

CNN OP-ED ON SEXUAL ABUSE IS FLAWED

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a CNN posted piece by Heidi Schlumpf:

CNN has every right to post the commentary of any author it chooses, but is it too much to ask that someone fact check the submissions?

The recent attacks on Cardinal George Pell, which I debunked on [June 29](#), gave Heidi Schlumpf the opportunity to write “Why the Catholic Church Must Continue Soul-Searching.” It is more than tendentious, it is factually wrong. She writes for the *National Catholic Reporter*, a dissident publication that rejects the Church’s teachings on sexuality.

The title of her article accurately conveys her thesis: the abuse scandal is on-going. That is why she says that the charges against Cardinal Pell are “a reminder that the church’s sex abuse crisis is not over.” She adds that Pell’s case “shows that the decades long sex abuse crisis is not a ‘once and done’ thing.”

BishopAccountability is cited by Schlumpf as the source of her data. She says “credible accusations today [of clergy sexual abuse] are still significant, with 101 priests or religious accused in 2014-15.” Her data are wrong.

First of all, the latest report on this subject is found in the *2016 Annual Report on the Implementation of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. It covers the period from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016. So why did Schlumpf cite the audit from the year before? Because she relied on BishopAccountability, a notoriously unreliable source, never bothering to independently verify the data.

Had Schlumpf cited the most recent report, she would have found that there were 25 new allegations made by minors during the 2015-2016 year against current clergy members. But only two were substantiated. That means of the 52,238 priests and deacons, .004 percent had a substantiated charge made against them.

As I wrote on June 6th, *"we know of no other institution in the United States, secular or religious, which has a better record than the Catholic Church today when it comes to the sexual abuse of minors by adult employees."*

Moreover, the figure of 101 priests or religious cited by Schlumpf in 2014-2015 is wrong. The 2015 audit shows that 26 allegations were made during that year against current clergy members, seven of which were substantiated.

Schlumpf's article is a splendid example of the way dissident Catholics think. It is they who pushed for a relaxation of sexual strictures in the seminaries—that happened in the 1970s—and it is therefore they who are mostly responsible for the homosexual scandal. Ever since, they have been blaming either "repressive" Catholic teachings or the bishops, taking no responsibility for their input.

Furthermore, dissident Catholics have a vested ideological interest in continuing the myth that the crisis continues. They do so as a way to convince the Church that it must further loosen Catholic sexual ethics, opening the door to such absurdities as gay marriage.

CNN needs to do a better job vetting its submissions.

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“LITTLE HOURS” BOMBS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on reviews of “The Little Hours,” a movie he previously [panned](#):

- “Unrepentant sacrilegious slapstick” (The Verge)
- “Juvenile and bawdy and stupid and crude” (Flavorwire)
- “Awash in sacrilegious revelry. Rarely has devotion been this dirty” (Film Journal)
- “Not nearly as funny, biting, or smart as the films it’s so clearly trying to emulate” (IGN)
- “Generally, the humor lacks bite” (Reason)
- “At times, the atmosphere is so clubby that the actors seem to be performing for one another” (*New York Times*)
- “You spend roughly half of The Little Hours waiting for the film to get going and the other half wishing it would hurry up and end” (Edinburgh International Film Festival)
- “Ultimately, you’re just left wondering what it is and what the point of it all might be” (*Los Angeles Times*)

That settles it. If even those who find Catholic bashing inoffensive don’t like this movie, then there is nothing to cheer about. What a bomb.

MORE JUSTICE NEEDED IN PHILLY

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on Philadelphia District Attorney Seth Williams:

On June 29, Philadelphia District Attorney Seth Williams, on trial for 29 counts of bribery, extortion and fraud, abruptly pleaded guilty to bribery. He was immediately remanded to jail by a judge who pronounced himself “appalled” by the evidence he had heard in this trial.

Yet Williams’ conduct in this sordid tale of corruption is only a part of his long record of abusing his office. His targeting of Catholic clergy—particularly Msgr. William Lynn—stands out as among the most egregious of the injustices he has perpetrated as District Attorney. *Indeed, it is the most unethical assault ever conducted by a D.A. against a high-ranking member of the Catholic clergy in American history.*

In 2010, Williams, the newly elected District Attorney—unable to nail a bishop with allegations related to sexual abuse of minors—set his sights on Lynn, a top archdiocesan official. In 2012, he succeeded in having Lynn convicted on grounds that were shaky from the beginning.

Subsequently, the courts have overturned that conviction *three times*—in December 2013, December 2015, and August 2016. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled that the trial court had “abused its discretion” in allowing in evidence unrelated to this case. Yet each time, Williams insisted on retrying Msgr. Lynn, clearly abusing *his* prosecutorial discretion. As Williams goes to jail, Msgr. Lynn awaits yet another trial—even though he has now served virtually all of the minimum three years of his sentence.

That Williams has a personal vendetta against the Church is further evidenced by his admission, as part of his guilty plea, that he stole \$13,000 in income from his mother that was supposed to go to a Catholic nursing home in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. In other words, he was ripping off the archdiocese while continuing an unjust prosecution of one of its top officials.

Seth Williams faces the punishment he deserves for having “betrayed and sold his office,” in the words of Judge Paul Diamond. True justice, however, demands that the Philadelphia D.A.’s office now put an end, once and for all, to its *unjust* persecution of Msgr. Lynn.

CARDINAL PELL DESERVES FAIR HEARING

Catholic League president Bill Donohue speaks to the controversy over Cardinal George Pell:

Cardinal Pell has been charged by Australian police on multiple counts of sexual abuse. He will appear before a Melbourne court on July 18. He says the charges are false and is “looking forward finally to having my day in court.”

Actually, Cardinal Pell has been in court before, and the charges against him went nowhere. It is worth discussing them now, especially given the current media frenzy over the latest accusations.

In 2002, allegations of sexual abuse against Cardinal Pell were thrown out of court by the Victorian Supreme Court. A Melbourne man said he was abused by Pell in 1962 at a camp when he was 12; Pell was studying for the priesthood. The judge ruled that there were “some valid criticism of the complainant’s credibility.” That was a gross understatement.

The accuser was no stranger to the courts—he had appeared before a judge 20 times before. The result? He was convicted 39 times. As it turns out, the complainant was a violent drunken drug addict who served nearly four years in prison. He

drove drunk, assaulted people, and took amphetamines.

The case against Pell also took a hit when the accusations made against him could not be substantiated. Here is how the judge put it: "Of the numerous people who were at the camp either as adult helpers (including seminarians) or as altar servers, and who have made signed statements and/or who have given evidence, none was aware of any inappropriate behaviour by the respondent or any other adult."

None of this exculpatory evidence has had much effect on the Australian media. For example, in 2013, *The Age* and the *Sydney Morning Herald* picked up a story by Barney Zwartz who said that Pell's name has never been cleared. Yet in 2002, following the trial, Zwartz wrote that "an independent investigation by a retired non-Catholic judge cleared him."

Other media outlets cited Zwartz's 2013 story, only to apologize to readers after the truth emerged. *CathNews*, a prominent Australian Catholic media source, admitted that it had made "unfair, false and seriously defamatory allegations against Cardinal Pell, who has worked hard to eradicate the evil of sexual abuse."

It is certainly true that Cardinal Pell has worked hard to rid the Church of sexual abuse. In 1996, just three months after he became the Archbishop of Melbourne, he launched an independent initiative offering compensation and counseling to the victims of sexual abuse. And at every step of the way, he has cooperated with the authorities in various probes.

- In May 2013, Pell offered testimony to the Victoria Parliamentary Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and other Organizations.
- In August 2014, Pell spoke to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.
- In February 2016, he spoke again to the Royal Commission.

- In March 2016, he testified once more to the Royal Commission.
- In October 2016, he spoke to the Victoria Police about allegations that he had inappropriately touched two boys while horsing around in a swimming pool in the 1970s.

Regarding the swimming incident—this is one of the charges being made now against Cardinal Pell—it is striking these two men decided to keep their mouths shut for nearly 40 years before coming forward. Why would they do that?

The accusers, Lyndon Monument and Damian Dignan, have had their share of problems. Indeed, they have a lot in common with the man who said he was abused by Pell in 1962 and had his case thrown out in 2002.

Monument was a big drinker, but he didn't stop with alcohol. He became a drug addict, dealing amphetamines, and wound up assaulting his girlfriend and a drug dealer; he spent 11 months in prison. Dignan also has a history of violence, and was arrested for drunk driving. Not surprisingly, both have made accusations against former teachers.

As with the camp accuser, no one can corroborate the charges of the alleged pool victims. According to a news story by Australian journalist Louise Milligan, the pool manager's wife concedes that Pell was "a constant figure at the pool every summer," and "was very popular with the children that he played with." The woman said that "neither she nor her husband ever saw anything untoward, and if they had, she said, George Pell would have been sent away and the police would have been called."

Milligan is not just another reporter—she has written a book about Cardinal Pell, one that puts a negative spin on him and the Church. She has been called a partisan out to get her subject, something she denies.

"Let this be known," she writes, "Cardinal Pell's politics are

of zero interest to me.” But then she says something that undercuts her statement: “He’s a man who for years was telling the rest of us how to live our lives—not least how to live our sex lives.” One wonders what world this woman lives in—she says she is non-partisan and then slams Pell for being a tyrant.

The fact is that Milligan has never liked Cardinal Pell. The first article she ever wrote about him appeared in the April 16, 2001 edition of the *Australian*. It was about gay fascists who tried to storm St. Patrick’s Cathedral in Melbourne. They were screaming, “George Pell, go to hell.” Like Milligan today, the gays objected to his defense of Catholic teachings on sexuality.

The second piece written by Milligan on Pell (it was published June 25, 2001), said he was “rigid as an Easter Island statue,” one who ministers “hardline Catholicism to the faithful.” Imagine what she would say if she admitted to not liking him!

Cardinal George Pell has long been targeted by homosexual activists, drug addicts, thugs, and ideologically driven reporters. He deserves better—he is entitled to the presumption of innocence. But given the animus against Catholicism these days, it won’t be easy for justice to prevail.

BISHOP PAPROCKI UNFAIRLY MALIGNED

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comes to the defense of Springfield, Illinois Bishop Thomas Paprocki:

It's a sign of the collapse of civility in the culture that insult and invective have taken the place of reasoned discourse. Bishop Thomas Paprocki releases a decree on "manifest sinners" in the Catholic Church who are giving "public scandal," and for that he is being called "mean-spirited" and "cruel"; some dissidents have called for him to resign. Instead of being condemned, he should be commended.

The proximate issue before Bishop Paprocki is the Catholic status of a man who claims to be married to a man, and a woman who claims to be married to a woman.

From time immemorial, the *whole world* knew that it was objectively impossible for two people of the same sex to marry—they cannot procreate nor can they act as natural surrogates to children who have lost their father and mother—but that has recently changed in some quarters of civil society. It has not changed in the Catholic Church.

Bishop Paprocki, an esteemed canon lawyer, ruled that it would not be appropriate for Church officials to recognize these "marriages."

This means, among other things, that men and women who claim to be married to a person of the same sex should not present themselves for Holy Communion, and should be denied this sacrament if they persist.

Similarly, funeral rites should not be extended to those who have "lived openly in a same-sex marriage before their death," the exception being if "they have given some signs of repentance before their death." Children who find themselves in these unions should not generally be denied the sacraments.

Notice that Bishop Paprocki did not rule against homosexuals and lesbians. Indeed, in a statement clarifying his decree, Bishop Paprocki said, "People with same-sex attraction are welcome in our parishes in the Catholic Diocese of Springfield in Illinois as we repent our sins and pray for God to keep us

in His grace.”

So what was he getting at in his decree? He is talking about those who are “living openly” in same-sex “marriages.” Let me quote from Edward N. Peters, a prominent canon lawyer, who has addressed this subject.

“Paprocki’s decree is *not* aimed at a category of persons (homosexuals, lesbians, LGBT, etc., words that do not even appear in his document) but rather, it is concerned with an *act*, a *public* act, an act that creates a civilly-recognized *status*, namely, the *act* of entering into a ‘same-sex marriage.’” (His italics.)

No matter, there are still some who say that Bishop Paprocki is picking on gays. This is easy to disprove.

Consider the following sentence: “Canon law makes it clear that funerals should be refused to ‘manifest sinners to whom a Church funeral could not be granted without public scandal to the faithful.’”

That sentence appears below the headline of a 2015 article in the *Catholic Herald*. The headline reads, “The Italian Church Must Stop Carrying Out Mafia Funerals.”

The issue is not gays—it is “manifest sinners” who are giving “public scandal to the faithful.” That would include the mafia, as well as those of the same sex who claim to be married.

Regarding the mafia, it is worth recalling that Pope Francis excommunicated the mobsters in 2014. He has also spoken out against same-sex “marriages,” and has done so repeatedly.

Bishop Paprocki wants to offer clarity to the faithful on Church teachings. That is his job and he does it exceedingly well. We are lucky to have him.

HIGH COURT GIVES SCHOOL CHOICE A CHANCE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a decision by the U.S. Supreme Court that seriously affects school choice:

Can students selected for a publicly funded school choice scholarship elect to attend a Catholic school? Can the state lend secular textbooks to Catholic schools? In both cases, previously decided, school choice was struck down by state courts, the former in Colorado and the latter in New Mexico. Now that has changed.

On June 27, the U.S. Supreme Court, which held these cases at bay until it reached its decision on June 26 in *Trinity Lutheran v. Comer*, vacated these rulings, remanding them to the lower courts for reconsideration in light of *Trinity*.

This is the closest that the proponents of school choice have ever come to winning in the U.S. Supreme Court. In effect, it sends a powerful message to the 39 states that have a Blaine amendment—laws based on 19th century anti-Catholic bigotry—that they had better rethink statutes that discriminate against parochial schools in the distribution of public funds.

It is up to state lawmakers to introduce legislation that allows for non-discriminatory school voucher programs, and all other measures that provide parents with choice in education. Education equality is long overdue.

Those who seek to keep the poor in their place—by condemning innocent minority children to failed public schools in the

inner-city—are the big losers. Their rhetoric is clearly pro-poor, but their behavior is decisively anti-poor, and that is all that matters.

“ORNITHOLOGIST” IS KINKY FLICK

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on “The Ornithologist,” a movie that is not endearing to Catholics:

“The Most Blasphemous Movie of the Year.” That is how a reviewer in the *Daily Beast* puts it. This is rather presumptuous: we are only half way through 2017.

The movie opens with Fernando, who is a stand-in for St. Anthony of Padua, hanging out by a remote river in northern Portugal looking for endangered black storks. He calls his boyfriend on his cell phone (never mind that the setting is the 13th century), telling him how much he loves him and that he received the reminder to take his medication.

So what meds would a gay birdman take in the Middle Ages? In an interview with the *Village Voice*, the writer-director João Pedro Rodrigues says, “He could be taking medications because he’s HIV positive.” That’s a safe bet.

Then the birdman’s boat capsizes, leaving him unconscious. Lucky for him along come two Chinese missionaries to rescue him. Unlucky for him, the gals strip him to his underwear, “his body hanging upright from a tree via ropes that are wrapped around his entire body—including, in a particularly uncomfortable manner, his genitals.” That would hurt. The gals then promise to castrate him the next day. That would hurt

worse.

The Chinese gals are quite contemporary for 13th-century females. "Like good Christian girls, we sleep together." After they have sex, Fernando meets a deaf-mute goat shepherd named Jesus. Predictably, they have sex on the beach. Not sure whether this is before or after Fernando is urinated on by those nasty pagans.

There is plenty of violence and gore to this "deliriously homoerotic" movie, so those attracted to kinky fare will not be disappointed. Speaking of which, it would make for a splendid segment on "60 Minutes" to interview a sample of moviegoers who like this film. Chances are we would all conclude that they really are different.

SHOWTIME GETS FILTHY

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on last night's episode of the Showtime series, "I'm Dying Up Here":

One wonders why they do it. Why do comedy writers find it next to impossible not to tell a filthy joke about Catholics?

The setting for "I'm Dying Up Here" is a comedy club in Los Angeles in the 1970s. An actor playing Richard Pryor shouts out to a character named Ralph, asking audience members if they know that Ralph is black; Ralph is then asked if he knows he is black.

Ralph: "Is the pope a virgin?"

Pryor: "Is the pope a virgin? How do I know? I ain't smelled his [male organ]. Damn. I'm sure it smell real pretty."

Maybe if they decide to clean up this show they might also stop making blacks sound as if they are illiterate.

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BIG WIN FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Trinity Lutheran Church v. Comer*:

At issue is whether the state has a right to deny public funds to a religious entity when the disbursement is for a secular purpose. In other words, is it constitutional to treat a church in a manner that is different from a non-sectarian institution?

The Supreme Court ruled 7-2 that “the exclusion of Trinity Lutheran from a public benefit for which it is otherwise qualified, solely because it is a church, is odious to our Constitution all the same, and cannot stand.”

It did not mince words: “This Court has repeatedly confirmed that denying a generally available benefit solely on account of religious identity imposes a penalty on the free exercise of religion.”

Today’s victory extends way beyond the right of a Lutheran church in Missouri to receive public funding for a playground. Nearly 80 percent of the states have Blaine amendments, provisions that discriminate against houses of worship and religious institutions in the distribution of public aid. These amendments are rooted in anti-Catholicism, a bigotry that was central to the nativistic agenda in the nineteenth

century.

Defending this bigotry was Americans United for Separation of Church and State, an organization that was itself founded as an anti-Catholic institution in the 1940s. The Interfaith Alliance and six Jewish groups also fought today's ruling.

This is a big win for religious liberty. Many more are needed to restore fidelity to the original purpose of the First Amendment.

SAMANTHA BEE'S DISHONEST HARANGUE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on last night's edition of "Full Frontal with Samantha Bee":

Samantha Bee is no stranger to Catholic bashing, so it was hardly surprising to learn that she ripped the Catholic Church in her June 21st show. Her focus was the Child Victims Act, a bill being considered by the New York State legislature. The least controversial aspect of the bill is extending the number of years that alleged victims could sue; the most controversial component is allowing a one-year window to revive old cases.

According to Bee, the bill's opponents are evil-minded persons who seek to justify child sexual molestation (she went off-the-rails on me). She interviewed a sponsor of one of the bills, State Senator Brad Hoylman, who said opposition was coming from the Catholic Church, yeshivas, and the Boy Scouts.

It is striking that Hoylman did not mention the public

schools. That's because they have traditionally been exempt from coverage in these bills. In 2009, when they were included, the public school establishment went ballistic and the bill failed. This year the public schools were included, but given their low profile, they either knew that the lawsuits would focus on the Catholic Church, or they were going to get another pass at the last moment.

The reason why I have long opposed these bills is twofold: a) they suspend the statute of limitations, a due process staple for the accused, and b) anti-Catholic bigotry. Regarding the latter, in every state where legislation like this has been considered, rapacious lawyers with a history of Catholic bashing have zeroed in on the local diocese, dragging up cases from a half-century ago where many witnesses have died or memories have faded. *The public schools always get a pass.*

The latest data show that .004 percent of the Catholic clergy had a credible accusation made against them in the year 2014-2015. No institution, secular or religious, can match that record.

It is in the public schools where child rape exists on a massive scale, and no one is doing anything about it. Moreover, they are still "passing the trash," moving molesting teachers from one school district to another. Furthermore, because of the doctrine of sovereign immunity, alleged victims have only 90 days to file suit, otherwise they are out of luck.

Bee's wide-ranging attack on me—she looked and sounded delirious—bears no response; the random clips her producers spliced together can be easily defended.

Samantha Bee epitomizes the worst of comedians these days: she is dishonest, crude, and without a whole lot of talent. At least Kathy Griffin can be funny. But Bee seems to have found her niche—feeding the appetite of bigots.

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