

THE DUNCES AT IRISH CENTRAL

Bill Donohue comments on the accuracy of Irish Central:

Irish Central employs dunces. Here's the latest proof.

Cahir O'Doherty likes to write boilerplate stories, and as a result his ability to get facts straight is seriously compromised. He, like many others, is experiencing apoplexy over my analysis of the fake news story about a "mass grave" containing the bodies of 800 children in Tuam, Ireland.

He says that Catherine Corless, the person peddling the hoax, "never spoke of" a mass grave. Wrong. On May 25, 2014, Alison O'Reilly of the *Irish Daily Mail* quoted Corless saying, "I am certain there are 796 children in the mass grave."

He says "Donohue informs us that at most the two children [Barry Sweeney and Frannie Hopkins] found between 15 and 20 small skeletons" when playing in Tuam in 1975. "Donohue informs"? Sounds as if I made it up. In fact, I quoted what Sweeney said—embarrassingly, he is Corless' key source—from an article written by Douglas Dalby of the *New York Times* on June 10, 2014.

He also takes issue with my comments on the McAleese Report on the Magdalene Laundries which *did not substantiate the horror stories attributed to the nuns*. Maybe O'Doherty will find time to read it.

O'Doherty is a dunce. But he gives his boss, Niall O'Dowd, what he wants to believe. O'Dowd licks his lips at any bad news coming from traditional Irish Catholic individuals or institutions.

For example, O'Dowd would have us believe that "Children died needlessly by the thousands" at homes run by the nuns in the early twentieth century. Really? So the evil nuns made the

kids sick—they did not *acquire* sick children. What is really sick is the appetite to believe the worst about the Catholic Church.

O'Dowd would benefit from reading the story by Caroline Farrow posted yesterday on mercatornet.com. She speaks about the health conditions of children at the time the nuns were running the Mother and Baby Home in Tuam.

Farrow writes about “children subject to measles, influenza and gastroenteritis in crowded conditions, a time before antibiotics as well as poor diet and perennial low temperatures. An analysis of the death certificates indicates that the causes of death were rarely from one single determining factor—a lot of the children had had underlying ill-health or conditions since birth and some had been born with abnormalities.” I guess the evil nuns made that happen, too.

Don't look for Irish Central to mention any of this. It would get in the way of its narrative.

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WHY IRELAND'S “MASS GRAVE” STORY IS A HOAX

Bill Donohue comments on why Ireland's “mass grave” story is a hoax:

The big news about the discovery of a “mass grave” outside the Mother and Baby Home run by the Bon Secours Sisters in Tuam is

bunk. I just got the chance to explain why when interviewed by Dublin's Newstalk, the only exclusively talk-radio station in Ireland. The interviewer was cordial but clueless. I will discuss this matter further later today on BBC radio and other Irish radio stations.

Almost all of the media in the U.S., the U.K., and elsewhere are promoting a fake news account of a "mass grave" containing the remains of nearly 800 children. Here is the basis of my position.

- The official statement by the Mother and Baby Commission, issued March 3rd, makes no mention of a "mass grave." Why not? If there were evidence of a mass grave surely that would be the lead story. Instead, it says "significant quantities of human remains" were found in sewage chambers. That is disturbing but it does not support the wild claims of a "mass grave."
- Katherine Zappone TD, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, issued her formal remarks on March 3rd as well. She said nothing about any "mass grave." Why not?
- On July 12, 2016, the government's Interim Report was issued. It said nothing about any "mass grave." Why not?
- Catherine Corless is the source of the "mass grave" allegation. In 2012, she wrote about her findings in an article titled, "The Home"; it was published in the *Journal of the Old Tuam Society*. She made no mention of any "mass grave." Why not?
- Corless not only failed to mention a "mass grave," she offered evidence that contradicts her later claim. To wit: "A few local boys came upon a sort of crypt in the ground, and on peering in they saw several small skulls." She mentioned there was a "little graveyard." That is not the makings of a mass grave.
- Corless said in 2014, "I am certain there were 796 children in a mass grave." She offered no evidence, nor did she explain why—just two years earlier—she said

there were “several small skulls” in a “little graveyard.”

- The primary source for Corless’ “mass grave” thesis is Barry Sweeney. When he was 10, he and a friend stumbled on a hole with skeletons in it. In 2014, he was asked by the *Irish Times* to comment on Corless’ claim that there were “800 skeletons down that hole.” He said, “Nothing like that.” How many? “About 20,” he said. He later told the *New York Times* there were “maybe 15 to 20 small skeletons.” In other words, Corless’ primary source contradicts her account!
- When this story broke in 2014, Ireland’s Minister for Education, Ruairi Quinn, said the Corless account was “simply not true.”
- The local police said at that time that “there is no confirmation from any source that there are between 750 and 800 bodies present.”

So why did Corless change her story from “several small skulls” found in a “little graveyard” to 800 bodies found in a “mass grave”? That is what journalists should be probing. They can begin by questioning her relationship with Martin Sixsmith, whom she first met in January 2014. He is the author of a book about Philomena Lee, the woman made famous in the movie, “Philomena.” The lies about her story have been recounted by me in my article, “[Philomena Is a Malicious Fraud](#).”

It was only after Corless met Sixsmith that her rage against the Catholic Church was evident. Her 2012 journal piece was void of any hatred, but after her encounter with Sixsmith, she turned on the Church. Their hostility to Catholicism has been on display ever since.

The most pernicious aspect of this story is the willingness of the media to be seduced by the most fantastic tales about the Catholic Church, and the profound laziness of reporters to fact check news stories. They are responsible for making this

a classic example of fake news.

IRELAND'S "MASS GRAVES" STORY IS FAKE NEWS

Bill Donohue comments on news stories that Catholic nuns in Ireland housed a mass grave of babies:

It was a lie in 2014 and it is a lie in 2017. There is *no evidence* of a mass grave outside a home for unmarried women operated by nuns in Tuam, Ireland, near Galway, in the 20th century. The hoax is now back again, and an obliging media are running with the story as if it were true.

Any objective and independent reporter would be able to report what I am about to say, but unfortunately there are too many lazy and incompetent reporters prepared to swallow the latest moonshine about the Catholic Church. If there were a Pulitzer for Fake News, the competition would be fierce.

Ireland's Mother and Baby Commission completed its inquiry into this issue and released a statement on March 3rd about its findings today. The probe was a response to allegations made by a local historian, Catherine Corless, who claimed that 800 babies were buried in a tank outside the former Mother and Baby home that was operated by the Bon Secours nuns.

The statement issued by the Mother and Baby Commission never mentions anything about a mass grave. Having completed a test excavation of the Tuam site, it found "significant quantities of human remains" in most of the underground sewage chambers. "These remains involved a number of individuals with age-at-death ranges from approximately 35 foetal weeks to 2-3 years."

That's the story. If there were "mass graves," not only would the official statement mention it, but so would Katherine Zappone TD, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs; she issued her formal remarks today. She says absolutely nothing about any "mass graves." Moreover, when the government's Interim Report was issued on July 12, 2016, it also made no mention of "mass graves."

"Experts Find Mass Grave at ex-Catholic Orphanage in Ireland." That is what the Associated Press reported on March 3rd. The author, Shawn Pogatchnik, offers no evidence and no citation from the government's report to prove his allegation.

AP should know better given its lousy record on this subject. On June 3 and June 8, 2014, AP ran news stories on this subject and later had to *apologize* for making several factual errors. It now owes readers another apology.

Reuters did a good job reporting on this issue: it never mentioned anything about the mythical "mass graves." The Belfast Telegraph Online also offered an accurate account, but it was misleading in one way: it quoted Joan Burton of the Labor Party who cited the work of Corless, concluding that "it now appears" that there was "some kind of mass grave." Her conjecture is based on Corless' discredited account.

Here is an excerpt from my 2014 report, "[Ireland's 'Mass Grave' Hysteria](#)."

"The notion that a mass grave existed in the site of the Home is oddly enough credited to the same person who says there never was one. His name is Barry Sweeney. Here's what happened.

"In 1975, when Sweeney was 10, he and a friend, Frannie Hopkins, 12, were playing on the grounds where the home was when they stumbled on a hole with skeletons in it.

"He [Sweeney] is quoted in the Irish Times saying 'there was

no way there were 800 skeletons down that hole. Nothing like that number.' How many were there? 'About 20,' he says."

Douglas Dalby of the *New York Times* did a good job checking the facts and his account supports what I wrote. He quotes Sweeney saying, "People are making out we saw a mass grave. But we can only say what we seen [sic]: maybe 15-20 small skeletons."

The appetite to believe the worst about the Catholic Church, and Ireland's nuns, is so great that many in the media will believe anything negative about it. Yet we know from the McAleese Report on the Magdalene Laundries that not a single woman was ever sexually assaulted by one of the sisters and that the conditions were not "prison like."

We also know that the movie, "Philomena," was another smear job. Philomena Lee, upon whom the film was based, voluntarily turned her out-of-wedlock baby over to the nuns at the age of 22. After she signed a contract freely handing over her child to the nuns, the sisters helped her to find gainful employment. Contrary to what the movie said, Philomena never once set foot in the U.S. looking for her son. Indeed, she never set foot in the U.S. until it was time to hawk the movie.

Mass graves. Sexually assaulted women. Children stolen. It is all a lie. It's about time this non-stop assault on truth and the Catholic Church stopped before no one believes anything the media tell us anymore about all matters Catholic.

TRUMP CHAMPIONS EDUCATIONAL EQUALITY

Bill Donohue comments on President Trump's visit today to a Catholic school in Florida:

Unlike President Obama, who opposed giving poor blacks the same right that he and Michelle exercised by enrolling their children in a private school, President Trump believes in educational equality. His trip today to St. Andrew Catholic School in Pine Hills, Florida, is an important statement.

Students from St. Andrew Catholic benefit from the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship. The program, which started in 2002, provides tax incentives to businesses who fund private schools. Currently, more than 92,000 Florida students are using this program to escape the public schools. This initiative is targeted at poor families, overwhelmingly non-white.

To qualify, the student must (a) either currently be in foster care (or was placed there during the past year) or (b) qualify for the free or reduced-price lunch program. The student must also be in a household where the income does not exceed 260 percent of the federal poverty level.

In the 1970s, I taught at a Catholic school in Spanish Harlem and saw first-hand the yeoman job of Catholic education in the ghetto. There was a public school across the street but it had to be closed down because of all the gang violence and rapes. But my students were not only safe, they thrived academically, as well as spiritually.

Those opposed to school choice extend beyond the selfish interests of the teachers' unions; it extends, in some cases, to anti-Catholic bigots. Indeed, there is an outcry right now in some quarters of Florida: Activists are upset because

nearly 70 percent of the students enrolled in this program are in religious schools.

If poor blacks in Florida, and elsewhere, choose Catholic schools to enroll their children—many of whom are not Catholic—we should not blame them or the Catholic schools. We should instead address why the parents made this choice and do something about lousy public schools.

Kudos to President Trump. Let's see who objects to educating poor blacks being funded by the corporations. My guess is it will be those who scream the loudest about equality, yet do everything they can to keep the poor in their place.

GAY ACTIVISTS EXPLOIT ASH WEDNESDAY

Bill Donohue comments on gays who exploited Ash Wednesday:

Gay activists can't even commemorate Ash Wednesday without drawing attention to themselves. That is why many accessed ashes mixed with purple glitter yesterday; approximately 150 participating clergy in several cities across the country took part in "Glitter+Ash Wednesday." A New York City homosexual outfit, Parity, promoted this stunt nationwide.

Liz Edman, a lesbian Episcopalian priest in New Jersey, started this exploitative event last year. Reportedly, her goal was to "come out" as queer, though it is not clear who among her friends and followers thought she was heterosexual. It was her girlfriend who suggested the purple glitter idea.

The executive director of Parity is Marian Edmonds-Allen,

allegedly a member of the clergy of some religion (the *Washington Post* did not say which one and I don't have the time to find out). Speaking of her comrades, she said, "On the day, Ash Wednesday, when Christians are publicly Christian, we are going to be publicly queer." The narcissism doesn't get much deeper than this.

This just goes to show what a joke all this talk about inclusion is: gay activists intentionally draw attention to themselves to show how different they are. On that score, everyone can agree.

TRUMP GOES MUTE ON MORAL ISSUES

Bill Donohue comments on President Trump's address to the Congress:

President Trump raised everyone's expectations by delivering a powerful speech last night outlining his agenda for defense, jobs, infrastructure, healthcare, education, immigration, and other policy matters. But he said not a word about moral issues.

The following words were never mentioned: abortion, assisted suicide, religion, religious liberty, and religious exemptions. The closest Trump came was to include support for religious schools in his school choice proposal.

While Trump is correct to cite education as a civil rights issue, he is wrong to say it is "the civil rights issue of our time." To be sure, children have a right to a good education, but that is predicated on their right to be born, a right that

does not exist.

The fight for religious exemptions, as a cornerstone of religious liberty, is being waged with ferocity across the nation. One might have thought that a president, who has floated a very fine draft of an executive order on religious liberty, might have made mention of this subject, if not the draft, in his remarks.

The problem with Trump's speech is that it only spoke about missiles and markets, never citing morality. This is popular with many Republicans, whose only goals are making money and protecting national security. But without demonstrating a concern for the moral order, the two "M's" of missiles and markets are an insufficient condition of the good society: the third "M," morality, must be added if success is to be achieved.