

CATHOLICISM IS NOT INCLUSIVE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on controversies embroiling two Catholic entities:

When the pastor of a rural Minnesota Catholic church learned that three male musicians each claimed to be married to a man, he dismissed them. When officials at a suburban Maryland Catholic school learned that a substitute teacher and field hockey coach was associated with a white supremacist group, they dismissed him.

Both decisions were merited.

The Catholic Church opposes gay marriage and racism. While neither the gay men nor the white supremacist were openly flouting their convictions, once their status became publicly known, Catholic officials had little choice but to dismiss them. Not to do so would be to give sanction to behaviors that are in direct contradiction to the teachings of the Church.

That should be the end of the story. However, the three gay men have garnered some community support, and one of them is refusing to leave the church. There has been no positive reaction to the teacher who has ties to racists, and he is not contesting the decision to fire him.

Similarly, gay activists have taken up the cause of the gay musicians, maintaining that the Catholic Church should be inclusive. But that is precisely the argument that white racists could make regarding the Maryland teacher: the Church should welcome everyone.

The word catholic means universal, but it is a profound misreading of Catholicism to suggest that it is an inclusive organization. It is not. Nor for that matter is *any institution*: from the smallest cell in society, namely the family, to global organizations such as the United Nations,

all are founded on exclusivity: they have lines of authority, based on either kinship or institutional strictures, that exclude those who do not qualify for membership.

Diversity, si. Inclusiveness, no. That is what Catholicism represents.

CHURCH LEADS IN HANDLING SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the need for employers to upgrade their sexual misconduct policies:

The clergy sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church made headline news in 2002, even though most of the offenses took place from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s. Over the past decade and a half, the Church launched many new policies to check this problem, the result being a dramatic reduction in cases of abuse. Indeed, there is no institution in the nation today, religious or secular, that has a better record in dealing with sexual misconduct than the Catholic Church.

Ironically, it is precisely the Church's most prominent and vocal critics who are now undergoing their own sexual misconduct problems: journalism, the arts, Hollywood, and education have all been hit with scandal.

The media have had more than their fair share of problems dealing with sexual predators. Charlie Rose, Matt Lauer, Glenn Thrush, Michael Oreskes, and Mark Halperin are the big names, but no one knows just how deep the scandal goes. Payouts are commonplace, but little in the way of policy changes have been announced.

The Society of Professional Journalists has an impressive list of resources available to members, ranging from freedom of information to ethics in the newsroom. But the only statement it has on its website regarding sexual harassment in the newsroom is a list of articles on the subject.

One of those recommended articles is from the *New York Times*, a rather strange source of advice given the newspaper's serious problems with sexual misconduct. The suggested article offers nothing more than tips on training and the need to promote more women. The latter is particularly embarrassing: when Jill Abramson was deputy to Michael Oreskes, she knew of his alleged offenses yet she admits she never did anything about them.

For thirty years, Peter Martins ran the New York City Ballet. Insiders knew of his serial offenses: he verbally and physically abused men as well as women. Also, board members knew of his wife beating, yet did nothing about it.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences expelled Harvey Weinstein on October 14, but reports are surfacing saying that many members now regret doing so. Roman Polanski continues to be defended by many in Hollywood, even as new allegations are being made. A task force on sexual misconduct has been launched by the Academy, but it has yet to finalize anything.

Stories of predatory professors abound, and this is especially true of grad students. Yet the only formal committee on sexuality that is listed by the American Association of University Professors deals with "Sexual Diversity and Gender Identity." There is no institutionalized mechanism to address the sexual exploitation of students by professors.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops not only has a comprehensive training program for all its employees on sexual abuse, it conducts background checks on all those who

work with children. Regarding sexual harassment in the workplace, each diocese has its own policy. The Archdiocese of New York, for instance, has a detailed employee handbook section on this issue, which includes termination in cases of serious sexual misconduct.

The Catholic Church's policies on sexual misconduct provide a model for all organizations and professions. It is high time it received credit for the progress it has made. More important, those who have been its harshest critics need to learn from what it has accomplished and start instituting policies that mirror those of the Church.

MEDIA BIAS AGAINST CARDINAL PELL

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the latest media bias against Cardinal George Pell:

Cardinal George Pell is the highest ranking member of the Catholic clergy ever to be charged with sexual abuse. To date, this matter has not been adjudicated in the courts, and indeed no specific charges have been rendered against him. Yet the media in Australia, Europe, and North America have led the public to believe that he is a guilty man. The latest round of biased journalism occurred today.

There are several news stories in Australia and England on the death of Damian Dignan, one of Cardinal Pell's accusers. All of the stories feed the image of Pell as a guilty man.

Dignan, who died of cancer, alleged that in the 1970s Cardinal Pell inappropriately touched him while throwing him off his

shoulders in a swimming pool. It took him until March 2016—nearly 40 years after the alleged offense—to report it, thus raising questions about its veracity. Dignan also had a record of violence and drunk driving.

The following news stories made no reference to the date of the alleged offense, the date it was reported, or the nature of the offense:

The Australian

Guardian (U.K.)

Gulf News (Australia)

Herald Sun (Australia)

Hobart Mercury (Australia)

The following mentioned the pool incident but not when it allegedly occurred:

The Courier (Australia)

Daily Mail (U.K.)

Express Digest (U.K.)

9 News (Australia)

The following news stories mentioned the date of the accusation but said nothing about when it allegedly occurred or the nature of the offense:

The Age (Australia)

BBC (U.K.)

There was not one accurate news story. This is not a mistake—it is a pattern (see the Catholic League website for previous examples).

Worse than not reporting all the facts are those stories which mention the date of the accusation in 2016, but not when the alleged offense occurred, making it seem that it was of recent vintage.

It is striking that a former chief Victorian magistrate and

crown prosecutor, Nicholas Papas, told the *Guardian* that Dignan's death would negatively impact on the upcoming court case. Really? In other words, in order to convict Cardinal Pell, they needed the testimony of a person who alleges that horsing around with Pell in a pool back in the 1970s amounted to sexual abuse?

No wonder skeptics have turned cynical. Cardinal Pell has been unfairly treated from the beginning, both by the media and the courts, and this chapter only adds to the litany of injustices.

Those who are now belaboring the treatment of public notables in the U.S. who have been assumed guilty—without hard evidence—would do well to examine what has happened to many priests, beginning with Cardinal George Pell.

MEDIA PROVIDE COVER FOR BOSTON GLOBE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue says the *Boston Globe* still refuses to come clean in identifying sexual misconduct in the workplace, and the media are giving it a pass:

On December 8th, the *Boston Globe* published an article citing some past and recent examples of sexual misconduct among its employees. There were two curious things about the piece: the timing and the content.

The article was posted online after work on a Friday, around 6:00 p.m.

This was no mistake: bleeding out bad news late on a Friday is done purposely so few readers will notice it. The next day the

article appeared in the newspaper; Saturday is known for having the lowest circulation of the week.

The content was just as cute: *Boston Globe* editor Brian McGrory refused to name names—he protected the “privacy” of the sexual predators, thus adopting a “confidentiality policy” for the *Globe* that his newspaper found unconscionable when invoked by the Boston archdiocese.

On December 12th, I wrote a news release blasting McGrory for his duplicity; we provided our subscribers with email contact information at the *Globe*. On December 18, I struck again, detailing many examples of *Globe* editorials savaging the Catholic Church for following the same policy it had adopted all along as its own. We sent my statement to over 100 editors and reporters at the newspaper.

That same day, I discussed this matter with Laura Ingraham on her Fox News Show, “The Ingraham Angle.” That was a Monday.

Late on the following Thursday, McGrory apologized online for not saying who the most recent sexual abuser was. He identified the man and then tried to walk away from the issue. He never fingered all of the other predators known to him, nor did he identify the guilty who worked at the *Globe* before his time. Surely the *Globe* keeps personnel records—it demanded the Boston archdiocese turn over its files. So why not the *Globe's*?

Why were none of these abusers reported to the authorities? Sexual harassment in the workplace is illegal in Massachusetts, and that includes verbal, as well as physical, offenses. Oh, yes, McGrory’s apology to readers of the newspaper’s edition appeared on Friday, December 22, the last workday—many were off—before Christmas.

The Catholic Church has long been trashed for the way it handled the problem of sexual misconduct, but the media have said virtually nothing about the *Boston Globe's* duplicity. Is

that because its competitors do not want to open up a can of worms?

We normally call it a cover up when those who work in a company fail to come clean about wrongdoing. What do we call it when almost an entire profession covers for its own? Journalism?

JAY-Z FESSES UP

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the trailer to “Family Feud”:

A video trailer is supposed to be a teaser, but in this case it falls flat, leading nowhere.

Jay-Z’s recently released “Family Feud” video shows him walking into a Catholic church with his real-life daughter, rapping away—“Nobody wins when the family feuds”—as he struts. This is followed by a flashback scene where he is shown kissing a gal in her undergarments. Then Beyoncé appears, standing at the pulpit, wearing a navy blue outfit dressed like a queen. She is a priestess: she hears Jay-Z’s confession, apparently a statement on his real-life infidelities.

Is it anti-Catholic? No, it is not a bigoted assault. Indeed, it pales next to Jay-Z’s relentlessly racist (and anti-black) lyrics. But it is nonetheless gratuitous as well as exploitative, just the kind of thing we would expect from this genius couple.