issued.

The last critic mentioned by Goodstein is SNAP director David

Clohessy. In today's *New York Daily News*, he is quoted saying, "We're trying to keep this issue front and center."

He needs to – he's broke.

On Feb. 23, SNAP sent a desperate e-mail to its donors saying, "We are barely meeting our everyday expenses."

One of the reasons why SNAP is in bad shape is because Clohessy has had to come up with big bucks to pay for his lawyers after being sued for refusing to turn over SNAP records about his allegedly shady operations. While he demands transparency from the Church, Clohessy refuses to disclose his source of funding (we know that much comes from Church-suing lawyers like Jeffrey Anderson).

Clohessy was asked before a Missouri court in 2011, "Has SNAP to your knowledge ever issued a press release that contained false information?" He didn't blink. "Sure."

For decades, Clohessy has been lobbing rhetorical bombs at the Catholic Church, arguing what a crime it is for anyone in the Church not to report a suspected molester. But when it comes to himself, it's a different story. In the 1990s, he knew about the predatory behavior of a molesting priest and never called the cops. That priest was his brother, Kevin. This is not a matter of conjecture – he's admitted it.

No one with any sense of dignity should ever seek to defend the behavior of a molester. It must also be said that when such a serious issue like this is being discussed, no one with any sense of dignity should be making irresponsible charges or sweeping generalizations. Moreover, no one engaged in this conversation should come to the table unless his own hands are clean. Had these strictures been applied to Goodstein's piece, she wouldn't have had a story.

[Back to Top](#)