

ATHEISTS LOSE AGAIN

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a court ruling just handed down:

The Freedom From Religion Foundation lost again. The militant atheists took it on the chin on August 8 when a federal appeals court overturned a lower court ruling on the constitutionality of allowing Lehigh County, Pennsylvania to keep its 75-year-old official seal that has an image of a Christian cross. The Philadelphia appeals court noted that the seal did not amount to a government endorsement of religion.

The mania to scrub our society free from its Judeo-Christian heritage is a fool's errand. Go to virtually any government building in Washington, D.C. and observe all of the religious symbols, images, and inscriptions—they're everywhere. It's a recognition of who founded America and on what principles.

People of faith have every right to exercise their freedom of speech, and it matters not a whit whether the venue is located on public or private property. Our First Amendment guarantee is not rebuttable. Moreover, it is not going to be disqualified because some hate-driven secularists want to deny us our constitutional rights.

Chalk up another victory for our side. This is not a good day for the Freedom From Religion Foundation. Let's hope they appeal this decision to the U.S. Supreme Court. That way they can waste more of their donors' money.

ROOT CAUSE OF MASS SHOOTINGS IS ROOTLESSNESS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the latest mass shootings:

As a sociologist who has taught Criminology and written about mass shootings, it is distressing to listen to all the chatter about Republicans and Democrats being blamed for the mass shootings in El Paso and Dayton. Most of the talk is pure bunk. At the heart of the problem are what I call the three "B's": beliefs, bonds, and boundaries (see my book [*The Catholic Advantage*](#) for the details).

It is not people of faith who are the most likely to go on a shooting rampage; it is those who have no religious convictions. This does not mean that simply being an agnostic or an atheist is sufficient to cause someone to become a mass murderer. That's nonsense. But to discount the role of religion in examining the lives of young men who are socially dysfunctional is also nonsense, and this is especially true of mass murderers.

Bonds matter greatly. If someone has a strong relationship with his family and his friends (not to mention God), he is considerably less likely to become a mass killer. This does not mean that all loners are likely to wind up like the El Paso and Dayton killers. But it does mean that this characteristic, when coupled with the other two "B's," is an important variable.

Not respecting boundaries is also associated with criminal behavior. All of us cross the line once in a while, but to those who find it easy to do so (no pangs of guilt), and who do so with regularity, beware: They are more likely to hurt someone than the rest of us.

From what we know about the suspected El Paso killer, he was a classic loner. Leigh Ann Locascio, a former neighbor of Patrick Crusius, called him an extreme loner who sat alone on the school bus. "He wouldn't talk to people," she said. "No one really knew him."

Connor Betts, the suspected Dayton killer, was described by one of his bandmates, Jesse Creekbaum, as a "loner." Another person who knew him, Brad Howard, said Betts was a quiet kid who kept to himself.

It is not clear what religious affiliation, if any, Crusius had. But we know that Betts worshipped Satan and wore satanic patches on his jacket.

Much too much is being made of the political leanings of these men. Crusius was upset with the "Hispanic invasion of Texas," and in the eyes of some that makes him a white nationalist. But he was also an extreme environmentalist, a critic of big corporations, and a proponent of universal health care. Betts was a self-described leftist who championed the cause of left-wing terrorists.

There are many things that can be done to lessen the likelihood of mass shootings, but not to address rootlessness is a serious mistake. Last year a Cigna study showed that the most likely persons to be lonely were young people, not the elderly. Most of them, of course, will not become mass murderers, but it is from their ranks, not the well adjusted, where the next mass shooter is likely to come from.

Earlier this year, a study was published in the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* that found a significant increase of mental distress, depression, and suicidal thoughts among adults. The greatest increase was among young people.

What's going on? The lack of social interaction is a real problem. By 2012, it was evident that smartphones and social media had overtaken the lives of millions of young people. The

authors of this study concluded that there was a relationship between the increase in loneliness among young people and the use of smartphones and social media. It's the amount of time that young people spend on their phones that is most disturbing. Indeed, the more time spent with these devices, the greater the risk of depression.

Of course, most young persons who are addicted to their phone are not likely to murder. But again, we would be remiss not to study the forces that create the milieu in which anti-social behavior is more likely to occur.

It is irresponsible to allow ideologues to drive the discussion of mass shootings. This problem will not be curbed by blaming white nationalists or Christian nationalists (they are the new bad guys in the left-wing playbook). After all, young black men who kill each other in the inner city with abandon have nothing to do with white nationalists or Christian nationalists. That they are given less attention by the media than violent white men smacks of racism.

Cities, towns and villages across the nation should institute hot lines for the public to call when they suspect that a young person is seriously in need of help. The hot lines would not involve the police: they would be staffed by the clergy, guidance counselors, social workers, and psychologists. After fielding a call, they would make an assessment and, if necessary, contact those who know the individual. If the troubled youth cooperates, he would be given the help he needs.

There won't be any major progress until we focus on what can be done about the lack of beliefs, bonds, and boundaries that are characteristic of mass killers. School starts soon so time is of the essence.

SEXUAL ABUSE ENABLER AWARDED \$2.45 MILLION

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on media coverage of former Michigan State University president Lou Anna Simon's retirement package:

Imagine the following scenario.

A cardinal in the Catholic Church knows that for 20 years a priest in his archdiocese has sexually abused hundreds of young persons, yet he never once reported his crimes to the authorities. When this is disclosed to the public, the cardinal stands fast, refusing to budge. When a protest of angry Catholics forces him to resign, he is allowed to teach at a local Catholic college and is awarded the title "distinguished professor."

There's more. Imagine the cardinal being charged by prosecutors with two felonies and with lying to the police. Imagine further that the archdiocese agrees to award him \$2.45 million over three years; he is also given medical and dental coverage. But he has to agree not to sue the archdiocese first! He agrees.

This is exactly what happened on July 30 when the Board of Trustees at Michigan State University awarded former president Lou Anna Simon about \$2.5 million (of taxpayers' money), plus benefits, after she was forced to resign. She is charged with two felonies and with lying to the police about Dr. Lawrence Nassar. Nassar is in prison for sexually abusing young athletes when working as a sports doctor at the university; hundreds of young girls are believed to have been molested by him.

Simon's payout follows her refusal to resign—she did so under protest. The school then awarded her the title “distinguished professor.”

We all know what would happen if the scenario about the cardinal were true. It would be the lead story in every newspaper, and would be given non-stop coverage on broadcast and cable TV.

Guess who covered the Michigan State story? Almost no one. AP picked it up, as well as the Michigan media, and there was a critical piece on the website of Forbes. The *Boston Globe*, the *New York Times*, and the *Washington Post* relegated this story to the sports page, as if the story was really about Nassar! ABC, CBS, NBC, PBS, CNN, Fox News, and MSNBC totally ignored it.

The three newspapers mentioned have been the most consistent, and hard-hitting, critics of the Catholic Church in its handling of sexual abuse cases. Yet there was no big story, and no editorial, about the corruption at Michigan State. Just a short story alongside MLB news.

I have been saying for years that the public, especially Catholics, are being played. The clergy abuse scandal is a disgrace, but it is also a disgrace the way the media, and others, have treated sexual misconduct stories when they do not involve the Catholic Church. The lack of outrage over the way Michigan State handled its former president settles the issue.

The double standard is nauseating. In the eyes of the media, victims' lawyers, state attorneys general, late-night talk show hosts, educators, and activist organizations, not all victims of sexual misconduct are equal. What counts is the identity of the victimizer.

NEW YORK TIMES REPORTER REEKS OF BIAS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue has written an open letter to Dean Baquet, executive editor at the *New York Times* concerning the anti-Catholic bias of one of the newspaper's senior reporters, Carl Hulse.

To watch the video that captures Hulse's remarks, click [here](#).

To read the *Washington Examiner's* news story, click [here](#).

To read Donohue's letter, click [here](#).

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