

FR. GROESCHEL UNDER FIRE



Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on remarks made by Father Benedict Groeschel in the *National Catholic Register* regarding the sexual abuse of minors:

A quarter century ago, Father Groeschel and seven other priests broke away from a religious community to found the Franciscan Friars of Renewal. His service to the Church over the past half-century has been nothing less than heroic. His ministry to the least among us is especially noteworthy.

Father Groeschel holds a Ph.D. in psychology from Columbia University, and has put his training to work by counseling some of the most mentally and socially challenged people in our society. In addition, for the past four decades he has been screening men for the priesthood, weeding out those who should not be ordained. His record is impressive.

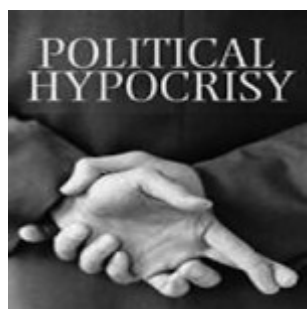
In a recent interview, he *hypothesized* how a young person (14, 16 or 18, as he put it) could conceivably take advantage of a priest who was having a nervous breakdown. He also referred to Jerry Sandusky, the disgraced Penn State football coach, as “this poor guy.” For these remarks, and related comments, he is now being labeled as a defender of child abuse.

The accusation is scurrilous. In the same interview, Groeschel emphatically said that priests who are sexual abusers “have to leave.” His reference to Sandusky was exactly the way a priest-psychologist might be expected to speak: “poor guy” conveys sympathy for his maladies—it is not a defense of his behavior! Indeed, Groeschel asked, “Why didn’t anyone say anything?”

Groeschel is nearly 80 years old. A few years back, he was

almost killed in an auto accident that left him disabled; it has definitely taken a toll on him. I have known him for two decades, and recently spent an afternoon with him. I've read his books, listened to his tapes—on sexual abuse—and have come to know a great priest. To condemn him for one part of one interview is wholly unjust.

NYS POLS AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT



Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on how the New York State Legislature is handling charges of sexual harassment against Brooklyn Assemblyman Vito Lopez:

Assemblyman Lopez says he is innocent of physically abusing female aides. I have no way of telling. He is also charged with giving hush money. The real issue for the Catholic League is the incredible duplicity at work: we have one rule for priests accused of sexual abuse, and another for lawmakers.

The New York Archdiocese, following the rules established by the bishops' conference, makes it clear that it must "cooperate with public authorities about reporting cases [of sexual abuse] even when the person is no longer a minor." That's what "zero tolerance" means.

Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver says, "The Assembly has a zero tolerance policy when it comes to sexual harassment." Really? Then why weren't the cops called? Why did he not initially insist, as he was supposed to do, that the case be given to

the Assembly Ethics Commission? Instead, he apologizes for not doing so, while still insisting that what he did was “both legally correct and ethical.”

Why did Silver allow what is arguably a criminal case to be handled internally by his colleagues? After all, the Assembly policy on sexual harassment in the workplace explicitly says it “is against the law.”

If a priest were accused of sliding his hand up a woman’s dress, as Lopez has (he is accused of many more offenses), and this were treated as an internal matter by the archdiocese, lawmakers would go ballistic. Yet when it comes to one of their own, they are content to do very little: Lopez’s initial punishment consisted of things like cutting his budget, and ordering him and his staff to attend classes on sexual harassment.

What is needed is a “zero tolerance” policy for lawmakers modeled on the one adopted by the bishops.

ATHEIST AGAINST ATHEIST



Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the battle between two national atheist organizations:

A war has broken out between the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) and American Atheists. It’s over money. Both are appealing to the same small pool of angry nonbelievers, and there is only so much dough to go around. FFRF pulled the trigger.

American Atheists sought to put its vile message on billboards in Tampa and Charlotte, home of the two political conventions. It got shut out of Tampa, and recently said it was pulling its billboards in Charlotte, allegedly because of threats. Enter FFRF: it succeeded in getting its billboards posted in both cities.

So what's the problem? FFRF is furious that many are mistakenly attributing its billboards to American Atheists. FFRF says, "Please do not confuse FFRF's billboard message with that of another atheist group, which tried unsuccessfully to place a very different message in Tampa, and which has voluntarily removed its billboards in Charlotte." In other words, FFRF wants the credit, and the cash that goes with it.

FFRF is right about one thing: the messages are not identical. American Atheists sought to dump on Mormons and Christians, saving its most vicious comments for the latter (notice it didn't rip on Jews or Muslims). The Christian God, it said, was "Sadistic," the product of a "Useless Savior" who "Promotes Hate." Well, they would certainly know something about hate. By contrast FFRF's message is not hate-filled: it simply says, "God Fixation Won't Fix This Nation." This may be moronic, but it is not negative; it is vintage fare from the hapless ones.

How effective are these ads? The Republicans are largely composed of the faithful, and the Democrats are largely populated by secularists; the former won't convert and the latter already have. So why bother? To insult the Republicans and loot Dems. Believe it.

TRYING TO SILENCE BISHOP CORDILEONE



Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the DUI arrest of Oakland Bishop Salvatore Cordileone, the archbishop-elect of San Francisco:

Bishop Cordileone was stopped at a DUI checkpoint in San Diego last weekend; he was arrested after it was determined that his blood-alcohol level was above the legal limit. He has since apologized.

This won't be the end of this story, but not because of what happened. What counts is who it happened to. It just so happens that Cordileone holds orthodox Catholic positions on sexuality, the kind of views hated by both secularists and left-wing Catholics. Consider Michael Sean Winters of the dissident weekly, the *National Catholic Reporter*.

Winters, like a lot of embittered Catholic "progressives," is obsessed with homosexuality. That is why he was unable to write one paragraph in his screed against Cordileone without mentioning this subject. The context? Winters wants the bishop to "think with greater compassion about the complicated lives we all lead today." He also wants the bishop to show an "appropriate [sic] humility and humanness." All of this is code for "shut up and leave the culture to us."

Gay blog sites have also picked up on this theme. Why? San Francisco is a city where men [read: gays] are free to walk around naked in the street in front of women and children. They can even walk into McDonalds totally nude and park

themselves next to Ronald McDonald, provided, the law says, they place a towel on their seat (hygiene matters). Next month homosexuals will whip each other in the street and have sex in public at the Folsom Street Fair. This is the city that Cordileone will soon inherit.

Winters, and his ilk, want nothing more than to intimidate Bishop Cordileone. They know he is bright, courageous and faithful to the teachings of the Catholic Church. That is why they would like to silence him, especially on sexual issues. We stand with Bishop Cordileone and urge him not to break stride. We are confident he will not.

DOLAN TO CLOSE DEM CONVENTION



Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the news that Timothy Cardinal Dolan will give benediction at the Democratic National Convention (DNC):

Over the past week, Cardinal Dolan has been hammered by liberals for accepting an invitation to give benediction at the Republican National Convention (RNC). Now that he will close both conventions, they look even more foolish. Here's a sample of what Dolan's critics have said.

Andrew Sullivan called Dolan "The Republican Party Cardinal." The *Boston Herald's* Margery Eagan called him an "opportunist." Mike D'Antonio at the Huffington Post accused Dolan of "leading the bishops in a partisan direction." John Gehring of Faith & Public Life said he was "baptizing the Republican nominee." Mike O'Loughlin at *America* accused him of "being a

skill for the GOP.” The *National Catholic Reporter* said Dolan was “playing a dangerous game.” Sarah Posner at Salon said Dolan’s acceptance “solidifies a partisan partnership between the GOP and the Bishops.” Niall O’Dowd at the *Irish Voice* said his presence “is a dog whistle to all Catholics out there to support the GOP candidates.” And the *Los Angeles Times* editorialized that Dolan has “placed his imprimatur” on the Republican strategy.

The fundamental difference between Cardinal Dolan and these critics comes down to one thing: he is a man of principle and they don’t know how to spell the word. He invited President Obama to the Al Smith Dinner, knowing he would receive flak from some on the right. Then he agreed to speak at the RNC, knowing he would be blasted by some on the left. Now he has accepted an invitation to speak at the DNC and none of his critics—on both the left and the right—can figure him out.

What this shows is that Cardinal Dolan is able to rise above the politics of the moment. But to those who view the world exclusively through the lens of power, this is completely unintelligible.

DOLAN REBUFFED BY DEMS



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ANOTHER SUSPECT ABUSE CASE



Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments as follows:

Some guy filed a suit yesterday against the Archdiocese of Chicago claiming he was fondled by an Augustinian brother. But there is more than one reason to question his motives: the accused brother is dead; no complaints had ever been filed against him by anyone; he did not work in the Archdiocese; the “victim” claims he did not recall what happened until 2011; and the alleged abuse occurred some 35 years ago.

Those who have truly been victimized are deserving of justice. But cases like this smack of injustice. Quite frankly, it’s been open season on priests for decades, what with contrived “repressed memory” gimmicks and the like. No wonder the sound

of “ching-ching” can be heard for miles around.

LIBERALS GIVE THE LEAST TO THE POOR



Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a new study on charitable giving released today by the *Chronicle of Philanthropy*:

Liberals are the least likely to help the poor. That's the inescapable conclusion of this new study: states where people participate in religion at a high rate are also the most generous; conversely, the least generous states are also the least religious. Importantly, nine of the ten least generous states voted for Obama in 2008.

This new study is consistent with previous research. Sociologists Mark D. Regnerus and David Sikkink looked at the data gathered by the Religious Identity and Influence Survey and concluded that the more religious a person is, the more likely he is to give to the poor; those who are nonreligious give the least. In his book *Who Really Cares*, Arthur C. Brooks, president of the American Enterprise Institute, examined this issue in depth. He concluded that "Religious people are far more charitable than nonreligious people." Similarly, in their book *American Grace*, David Campbell of Notre Dame and Robert Putnam of Harvard found that religious people are more generous than nonreligious people.

It is well known that liberals are far more likely than conservatives to be nonreligious. It is also well known that

liberals talk endlessly about poverty. Yet in their daily lives they do the least about it: they volunteer the least; they give less blood; they are less likely to help someone find a job; and they donate the least. Their idea of charity is to have the government raise taxes, i.e., take money from others, and spend it on welfare programs.

The data have grave implications this election season. Paul Ryan is being lectured by liberals—the most miserly people in the nation—for not being responsive to the poor. It doesn't get more absurd than this. Not until liberals catch up with conservatives in their charitable giving are they in a position to lecture anyone about the poor.

AL SMITH DINNER SPARKS DEBATE



Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the debate over this year's Al Smith Dinner:

It is customary, though not compulsory, for the New York Archbishop to invite the presidential candidates from the two major political parties to the annual Al Smith Dinner in New York City. This year both candidates will be there. Some are not happy with these choices, especially the decision to invite President Obama. Cardinal Timothy Dolan has not been shy about his criticisms of the Health and Human Services (HHS) mandate, yet he decided to rise above the politics of the moment and allow the presidential candidates to partake in this charitable event.

On the August 9 edition of “Lou Dobbs Tonight” (Fox Business Channel), I vigorously defended Cardinal Dolan’s decision. I talked with him earlier that day about this issue and found, unsurprisingly, that the New York Archbishop wasn’t budging in his conviction that the HHS mandate must be fought with every tool we have. His resolve is unflinching. For me, that was the bottom line. But not for others.

If Catholics want to change the culture, they need to engage it. Practically speaking, this means that we invite local political figures to Midnight Mass at Christmas, regardless of their religion or politics; it means we break bread with our adversaries at commemorative events; it means we fraternize with those with whom we disagree with at city, state and federal functions. It does not mean that we are selling out.

Acting diplomatically may at times make for a hard swallow. But following protocol is not analogous to prostituting one’s principles. As anyone who read Cardinal Dolan’s statement from yesterday knows, he is not caving in; indeed he is incapable of doing so.

Finally, though I am not going to the dinner (I have never been to any of these dinners), my defense of the New York Archbishop has led to a barrage of vile comments directed at me. So be it. But Cardinal Dolan deserves better.

SHOOTING DEMONSTRATES TOXIC ENVIRONMENT



Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on today's shooting at the offices of the Family Research Council:

First and foremost, our thoughts and prayers go out to those affected by the shooting at the Family Research Council.

Early reports indicate that the motives of the shooter are cause for serious concern. One source told Fox News that the suspect "made statements regarding their policies, and then opened fire with a gun striking a security guard." After he was apprehended the suspect said, "It was not about you. It was about what this place stands for."

Is this what we have come to? Has the environment become so toxic that a faith-based organization becomes a target of an attack simply because it holds traditional values on sexuality, marriage and life? Unfortunately it seems that this may be the case.

We hope that this incident is taken seriously. There are still a couple of months to go before the election and signs indicate that they will be contentious. Now is the time for people of goodwill to call for civility and condemn this attack.