

MEDIA POLITICS AND THE POPE



Bill Donohue comments on media coverage of Pope Francis:

Every sentient human being knows about the published reflections that Pope Francis offered last week on a variety of subjects. But few know about other matters he recently addressed, and that is because the media are not happy with his decisions. Here are four examples.

- In a homily given on September 16, the pope said “a good Catholic meddles in politics.”
- In his published interview released September 19, the pope spoke against priests who are “too lax.” By that he meant, “[T]he loose minister washes his hands by simply saying, ‘This is not a sin,’ or something like that.”
- On September 20, he denounced abortion as part of our “throwaway culture.”
- On September 21, one Australian newspaper reported that a heretical priest, Greg Reynolds, was excommunicated by the Vatican for his activism on behalf of women priests and gay marriage.

There was a virtual blackout on the pope’s homily urging Catholics to meddle in politics. Very few mentioned that in his well-publicized interview he cited lax priests for denying the existence of sin. His comments on abortion received some coverage, but not much: only ABC “World News Tonight” mentioned it among the big broadcasters. Aside from a few Catholic and gay blogs, news about the dissident Australian priest being excommunicated received almost zero coverage.

Most of those who work in the elite media are pro-abortion and pro-gay marriage. Not all are biased, but too many are. They have a vested ideological interest in flagging stories about the pope that may gin up the left and alienate conservatives; they also have a political interest in burying stories that have the opposite effect.

The media need a Catholic whistle-blower for its papal coverage. We gladly accept the invitation.

INTOLERANCE MARKS BISHOPS' CRITICS



Bill Donohue comments on reaction to the Marriage and Religious Freedom Act that was endorsed by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) on September 20:

The USCCB, led by San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone and Baltimore Archbishop William Lori, has thrown its support behind the Marriage and Religious Freedom Act that was introduced on September 19 by Rep. Raúl Labrador. One might think that an anti-discrimination bill would be supported by everyone, but this is not the case. Supporting religious discrimination is the American Civil Liberties Union, the Interfaith Alliance and the Human Rights Campaign. Now Dorothy J. Samuels has joined them by writing a column for the *New York Times* editorial blog.

Most states have laws that enshrine marriage, properly understood, into law. Those states that support homosexual

marriage are free to do so, and there is nothing in the Marriage and Religious Freedom Act that stops them. All the bill does is secure the religious liberty rights of Americans from being violated by the federal government.

Samuels says the bill is “pernicious.” Archbishop Cordileone knows this is nonsense: “It would prevent the federal government from discriminating against religious believers who hold to the principle that marriage is the union of one man and one woman.” Archbishop Lori is also pointed: “Among the many protections in this bill, the federal government would not be able to deny individuals and organizations a grant, contract, or employment because their belief that marriage is the union of one man and one woman is informed by their religious faith.”

The intolerance being exhibited by the enemies of religious liberty is dangerous. Just recently, Craig James was fired from Fox Sports Southwest after it was discovered that he supports marriage, properly understood. This bill would not give him relief because it only applies to the federal government, but it just goes to show that intolerance is on the rise in left-wing quarters.

ARCHBISHOP MYERS ACQUIRES CO-ADJUTOR



Bill Donohue comments as follows:

Newark Archbishop John J. Myers is fortunate to acquire the stellar assistance of Bishop Bernard A. Hebda. Three of Newark's bishops, including Myers, are in their 70s, so picking up the 54-year-old Bishop of Gaylord, Michigan is a real plus.

As usual, there are a few carping voices. Much is still being made over the antics of Fr. Michael Fugee, the priest who resigned after violating a judicial order. In 2001, he was charged with groping a teenager while wrestling in front of family members. Myers was unfairly blamed for Fugee's refusal to abide by strictures he agreed to respect. Now critics are contending that Hebda's appointment is a reflection on Myers' tenure.

Archbishop Myers requested assistance from Rome some time ago; it is hardly an unusual request for someone nearing retirement age. Yet according to Charles Reid, who teaches at the University of St. Thomas in Minnesota, "[A]t the very least we can say this happened because of the sex-abuse scandal." At the very least, we can say it is a disgrace for a law professor to make accusations without corroborating evidence. Also, it is striking to see Reid get worked up about this issue: in July, he lectured the "religious right" for their fixation on "loose sexual mores."

David Clohessy, director of SNAP, criticized Pope Francis for going easy on Myers' alleged cover-ups. He knows something about cover-ups: he refused to report his brother, Kevin, to the cops when he learned that his sibling was a molester.

Robert Hoatson says the acquisition of Hebda means Myers is "on the way out." He is an expert on what it feels like to be "on the way out": he is an ex-priest. Moreover, he commands no following. To wit: last month he held a demonstration against Myers. Three people showed up.

Congratulations to Archbishop Myers and to Co-Adjutor

KUDOS TO ARCHBISHOP NIENSTEDT



Bill Donohue comments on the way St. Paul and Minneapolis Archbishop John C. Nienstedt is handling priestly misconduct:

On Sunday, the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis announced it was putting a priest on leave after a woman said he inappropriately touched her. The priest denies the accusation; the allegation was reported to the police. Yesterday, Minnesota Public Radio (MPR) ran a story on a previous case: it said the archdiocese knew of the misconduct of Fr. Curtis Wehmeyer before he abused two boys in 2010.

In early June 2012, the mother of the abused boys told a priest about the molestation. He urged her to call the police. On June 14, she provided details and was told to report this to the archdiocese. On June 19, she met with officials and one of the boys was questioned. On June 20, the police were contacted; the authorities were told that the priest would be relieved of his duties on June 21. He was. In September, the Ramsey County Attorney commended the archdiocese saying, "They did the right thing."

Some critics are saying the archdiocese should have dealt with Wehmeyer before the abuse occurred. In 2004, three years after being ordained, Wehmeyer made sexually suggestive remarks to two men, 19 and 20, but they never complained. The archdiocese found out anyway, and sent the priest to St. Luke Institute

for counseling. Two years later, he was found cruising in an area known for gay sex; no law was violated. In 2009, he was arrested for drunk driving. Fr. Kevin McDonough, a former vicar general, said last week that “[N]othing, nothing, nothing in this man’s behavior known to us would have convinced any reasonable person that he was likely to harm kids.”

These are not easy decisions. To be sure, workplace misconduct cannot be ignored—red flags are important. But when treatment is afforded, and no laws have been broken, the “innocent until proven guilty” rule applies. The burden is on those who disagree to say exactly what should be done in instances where there are no complainants. Kudos to Archbishop Nienstedt for handling these matters with justice for all.

POPE “HATES DOGMA”



Bill Donohue discusses the way the left is responding to Pope Francis:

If ever there were any doubt that the Catholic left and the secular left have much in common, it is doubted no more. Consider that Jane Fonda tweeted this weekend that Pope Francis “hates dogma,” and that today we learned from Fordham theologian Michael Peppard that while the pope “is a lover of traditional prayers and books,” the “old Q-and-A *Baltimore Catechism* is not among them.” Of course, neither quoted the

pope as making these comments, and that's because he never did.

Whoopi Goldberg, who has made a career criticizing the pope's predecessors, loves Pope Francis because he said, according to her, that atheists are going to heaven. On the website of the *New Republic*, we find out that New York mayoral candidate Bill de Blasio, outed today in the *New York Times* as a former Marxist, shares with the pope a fondness for liberation theology (never mind that just last week it was reported that the pope's exchange with the Peruvian father of liberation theology was "serious and sharp").

Homosexual Catholics and secularists have never been happier about a pope. *New York Times* columnist Frank Bruni is literally screaming "Hallelujah." Pundit Andrew Sullivan is "still reeling" about the pope's published interview of last week, exclaiming this is "The Rebirth of Catholicism." The Human Rights Campaign, a gay activist group, is heralding the "transformative change" that the pope is bringing. Perhaps they think the pope is going to host a gay dance in the Vatican.

Frances Kissling, the pro-abortion ex-Catholic, says "the bishops have been part of the problem." What problem? Making the abortion debate "ugly." James Salt of Catholics United, a dissident front group, is also trying to drive a wedge between the bishops and the pope. Sister Simone "Nuns-on-the-Bus" Campbell commends the pope for "saying that the Gospel cannot be used to benefit one political party." This from the same woman who spoke at the Democratic National Convention. Stay tuned for more. They're coming out of the woodwork.

SPIN DOCTORS IN ORBIT OVER POPE



Bill Donohue comments on reaction to Pope Francis' interview published yesterday by *America* magazine:

Pope Francis is a reformer; he is not a revolutionary. The distinction is important. His style and tone are different, but he shares with John Paul II and Benedict XVI the same doctrinal positions, and the same vision, of the Catholic Church.

Some conservatives are in mourning. They shouldn't be. Some liberals are popping the cork. They shouldn't be. Knee-jerk reactions are typically a function of ignorance, and that's what we are witnessing. It would be so refreshing if people actually read what the pope said.

Already, there are some on the left who are seizing the moment to stifle the speech of loyal sons and daughters of the Church. Chris Cuomo tried that today with me, but it didn't work. Don't take my word for it—click [here](#) to see what happened.

Left-wing spin doctors, like those at GLAAD, are saying the pope “has recognized the harm that the Roman Catholic hierarchy's campaigns against LGBT people and families have caused.” But no bishop has ever condemned gays for being gay. GLAAD is playing games: it wants to say that anyone who supports marriage, properly understood, is a bigot. Only ideologues believe such nonsense.

On Monday the pope said “a good Catholic meddles in politics.”

Today he condemned abortion as representative of our “throwaway culture.” Both of these remarks were ignored by the media. Instead, they cherry pick his comments. This isn’t journalism—it’s politics.

Look for the authoritarian left to lecture the rest of us about fidelity to their interpretation of what the pope believes. They should instead practice fidelity to the teachings that the Holy Father upholds.

POPE COMMENTS ON ABORTION, GAYS



Bill Donohue comments on remarks by Pope Francis that were made last month in a three-part meeting in Rome with Catholic journalists; they were published today by *America* magazine:

The *New York Times* issued a “Breaking News Alert,” followed by a story, “Pope Bluntly Faults Church’s Focus on Gays and Abortion.” Here is what the pope said: “We cannot insist only on issues related to abortion, gay marriage and the use of contraceptive methods. This is not possible.” He also said, “when we speak about these issues, we have to talk about them in a context.”

The pope is right that single-issue Catholics need to rise above their immediate concerns. He did not say we should not address abortion or homosexuality; he simply said we cannot be absorbed by these issues. Both the left and the right should

heed his message.

The article in the *New York Times* says U.S. bishops will feel the pinch of these remarks as they often appear “to make combating abortion, gay marriage and contraception their top public policy priorities.” This is inaccurate. It is not the bishops who have made these issues front and center—it is the Obama administration. It would be more accurate to say the pope would find fault with the bishops *if they did not resist these state encroachments on the religious-liberty rights of Catholics*.

The pope also said the Church should be a “home to all” and not a “small chapel.” He did not mean by these words, as the *Times* alert said, that these remarks were a criticism of focusing on “doctrine, orthodoxy and a limited agenda of moral teachings.” In the previous paragraph, he speaks about “the sanctity of the militant church.” In the same paragraph where he mentions “small chapel,” he cites the “negative behavior” of priests and nuns, saying their conduct is that of an “unfruitful bachelor” and a “spinster.” He did not say what the *Times* attributed to him.

The pope wants us to reject abortion, and to help women who have had one to find peace with God. He wants us to reject gay marriage, but not gays because they are gay. Kudos to Pope Francis.

BISHOPS STAND FAST ON HHS

MANDATE



Bill Donohue comments on a letter sent yesterday by Cardinal Timothy Dolan, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), to the nation's bishops expressing the unanimous resolve

of the USCCB's Administrative Committee to continue the fight against the Health and Human Services (HHS) mandate:

Cardinal Dolan laid out the top three concerns of the bishops: (1) the HHS mandate unfairly defines religious employer in such a way as to reduce "religious freedom to the freedom of worship by dividing our community between houses of worship and ministries of service" (2) it reduces these ministries to a "second-class" status that unfairly burdens them (3) it does nothing to relieve the objections of for-profit businesses run by practicing Catholics.

The letter comes at a time when some have questioned the resolve of the bishops to fight the HHS mandate. Cardinal Dolan has put that concern to rest. The first objection outlined in the letter is key.

For over 200 years, Americans have cited their First Amendment right to religious liberty as the cornerstone of their inalienable rights. Then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton effectively tried to deep six this right by reinterpreting our God-given right as "freedom to worship"; President Barack Obama then began echoing her neologism in public.

Freedom to worship is what dictatorships observe: people are free to worship indoors—just don't take it outside. In other words, this is an attempt by the federal government to privatize religion by limiting the scope of its exercise. If

we did this to speech, it would stifle it. Religion is either freely and publicly expressed, or it is abridged.

The time has come for the HHS mandate to be withdrawn. To sign the Catholic League petition asking the Obama administration to pull the HHS mandate, click [here](#).

JON STEWART ATTACKS EUCHARIST



Bill Donohue comments on the September 16 edition of “The Daily Show”:

Jon Stewart offered his thoughts on Pope Francis. “I love this guy! So, to sum it up, let me get this straight: gays are cool, priests can get married, and you don’t even have to believe in God to get to Heaven!”

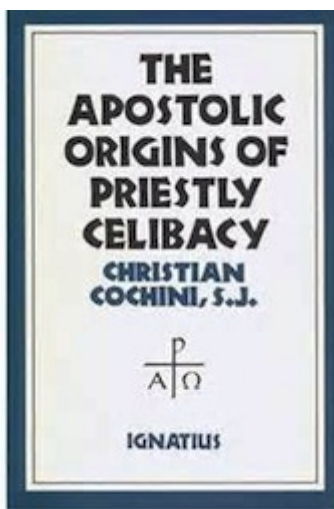
This is all in good fun. Stewart should have stopped there.

Here is what he said next: “What, exactly, of Catholicism is left? I mean, you take away Jesus and celibacy—Catholic Church is just an ordinary restaurant that only serves wafers.” At this point, a woman is shown receiving Communion. This is followed by several obscenities.

They need to hire some practicing Catholics at “The Daily Show.” Someone needs to tell Stewart the difference between joking about celibacy and ridiculing the heart and soul of Catholicism. I am assuming, of course, that that would make a difference.

Contact Comedy Central spokesman Steve Albani:
steve.albani@cc.com

MEDIA PUSHING CHURCH TO CHANGE



Bill Donohue comments on the way the media are trying to push for reforms in the Catholic Church:

The internal affairs of any religion should be the business of its congregants, yet when it comes to the Catholic Church, the media offer a dispensation. Recent comments by the Vatican's secretary of state, Archbishop Pietro Parolin, who simply restated the Church teaching on celibacy, have ignited the passions of the media.

Last week, NBC "Nightly News" anchor Brian Williams, and ABC "World News Tonight" anchor Diane Sawyer, both questioned whether the Church is going to drop its celibacy requirement for priests. NBC followed with a story by Tracy Connor that teased the issue further: "Meet Father Dad: How Married Priests Would Change the Catholic Church." The conclusion: "More students in the seminaries, more people in the pews, and the pitter-patter of little feet padding through the rectory." They forgot to explain why, if this were likely, the

Protestant mainline denominations are sinking.

Here's the real news: the Catholic Church in the Eastern Rite has long permitted married men to become priests, and it is in full communion with the pope; Anglican married priests who convert and become Catholic priests are accepted in the Catholic Church. As Archbishop Parolin said, the teaching on celibacy is a discipline, not a dogma, and therefore it can be changed. It was expected, but not mandated, that priests be celibate in the Church's first thousand years; it was encoded as a discipline in the 12th century. So, yes, the Church can drop its stricture on celibacy. Whether it should is not for the media to decide.

Right on the heels of married priests comes the call for women priests. This is more difficult: Pope John Paul II effectively closed the door on this subject, citing the Church's inability to change Scripture. No matter, many are huffing and puffing over the alleged ordination of an old lady two days ago in Albany: a faux Catholic group claims to have ordained Mary Theresa Streck. What is really amazing about this story is the serious coverage it was given by the media. They should have questioned why poor Mary wasn't made a bishop.