

FABRICATING OPPOSITION TO JOHN PAUL II

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the reaction to the beatification of Pope John Paul II on May 1:

The worldwide reaction to the beatification of John Paul II, from all quarters, is overwhelmingly enthusiastic. But one would never know this if one's bible were the *New York Times*. Today, it reported that the beatification "has become intensely polarizing." With good reason, it offers no survey data: polls show 90 percent of Catholics approve and so do most non-Catholics. So on what basis does it make such an extraordinary statement? Amazingly, it doesn't even quote a single individual or organization! All it does is fall back on the proverbial, "critics say" line of journalism.

John Allen, normally reliable, isn't much better. He says, "I am aware that there's some ambivalence" about the process. Sure he is aware of some consternation—he obviously reads the newspaper he writes for, namely, the *National Catholic Reporter* (it has become so violently critical of the Catholic Church that it has undermined its own credibility as a serious Catholic organ). As evidence to support the "ambivalence" thesis, Allen cites an angry ex-nun. So what else is new?

So who else thinks John Paul unworthy? Well, we have the ultra-leftist *Nation* magazine, the near-defunct *Time* magazine and the ever-critical Huffington Post. Then there is the usual stable of carping Catholics: Maureen Dowd, James Carroll and Rev. Richard McBrien (the pope had "a terrible record").

One final note. In making his case against John Paul II, author Jason Berry says that when accusations were made against the disgraced late priest, Father Maciel (who admittedly hoodwinked the pope), I "responded immediately with a letter to the *Courant*, scoffing at the allegations." Berry knows this is a lie, and that's because I previously gave him the evidence. What I contested was whether, as alleged, Pope

Pius XII not only gave Maciel the green light to have sex with seminarians, he recommended doing so for the purpose of relieving “physical pain.” Now if Berry believes that, he needs to see a shrink.

BISHOPS INDICTED BY JUDGE “REFORMER”

Catholic League president Bill Donohue responds to a column in today’s *Chicago Tribune* by Judge Anne Burke, former interim chairwoman of the National Review Board (an agency established by the bishops’ conference to monitor priestly sexual abuse):

Anne Burke misrepresents the situation in the Philadelphia Archdiocese, and indicts every bishop in the United States.

Burke’s accusation of a cover-up in Philadelphia is factually wrong and morally scurrilous: she cites 24 priests who are accused of wrongdoing, never mentioning that most of them were previously investigated and allowed to stay in ministry (unlike others who did not pass muster with earlier probes), precisely because the charges were unsubstantiated. The only reason they are being reinvestigated is because the Philadelphia Archdiocese decided this was the proper response to resurrected accusations made in a *third* grand jury report.

Burke makes it sound as if the Archdiocese is comfortable with allowing molesters to walk the streets of Philadelphia. This is a smear. She also gives the impression that all of these priests are guilty of some serious crime. Truth to tell, none has been found guilty of anything, and many of the accusations are more absurd than they are serious.

If this isn’t bad enough, Burke indicts every bishop in the nation. “This makes me wonder what kind of people we are dealing with when we engage the bishops?” Her conclusion: “Are

they ever to be trusted?" Her statement is unqualified, demagogic and irresponsible.

This is nothing new. In 2006, Burke justified removing priests from ministry on the basis of *one unsubstantiated accusation*: "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." Burke's problem extends beyond the Catholic Church—she has a problem with the U.S. Constitution.

MORE DECEIT FROM VOTF

Catholic League president Bill Donohue addresses the response by Voice of the Faithful (VOTF) to our April 25 news release:

Charged by the Catholic League at the beginning of the week with deceit, VOTF answers at the end of the week with more deceit.

After being contacted last week by Philadelphia priests about a "survey" sent by VOTF, we wrote to over 900 priests in the Philadelphia Archdiocese letting them know of our support in fighting this dissident Catholic group. Earlier in the month, VOTF had the nerve to inform these priests that if they did not respond to its "survey" asking them to support its position calling for the abolition of the statute of limitations for sexual abuse, they would be listed as not supporting this revision in Pennsylvania law. In other words, if they don't respond, they will be condemned for resisting reforms.

In a news release issued yesterday, VOTF went on the defensive but never addressed our central concern, namely, the bogus nature of this so-called survey. How telling. Instead of directly challenging us, it deceitfully skirted the issue.

Their “survey,” of course, is nothing but a sham.

VOTF members, as disclosed in a real survey a few years ago, is mostly comprised of elderly Irish men and women who, despite earning on average over \$100,000 a year, do not support their own organization (only 25 percent donate money). Maybe that is why VOTF, which likes to lecture the Catholic Church on finances, is collapsing under financial duress (it is sorely in debt). That it is morally bankrupt as well is beyond dispute.

Contact VOTF leader Nick Ingala: nickingala@votf.org

LADY GAGA’S EPIPHANY

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a video clip from the May 7 HBO documentary, “Lady Gaga Presents The Monster Ball Tour: At Madison Square Garden”:

After criticizing Lady Gaga for tweaking Catholic sensibilities with her Easter present—releasing “Judas,” her single from *Born This Way*—we are now in a position to say something positive about the addleheaded culture queen. A clip from her upcoming HBO documentary, readily available online, offers a new look at her. Shown applying makeup backstage before a recent Madison Square Garden event, and obviously distraught, she starts out angry but then segues into a confessional stance: she prays to God in a manner that cannot be staged. Indeed, her sincerity shines through.

Lady Gaga begins her prayer with reverence, offering, “Dear Lord, thank you so much for the blessings of all my friends, my fans, and my family.” Shortly thereafter she says, “Dear Lord, please give me strength to be a winner for all of them and not for myself. Dear Lord, remind me to empower not myself but to empower all those people around me because that is my

gift.” She then asks God for courage, begging, “Do not let me give in to my own insecurities. Allow me to walk in Your way.”

Is this Lady Gaga’s epiphany moment? It may be. One thing is for sure: she has not lost her Catholic roots. In fact, the belligerence of her opening statement, coupled with her unhappy demeanor, contrasts sharply with her prayerful and peaceful exit.

We hope this is not just a convenient pivot. We hope Lady Gaga sets anchor in the religion of her upbringing and finds lasting peace. We wish her well. And, yes, the offer to buy her a beer—promised last week on TV—still stands.

Contact HBO co-president Richard Plepler praising him for including this prayerful statement: richard.plepler@hbo.com

PHILLY PRIESTS SENT BOGUS SURVEY

The Greater Philadelphia chapter of Voice of the Faithful is the subject of this commentary by Catholic League president Bill Donohue:

Voice of the Faithful is a dissident Catholic group that has now launched an agenda to manipulate priests and the public in the Philadelphia area. It recently sent a letter to the 900-plus priests in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia asking them to agree with its position that Pennsylvania lawmakers should abolish the statute of limitations for sexual abuse, opening a two-year window for civil suits.

The letter by Marita Green of the Steering Committee has the audacity to say that supporting its position is a “measure of

integrity.” Included is a “survey” which asks priests whether they agree with its stance. To top things off, it explicitly says that “the number [of postcards] that are not returned will be recorded as votes against abolishing the statute-of-limitations shield.”

How cute. If priests do not agree with those whose goal it is to selectively bankrupt the archdiocese for incidents that allegedly occurred decades ago, they are to be branded heartless. That’s what this is all about. Voice of the Faithful is deliberately trying to engineer this “survey” so that it can go to the media “demonstrating” how few priests of “integrity” there are in the Philadelphia area. But it won’t work—the Catholic League has already sabotaged this effort.

After a priest sent us the correspondence from Voice of the Faithful last week, we mailed the 900-plus priests in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia a letter designed to short-circuit this agenda (click [here](#)). We are happy to report that several priests left messages on our answering machine over the weekend, and faxed us letters commending us for our work.

Catholics were rightfully angry when they learned about the sexual abuse scandal a decade ago. But now their anger is turning on those whose passion for revenge has nothing to do with justice; it’s all about settling old scores. We will fight these demagogues to the end.

CATHOLICS FOR CHOICE LIES

Catholic League president Bill Donohue addresses a Catholics for Choice workshop scheduled for April 28 at Planned Parenthood of Collier County, Florida:

Catholics for Choice has twice been condemned by the bishops' conference as a fraud—there is nothing Catholic about it. Indeed, it has never raised as much as a dime from practicing Catholics, relying almost exclusively on donations from the Ford Foundation and other establishment groups. Its agenda—to champion child abuse in the womb—is anything but Catholic. But it is fitting that Planned Parenthood, the captain of the abortion industry, is hosting this workshop.

The Diocese of Venice in Florida has it exactly right when it declares that this event is “an attempt to distort Catholic teaching to advance a particular agenda that is offensive to Catholics and like-minded people of good will.” The central message of Catholics for Choice—“you can be prochoice and Catholic”—carries as much credibility as saying you can be pro-genocide and Catholic.

To say, as they are advertising, that “abortion can be a moral choice,” is to say that the intentional killing of innocent human life can be morally justified. It cannot be, notwithstanding the positions of Catholics for Choice and Planned Parenthood, both of which have a track record that is as deceitful as it is bloody.

TIMES SQUARE NUNS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the response to two Broadway plays depicting nuns:

“Sister Act” opened on Broadway this week, much to the delight of the *New York Times*. The script, however, was shallow. We’re being nice. The *Times*, in characteristic form, was not. Charles Isherwood couldn’t resist throwing a sucker punch, noting that “this sentimental story of a bad girl showing the

good sisters how to get down has *all the depth of a communion wafer, and possibly a little less bite.*" Which only goes to show that even when a play about nuns does not offend, there is no guarantee that some critics won't find an opportunity to do so.

Another play, "High," features a recovering alcoholic, gutter-mouth nun, the kind of sister that warms the heart of Broadway aficionados. Though Kathleen Turner manages to keep her clothes on for a change, she wishes someone could have dressed up the score: the play opened April 19, and a week later it was announced that its last performance will be this Sunday. Evidently, we can't blame Turner. Here is what Matthew Lombardo, the play's creator, said in response to why he chose Turner: "In a word, I needed a broad, and when you think of a broad, you think of Kathleen Turner." But I guess this broad didn't cut it as a nun.

In case the snickering class wants to meet real nuns, we suggest they check out the Sisters of Life. They are in sharp contrast to the Times Square nuns featured on Broadway, and quite unlike their imposters, they know how to succeed without denigrating themselves.

EASTER BRINGS OUT THE CRAZIES

Catholic League president Bill Donohue notices how the crazies always surface at Eastertime:

Consider the Easter gifts Christians have been graced with this year:

- Ricky Gervais felt the need to offer a very public “Holiday Message,” notifying the world that though he is not a Christian, he is a very Christ-like person. It is revealing that this British atheist couldn’t find a single secular humanist to model himself after.
- Lady Gaga, who admits to being “confused” about religion, offered more proof of her addled state by choosing to release her single, “Judas,” this weekend. It begins with, “I’m in love with Judas.”
- Third graders at a Seattle school were told they must call Easter Eggs “Spring Spheres,” though the kids refused to cooperate.
- Adults in Munson Township, Ohio were ordered to call their Easter Egg Hunt the Egg Hunt. Watch for it to be banned next year.
- Filmmaker Simcha Jacobovici, who a few years ago entertained us with the hoax about Jesus’ tomb, is back again, this time claiming he found two nails used to crucify Jesus. He is looking in vain to find an archaeologist who might believe him.
- Evangelist Rob Bell made the cover of *Time*, and that’s because they like his “Happy Meal” approach to Christianity: sin and evil don’t exist, just sugar and spice and everything nice.
- On Good Friday, James Frey—the same guy Oprah sized up as a fraud—will introduce his book, *The Final Testament of the Holy Bible*: he portrays Jesus as an alcoholic who lives in a filthy Bronx apartment, smokes dope, kisses men and impregnates prostitutes. Frey is agnostic on the question of whether Jesus ever worked for the *New York Times*.

Contrary to our skeptics, we don’t make these things up—we just note them.

NEW QUESTIONS ABOUT SNAP PSYCHIATRIST

Bill Donohue comments on today's *Times-Picayune* article on Louisiana psychiatrist Dr. Steve Taylor and his association with the Survivors Network for those Abused by Priests (SNAP):

Dr. Steve Taylor, who is sitting in prison after pleading guilty to charges of accessing kiddie porn, seems to have a very curious mindset, and an even more curious relationship with SNAP. At first, he said he downloaded the child porn for "scientific" purposes—he wanted to see what interested pedophiles. Then he said he never obtained such fare, going so far as to say he didn't recall ever admitting to doing so in the first place. But when his lawyer told him they had him dead to right, his slippery memory snapped back in place, just in time to cop a plea.

Now it may be that Dr. Taylor's memory is organically flawed: he has been working only half-days since he suffered a head injury in 1968 (the State Board of Medical Examiners made this call when it was determined that his judgment becomes impaired after four hours). In any event, in 2010 board members sanctioned him after they concluded he was a kiddie porn aficionado; he had previously been sanctioned for drug use, dementia, and other maladies.

What has not been determined is whether his suspect mental faculties (combined with his hatred of the Catholic Church, e.g., he wanted to bust the seal of confession) worked against the due process of rights of priests whom he pursued while working with SNAP. As it turns out, Taylor's wife, the former Lyn Hill Hayward, founded the local SNAP chapter, and it was that affiliate which he served. For her part, she claims she was once abused by a priest friend of hers: they were such good friends that eight years after the alleged abuse, he

officiated her marriage. It is not a giant leap of faith to wonder whether all of these factors compromised the rights of priests.

Nothing less than full disclosure of the contents of all records detailing the proceedings between Dr. Taylor and his SNAP clients will satisfy. We also need to know whether he and his wife violated conflict of interest standards. SNAP records should also be disclosed.

SPIKE IN FALSE CLAIMS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the spike in false claims made against priests:

The report on clergy abuse was released a week ago today, and for some reason, there has been virtually no reporting on what may be the most important finding of them all: the 42 percent increase in accusations found to be unsubstantiated or false. The number of such claims jumped from 12 percent in 2009 to 17 percent in 2010, the largest, by far, in any one year.

The report does not say what accounts for the sharp increase, so it cannot be said with certainty what is causing it. But if I had to guess, it has to do with one thing: the word is out that the clock is ticking, so if someone wants to cash in with a bogus claim, he had better come forward before it's too late.

Whatever the cause is, it puts priests in jeopardy: all it takes is for someone to drop a dime, make up an accusation, and hire a lawyer on a contingency fee basis. The beauty of it all is that his true identity will not be disclosed publicly; he will be assigned the name John Doe 101, and the accused will not know who he really is. Better yet, the priest may already be dead.

A more aggressive approach by the dioceses is badly needed. False claimants should be sued for perjury and slander. Not until these "victims" pay a price for their maliciousness will justice be done.

Shame on the media for ignoring this story.