

THE ROLE OF GAYS, CELIBACY AND THE MEDIA IN THE CHURCH SEX ABUSE SCANDAL

In response to multiple media requests on the role of gays, celibacy and the media in the current Church scandal, Catholic League president William Donohue issued the following statement today:

“It is wrong to say that the sex abuse scandal in the Church can be rationally discussed without mentioning the role that sexually active homosexuals have played. It has been substantial. But it is important to emphasize that it is simplistic and diversionary to argue that gays are the problem. The problem is a relaxation of disciplinary measures and an astounding lack of courage on the part of many clerics. It is our hope that every aspect of this problem will surface, otherwise no progress will be made. To the extent that a discussion of the role that sexually active homosexuals evolves into a gay-bashing exercise, the Catholic League will fight it. Bigotry of all stripes is intolerable.

“The best evidence suggests that the rate of priest pedophilia is about the same as found among the clergy of other religions. It runs between 2 and 5 percent. The rate in the general adult population is 8 percent. Given this data it is not easy to demonstrate that celibacy is the problem. Indeed, the Anglican dioceses in British Columbia are going bankrupt because so many ministers can't keep their hands to themselves. And these men are married.

“The media did not cause this problem. The Catholic Church brought it on herself. These wounds are self-inflicted. Most of the hard-news reporting on TV and in newspapers has been fair, as have the editorials. But too many columnists and

cartoonists are literally out of control with their raging bigotry.

“The extent and depth of this problem is awesome. It is the Cross Christ gave to the Catholic Church during Lent. But while the Cross signifies death, it also signifies resurrection and redemption. Look for the Church to rebound once it faces up to this crisis.”

CHURCH SCANDAL IS FODDER FOR AGENDA ACTIVISTS

Those with an agenda are taking advantage of the sex abuse scandal in the Catholic Church. Catholic League president William Donohue spoke to this issue today:

“For a very long time, those on the far right and the far left have greeted bad news about the Church’s sex abuse scandals as good news. The former say we’ve had too many reforms and the latter say we’ve had too few. Both act more like gnostics than learned men.

“So-called progressive Catholics have been the most vocal lately. Virtually every Catholic dissident organization has been pressing for widespread reforms. Most prominent have been Call to Action, Catholics Speak Out, Celibacy is the Issue, CORPUS, Dignity, New Ways Ministry, Rent a Priest and Women’s Ordination Conference. They all reject the Church’s teachings on celibacy and women’s ordination. Indeed, they don’t agree with the Church on anything from abortion to homosexuality.

“Anti-Catholic groups like Catholics for a Free Choice have

kept a low profile, but the Feminist Majority has not. Catholic basher Georgie Ann Geyer has taken the opportunity to accuse the Church of conducting a 'ruthless campaign' against family planning. Eileen McNamara of the *Boston Globe* says the pope must resign. Gloria Steinem blames patriarchy for the scandal contending this was the same structure that gave us Hitler. And Anna Quindlen points the finger at the Church's 'preoccupation with the sins of the flesh.'

"These are the voices of exasperation. Having lost most battles, they think now is the time to get what they've always wanted—a world where sexual freedom is unlimited and negative consequences are unknown. It is fantasy land they live in: were it not for their arrogance they would know that libertinism kills. It kills spiritually, morally, psychologically and physically. It is not sexual reticence that has delivered the sex abuse scandal—it is sexual license."

PETA CAN'T SELL ITS ANTI-DAIRY MESSAGE WITHOUT BASHING CATHOLICS

The People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) has opened a new advertising campaign that shows the Virgin Mary breast-feeding baby Jesus. The inscription at the top reads "If It Was Good Enough for Jesus..."; just below it is "The Breast Is Best—DumpDairy.com."

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

“In 1996, PETA libeled Boys Town, the famous Catholic home for troubled boys, with false accusations that it was home to a pedophile ring; the animal-rights group objected to animal research that was being done at Boys Town. In 1997, it continued its war against Boys Town when some of its members dressed as Satan while screaming from the roof of the hospital. In 2000, it withdrew its ‘Jesus Was a Vegetarian’ campaign after Priests of the Sacred Heart protested. Also in 2000, PETA showed the Shroud of Turin on a poster with the words, ‘Make a Lasting Impression—Go Vegetarian.’ Now it’s back again.

“Our Blessed Mother means a great deal to Catholics. We do not look kindly on those who seek to make a cheap point at our expense in order to advance their mad animal-rights crusade.

“Animals are entitled to our protective welfare—they are incapable of possessing rights because their inability to think disqualifies them as moral agents. That’s one thing that the leadership of PETA has in common with their precious salamanders—an inability to think. But just because passion has overcome their faculty of reason is no justification for not holding them responsible for their actions.

“What these stiffies need is an old-fashioned Irish remedy—a shot of whiskey in milk. The whiskey will lighten them up and the milk will do wonders for their sickly condition.”

CATHOLIC BASHERS DELIVER EASTER MESSAGE

Catholic-bashing events are scheduled for Easter in Washington, D.C., Arlington, Texas, and San Francisco,

California.

On Easter Sunday, the Source Theatre Company in Washington, D.C., will host the Terrence McNally play "Corpus Christi." It depicts Christ having sex with the 12 apostles. The play runs Sundays through Wednesdays through April 10.

Theatre Arlington in Arlington, Texas, will begin hosting the play "Do Black Patent Leather Shoes Really Reflect Up" on Good Friday. It will also run on Easter, ending April 28. The play is advertised as a "Catholic School-Spoofing Musical" and "an irreverent romp."

The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, a group of San Francisco homosexuals dressed as nuns, will celebrate Easter with an "Indulgence in the Park." They will feature a "clown-drag-nun" fundraiser and a "Hunky Jesus" contest. On Good Friday they will have a "traditional observance of Very Good Friday" with "scantily clad men."

Catholic League president William Donohue spoke to these events today:

"Easter is too irresistible a holiday for anti-Catholics not to bash. This year's targets include Christ, Catholic schools and nuns. While putting these events on at any time of the year is sick, it takes a particularly disturbed individual to celebrate Easter this way. It would be like dissing Jews on Yom Kippur, ridiculing blacks on Martin Luther King Day or mocking homosexuals on Gay Pride Day.

"How neat it would be to hire a private eye to trail those in attendance at these three events. Catholics need to know who their enemy is. But who needs private eyes when we already know who it is: well-educated agnostics, atheists and embittered ex-Catholics who sip latte, hang-out in library carrels and have an aversion to makeup (save for going in drag)."

FEMINIST BIGOTS ARE BURSTING OUT ALL OVER

The sex abuse scandal in the Catholic Church has provoked a torrent of criticism, much of it fair. But there has also been an explosion of bigotry, some of which is coming from the ranks of radical feminists. Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

“On March 20, Maureen Dowd of the *New York Times* went ballistic putting the Catholic Church in the same camp with the Taliban and Al Queda. Today, syndicated gossip columnist Liz Smith says that Dowd deserves a Pulitzer Prize for those remarks. Smith added that Dowd’s ‘stunning column may have done more for the cause of women than the entire feminist attitude in the world.’

“In the March 25 edition of the *Nation*, Margaret Spillane accused the Boston hierarchy of ‘treating women as contaminants and children as invisible,’ maintaining that the ‘real goal’ of Boston Archbishop Bernard Cardinal Law is to ‘make a permanent move to Rome as the first American Pope.’

“Even in the asylum such voices would not be heard. But the fact that they are coming from mainstream journalists is revealing.

“Radical feminists have long hated the Catholic Church. Their agenda has never been the interests of housewives or working mothers. Their agenda has always been a lust for power coupled with an embrace of the most libertine conceptions of sexuality. Angry with nature and with nature’s God, they see the Catholic Church as the last bastion of traditional morality. Therefore, the Church must fall.

"The Catholic Church has weathered many storms in 2000 years. Some of its wounds have been self-inflicted and some have been the result of unrelieved bigotry. Dowd, Smith and Spillane are wrong, however, in thinking that they will end up on the winning side. Lay Catholics have got their number. In once sense they've done us a favor: they've cleared the battlefield of all camouflage."

PRIESTS UNDER SIEGE: THE MEDIA'S ROLE

Reports are surfacing that many Catholic priests are under siege in the wake of the sex abuse scandal in the Catholic Church. Catholic League president William Donohue commented on this phenomenon today:

"Virtually every priest I know is very angry over the sex abuse scandal in the Church. They are good men who would never commit or countenance evil acts against children or adolescents. But they also object, quite rightfully so, to feeling under siege. Take, for example, the instances cited today in the *New York Post's* front-page story. Priests are being verbally attacked in public and are the object of invective. Similar stories have come to my attention.

"The media have an obligation to expose scandal, whether it be in the Catholic Church or in government. Most have acted responsibly. But some are actively feeding the problem. For example, in the 'Page Six' section of today's *New York Post*, there is a vicious cartoon showing a priest in the confessional smoking a cigarette, with a bottle of booze next to him and his pants down around his ankles. On the other

side of the screen is a boy who asks, 'Anything yuh wanna confess to me?' Evidently, the *New York Post* hasn't figured it out: the very problem of priests under siege it decries is a function, in part, of its own tolerance for Catholic-baiting.

"Speaking of cartoons, cagle.com lists hundreds of professional cartoons. The ones that depict Protestants, Jews and Muslims are mostly innocent jabs. The ones that depict gays are either innocuous or deride anti-gays. And then there's Catholics. On the front page it lists a special section called 'Pedophile.' There are 18 cartoons of a sweeping nature condemning all priests.

"On September 11, 29 Muslims attacked the U.S. And the first thing out of every leader's mouth was to admonish Americans not to blame all Muslims for the deeds of a few. Fine. But when it comes to a tiny minority of rotten priests, it's okay to slam them all. Which only proves that anti-Catholicism is the nation's biggest prejudice."

RIGHTEOUS ANGER DOESN'T JUSTIFY USING RICO

It is alleged that thirty-two years ago a man (whose identity is unknown) was sexually abused by former bishop Anthony O'Connell; O'Connell recently resigned as Bishop of Palm Beach after admitting he abused a teenager, Christopher Dixon, in the 1970s. The man who is filing suit is suing O'Connell and the three dioceses where he worked: Jefferson City, Missouri; Knoxville, Tennessee; and Palm Beach, Florida. The bishop and the three dioceses are being sued under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO).

Catholic League president William Donohue spoke to this issue today:

“If I were abused by a priest I would sue him. Fortunately, almost all the priests I know are good men. But some, as Cardinal O’Connor admitted, are evil.

“Righteous anger, however, doesn’t justify the use of RICO. G. Robert Blakely, the Notre Dame professor who wrote the law, said it was aimed at organized crime. Notwithstanding its intent, RICO has become one of the most free-wielding legal clubs of our time. It has been used by the ACLU to punish pro-life activists who were simply invoking their First Amendment right to freedom of speech. Interestingly, although RICO was written to stop the kind of racketeering that exists in the pornography industry, the ACLU has recommended against using it on the war on pornography. In short, this is the wrong remedy for an admittedly outrageous crime.

“As the sex abuse scandal in the Catholic Church unfolds, it is important that people cool their jets. Just as it is wrong for the guilty to go free, it is equally important that the innocent not be punished. To sue the three dioceses where O’Connell worked is wrong: the men and women who work there should not pay for the sins of their former priest. Casting the net too wide is just as bad as dropping it altogether.”

DID THE POPE BREAK HIS SILENCE ON SEX ABUSE CASES?

The media are reporting that Pope John Paul II broke his silence on the sex abuse scandal in the Roman Catholic Church. William Donohue commented on these reports today:

“In August 1993, Pope John Paul II ventured to Denver for World Youth Day. Without equivocation, and in direct response to the problem of priest pedophilia, he said, ‘I have already written to the bishops of the United States about the pain of the suffering and scandal caused by the sins of some ministers of the order.’ Yet today many in the media are going ballistic with their invented news that the pope has finally broken his silence about this problem. Those guilty include the print and electronic media, wire services and internet news sites.

“There is a reason for this hyperventilation: for some in the media, bad news about the Catholic Church is good news for them. Who cares about the facts? So what if the pope has addressed this issue many times, extending back nine years? It’s good for ratings and sales to float the idea that the Holy Father just woke up yesterday.

“Every Catholic I know—priest, religious or layperson—is furious about this problem. But they are just as furious about those pundits and media outlets that seek to exploit this issue to serve their own agenda. Ditto for those activists who hate the Church, including those Catholics with one foot out the door.

“The Catholic League wants an open and honest discussion of all the permutations coloring this issue. Underline all.”

IRISH-CATHOLIC PUNDITS TAKE AIM AT CATHOLICISM

In the past week, several Irish-Catholic pundits have commented on the sexual misconduct scandal in the Catholic

Church. Catholic League president William Donohue has been tracking this and offered the following comments today:

"William F. Buckley Jr., William Bennett, Patrick Buchanan and Pete Hamill are understandably upset with the Church scandal. But all have written responsibly on the subject. Unfortunately, some Irish Catholics have let their Irish get the best of them.

"On March 17, Bill O'Reilly wrote in the *New York Post* that the current problems are due to the fact that the Catholic Church 'is a dictatorship.' He's off by 180 degrees. It is precisely the opposite condition that prevails: it is the unwillingness to enforce the most elementary rules—touching virtually every aspect of the clergy, religious and laity—that is driving the problem. Bill's head is still in the 1950s and early 1960s.

"On March 19, Jimmy Breslin in *Newsday* offered kudos to a priest buddy of his who violated his vow of celibacy by deceitfully getting married and is now on his way out the door. In the same column, Breslin writes of the 'insane doctrine of celibacy.' In short, if Breslin and his priest buddies disagree with a teaching of the Church, the Church should change and his buddies should stay. Perhaps he might try violating one of the house rules at *Newsday* and see how long he lasts.

"Michael Kelly in today's *Washington Post* talks of 'the systematic corruption of the Catholic Church.' He obviously never heard of Bishop Wuerl of Pittsburgh and many like him who have successfully dealt with sexual misconduct issues. But perhaps his ignorance is deliberate.

"For sheer lunacy, there's Maureen Dowd. In today's *New York Times*, she compares the Church to the Taliban and Al Queda. I pray there's an empty bed in a nearby asylum."

NOW CHIEF KIM GANDY REVEALS HER BIAS

On March 20, National Organization for Women president Kim Gandy will speak at her alma mater, Loyola Law School in New Orleans. The local bishop, Archbishop Alfred Hughes, is opposed to her speaking engagement, citing her commitment to abortion rights as contrary to the Church's teachings. Gandy, in return, has accused the archbishop of "urging my law school to do away with traditional academic freedom of speech and replace the free exchange of ideas with religious doctrine." She added, "I imagine that Archbishop Hughes finds this flame-throwing a welcome relief from the heat of Church cover-ups of pedophilia."

Catholic League president William Donohue sounded off on this today:

"Nazi deniers are not welcome to speak at Yeshiva University, racists are not welcome to speak at Howard University and abortion-rights activists are not welcome to speak at Catholic universities. But in fact Kim Gandy is going to speak at a Catholic university. So much for the myth that the Catholic Church is a dictatorship. In any event, Archbishop Hughes is wholly within his rights in objecting to Gandy's speaking engagement: he no doubt would object if an anti-Semite or racist were invited to speak as well.

"In the last month, we learned that Laura Bush was forced to withdraw from speaking at UCLA because some faculty members objected to her views. Similarly, we learned that an orchestrated attempt is being made to unseat SUNY trustee Candace deRussy because some faculty members don't like her

views. Yet those making the objections are rarely accused of stifling free speech. The double standard never ends.

“Gandy revealed her hand with her snide remark about the protest against her being a ‘welcome relief from the heat of Church cover-ups of pedophilia.’ We have news for her: no matter how bad problems are in the Church, the Catholic League will not allow bigots like her to make us a punching bag. We’re in this fight for the long run.”