

NEW YORK TIMES OP-ED FANS “MASS GRAVE” HOAX

Bill Donohue

In its reporting on Ireland’s “mass grave” story, the *New York Times* has been one of the only media outlets in the nation not to buy into this hoax. Indeed, the 2014 story by Douglas Dalby blew holes in the account rendered by Catherine Corless, the person responsible for making this unsubstantiated accusation. He accurately stated that she “*surmised* that the children’s bodies were interred in a septic tank behind the home,” and quoted sources who undermined her story. (My italic.)

In today’s *New York Times* there is an op-ed by Sadhbh Walshe that is strewn with inaccuracies and vicious smears against nuns. Her only credentials are that of a film maker and staff writer for fictional TV shows. She is good at fiction: she cites a report by an Irish commission as proof that “mass graves” were found outside a Mother and Baby Home in Tuam, Ireland. In point of fact, it never made such an accusation. Walshe made it up. This explains why she never quoted from the report.

“Now the existence of a mass grave of babies can no longer be denied,” Walshe says. Yes it can. Where is the evidence? Where are the pictures? Why didn’t the Irish government say it found a “mass grave”?

Irish Central has gone further, claiming that “800 babies were found buried, abandoned in an unmarked grave in Tuam.” This is a lie. I have asked Irish Central chief Niall O’Dowd to send me pictures of the babies. I am still waiting.

To *surmise* is to guess—it is not proof of anything. Those of us trained in the social sciences rely on empirical evidence, not guesswork. Sorry, Walshe, you are no more convincing than

ROLLINS COLLEGE REINSTATES STUDENT

Bill Donohue

"There is more free speech in pubs than on the typical college campus." That is what I told Rollins College president Grant Cornwell on March 28, the day I first addressed the suspension of student Marshall Polston. Rollins has now reinstated the student.

This issue may be over for Polston—he courageously stood up to those who sought to abridge his freedom of speech—but it should not be over for the professor, Areej Zufari, or the administration. There are too many serious issues left unaddressed.

When I spoke to Cornwell, he said Polston was not being suspended for anything he did in the classroom, but for his threats. I asked if he carried a gun. He said no. I asked if he carried a knife. He said no. I asked if he verbally threatened Zufari. He said no. "Then who did he threaten?" He said he was told by lawyers not to divulge who it was.

Cornwell also told me that the entire story was nothing more than "fake news." He said he was "calling me out" on this. That was a mistake. I responded by saying, "I am calling you out," and then proceeded to tell him how badly he was handling this matter.

If I were the president of Rollins, I told Cornwell, and I had

evidence that a student was threatening someone, I would call the police. But he didn't. Similarly, I said, if I were in his shoes, and I was convinced that this story was "fake news," I would hold a press conference and offer evidence to support my claim. But he didn't.

We now know why Cornwell didn't call the cops or hold a presser: there was no evidence that Polston had done anything wrong.

Zufari is the issue, not Polston. She does not belong teaching in any college or university in America. Her contempt for the free speech rights of her students is appalling, and her vindictiveness is obscene. It's actually worse than this.

Zufari called the public safety office to lodge a complaint against Polston. On what basis? No one, not Cornwell or Zufari, claims that Polston threatened her. So why didn't the administration put her on the carpet? After all, a student's reputation was damaged and nothing was done about it. Zufari also accused Polston of "stalking her." But there is no evidence that he did.

By reinstating Polston, it suggests there never was any stalking, or threats against anyone.

The administration is also the issue. Why was the administration so upset with Polston for arguing with Zufari in the classroom that it intervened to change his behavior, but it did not intervene when a Muslim student recommended beheading gays and adulterers? Why did Zufari treat this comment as if it were uncontroversial? I would love to know why.

Why did the administration not question the propriety of Zufari telling her students that Jesus was not crucified, and that his apostles did not believe he was divine? Would the administration be okay with a Christian professor for proselytizing in the classroom?

The *Orlando Sentinel* story in today's newspaper ends by saying, "Students and Rollins employees held a private meeting on diversity Thursday to discuss what happened."

Diversity on college campuses never means diversity of thought—the most important diversity a college should foster—it means demographic diversity. If Rollins were serious about making real reforms, it would not be talking about the diversity that a Muslim professor brings to the campus; rather, it would be talking about the right of students to question his professors.

The case against Polston was ideologically charged from the beginning. Zufari violated every tenet of academic freedom, and the administration engaged in a cover up on her behalf, sundering the rights of an innocent student in the process. There is nothing "fake" about that account.

ROLLINS COLLEGE AND ORLANDO SENTINEL

Bill Donohue

[Yesterday](#), I raised many questions about the account given by Rollins College officials in their handling of the dispute between Marshall Polston, the student who was suspended, and his professor, Areej Zufari. Some of what I drew on came from a story by *Orlando Sentinel* reporter Gabrielle Russon. She did a fine job.

Inexplicably, columnist Scott Maxwell then wrote a story for the newspaper citing Russon's work to make the point that the charges made by the student constitute "fake news." This is

the same position taken by Rollins College.

Something is wrong with this picture. Russon's account does not support Maxwell's. Indeed, she never mentions "fake news," never mind provide evidence to sustain this accusation. Why, then, did the newspaper run it?

More important, Maxwell never addresses the core issues:

- Why did Zufari contact the office of public safety about a threat the student never made? She herself admits that the student never threatened her.
- Why did school officials seek to change the student's behavior when his only "infraction" was to sharply question positions taken by Zufari in class?
- Why does Zufari not respect the free speech of her students?
- Why is she allowed to promote the Islamic interpretation of Jesus' crucifixion and his divinity? This would be labeled indoctrination if a Christian professor were to espouse the Biblical account.

Maxwell never addresses any of these matters. Nor does he report on the Muslim student who justified killing gays and adulterers in Zufari's class, and why she did not take issue with this.

Grasping at straws, Maxwell defends Rollins by saying it is welcoming to Christians. He should read his own newspaper. Here is what it said on March 7, 2013: "Rollins College has kicked a religious student group off campus for requiring its student leaders to be Christian...."

There was an odor to this story when it began. It now stinks to high heaven.

IRISH CENTRAL ATTACKS ORPHAN

On March 27, I posted an [article](#) written by an orphan who grew up in a Mother and Baby Home in Ireland. It is a well-written and researched account of conditions in Ireland in the twentieth century, and the care provided by nuns. It also debunks the myths about those “evil” nuns, the kind of propaganda promoted by Irish Central and others.

Predictably, Irish Central is upset. Good news about the Catholic Church’s contribution to society is generally not welcomed by Niall O’Dowd and his staff. So he unleashed Cahir O’Doherty to offer a response to the orphan’s piece. That was a mistake.

On March 7, I wrote a news release, “The Dunces at Irish Central.” I cited O’Doherty as Exhibit A. Why? Because in his attempt to validate the Tuam “mass grave” hoax sponsored by Catherine Corless, he said she “never spoke of” a mass grave. In fact, she has, as I demonstrated.

Well, the dunce is back. We know O’Doherty is a dunce because of his illiteracy. This is his story’s headline: “Bill Donohue’s Says Unnamed ‘Galway Orphan’ Exonerates Tuam Nuns.” Even a middle-school dropout knows it should read, “Bill Donohue Says,” not “Bill Donohue’s.”

Perhaps I am too hard on O’Doherty. After all, reporters do not ordinarily assign the headline to their stories. But this would make matters worse: it suggests that O’Dowd has a stable of dunces.

No matter, O’Doherty goes on to prove his erudition. For example, he quotes the following from the orphan’s article.

“Perhaps was there more to the behavior of their daughters who may have been uncontrollable, wild, even loose women, we don’t know. We can only assume by today’s standards that if

a young girl got pregnant and she came from a good family that her family might support her. But even by today's standards if the young women were wild and uncontrollable and came home expecting a baby she too would be *expelled from the family....*" (My italics.)

"So there you have it, loose, wild and uncontrollable young women had *no one to blame but themselves*," O'Doherty writes. (My emphasis.)

As anyone who is not a dunce can see, the orphan put the blame on the family, not the women. This explains why O'Doherty screwed it up.

Then, after floating the idea that maybe I wrote the article, O'Doherty pivots, saying, "there's no difficulty finding elderly reactionaries to write poison pen missives in defense of the indefensible in Ireland."

This is a new low, even for Irish Central. Without a scintilla of evidence to the contrary, it viciously attacks the orphan. To say this is morally reprehensible is an understatement.

Contact O'Dowd: niall@irishcentral.com

ROLLINS COLLEGE DRAMA CONTINUES

Bill Donohue

[Yesterday](#), we addressed news reports about a Rollins College student, Marshall Polston, who was suspended following an exchange with his professor, Areej Zufari. It is claimed that Zufari punished Polston after he disagreed with her comments

saying Jesus was not crucified and his apostles did not believe he was divine. Rollins suspended Polston citing threats that he made.

Polston called me yesterday to discuss this matter. So did the president of Rollins, Dr. Grant H. Cornwell. We had a lengthy exchange in response to my letter that was addressed to him. We also heard from Allan E. Keen, who is chairman of the Board of Trustees. Today, Keen sent another email and an article from the *Orlando Sentinel* on this issue.

Both Cornwell and Keen argue that the reporting on this story constitutes “fake news.” But neither provides any specifics to support his claim.

In particular, I pressed Cornwell to offer me a “bullet-type response,” one that would address my letter, the student’s claims, and news reports on this issue. I asked for proof that Polston made threats. Cornwell cited legal reasons for not commenting any further. He also said he did not know enough about what happened in the classroom.

The following remarks are in reply to Keen’s email today, which includes a letter he sent to the Trustees, and the piece in the *Orlando Sentinel*, “[Rollins Student, Prof Clashed for Weeks in Religion Class](#),” written by Gabrielle Russon. The italics are my response to cited remarks.

- In his email today, Keen says Polston “was suspended because of a matter related to another student.” *No details were given.*
- In his letter to the Trustees, Keen contends this issue was not a recent development, saying that “there were actions and concerns going back for several months, and even after some intervention, the student continued to act somewhat unusual...” *No details were given.*
- Keen says the student was not suspended for his “disagreements with the professor, or these classroom

activities.” Rather, “it was related to a ‘different’ incident with a student.” *No details were given.*

- In her story in the *Orlando Sentinel*, Russon says the professor “filed a ‘protection against stalking’ request” against the student last Friday. Rollins then suspended him. *No one questions the filing or the injunction. But is there evidence that he actually stalked her? Or did she file the complaint believing he might stalk her?*
- The injunction, Russon says, lists the nature of the professor’s problems with the student. “He has disrupted class twice (we’ve only had two classes) with antagonizing interjections, contradicting me and monopolizing class time.” *As a former professor, this complaint reads as an indictment of the professor, not the student. “Antagonizing interjections”? Meaning he sharply disagreed? More important, since when has it been regarded as inappropriate student behavior to “contradict” a professor? Why isn’t this simply a matter of free speech? Similarly, did he not allow other students to speak—did he filibuster?—or was he overly talkative?*
- Russon says of the professor, “She wanted him out of her class.” *Precisely—this says it all.*
- Russon writes that “School officials intervened to meet with Polston and his behavior improved over the next few weeks.” *But what exactly did he do wrong to merit this intervention? Did he violate campus policy in some way? And how did his “behavior” change? Or was the intervention meant to have a chilling effect on his free speech? If so, this is a very serious matter.*
- The professor failed Polston (a straight-A student) for an essay he submitted on March 8. Russon says the professor “was concerned about his reaction” and wrote to a public safety official about it. “The next day, Polston emailed her.” He accused her of “extreme bias.” *In other words, the professor contacted the public*

safety office in anticipation of a threat, one that never happened!

- Russon quotes an associate dean saying, “At no point did he threaten anyone openly.” *This seals it: Her complaint to the public safety office was not based on any threat by the student.*
- Russon writes, “Zufari was so concerned that she canceled class.” *About a non-existent threat? This is posturing, a gambit designed to indict the student on charges that are false, by her own admission.*

So who is this unnamed student who was “threatened” by Polston? Was it the Muslim male student who justified “beheading for gays and adulterers”? This is not a matter of dispute. According to Robby Soave in reason.com, “Someone even notified the FBI.” By the way, there is no evidence that Zufari found this comment to be “antagonizing,” nor did she contact public safety officials about this proponent of shariah law.

There are so many outstanding questions—egregious matters left on the table—to make any reasonable observer skeptical, if not cynical, of the account offered by Cornwell and Keen. Only they can clear this matter up, but to do so they need to get specific. Otherwise, we are left with the impression that Zufari was intimidated by Polston, leading her to make false conduct charges against him.

One more thing. Overlooked in this entire issue is the propriety of Zufari telling students that Jesus was not crucified nor was he seen as divine by the apostles. If a Christian professor instructed his students on the merits of the Biblical account, he would be accused of indoctrination. So why isn’t Zufari?

ROLLINS COLLEGE PUNISHES FREE SPEECH

The following is the text of a letter sent by Bill Donohue to Rollins College president Grant H. Cornwell regarding a violation of a student's rights on his campus.

March 28, 2017

Dr. Grant H. Cornwell
President
Rollins College
1000 Holt Avenue – 2711
Winter Park, Florida 32789

Dear President Cornwell:

I am requesting your intervention in a serious matter that has arisen on your campus involving the abridgement of free speech. My interests are twofold: (a) as president of the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization, I take issues of religious discrimination seriously, and (b) I served on the board of directors of the National Association of Scholars for 20 years, during which time I was a college professor.

From news reports that I have read, a sophomore at Rollins, Marshall Polston, was suspended for allegedly creating a "threat of disruption within the operations of the College," and for jeopardizing "the safety and well-being of members of the College community and yourself."

Those are strong charges. Yet the incident that gave rise to this incendiary situation was apparently a classroom disagreement that Mr. Polston had with professor Areej Zufari. She asserted that the Biblical story of the crucifixion was not true, and that Jesus' apostles did not believe he was

divine.

Professor Zufari is entitled to her belief, and so is Mr. Polston. What she is not entitled to do is punish him for disagreeing with her: he is a straight-A student and she failed him for his “disruption.” Worse, college officials have now deemed him to be a threat to campus safety. This is absurd, outrageous, and indefensible.

You have served as a Director of the Association of American Colleges and Universities, and previously served on the National Advisory Board for Liberal Education and Global Citizenship. You therefore know the value of free speech and the unfettered right to pursue truth. That is why I am asking you to intervene in this matter.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
William A. Donohue, Ph.D.
President

Contact President Cornwell: president@rollins.edu

IRELAND'S RECONSIDERED

“HOMES”

Bill Donohue

We have become so accustomed to boilerplate accounts of Ireland's Mother and Baby Homes that even the most absurd accusations leave us numb. This is wrong. Indeed, it is dangerous. It is also born of blind hatred of all things Catholic.

Those who are making wild-eyed accusations consider themselves tolerant and open-minded, yet they are anything but. Like all hard-core ideologues, their minds have been made up: they are both judge and jury, and their sentence has been delivered.

Some of us, however, are still persuaded by evidence, data, logic, and reason, and do not allow emotion to dictate our thinking. This surely includes many who have contacted me from Ireland. One of them recently sent a very sober and well-researched article written by an anonymous orphan from Galway. It debunks many myths about Irish nuns, and recounts some harsh realities.

To read this splendid piece, click [here](#).

ELITE NYC PUBLIC SCHOOL DENIES CATHOLICS

Bill Donohue

Maspeth High School is an elite public school in Queens, New York. Of the 4,000 applicants this year, only 250 seats are available. Not one went to parochial school students, even though 207 Catholic students had attended a Maspeth information session. The principal, Khurshid Abdul-Mutakabbir, says a “clerical error” was to blame, and pledges to fix it.

After parents complained to the Department of Education, steps were taken to ameliorate the situation; some Catholics have now been admitted.

Bob Holden is the president of the Juniper Park Civic Association in Middle Village. He would like to see an

investigation of this matter. So would I. Was it just a “clerical error,” or is there more to this story?

I am writing to State Senator Joe Addabbo Jr., who has expressed interest in such a probe, to call for an investigation.

Contact: addabbo@nysenate.gov

JUSTICE FOR MSGR. LYNN DELAYED AGAIN

Bill Donohue

The circus continues. Judge Gwendolyn N. Bright of the Common Appeals Court denied a motion to dismiss the case against Msgr. William Lynn. A retrial is expected in May, though Lynn’s lawyer, Thomas Bergstrom, says he may appeal the ruling.

Judge Bright added to this classic case of jurisprudential corruption when she said that city prosecutors were wrong not to tell Bergstrom about a detective’s doubt concerning the credibility of one of their key witnesses. But she said it was “not intentional prosecutorial misconduct.”

Really? At the behest of the D.A.’s office, Detective Joseph Walsh investigated the incredulous claims made by Danny Gallagher [a.k.a. “Billy Doe”], the star witness for the prosecution. According to journalist Ralph Cipriano, Walsh found that “every witness statement he took, including the ones from Gallagher’s own family members, contradicted Danny Gallagher’s wild and crazy stories.”

More important, when Walsh told A.D.A. Mariana Sorenson about Gallagher's lies, she accused him of "killing my case."

So, no, Judge Bright, there was nothing unintentional about what happened.

The circus will now be taken to a new level when Seth Williams, the Philly D.A. who was busted by the feds this week, tries to take this case up again.

It is not Msgr. Lynn who belongs in jail—it is the witch-hunters out to destroy him.

JUSTICE IN PHILLY FOR MSGR. LYNN?

Bill Donohue

This afternoon, Common Pleas judge Gwendolyn N. Bright will decide whether to end the ideologically charged war on Msgr. William Lynn, or allow a new trial.

Lynn was convicted of child endangerment on two occasions, and both convictions were overturned. The Philadelphia D.A. who is pressing the case against Lynn, Seth Williams, was arrested this week, yet he still remains in office. Deborah R. Gross, chancellor of the Philadelphia Bar Association, has called for him to resign, but he refuses to do so.

Williams was charged by federal authorities with bribery, extortion, honest services fraud, and wire fraud. He is alleged to have received gifts that range from luxury vacations in the Dominican Republic to sofas, all in exchange for cutting deals with his friends. This man is so low that he

even stole more than \$20,000 from his adopted mother, an elderly woman in poor health.

Williams is responsible for the conviction of Msgr. William Lynn, the first U.S. Church official ever to serve time in prison for his handling of priestly sexual abuse. Williams did not start the war on Lynn, but he brought it to new heights.

The attack on the Catholic Church in Philadelphia began in 2001. That was when a grand jury was charged “to investigate the sexual abuse of minors by individuals associated with religious organizations and denominations.” The D.A. was Lynne Abraham. After a second grand jury was convened, I wrote to her asking which religious organizations and denominations she had pursued, other than the Catholic Church. She never answered. That’s because she gave all other religions a pass.

In 2005, Abraham gave up: not a single priest was prosecuted. But the war on the Church in Philly was not over. Enter the new D.A., Williams, in 2010.

Williams went for the big prize—he sought to bring down a bishop. He failed, so he set his sights on Msgr. Lynn, a top aide in the archdiocese.

It cannot be easily summarized just how corrupt Williams is. Even if he had not been busted by the feds this week, *the record shows that his war on Msgr. Lynn is the most unethical assault ever conducted by a D.A. against a high-ranking member of the Catholic clergy in American history. Worse, the corruption extends beyond Williams.*

To read our account of what has transpired in Philadelphia, click [here](#). Meanwhile, please keep Msgr. Lynn in your prayers.