

BARRETT SUBJECTED TO MORE CATHOLIC BAITING

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a new attack on Amy Coney Barrett's religion:

The Catholic baiting that Notre Dame law professor Amy Coney Barrett has been subjected to is becoming a liberal sport; she is being considered for a seat on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. After first being questioned about her religious convictions—coming close to invoking a religious test—by Senator Dick Durbin and Senator Dianne Feinstein ([I wrote to both of them registering my outrage](#)), Barrett's religious affiliations are now under attack.

The *New York Times* has an interesting story on Barrett's membership in a Catholic group called People of Praise. The paper calls it “a small, tightly knit Christian group,” one whose members enter into a covenant with each other.

What seems to bother the *Times*, as well as others opposed to President Trump, are two issues: the extent to which membership in this group might compromise Barrett's independence, and whether her association with a group that accepts a traditional role for married women is acceptable for a federal judge.

“These groups can become so absorbing that it's difficult for a person to retain individual judgment,” says Sarah Barringer Gordon, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania.

“These groups?” If Gordon has proof that People of Praise is a cult—that is the clear implication of her remark—she should share it. But she has none. Which leaves us to conclude that she is engaged in the same Catholic-baiting tactics used by Durbin and Feinstein.

People of Praise was founded in 1971 in South Bend, Indiana. Today it has branches throughout North America and the Caribbean. It sees itself as “part of a global movement that has brought powerful new experiences of the Holy Spirit to more than 500 million people since the beginning of the 20th century.” It aligns itself with “the Pentecostal movement or the charismatic renewal.”

Among other things, it operates interracial schools and camps, and provides for many family outings; members often travel together. Is it a Catholic fringe group? No, for if it were, Pope Francis would not have welcomed it in June: he celebrated with them, and others, the 50th anniversary of the Catholic charismatic renewal; the event drew over 30,000 people from 128 countries.

Praise for People publishes a magazine, *V&B* (Vine and Branches), that offers concrete proof that it is anything but a cult. The cover story of the Winter 2014 edition was called, “Looking at Marriage.” It featured the experiences of five community couples. They were illustrative of the theme, “Marriage & Community: Two Covenants, One Life Together.”

The first couple, Clem and Julie, do not sound like biblical robots who live an ascetic existence. The interview begins with Julie putting Clem in his place for going out for beers after work on Friday nights, leaving her to tend to their babies. “I’d like to go out for beer on Friday nights, and here I am with these two kids all day, and you go out for a beer?” This isn’t exactly the voice of submission.

Then there is Tom, married to Nancy, who says, “I’m aware of people who left the community because they felt the People of Praise was too much encroaching on their family time...” Cults don’t allow their members to bolt, and if some do manage to leave, there is no lament—just condemnation.

Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of this latest attempt to

smear Barrett is the hypocrisy: while there are some people of faith who are guilty of Groupthink, it is not a phenomenon unique to them. "Open-minded" liberals, it could easily be argued, are the most likely to lack independence of thought. Enter Hillary and Michelle.

Why do liberals resent it when women *do not* engage in Groupthink? Hillary Clinton is fuming over women who did not vote for her: women have an obligation to vote for the woman candidate, she says, regardless of their convictions. She explicitly excoriated women who exercised their independence of mind by not voting for her.

Michelle Obama also resents women who think for themselves. She slammed women who voted for Trump, saying that they "voted against their own voices." Tell that to the majority of white women who voted against Hillary, Michelle: it's important to inform them that you know what their interests are better than they do.

The next time a secular liberal is nominated to the federal bench, conservatives should return the favor by subjecting them to the same acid test of independence. Groupthink is such a staple of liberal thought these days that no nominee would ever pass muster.

HUGH HEFNER'S LEGACY

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the passing of Hugh Hefner:

Hugh Hefner's legacy cannot be adequately assessed without addressing the sociological fallout of "The Playboy Philosophy."

Hefner founded *Playboy* in 1953 and he quickly succeeded in making it an important cultural marker. He rebelled against his conservative Protestant parents, whom he called “very repressed,” and set out to rectify the problem by targeting Christianity.

In 1962, Hefner made his case for sexual freedom in his series, “The Playboy Philosophy.” While it is a stretch to call it a “philosophy,” it was much more than mere musings about matters sexual: it was a clarion call for libertinism, and a wholesale rejection of Christian sexual ethics.

The series lasted for two and a half years, and during that time virtually every deviant act noted by Christianity came under assault. To be specific, Hefner blamed Christianity for inhibiting sexual expression, accusing it of having too many rules against non-marital sex, homosexuality, bestiality, and the like.

Hefner’s reach was wide, finding a receptive home on college campuses. The men loved it. So did his friends: Roman Polanski was one of his best buddies, and Bill Cosby was a regular at the Playboy Mansion.

Every social observer agrees that the sexual revolution is unintelligible without noting the effect that Hefner’s philosophy played. But did it liberate?

When *Playboy* was founded, the birth control pill did not exist, abortion was illegal, and sex education was non-existent in the schools. Yet the rate of out-of-wedlock births was negligible, abortion was rare, and STDs were insignificant. Today, all three conditions have soared. Moreover, the spike occurred at a time when everything from the ABC’s of condom usage to the wonders of anal sex are taught in sex education classes all across the nation.

Anyone who thinks that Hefner’s legacy is one of liberation needs to explain why those who were the most likely to

practice his philosophy wound up being anything but beacons of happiness. Want proof? Just ask the shrinks, and the morticians, in Hollywood.

LIBERALS BAN ART WITH IMPUNITY

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on artwork found offensive by some liberals in Minneapolis and New York City:

When the Catholic League objects to anti-Catholic art, we are routinely labeled censors by the artistic community, but when some of their liberal colleagues object to art that offends them—such as treating lizards “inhumanely”—there is little outrage, and no name calling. Indeed, even when real threats of violence are made, the grand defenders of artistic expression refuse to sound the alarms.

Where is the outrage by the media, the artistic community, and free speech activists over the Guggenheim’s decision to nix three works from an exhibition that is set to open on October 6? Where is the outrage over the Walker Art Center’s decision to dismantle a sculpture erected in the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden?

Animal rights zealots took aim at the Guggenheim for showcasing three works as part of its exhibition, “Art and China After 1989: Theater of the World.” Indian tribal activists took aim at the Walker Art Center for displaying “Scaffold,” a two-story structure by Sam Durant that depicted seven executions, including the hanging of 38 Dakota Indian men in Minnesota after 1862.

The first artwork banned by the Guggenheim is a video showing four pairs of pit bulls on nonmotorized treadmills; they are portrayed as charging at each other, though they never touch. There is a second video that shows two pigs copulating in front of a live audience. The third work is an installation—considered the real gem by the *New York Times*—that features hundreds of live lizards, crickets, and other reptiles and insects racing around eating each other under a warming lamp.

Over the summer, Indian leaders—not rank-and-file Indians—were up in arms over the Minneapolis exhibit. Not surprisingly, they were not consulted by the diversity dons at the Walker Art Center (white liberals never believe their own rules apply to them) which is one reason the Indians objected; they also said it brought back bad memories. In the end, they got more than what they wanted: The installation was not only dismantled, the newly sensitized white liberals recycled the steel from the structure and the wood was given to the Dakotas for “burial.”

The ASPCA and PETA were furious with the Guggenheim, as was entertainer Ricky Gervais. They should not be so self-righteous.

From 1894 to 1994, the ASPCA in New York City killed virtually all the unadopted pets in its care. More recently, its passion for animal rights led it to smear Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, accusing it of animal cruelty. The charges were false: In 2012 the ASPCA was forced to pay Ringling Bros. \$9.3 million in a settlement.

PETA kills almost all the cats and dogs in its possession. In fact, it kills 95 percent of adoptable pets in its care. Yet its leader, Ingrid Newkirk, maintains it is unethical to swat mosquitoes. She is also known for cheapening the Holocaust: “Six million Jews died in concentration camps,” she told the *Washington Post*, “but six billion broiler chickens will die

this year in slaughter houses.”

Gervais will go to the mat to protect the life of animals, just so long as they are not human. There is not an animal rights cause he will not champion, nor is there a pro-abortion cause he will not support. For example, when Texas state senator Wendy Davis conducted a filibuster protesting abortion restrictions, Gervais said it secured her place in “the pantheon of American heroes.”

Though these big name activists were quite vocal in expressing their displeasure with the Guggenheim, what made the famous museum buckle was not advocacy, it was the threat of violence. “Explicit and repeated threats of violence made our decision necessary,” the Guggenheim said.

Look for more on this story in coming days.

GOODELL IS TO BLAME FOR NFL CRACKUP

Bill Donohue sent a letter to NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell today registering his anger over what has been happening. He shared it with Brent Bozell and Terry Jeffrey at CNSNews.com, and they elected to post it. To see the piece by Michael Morris, click [here](#).

DONOHUE HAPPY WITH WEINER VERDICT

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the sentencing of Anthony Weiner:

Anthony Weiner was sentenced to 21 months in federal prison today, and justly so. While his obscene antics involving a 15-year-old girl were bad enough, it was his exploitation of his own son that inspired me to file a formal complaint against him for suspected child abuse. Fortunately, my complaint was honored by New York City authorities, and the rest is history.

To read my involvement in this case, click [here](#).

FEMINISTS JEOPARDIZE WOMEN'S HEALTH

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a lawsuit that would jeopardize women's health:

We are told *ad nauseam* that education empowers women, and that they have a right to know everything and anything about their bodies. We are also told that women have a right to safe medical care, and are entitled to competent service by well-trained physicians.

Then why are feminists working overtime to keep information from women about their bodies? And why are they trying desperately to prevent them from receiving first-class medical care? To be blunt, they are jeopardizing women's health.

Feminists at Planned Parenthood oppose laws that require women seeking an abortion to see pictures of the baby they are planning to abort. This is the one exception to the “education empowers women” mantra.

Planned Parenthood, along with the ACLU, is now suing Maine seeking to undo a law—which three-fourths of the states have—requiring all abortions to be performed by a physician. This is the one exception to a woman’s right to “competent service by well-trained physicians” mantra.

Planned Parenthood and the ACLU are so zealous about abortion rights that they would sacrifice the lives of pregnant women—to say nothing about their babies—in exchange for *increasing* the number of abortions. To be exact, they want nurse practitioners and nurse midwives to perform first trimester abortions, thus increasing the pool of abortionists.

According to the ACLU statement on its joint lawsuit, the current law means that “some rural women are being forced to travel hundreds of miles to get an abortion.” That problem would be eliminated if nurses could do the job.

Forgetting about the psychological consequences that many women endure following an abortion, what about the health risks that often accompany abortion?

In a 2013 article published by Denise M. Burke, Vice President of Legal Affairs for Americans United for Life, “Regulating Abortion Facilities and Providers: Combating the True Back Alley,” she recounted how first-trimester abortions can lead to serious medical problems.

“Potential complications for first-trimester abortions include, among others, bleeding, hemorrhage, infection, uterine perforation, blood clots, cervical tears, incomplete abortion (retained tissue), failure to actually terminate the pregnancy, free fluid in the abdomen, acute abdomen, missed ectopic pregnancies, cardiac arrest, sepsis, respiratory

arrest, reactions to anesthesia, fertility problems, emotional problems, and even death.”

So what exactly is Nurse Suzie to do when her patient is hemorrhaging on the table? Call 911? Calling a doctor won’t work: the champions of women’s rights admit he might be “hundreds of miles” away.

Consider a case cited by Burke that occurred in Arizona. A woman bled to death following a two-inch laceration in her uterus. She was crying for help but the medical assistants didn’t know what to do. She died after bleeding for two to three hours. Was there a doctor there? Yes, but he was eating lunch, refused to check on her condition, and left to see his tailor.

Blaming the delinquent doctor misses the point: The point is that the non-physicians were not trained to help the woman. So she died. Now imagine how much more likely this would be if we allow mid-wives to perform abortions when there is no doctor within “hundreds of miles” to treat her?

The lack of hospitals in many rural areas is indeed a problem, but the cause of women’s rights is not advanced by allowing non-doctors to play doctor. It is made worse. That those promoting this policy claim to have the best interests of women in mind makes it all the more sickening.

ACLU SUES MICHIGAN OVER RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the ACLU’s latest attack on religious freedom:

The ACLU is suing the state of Michigan over its law protecting the conscience rights of faith-based foster care and adoption agencies. The Catholic League stands with the Michigan Catholic Conference, which called for defending the state law “from yet another egregious attack on religious faith in public life.”

At issue is a law signed by Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder in 2015 that exempts faith-based child placement agencies from providing services that conflict with their religious beliefs. A lesbian couple says that when they sought to adopt a child, they were turned away by a Catholic agency and another Christian agency; for religious reasons, they do not place children with same-sex couples.

Of course, there are other child placement agencies in the state that the couple could have gone to. But that is not the point for the ACLU. As with its long war against Catholic hospitals, the goal of the ACLU is to either force faith-based institutions to violate their religious teachings or to drive them out of human services altogether.

That this would be to the detriment of all those people—in this case children—who are served by faith-based charitable agencies, is of little concern to the ACLU. Its agenda is driven not by concern for people in need, but by a determination to advance its pro-abortion, pro-gay marriage ideology at all costs.

The Michigan Catholic Conference calls this lawsuit “mean-spirited, divisive and intolerant.” That is also an accurate description of the ACLU’s long campaign of anti-Catholic bigotry.

IGNORANCE OF RELIGIOUS RIGHTS IS WIDESPREAD

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a new survey of First Amendment rights:

The Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania has released a new survey on the public's knowledge of basic constitutional rights; it is disturbing on many levels.

Every totalitarian movement in history, beginning with the French Revolution, has sought to crush conscience rights. That is because conscience rights are inextricably linked to religious rights, making freedom of religion the one right that totalitarian rulers fear most. This alone justifies a well-crafted civics program in the public schools. It is also cause for despair after reading the Annenberg survey.

More than a third of Americans, 37 percent, can't name any of the rights guaranteed by the First Amendment. Nearly half, 48 percent, list freedom of speech as a guaranteed right, but only 15 percent can name freedom of religion. The results of other survey houses indicate that matters have gotten worse.

The First Amendment Center at Vanderbilt University has been tracking this issue for decades. In 2014, it found that 68 percent were able to identify freedom of speech as a guaranteed right, but only 29 percent could name freedom of religion. Twenty years ago, the respective figures were 49 percent and 21 percent.

Why is it that knowledge of our First Amendment right to freedom of religion always trails our awareness of freedom of speech? Is it because the rights crusade that began in the 1960s is more often associated with free speech rights? Yet the efforts by Rev. Martin Luther King were anchored more in

religious rights than free speech rights.

Why is it that we are apparently going backwards on both measures, especially on religious rights? To be exact, between 1997 and 2017, our knowledge of free speech as a First Amendment right slipped by 2 percent, but our knowledge of freedom of religion dropped by 29 percent. Is it because the public schools harbor a phobia, or worse, about religious expression?

We are currently witnessing an assault on our First Amendment rights to freedom of speech and freedom of religion, and in both instances it is emanating largely from the schools: colleges and universities are doing a pitiful job defending freedom of speech on campus, and religious rights are increasingly imperiled at the elementary and secondary levels.

Freedom depends, in part, on our vigilance in protecting fundamental human rights. If the first freedom to go is freedom of religion—history shows that it is—then these survey findings are not encouraging. We are not likely to defend rights we barely know exist.

BELAFONTE SET TO JUDGE NYC STATUES

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on Harry Belafonte sitting in judgment of monuments in New York City:

New York City's left-wing mayor, Bill de Blasio, has selected his left-wing friend, Harry Belafonte, to advise him on which New York City monuments are so hateful that they should be removed. The singer is one of 18 persons selected to be on the

panel which will render an opinion.

Belafonte knows a thing or two about hatred: He is a supreme hate-monger himself, having spewed his vitriol at America, as well as many prominent Americans, for decades.

Virtually everyone concedes that Osama bin Laden was a genocidal maniac, one responsible for the deaths of legions of his own people, never mind thousands of Americans. But in the eyes of Belafonte, the mass murderer is no different from George W. Bush.

“To the extent that you can describe Osama bin Laden as a terrorist, a man who has been smitten by the worst aspects of civil villainy. I think one can say the same thing about Bush.” [“Harry Belafonte’s Five Feistiest Political Quotes,” *Washington Post*, October 18, 2011]

Actually, Belafonte believes Bush was *worse* than bin Laden. He called the 43rd president “the greatest tyrant in the world [and] the greatest terrorist in the world.” [“Blacks Repudiate Belafonte,” National Leadership Network of Conservative African Americans, news release, January 13, 2006]

Belafonte also blamed America for creating bin Laden. “Bin Laden didn’t come from the abstract. He came from somewhere, and if you look where, you’ll see America’s hand of villainy.” [“Did Harry Belafonte Dishonor America?”, *The O’Reilly Factor*, foxnews.com, December 1, 2005]

Venezuelan dictator Hugo Chavez hated America, was a true tyrant, and impoverished his nation. But to Belafonte, he was a hero: “We respect you, we admire you.” [“Blacks Repudiate Belafonte”]

Belafonte’s praise for Chavez came on January 7, 2006, three days after the Venezuelan dictator was publicly condemned in the U.S. for accusing Jews of money grabbing worldwide. Two weeks earlier, on Christmas Eve, Chavez told the TV audience

that “the descendants of the same people that crucified Christ have taken over all the wealth of the world.” [“Blacks Repudiate Belafonte”]

Belafonte also blamed Jews for conspiring with the Nazis, saying, “Hitler had a lot of Jews high up in the hierarchy of the Third Reich.” [“Belafonte’s Retraction of Remarks on Jews Causes New Flap,” cnsnews.com, July 7, 2008]

The Koch brothers, Charles and David, are libertarian philanthropists, but because they are associated with conservative causes, Belafonte sees them as analogous to the Ku Klux Klan. He calls them “white supremacists” and “men of evil.” [“Harry Belafonte’s Greatest Hits,” freebeacon.com, November 4, 2013]

Colin Powell was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Secretary of State, but to Belafonte, the four-star general was nothing more than a house slave. “There’s an old saying in the days of slavery. There are those slaves who lived on the plantation, and there were those slaves who lived in the house. You got the privilege of living in the house if you served the master. Colin Powell was permitted to come into the house of the master.” [“Harry Belafonte’s Greatest Hits”]

To Belafonte, black music = coon music. “There’s certainly much more anger in rap than I’ve ever evidenced in coon songs. Coon songs seem more willing to placate.” [“Harry Belafonte’s Five Feistiest Political Quotes”]

Belafonte’s support for a dictatorship at home was made clear when he implored President Obama to start one. Speaking of Republicans who were blocking Obama’s programs, the singer said, “The only thing left for Barack Obama to do is to work like a third world dictator and just put all these guys in jail.” [“Harry Belafonte, MSNBC Criticized over ‘Jailing Republicans’ Remarks,” foxnews.com, December 14, 2012]

The evidence is unambiguous. Belafonte’s hatred of America is

matched only by his love for Communist regimes in the Soviet Union, East Germany, Cuba. [See the “Guide to the Political Left” article on Belafonte available at discoverthenetworks.org]

This is the kind of person that Mayor de Blasio will be taking his cues from in assessing which monuments should be taken down.

If America acted the way Belafonte’s beloved regimes did—the Soviet Union, East Germany, and Cuba—he would not be serving New York’s executive—he would be executed. Lucky for him America was founded by men like Washington, Madison, and Jefferson, all of whom believed in inalienable rights, and not in the virtues of tyranny.

Contact Eric Phillips, press secretary to Mayor de Blasio: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov

DE BLASIO’S MONUMENT GOALS ARE TROUBLING

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio’s panel that will determine which monuments and other markers should be taken down:

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio has empanelled 18 persons to assess which monuments and other markers should be removed from city property. He said the panel “will develop guidelines on how the City should address monuments seen as oppressive and inconsistent with the values of New York City.”

It is telling that the mayor did not say that the panel should

determine which monuments are inconsistent with American values. Instead, he cited the “values of New York City.” This begs two questions: What are New York City values, and who decides what they are? His past forays into this area are cause for grave concern.

In February 2011, a pro-life group, Life Always, displayed a huge billboard in the SoHo section of New York that showed a picture of a young black girl with the inscription, “The most dangerous place for an African American is in the womb.” Prominent African Americans endorsed the billboard; it was displayed during Black History Month.

The billboard incensed de Blasio, who was then New York’s Public Advocate. He not only failed to be an advocate for the unborn, or for pro-life New Yorkers, he actually recommended censoring it. “The billboard simply doesn’t belong in our city. The ad violates the values of New Yorkers.”

In other words, if an ad offends de Blasio’s values, it offends “the values of New Yorkers.” Not content to criticize an ad he objects to, he sought to muzzle the free speech rights of black pro-life men and women. He succeeded.

De Blasio’s passion for declaring abortion rights to be representative of New York values led him to support Governor Andrew Cuomo’s equally censorial approach to this subject. In 2014, Cuomo railed against what he called “extreme conservatives” who are “pro-life, pro-assault weapons, anti-gay.” He said such persons “have no place in the state of New York, because that’s not who New Yorkers are.”

So New Yorkers opposed to abortion “have no place in the state of New York,” and should get out of town. De Blasio said he agreed with that position “100 percent.”

Let’s be honest about this: De Blasio is not asking the panel to develop guidelines that offend traditional moral values—he is asking them to craft recommendations that offend his trendy

political values.

This explains why he is sure not to mess with the New York City street named after Planned Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger, despite the fact that she was a notorious racist and an anti-Catholic bigot. While he might be upset with her racism (the latter animus doesn't even register with him), it is not likely to trump his fondness for Planned Parenthood. Look for the sign to stay.

Contact Eric Phillips, press secretary to Mayor de Blasio: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov