

SELECTIVE “VICTIMS” BILL RESURRECTED

✖ Bill Donohue addresses New York State Assemblywoman Margaret Markey's Child Victims Act:

Over the past several years, Markey has introduced legislation addressing the sexual abuse of minors. One problem: her bills focus unfairly on private institutions, leaving public institutions virtually untouched. This year's version of her bill offers no change; it would open up a one-year window for alleged victims who were abused in a private institution regardless of when it took place. But it changes nothing for a victim who was abused in a public school even as recently as Thanksgiving (he only has ninety days to report the abuse).

On Friday, Markey will hold a rally outside City Hall in Manhattan in an attempt to persuade the public. It is interesting to note that the roster of speakers at the press conference does not include anyone from the Department of Education. Doing so would open Markey up to questions that she does not want to answer. One being, why a private school student who had his crotch grabbed by a janitor a quarter century ago has greater rights than a public school student who was abused by a teacher a few months ago.

We contacted Markey's office earlier this year about the discrepancy in her bill and asked for clarification—we never heard back. This is because she doesn't want to answer the big question: why the disparate treatment of private and public institutions? Note: in 2009, after months of protest by the Catholic League, Markey amended her bill to cover both public and private institutions, but it was quickly shot down by public school groups.

Those who are interested in true justice should support the

legislation introduced by Assemblyman Michael Cusick, which does not discriminate between public and private institutions. His bill treats all alleged victims equally regardless of wherever the abuse occurred. Markey's selective approach to child sexual abuse, on the other hand, leaves a large proportion of victims still seeking justice.

Contact Markey: MarkeyM@assembly.state.ny.us

INADEQUATE SURVEYS



Bill Donohue comments on four recent surveys of Catholics:

The larger the sample size of any population, the more costly the survey, but the more accurate the findings. Catholics make up anywhere between 70 and 78 million Americans, but even a sample of 1,500 can yield relatively accurate results (the margin of error in such a survey would generally be 3 percentage points). Two surveys of Catholics published today did not come close to this baseline sample.

The *New York Times* poll sampled 580 Catholics; it had a 4 percentage point margin of error. The Pew Research Center sampled 184 Catholics, allowing a margin of error of 8.2 percentage points.

Such samples are inadequate. By contrast, a Rasmussen poll of Catholics published last month had a sample size of 1,000; the margin of error was 3 percentage points. Ten days ago, Gallup did a survey of just one subset of Catholics, Hispanics, and had a sample size of 28,607; its margin of error was only 1 percentage point.

There are lots of problems with even the best surveys, but when the sample size is ridiculously small, the findings cannot be taken seriously.

NY TIMES SURVEY OF CATHOLICS

✖ Bill Donohue comments on some of the findings from a survey of self-identified Catholics as reported in today's *New York Times*:

Whether someone who "attends Mass a few times a year or never" can be considered Catholic is debatable, but at any rate those responses make for interesting reading when compared to those who "attend Mass weekly."

The majority of weekly attendees have a favorable view of Pope Benedict XVI; only a quarter of those who rarely attend feel the same way. Regarding recent papal events, 72% of weekly attendees have been closely following the news stories, while only 35% of those who rarely attend have been doing so. The majority of weekly church-goers would like to see the new pope either continue Benedict's teachings or adopt more conservative ones. Among the no-shows, only 20% agree with that position (66% want more liberal teachings).

Not surprisingly, weekly attendees see the healthcare insurance debate as a religious liberty issue, but nominal

Catholics see it as a matter of women's health. Regular church-goers want the next pope to be against abortion (70%) and the death penalty (67%), but the figures for lax Catholics are 45% and 50% respectively. In other words, those who rarely or never attend Mass are more inclined to oppose the death penalty for a convicted murderer than they are to oppose the killing of innocents!

Surveys about celibacy, women's ordination, and birth control have long found that most Catholics, including practicing ones, are open to change. In 1995, I commissioned a pollster to do a survey of Catholics on these issues. The question I was most interested in seeing the results for yielded a fascinating outcome: "If the Catholic church did not change its positions as many have suggested, how would that affect your commitment to the church?" An astonishing 83% said they would be just as committed, if not more so (for weekly attendees the figure was 90%).

In other words, while most Catholics are okay with making some changes, they value more highly the continuity of settled Church teachings.

HBO'S PLEPLER NEEDS TO MOVE ON MAHER

The March 1 episode of "Real Time with Bill Maher" is the

subject of Bill Donohue's remarks:



Richard Plepler is the CEO of HBO, and my dealings with him in the past have been cordial and professional. But he has obviously allowed Bill Maher to continue with his anti-Catholic rants with impunity. Here is a sample of what Maher said last Friday night:

- The pope and the cardinals are known to stick together “when you’re molesting kids.”
- “I kid the cardinals. They chipped in. They got him a t-shirt that said, ‘I’m not retiring. I’m being put out to stud.’”
- The pope, Maher commented, “said there were moments where it seemed like the Lord was sleeping. Wow! Sleeping. Or like the kids at Catholic summer camp—pretending to be asleep perhaps.”

The question for Plepler is simple: Are there no lines that Maher can cross before he is reined in? Are we to believe that no one at HBO has any say over his vicious rants? If it were some other segment of the population that was being trashed over and over again, are we to understand that absolutely nothing would be done about it?

Contact: richard.plepler@hbo.com

NY TIMES HOSTS ANOTHER DISSIDENT



Bill Donohue speaks to the latest *New York Times* hit on the Church:

Counting both blogs and op-ed articles, today's op-ed piece by Paul Elie is the 11th condemnatory article on the Catholic Church to have been published by the *New York Times* in the past 19 days.

As with so many Catholic malcontents, Elie's parochialism allows him to think that his unhappiness is shared by everyone. "Resignation," he says, is "what American Catholics are feeling about our faith." He should speak for himself—most of us do not share his *Commonweal* affliction.

Elie has long been predicting that the Church is teetering. Two decades ago he was lamenting the fate of pro-abortion Catholic women, arguing that their voice needs to be heard. In 1994, after maintaining that the laity were in "deep dissent" over such issues, he appeared positively dazed over the success of a best-selling book by Pope John Paul II.

Living in an intellectual ghetto has consequences. In 1999, Elie named the following eight bishops or archbishops as the successor to Cardinal John O'Connor: Theodore McCarrick, Justin Rigali, Edwin O'Brien, Henry Mansell, Harry Flynn, Charles Chaput, Thomas Daily, and Francis Stafford. Bridgeport Bishop Edward Egan got the job.

Elie wants all Catholics to stop going to church during Lent. He's leading the way: he is not going to his church, the Oratory Church of St. Boniface, this Sunday. He is threatening to go to a service with Quakers, Episcopalians, Jews, Muslims, or Baptists. For reasons I can't understand, he is also threatening to go to a Zen monastery. Doesn't he know that his happy parish has Zen Meditation every Thursday evening?

I have a tip for Elie. This Sunday at 1:00 p.m., the New York City Wiccan Family Temple is welcoming new members. I'm sure they would love to have him. La Tea is located at 107 Suffolk St. in Manhattan.