

“PAUL, APOSTLE OF CHRIST” OPENS MARCH 23

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on “PAUL, Apostle of Christ,” which opens tomorrow:

This is a film Christians will warm to, especially as we approach Holy Week. Jim Caviezel, who played Jesus in Mel Gibson’s “The Passion of the Christ,” stars as Saint Luke, and James Faulkner as Saint Paul. They offer an accurate and moving account of the Gospel story as seen through the eyes of these two saints. Nero’s persecution of Christians, and their determination not to yield, makes this a gripping account of the power of faith. It is the right movie at the right time.

CRISIS PREGNANCY CENTERS UNDER FIRE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on crisis pregnancy centers and who’s leading the charge against them:

Xavier Becerra is not known to many outside of California, but his place in history is secure: as the state’s attorney general, he is the subject of oral arguments before the U.S. Supreme Court. This is a man who not only champions abortion rights, for any reason and at any time of pregnancy, he is determined to silence his foes. Indeed, his extreme animus against the pro-life community is on a par with his passion for abortion.

The California AG’s name appears in the case before the high

court, *National Institute of Family & Life Advocates v. Becerra*. The lawsuit was brought by the pro-life institute after Becerra tried to effectively close down the state's crisis pregnancy centers. He invoked the state's FACT Act against these centers.

This law requires these abortion alternative centers to post a message that undercuts their purpose: they are mandated to tell their clients that the state offers subsidized medical care for eligible women, including abortion. The crisis pregnancy centers are objecting on the grounds that this constitutes "compelled speech," and is therefore unconstitutional under the First Amendment.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, the most reliably radical federal court in the land, ruled that this mandate was merely a regulation of "professional speech," and was therefore not subject to "strict scrutiny." If the high court were to uphold this interpretation, it would have grave consequences for conscience rights: the government could arguably compel any message it declares to be in the public interest.

Becerra is the point man for this war on crisis pregnancy centers. Moreover, when he was in the Congress, he was the abortion industry's best friend. Here is a sample of his voting record:

- YES on allowing human embryonic stem cell research
- NO on making it a crime to harm a fetus during another crime
- NO on forbidding human cloning for reproductive & medical research
- NO on funding for health providers who don't provide abortion info
- NO on banning Family Planning funding for abortion in U.S. aid abroad
- NO on banning partial-birth abortions

- NO on barring transporting minors to get an abortion

This is why Becerra received a 100% rating from NARAL and a 0% tally from the National Right to Life Committee.

Remember the pro-life activists who went undercover to film Planned Parenthood officials trafficking in aborted baby parts? Becerra brought felony charges against them, something so drastic that even the pro-abortion *Los Angeles Times* criticized him for “disturbing overreach.” In June 2017, a judge dismissed 14 of the 15 charges as legally insufficient. Becerra refiled all 15.

In October 2017, Becerra sued the Trump administration to block the conscience protections attendant to the Health and Human Services mandate. This was only one of more than two dozen lawsuits against the Trump administration.

This is what makes Becerra tick: He can't do enough to war on unborn babies and crisis pregnancy centers.

RADIO JOCK'S VILE ATTACK ON ELDERLY NUN

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a Tennessee radio sports jock's attack on a Chicago nun:

Sister Jean Dolores Schmidt is the well-loved chaplain at Loyola University Chicago, and a rabid sports fan. She was delighted when her school upset the University of Tennessee in the second round of the NCAA basketball tournament over the weekend.

The victory didn't sit well with Cody McClure, who hosts a

radio show on WKGN-AM, a Knoxville station. He posted a tweet saying, “F*** Sister Jean everyone.” The nun is 98-years-old.

When asked to explain himself, McClure said, “I don’t regret the joke, no I don’t, because it was a joke.” He then went on to lecture those who can’t take a joke anymore.

It wasn’t a joke—it was a cruel and obscene assault on an innocent elderly nun. Moreover, it was clearly meant to harm, not to induce laughter.

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JIM CARREY’S ATTACK ON SARAH SANDERS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on Jim Carrey’s attack on Sarah Huckabee Sanders:

Comedian Jim Carrey is the subject of cheers and jeers for his “Monstrous” portrait of Sarah Huckabee Sanders. Below his unflattering portrait of the White House press secretary, Carrey writes, “This is the portrait of a so-called Christian whose only purpose in life is to lie for the wicked. Monstrous!”

Trump haters are loving it. Critics are mostly focusing on his cruel depiction of Sanders. Not enough are calling attention to his bigoted remark. Her father, Gov. Mike Huckabee, got it.

“Pathetic BULLY, sexist, hater, bigot & ‘Christophobe’ @jimcarrey attacks @PressSec for her faith; what would be

hypocritical Hollywood reaction if he called someone a ‘so-called Muslim’ or ‘so-called Jew?’ #classlessCarrey”

Carrey has a history of bigotry. Previous tweets include comments indicting all Catholic priests as child molesters.

Carrey should be careful about throwing stones at others. His life is a mess—he suffers from depression and suicidal impulses—so someone who is as vicious as he is could easily caricature him in a “monstrous” fashion.

Part of Carrey’s problem is that he doesn’t know who he is. Raised Catholic, he has dabbled in Presbyterianism, Kabbalah, Buddhism, Scientology, and Transcendentalism, settling on the New Age mysteries of Eckhart Tolle. Those are vintage Hollywood credentials.

Carrey should apologize to Sanders and return to his religion of origin. Catholics welcome those who atone.

HANNIBAL BURESS AND HIS CATHOLIC FANS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the reaction to Hannibal Buress’ latest exploit:

Like many comedians these days, stand-up comedian Hannibal Buress can’t get through a show without being vulgar. Arrested in December for disorderly intoxication, he is known for his offensive behavior.

So it was hardly a surprise that he had his microphone cut while performing at Loyola University Chicago over the weekend: the action was taken when he started portraying all

priests as child molesters. “Y’all f*** kids, right?”

If this were all there was to this story, it would hardly be worth commenting on any further. But there is much more.

Why did a Catholic university invite Buresse in the first place? They knew what they were getting. Indeed, they even asked him to abide by certain rules as a condition of performing. He was asked not to tell jokes about rape, sexual assault, race, sexual orientation/gender, illegal drugs, and so forth. He agreed. Of course, he then intentionally violated the agreement, making fools of his host.

Even more bizarre was the reaction of the student audience. They didn’t boo at his obscene jokes—they booed when his mic was cut. Yes, they wanted Buresse to continue his assault on priests.

To top things off, Buresse was allowed to come back on stage 15 minutes after he left. What genius let him do that? And what happened? He got a a standing ovation from his Catholic fans. That’s right, the students at this Jesuit-run institution treated this filthy-mouthed bigot as a hero.

It would have been interesting to see how these enlightened students would have reacted if Buresse had started talking about all the homosexual priests who did the molesting. That would have really tested their sense of humor.

EVERYONE KNOWS ABORTION KILLS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on reactions to Conor Lamb’s position on abortion:

Conor Lamb just won the open congressional seat in a

Pittsburgh suburb. As a professed Catholic, he says, "We believe that life begins at conception, but as a matter of separation of church and state, I think a woman has the right to choose under the law..." He went on to say that his personal opposition to abortion would never allow him to vote for a single ban, including those in the late term.

By making his personal decision grounded in Catholicism, Lamb missed a great opportunity: it is science that tells us that life begins at conception. That Catholicism agrees with this scientific fact is commendable, but lacks the persuasive power necessary to win this argument in a diverse society. He should have simply referenced Biology 101, punctuated by his religious beliefs.

It must also be said that the pro-choice position on racial discrimination—"I am personally opposed but will not impose my views on others"—would be read as a flat-out endorsement of discrimination. That is why Lamb's position is so lame. Moreover, referencing separation of church and state is downright silly: no Catholic opposed to the death penalty worries about imposing his religious beliefs on others.

But it is not Lamb's convoluted thinking that is most interesting. It is the reaction it has had with the champions of abortion.

In his March 16 column in the *New York Times*, David Leonhardt has a reasonable commentary on this subject. Speaking of pro-life Americans, who oppose aborting children because they suffer from Down syndrome (as well as other reasons), he writes, "They're more likely to believe that babies with the syndrome have as much right to life as those without it." Then he writes, "That last sentence probably offends some readers—which helps make the point that personal opposition to abortion means something."

Which raises the question: Why would it offend anyone to say

that all babies have a right to life? Why wouldn't they simply disagree? Because that would make them out to be what they are—people who get exercised just hearing about a child's right to life. And what that makes them is not the subject of polite conversation.

Christina Cauterucci, writing for Slate, is more than exercised over this issue—she is ready to stick it to Lamb. “By broadcasting his belief that, lawmaking aside, a fertilized egg is a human life, he's essentially scolding women who've had abortions. ‘I believe you've killed someone, but I will fight for your right to do it!’”

She's touched on something real. Anyone who believes that life begins at fertilization, yet opposes laws to protect it, is morally challenged, to say the least. But it is her anger at Lamb that is most striking.

It's not good enough for her to have a congressman who will vote against all abortion bans. No, she loathes Lamb's personal conviction that life begins at conception because it ineluctably reminds people of what abortion is. She's right about that.

This is why the pro-abortion crowd is losing the argument. Their outrage over merely voicing the obvious—that life begins when the sperm and the egg unite—is proof positive that Lamb has hit a nerve. They know, deep down, that abortion kills. The only weapon left in their arsenal is to intimidate, if not muzzle, those who make public declarations of it.

KILLING THE KIDS, SELECTIVELY

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on aborting children with Down syndrome:

On March 14, U.S. District Court Judge Timothy Black issued a preliminary injunction blocking an Ohio law that would have banned abortions performed solely due to a diagnosis of Down syndrome.

It made the ACLU and Planned Parenthood happy: they both support killing babies who are 80 percent born (partial-birth abortion), so it's easy to see why they were delighted with this outcome.

Judge Black explained his reasoning by saying, "The State's attempt to carve out exceptions to a categorical right where none exist fails as a matter of law." He's wrong. In some states it is illegal to abort a child on the basis of sex. Pennsylvania is one of those states.

Pennsylvania is currently considering legislation similar to the one struck down in Ohio (North Dakota has a law, which has not been challenged in the courts, that bans aborting children with Down syndrome).

On March 12, Karen Gaffney spoke at the Capitol Rotunda in Harrisburg in favor of the ban in Pennsylvania. She has Down syndrome. She is also a champion swimmer who has traversed the Boston Harbor, the San Francisco Bay, and Lake Tahoe; she also participated in a relay that crossed the English Channel. Perhaps the ACLU and Planned Parenthood could explain to her why she has no right to live.

In Iceland, as George Will wrote in his March 15 column for the *Washington Post*, "upward of 85 percent of pregnant women opt for prenatal testing, which has produced a Down syndrome-elimination rate approaching 100 percent." He calls that

genocide. "It is simply the deliberate, systematic attempt to erase a category of people."

Will quotes an Icelandic counselor who consoles mothers about to abort their Down syndrome baby. She says, "We don't look at abortion as a murder." Then what is it? "We look at it as a *thing* that we ended." (My italic.)

A "thing." This kind of sanitization of the language is not merely troublesome, it is demonic. It is precisely the kind of language used by the Nazis: the Final Solution began by killing the disabled. Though we are not about to repeat that horror in the U.S., the road to killing the unwanted and the infirm is inexorably greased by this mind-set.

SECULARIZATION OF ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the evolution of New York's St. Patrick's Day Parade:

Since 1762, there has been a magnificent St. Patrick's Day Parade in New York City, drawing Irish Catholics from every county in Ireland, as well as from a host of schools, colleges, and voluntary organizations. The police and firefighters are front and center. But what was once a celebration of St. Patrick has now evolved into a celebration of the Irish.

St. Patrick is the patron saint of the Archdiocese of New York. On the morning of the march, there is a Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral. Until recently, few questioned the Catholicity of the parade.

No one has done more to deracinate the heritage of the parade than John Lahey, the president of Quinnipiac University. An active member of the St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee for many years—he is now chairman of the board of directors of the St. Patrick's Day Parade, Inc.—Lahey has fought to eliminate reference to the parade's purpose of honoring St. Patrick. He has also fought to end the requirement that the parade's leadership be of Irish descent and Roman Catholic.

In the name of inclusion, Lahey pushed for a homosexual group to march in the 2015 parade. But he made sure that his idea of inclusion did not extend to pro-life groups. Now this aspect of the parade is back in the news.

In the March 14 edition of *AM NY*, reporter Mike Vogel writes that in 2015 a gay group was allowed to march under its own banner for the first time. "While some hailed the decision," he writes, "others grumbled, including Bill Donohue of the Catholic League who called it 'contemptible.'" He then says the parade "continues to become more inclusive, despite complaints from those for whom tolerance seems to be a dirty word."

Vogel is a dishonest man. Here is what happened.

In 2014, I was assured by the late John Fitzsimons of the parade committee that if I agreed to allowing a gay group to march under its own banner, a pro-life group would be invited to march under its own banner as well. Gays and pro-life men and women had always marched in the parade, but not as separate units.

Fitzsimons came to me first because I had been the unofficial spokesman for the parade for two decades. As I told the media many times, the march is no more anti-gay than it is anti-life. I even went on radio inviting gays to march with the Catholic League contingent.

As it turned out, Fitzsimons lied. No pro-life group has ever

been allowed, though several applications have been made. That is why I pulled the Catholic League contingent from marching in the parade. Being double-crossed by another Irish Catholic, a man whom I regarded as a friend, is not something I will tolerate.

Vogel knows what my position is but chose to imply that I am intolerant. The quote where I said it was “contemptible” to allow a gay group to march under its own banner was taken from an AP story on March 17, 2016. The next sentence in this story is what Vogel conveniently ignored. “The group [Catholic League] stopped marching last year, saying it was unfair of organizers to open the parade to a gay group but not to an anti-abortion one.”

This year’s parade is showing evidence of further secularization. The Grand Marshal is Loretta Brennan Glucksman, a woman with strong Irish credentials, but no Catholic ones. Indeed, she is an ex-Catholic. “I don’t pray, I don’t go to church, and I don’t do any of those rituals that once were such a core part of my life,” she said recently. So fed up with the Catholic Church is she that she took off her miraculous medal in the 1980s when she married Lew Glucksman. Lahey must be delighted.

Those who march in New York’s St. Patrick’s Day Parade are great people. They deserve better.

NEW YORK TIMES PROBES THEATERS FOR ABUSE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a new investigation by the *New York Times* on sexual abuse:

The *New York Post* has a blockbuster story today about a *New York Times* investigation of sexual misconduct in the theater world. Specifically, the *Times* is asking 10 questions of major non-profit arts organizations about their handling of sexual harassment and assault complaints over the last 20 years.

The newspaper wants the respondents to identify who those individuals are, and the nature of the alleged offense. It also wants to know if senior members of the artistic community, business leaders, or board members were the subject of a complaint. It wants a response by March 30.

This has led to quite a pushback from theater elites, some of whom have accused the *Times* of an Inquisition. They have sought legal counsel.

What the theater community should do is agree, on one condition: The *New York Times* must first agree to have theater lawyers investigate Mark Thompson, the CEO of the New York Times Company. In his previous job, as head of the BBC, Thompson claims to have known nothing of the serial rapes committed by Jimmy Savile, many of them with minors, and on the property of the BBC.

[As we have previously shown](#), Thompson's account is unpersuasive: there is every reason to believe that he lied when he said he knew nothing of Savile's criminal acts. Now is the time to settle this matter: let the investigators have access to Thompson and all the letters and files attendant to this probe that are kept by the BBC.

CNN SERIES GETS IT WRONG ON THE CRUSADES

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the first episode of CNN's series on the papacy:

Last night was the first installment of CNN's six-part series, "Pope: The Most Powerful Man in History." Its treatment of the rise of the papacy through the centuries was mostly even-handed—until it got to the Crusades.

To be sure, the show featured some cogent observations from St. Louis University professor Thomas Madden. He pointed out that "the Crusades were, first and foremost, an act of piety," undertaken to stop Islamic invaders who were violently attacking nuns, clergy, and pilgrims; the Christians also sought to liberate the holy city of Jerusalem from its Muslim conquerors.

But Madden's observations were drowned out by the overriding theme of this segment: that the Crusades were little more than a power grab by Pope Urban II.

We are told that Pope Urban II saw the Crusades as "an opportunity to reunite Christians and restore the reign of the Roman Catholic Church"; that he "called for violence in the name of one world under one Catholic Church"; that the Crusades, while "partly motivated by religious zeal," were also "partly motivated by a simple desire for conquest"; and that as a result, Pope Francis "is today trying to heal wounds his predecessor inflicted almost a thousand years ago."

Such assertions are nothing new. Princeton's Bernard Lewis, one of the world's most noted historians, has written, "At the present time, the Crusades are often depicted as an early experiment in expansionist imperialism." Yet, "To the people of the time, both Muslim and Christian, they were no such

thing.”

Rather, Lewis explains, “The Crusade was a delayed response to the jihad, the holy war for Islam, and its purpose was to recover by war what had been lost by war—to free the holy places of Christendom and open them once again, without impediment, to Christian pilgrimage.”

Just as important, as Madden has pointed out many times before, “All the Crusades met all the criteria of a just war.” But one would never know this by watching this episode on CNN. There is no question that the uninformed viewer was presented with a jaundiced view of the Crusades.