

SHOWING THEIR CARDS

Every now and then some organizations that feign neutrality manage to show their cards. It's always gratifying when we learn our worst suspicions have been confirmed. It's even gratifying when we learn that those whom we are certain are the enemy unwittingly show their cards. The sex abuse scandal in the Church has provided several examples of this phenomenon.

Poynter is the name of a website that journalists tap into for information. Essentially, it puts in one spot news accounts on select subjects that have been collected from around the country. For the past year it has featured a section called "Clergy Abuse Tracker"; information on the clergy—from any religion—implicated in sexual abuse is to be found in this spot. That, at least, is what this section is ostensibly all about.

But objectivity is not what this journalistic site sports. For example, it has failed to report some highly notable cases of clergy abuse committed by non-Catholic clergymen; it never fails to catch a priest who's in the news. In January, Matthew Hale made a front-page section of the Chicago Tribune for his appearance in a federal courthouse on charges of soliciting the murder of a federal judge. Hale is not only one of the nation's most notorious white supremacists, he is the head of the World Church of the Creator. Poynter, however, failed to list this story.

Two days before Poynter excluded the story on Hale, it included a story on Galileo. That's right, Galileo. Someone simply decided to take another cheap shot at the Catholic Church in the pages of the Boston Globe by writing a piece on the early 17th century scientist; Poynter was so obliging it listed the article in the "Clergy Abuse Tracker" section. When we first spotted this story we thought old Galileo had risen

from the dead and returned as a molesting priest. But we were wrong. What actually happened was that Poynter got sloppy and showed its cards.

The Feminist Majority is a well-greased foundation headed by Eleanor Smeal, formerly of the National Organization for Women. Like most radical feminist groups, the Feminist Majority is anti-Catholic. What drives the anti-Catholic animus is, of course, abortion. Quite simply, the passion that the pro-abortion activists have for their cause is so intense and consuming that it often spills over into bigotry when challenged.

On its home webpage, the Feminist Majority lists under "Feminist News" news articles of interest to its members. For instance, at the end of January it drew attention to articles on "Women Sue AT&T for Contraceptive Coverage," "Title IX Commission To Meet on Final Recommendations: Women's Groups to Hold Rally," etc. But it also drew attention to a piece that had absolutely nothing to do with its mission: "Alleged Victims Call for Resignation of New Hampshire Bishop."

This was not an error, per se, but it was an example of how the Feminist Majority showed its cards. Some official in the organization thought it necessary to inform her supporters that another bishop was in trouble with his flock. Why? Because bad news about the Catholic Church is good news to its enemies.

The Freedom from Religion Foundation did something similar. Consider that its mission is allegedly to keep America free by defending separation of church and state. On its home webpage it lists various thematic issues of interest to its allies, most of which make sense given its goal. "The Case Against School Prayer," "Abortion is a Blessing," and "What's Wrong With the Ten Commandments" are the kinds of themes we would expect from an organization titled Freedom from Religion Foundation (though by actually declaring abortion to be a

“blessing,” it proves beyond doubt that “pro-choice” is a misnomer—“pro-abortion” is more accurate).

There was one listing, however, that didn’t make sense from a First Amendment perspective and that was “The Scandal of Pedophilia in the Church.” But it does make sense once we understand that, with the Feminist Majority, the Freedom from Religion Foundation is marked by an unabiding hostility to the Catholic Church. To say they like the scandal is an understatement—they love it.

We look at it this way: by tipping their hand, we can read their cards. This is not without consequence. As a matter of fact, to the extent that knowledge is power it can rightly be said that the Church’s adversaries have empowered the Catholic League.