

# 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW

The Catholic League's 2019 Year in Review is now available. It contains an overview of some of our most important battles and victories over the last year. To read it, click [here](#).

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## TIMELY REPORT ON LEGION OF CHRIST

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the recently released report on the founder of the Legionaries of Christ:

We have known for some time that Father Marcial Maciel, founder of the Legionaries of Christ, was one of the most notorious sexual abusers in the history of the Catholic Church. Now a report by his order has determined that he abused at least 60 boys; most were between 11 and 16. That means he was, like almost all the other predator priests, a homosexual. Yet almost every media story on the report falsely calls him a pedophile.

On a more positive note, some media outlets that continue to cover up for homosexual priests are at least acknowledging that it was Pope Benedict XVI who removed Maciel from public ministry in 2006. These outlets include the *National Catholic Reporter*, the BBC, the *Irish Times*, the *Guardian*, *Commonweal*, and *Vanity Fair*.

This matters because the trendy movie, "The Two Popes," unfairly maligns Pope Benedict XVI by suggesting that he covered up for Maciel. He did not—he got him kicked out of the

priesthood. *Commonweal* and *Vanity Fair* explicitly criticized the movie on this issue.

Due to the influence of this movie and the propaganda it spews—demonizing Pope Benedict XVI (while lauding Pope Francis)—the report on the Legionaries of Christ is timely. It allows for a more just, and accurate, consideration of Benedict's legacy.

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## **U.N. HYPOCRITES LECTURE HOLY SEE**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the response of the United Nations to the Vatican's new reforms governing sexual abuse:

The United Nations Human Rights Commission commended the Vatican for its new directives governing the sexual abuse of minors—the rules closely parallel those adopted by the bishops in the United States—but it could not stop there: it resorted to one of its typical lectures. It told the Catholic Church it must do better and needs to enforce its zero tolerance policy.

The timing couldn't be better. Three days ago a report was issued by researchers at the University of Birmingham and Ontario University detailing U.N. employees who raped impoverished women in Haiti, fathering hundreds of babies.

The rapists are employed by the U.N. Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Girls as young as 11 are forced to raise children by themselves, living in abject poverty. What did the U.N. "peacekeepers" give the girls whom they raped? Coins. As one of the victims put it, "They put a few coins in

your hands to drop a baby in you.”

The U.N. has a lousy record dealing with the molesters it employs. In 2015, after the U.N. lectured the Vatican on this issue, I wrote to Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General of the U.N., asking him “to do one of two things: a) either ensure that the United Nations’ policy on ‘zero tolerance’ against convicted sex abusers serving in peacekeeping missions is enforced immediately, or b) cease and desist from probing into alleged sexual abuse violations committed by those in the employ of the Holy See.”

I reminded the secretary general that the U.N. adopted a zero tolerance policy to combat sexual abuse in 2004, yet it was never enforced. “It is more than laughable—it is obscene—that U.N. peacekeeping members who have been convicted of sexual abuse are not even fined!” The following year I noted that the U.N. has no problem telling the Catholic Church that it needs to change its teachings on sexuality, though it never tells Muslims they need to change their Islamic teachings.

The U.N. needs to get its own house in order. It can begin by turning their criminals over to law enforcement. And the U.N. itself should make restitution to the girls whom their “peacekeepers” raped, as well as making provisions for their children.

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## **U.S. RELIGIOUS FREEDOM PANEL**

# RENEWED

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on renewed funding for a religious freedom panel:

The Senate has reauthorized funding for the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, an important global watchdog that monitors religious persecution. Those who support religious liberty are delighted with the news, but there are some, such as Mark Silk, who are not happy with the outcome.

Why would someone who is a professor of religion in public life at Smith College write an article for Religion News Service arguing that a commission that monitors religious persecution worldwide be allowed to die? He made plain his objection to the U.S. Commission: the panel members are “intent on highlighting the persecution of Christians.” That is a shameful objection.

Every study of international religious persecution has concluded that Christians are the most persecuted religious minority in the world.

Last year, the United Kingdom Foreign Secretary authorized religious leaders to do a report on this subject, so brutal is the persecution of Christians throughout the world. The Interim Report detailed the horrific extent of this tragedy. Moreover, the Pew Research Center, Open Doors, and Aid to the Church in Need have all provided irrefutable evidence of Christian persecution all over the globe.

Those who seek to combat injustice and religious intolerance welcome any commission or study that puts the persecution of religious minorities front and center. Such efforts can then be used by government bodies to retaliate against governments that sponsor or tolerate it.

The Senate acted properly. At least some things are still getting done in Washington besides bickering and political gamesmanship.

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## VANDALS STRIKE CATHOLIC CHURCHES

*Here is a list of some acts of vandalism at Catholic churches that have come to our attention in the past month. We usually see vandals attack crèches this time of the year; the fact that churches are being targeted is even more disturbing.*

**Cranston, RI**: St. Paul Catholic Church was vandalized twice in just over a week. In both incidents, on Wednesday night, Nov. 20 and again on Friday night, Nov. 29, rocks were thrown through the church's stained glass windows, smashing them.

**Wauseon, OH**: Three statues were vandalized at an outdoor shrine at St. Caspar Catholic Church on Monday, Nov. 18. According to parish secretary Kasey Sekula, "One of the statue's head was completely cut off. The other ones, the face was just pretty much destroyed."

**El Paso, TX**: A Friday, Dec. 6 incident at St. Thomas Aquinas Church in east El Paso was the latest, and most egregious, of a series of acts of vandalism against Catholic churches in El Paso since last May. In this attack, vandals broke into the church around 2 a.m., after using large, heavy stones from the church landscaping to smash windows at the entrance to the gathering area, the parish main office and the bookkeeping office—which was ransacked. A bible was set on fire, and a second fire, started on a table, was apparently set intentionally to burn a large framed image of Our Lady of

Guadalupe. The image was badly damaged by the fire, as was the wall on which it hung. Two crosses were turned upside down on the walls and satanic symbols were left in multiple locations.

**Wichita, KS:** A statue of the Virgin Mary in front of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church was vandalized, with black markings, apparently from spray paint, covering her hands and face. The incident happened over the weekend of Dec. 7-8.

**Miami, FL:** "A trail of destruction left" Corpus Christi Catholic Church "with thousands of dollars in damages as teenagers wreaked havoc across rooms during an early morning break-in" on Monday, Dec. 9, a local TV station reported. The teens started in a dining room, where they overturned tables, burned a package of disposable Styrofoam containers, and scrawled profanities and vulgar images onto windows and a refrigerator. Then they entered a kitchen, where they redrew the same vulgarities in white residue along a table, and discharged a fire extinguisher to blanket the table and floor in white flame retardant powder. Total damage was estimated at \$3,000.

**Tacoma, WA:** A tabernacle and a cross were stolen from the chapel at Holy Rosary Catholic Church on Tuesday night, Dec. 10. According to the principal of Holy Rosary Bilingual Academy, the thief knew exactly what he or she was looking for. The principal said it could cost thousands of dollars to replace what was stolen.

**Franklin Lakes, NJ:** A 26-year-old man has been charged with aggravated arson and burglary after setting fire to The Most Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church early in the morning of Wednesday, Dec. 11. The man used gasoline and a cigarette lighter to set the blaze, which completely destroyed the church.

**Crowley, LA:** Seven times in the past five months, Christian churches including St. Theresa Catholic Church have had glass

shattered by thrown objects. The latest incident occurred at a Christian church on Sunday, Dec. 8.

**Mt. Lebanon, PA:** A 21-year-old man was charged with smashing doors and windows at three churches, including St. Bernard Catholic Church, on Wednesday, Dec. 4.

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## THIRD CHURCH-SUING TOP COP IMPRISONED

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the conviction of another Church-suing top cop:

Thomas Spota, who served as the District Attorney of Suffolk County for many years, was convicted yesterday of covering up for a police chief who brutally beat a handcuffed man for stealing sex toys and pornography from his car. If this were all there were to this story, it wouldn't be worth mentioning. But there's more.

In the early 2000s, following revelations of clergy sexual abuse by the *Boston Globe*, Spota impaneled a Long Island grand jury to probe the Diocese of Rockville Centre. He knew full well he could not prosecute anyone because of the statute of limitations, but that didn't matter. He never cross examined witnesses and refused to allow officials from the diocese to testify. Worse, he leaked a copy of the grand jury report to *Newsday* before the diocese had a chance to respond.

Spota is the third top cop with a vendetta against the Catholic Church to wind up behind bars.

In 2017, Seth Williams, the Philadelphia District Attorney,

was sentenced to five years in prison on multiple counts of bribery, extortion, and fraud. He even robbed money set aside to pay for his own mother's nursing home care, using it to fund his lavish lifestyle.

Williams tried desperately to railroad accused priests, relying on the testimony of Danny Gallagher, a.k.a. "Billy Doe," an alleged victim. He was described by journalist Ralph Cipriano as "a former drug addict, heroin dealer, habitual liar, third-rate conman and thief [who] made up the whole story." As a result, four innocent men were sent to jail.

The third loser top cop to be sent to the slammer was Pennsylvania Attorney General Kathleen Kane. She started the state-wide grand jury probe of the Catholic Church that was ultimately picked up by her discredited successor, Josh Shapiro. She was sentenced in 2016 for leaking sealed, confidential grand jury documents to the media and for lying under oath.

The Catholic League clashed with Spota, Williams, and Kane on many occasions. While they were not imprisoned for their misdeeds against the Catholic Church, their flawed character—which we observed many times—ultimately caught up with them in a criminal way.

Interestingly, even though the three of them are Catholic, they all harbored an animus against Catholicism. It would be good for them to reflect on their predicament this Christmas season. Redemption may be at hand.

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# THE LEFT'S IDEA OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on how the left interprets religious liberty:

When conservative religious persons speak about religious liberty, they have in mind a robust interpretation of the free exercise provision of the First Amendment. This view is not shared by the comparatively few religious persons on the left.

On December 15, Melissa Rogers, the Obama administration's director of the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, offered her insights on this subject to Jennifer Rubin of the *Washington Post*.

She says she is concerned about "threats to religious pluralism and freedom." Sounds good. Unfortunately, it becomes clear that her idea of what constitutes these goals is very limited. Indeed, it could be said that her perspective is the real threat.

Religious pluralism cannot exist if the secular values of government agencies prevent religious institutions from exercising their religious prerogatives. This doesn't bother Rogers at all. She argues that when the interests of religious foster care and adoption services conflict with the interests of LGBTQ activists, the latter should prevail.

In other words, Christian social service agencies should not be afforded the religious exemption they have traditionally enjoyed: until recently, they were never forced to place children with couples of the same sex. Rogers wants to do away with this religious liberty, thus decimating religious pluralism and freedom.

Rogers also opposes "government-sponsored religious displays."

She doesn't provide any examples, though if she means nativity scenes on public property, that would mean she would prohibit the Catholic League's life-size crèche in Central Park (it is there now). This is not the voice of religious liberty.

Here's another example of her idea of religious pluralism. She boasts that when she was the Obama point-person for religion, she invited the Secular Coalition of America to the White House. She must be kidding. Welcoming professional atheists to the White House in the name of religious pluralism is akin to welcoming racists in the name of racial harmony.

Rogers hasn't changed since her Obama days. In 2013, she congratulated Mara Vanderslice for her yeoman work on faith-based issues. Nine years earlier I exposed Vanderslice, who was working for presidential candidate John Kerry: she was a left-wing activist who had spoken at ACT-UP rallies. This was the fascist gay group that crashed St. Patrick's Cathedral in 1989 during Mass, spitting the Eucharist on the floor. Kerry immediately put a gag rule on her, and I was blamed for his decision to silence her.

The left has very few sincerely religious leaders. Why not simply come out and say that religious liberty, as understood by most Americans for over 200 years, is a threat to freedom and must therefore be limited, if not eradicated. That would be the honest thing to do.

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## **SOME LIKE OFFENSIVE CHRISTMAS DISPLAYS**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on reaction to a Christmas display that some find funny:

A 24-year-old woman from Kansas took down her Christmas display after neighbors complained for four days. But many liked it. On the roof of her house was a huge image of male genitalia; she used a string of lights to create it. The woman, Shelby Lynn Gash, told her neighbors, "I felt the need to make a giant d\*\*\* on the roof."

It is not certain how Gash would feel if someone felt the need to mount porn pictures of her mother—as a birthday present—on his front lawn.

What is it about Christmas haters that they just can't lay low this time of the year? Is it the music that bothers them? Or the decorations? More likely, it is something deeper than that. It isn't hard to figure out what that is. In fact, that's why we put our life-size nativity scene in Central Park, in front of the Plaza Hotel, so everyone can see it.

We just felt the need to make a giant crèche on public property.

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## GAY-THEMED CHRISTMAS EVENTS GALORE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on gay-themed Christmas events:

We've never heard of gay-themed Hanukkah events, and we sure never heard of gay-themed Ramadan events, but there is a slew of Christmas ones. Maybe that's because the boys like us best.

The *Ru Paul Drag Race* show is being performed at various cities across the nation, hoping to bring some good cheer to

those tired of normal celebrations. One of their songs is, "All I Want for Christmas is Nudes," something all the queens can identify with.

San Francisco is the most homosexual-friendly city in the nation, so it is only natural that it would be home to *The Golden Girls Live! The Christmas Episodes*. It is said to appeal to aging homosexuals, men who are enthralled at the promise of sex after 40.

Seattle is home to *Jingle All the Gay*, a Christmas event that pledges to be a "thoroughly queer time." We're convinced it is.

In the heartland of America, Twin Cities *Pride* magazine is boasting of a Miss Richfield "queer-friendly holiday show." The publication notes that the holiday season is "already pretty queer." How's that? "First you fust a turkey, Jesus has two dads, you dress the tree in drag—the list goes on." No doubt it does.

Lifetime Christmas movies have gotten into the act as well. At the end of one film, *Twinkle All the Way*, two men kiss each other on the lips. Though they were introduced in the flick early on, there was no indication they were homosexuals. Guess they saved the best for last.

Netflix showed its perverse side by airing *The First Temptation of Christ*. Aired with English subtitles, this Brazilian short film depicts Jesus in a homosexual relationship. We don't expect that next month, when we celebrate Martin Luther King Day, Netflix will depict the civil rights leader in a homosexual relationship. Muhammad is also safe.

We did not read about any transgender Christmas events. Maybe in 2020. This could be a transition year.

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# TRUMP OFFERS PROTECTION TO JEWS ON CAMPUS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on an executive order that President Trump will sign today combating anti-Semitism:

One way to stop the barrage of anti-Semitism on college campuses is to withhold federal funds from institutions that tolerate it. This is what motivated President Trump to issue an executive order that will allow Jewishness to be seen as an expression of ethnicity.

In doing so, he offers protection to Jews on campus: they are being bullied by those who are part of the BDS movement (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) aimed at destabilizing Israel. Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act will now apply to anti-Semitism (the law offers protection on the basis of race, color or national origin, but not religion).

Critics of the order say it will penalize criticism of Israel, thus acting as a gag order. They are mistaken. The language to be adopted by the State Department states that "criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as anti-Semitic."

Some left-wing Jewish critics are alarmed that Jews are now seen as a nationality. Their fears are unfounded.

In 1964, Milton Gordon published his classic book, *Assimilation in American Life*. It was a brilliant discussion of the various ways in which immigrants assimilated into American life. His definition of an ethnic group, which was widely adopted by sociologists, applied to minority groups who

exhibited “a sense of peoplehood.” In doing so, he included Jews as constituting an ethnic group.

President Trump should be commended for issuing this executive order. Unfortunately, bigots on the campus—this includes administrators and faculty, as well as students—are a real problem today. Now at least some of them will be put on notice. What to do about Christian bashing on college campuses still needs to be resolved.