

RUSH LIMBAUGH INTERVIEWS BILL DONOHUE

The April edition of "The Limbaugh Letter" features an extensive interview with Bill Donohue. Here is an excerpt. The complete version is available on our website; see the "Special Reports" section.

Rush: Dr. Donohue, this is great. I have wanted to talk to you for the longest time, and I'm really appreciative that you've been able to make the time here.

You intrigue me. I've been watching you for years on TV. I don't think there's an advocate who does it better, and you do it in a way that's not overtly devout or religious.

Donohue: Well, you've got to have a sense of humor. I'm Irish. I come from a blue-collar background. My father left me when I was a child. I was raised by my grandparents who were born in Ireland, didn't have any education. My mother was a nurse. I got taught by the Marxists at NYU and The New School for Social Research, but it didn't have any effect on me because I had common sense. I'm fed up with the left in terms of their hypocrisy. I think that's what drove me. I started as a Democrat. I became Republican, but I've been happily independent over 20 years.

Rush: Okay, I wanted to set the table with that. What is your assessment of the state of religious freedom in the country today, and how has it changed since you took over the Catholic League?

Donohue: When I took over in 1993, quite frankly, I wondered if I would have enough work to do. That's because, like a lot of Catholics, I was not myself a victim of discrimination. That existed in the 18th, 19th, and maybe the first half of the 20th century. I'm not just using JFK as the proverbial

example, and it is true that in the 20th century the progress that individual Catholics made was gigantic. But while individual Catholics have made tremendous progress, the denigration and defamation of the institutional Church through the movies, through TV, what's said in the schools, and artistic exhibitions and the like – it's incredible the double standard, the hate-filled obscene comments that are made and lies about the Catholic Church. I think a lot of Catholics have said: "Well, that's for Father Murphy to take care of." No. We need something like Article 5 of NATO: If there's an attack on my church, it should be viewed as an attack on me.

Rush: Bill, that's one of the reasons why this is so important. I think the flock, if I can term it that way, is somewhat like many in the Republican Party. They're just scared. They're scared of media. The Church is not reaching out and demanding these people be anything. If you don't want to be a Catholic, don't go in. Stay away. What is the threat? Why does the Catholic Church, religion in general, threaten so many on the left?

Donohue: The biggest threats today come from government. They used to come from the media. The biggest change, and this is pernicious, it's not just coming from Hollywood, it's now coming from government which obviously is much scarier. Now, why the threats? Most of the attacks – not all, but the lion's share of them – have to deal with matters that are sexual. Evangelicals, Orthodox Jews, Muslims, Mormons, and others share the same idea of sexual ethics, which is what I call "sexual reticence." In other words, the necessity of restraint. "Restraint" is not a dirty word. It's actually good if people practice it. The people who don't practice it, well, they wind up dead. Physically dead, spiritually dead, morally dead. Why the Catholic Church? We're the big fat target.

Orthodox Jews are too small, so are the Mormons, so are the Muslims and they fear the Muslims. Evangelicals they don't like, but they're kind of scattered. They don't have that same

kind of institutional big target. We've been around for 2,000 years. We've got the Pope at the top. If your goal is libertinism, which essentially means license to do whatever you want, no holds barred, if the three most dreaded words in the English language are, "Thou shalt not," no, you're not going to like the evangelicals, the Orthodox Jews, the Mormons, and the Muslims, but boy, the one you want to get, the big fat target, the bulls-eye, is the Roman Catholic Church. Because to the extent you can weaken its moral authority, its moral voice, you will have largely been able to win. That's what is driving almost all of it.

Rush: Are they afraid that you're judgmental of them? Are they afraid that you are going to succeed in curtailing their freedom?

Donohue: I think they are afraid that I would succeed in getting forth the message to enough people that these attacks are malicious, that they're unfair, and that we need to have a respectful voice for the Catholic Church. But our side has been intimidated. I can't tell you the number of Catholics who have wine and dined me, who are good men and women, but I've just about given up on them. I said to them, "Listen, guys, I can give you the talking points. I can frame the issues. You know what I can't do?" And they ask, 'What's that, Bill?' Courage: it's not transferable." The reason you've made it, Rush, is not just because you're a brilliant commentator, but because you have courage. If you don't have it, forget it.

Rush: Are you worried the Church will succumb? That there might be enough pressure brought to bear that the Church would dramatically alter its position, say, on female priests? You've never had any doubts about that?

Donohue: No. And I'll tell you why. One, they can't change. We can change meat on Friday; we can change celibacy. That's a man-made rule. That's what they call in the Catholic circles a "discipline." It's not dogma. It wasn't written in Scripture.

It was optional for the first thousand years, and then they made it a requirement. They can change that next week if they want. But there are certain things they can't change, such as women priests, positions on abortion and marriage, and the like. So I'm not worried about that. And there's another reason. When Napoleon told Cardinal Consalvi he was going to destroy the Church, Consalvi said, and I'm paraphrasing, "Listen, if we cardinals and bishops with all the people that we've had screwing up for 18 centuries haven't destroyed the Church from within, you're not going to do it from outside either." There is a Holy Spirit. We blunder, we make our mistakes, but no, we're going to be here and I'm not worried about that.

Rush: What about the priesthood? Some say that the abuse of children thing is the result of infiltration, to create the exact image of the Church that has happened.

Donohue: The sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church was an absolute, utter disgrace. John Jay College of Criminal Justice, not an arm of the Catholic Church, put the timeline as overwhelmingly from the mid-60s to the mid-80s. Mid-60s, the beginning of the sexual revolution. Mid-80s, because I would argue AIDS was discovered in '81 and that put the brakes on people. Why did it affect the Catholic Church? When the winds of culture change dramatically, it gets through the military, it gets through the churches, everybody. That's not an excuse. You had two principle actors: the molesting priest and the enabling bishop. Most of the molesting priests, according to John Jay, were men who had sex with men. Now they don't use the word I'm going to use: homosexuality. John Jay said less than five percent were pedophiles. In other words, it was guys hitting on adolescent guys. Now, I can say this to you because you'll give me a chance to say it. I've said it a million times, but nobody wants to quote me on this. Most gay priests are not molesters, but most of the molesting priests have been gay. Now, I'm Irish. My people have a problem with

alcoholism. It doesn't mean if you're born Irish you're going to become an alcoholic. It means that maybe you ought to take a look at certain communities. That's all I'm saying. Now, the enabling bishop. What drove him? Clericalism. That's the term that's used in Catholic circles. Those who are not Catholic would probably understand it more in terms of elitism, arrogance, pomposity. Also, "give the poor devil therapy" was the zeitgeist. That was the spirit of the times in the 60s and 70s. You could rehabilitate anybody. Therapy was for everybody. People were bragging about their analysts, and too many bishops got advice from the psychiatrists and they accepted it.

Rush: Look, since we've ended up here, back on February 27 you were on CNN with Chris Cuomo, who went after you for your support of that vetoed bill in Arizona, the religious liberty bill. The words "gay" or "homosexuality" weren't in it. But few people – you were one – stood up and defended and properly explained that bill. Cuomo said to you, "Nobody's saying that a religious organization has to perform gay marriages because of this." You said, "Oh, wait a minute..."

Donohue: That's where we're going.

Rush: So clearly you think this bill could lead some day to somebody suing or demanding the Church marry a gay couple. Right?

Donohue: Let me be more specific even. I played a role along with others in killing the nomination of Dawn Johnsen, who in 1988 worked on an ACLU case to strip the Catholic Church of its tax-exempt status because the Church is pro-life. I know where they're going. Which brings me back to HHS. I refer to Obamacare as "the abortion-inducing-drug mandate." Contraception is not exactly a hot-button issue with Catholics, including practicing Catholics, these days. But abortion is a different matter altogether. Why did they throw in the abortion-inducing drugs? Because that's the camel's

nose under the tent. That's where they want to go. The big prize is not contraception. It's abortion.

Rush: Before we go I need to ask you something I've observed. The left in this country has traditionally opposed the Pope. They like this one. What is it about Pope Francis that they like? Do they think he's in the process of rejecting Catholic doctrine? He supposedly said, "Who am I to judge gays?" Are leftists looking at that as though the Pope might be malleable?

Donohue: See what they do? The left obviously lusts for power, and they're dishonest. What the Pope actually said was: "If someone is gay and he searches for the Lord and has good will," two conditions, "who am I to judge?" What the left does, and the Catholic left is the worst, they take that and run with it because they're trying to tell the bishops and the priests and the laypeople in this country, "You've got to get with the program." Cuomo tried to do this with me, "You're out of step with your Pope." But the Pope never said that. They try to create momentum. Now, it is true that when it comes to socioeconomic issues, he's out of Latin America, he has a different model. People are free to disagree on that. People said to me, "Why didn't you come against Rush Limbaugh for criticizing the Pope on that?" I said, "This is really stunning. Rush Limbaugh didn't say anything. He never used an insulting term like Bill Maher and you people do all day long. He disagreed with the Pope. You're the guys who disagree with the Pope for a living."

Rush: By the way, thank you for defending me on that and speaking up properly. You nailed that.

Donohue: It was just so unfair. It was so transparent.

Rush: Bill, I want to thank you for your time. There is no better advocate for what he believes than you, and I've long admired your work. I wish you all the best and if there is

ever anything we can do to help, would you please let me know?

Donohue: I would. Thank you, buddy.

*Reprinted with permission from "The Limbaugh Letter," ©2014
Premiere Networks, Inc.*

*For additional information, or to subscribe to "The Limbaugh
Letter" please be sure to visit Rush's website
www.thelimbaughletter.com*