

KAMALA HARRIS OPINES ON LIFE AND DEATH

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on how Sen. Kamala Harris treats life and death issues:

Last week, Sen. Kamala Harris was asked by National Public Radio (NPR) about her position on the death penalty. She is against it. When pushed further, she stuck to her guns.

NPR: "For any crime?"

Harris: "Correct."

NPR: "Not even, I don't know, treason?"

Harris: "Not in the United States, no."

NPR: "There's nothing that rises to that level?"

Harris: "Not in the United States, no."

Last year, Harris addressed the issue of aborting a child right up until birth. Here is what she tweeted on January 29, 2018:

"Tonight, the Senate is voting on whether to impose a 20-week abortion ban. Women have the constitutional right to make their own decisions about their reproductive health. It shouldn't be infringed upon. Get out your bullhorns. Everyone should be shouting about this."

There we have it. Harris says that those who endanger the safety of all Americans by attempting a violent overthrow of the government, or spying on the military for a foreign enemy, should have their lives spared, but innocent children who are moments from being born are not entitled to have their lives spared.

Harris is a declared candidate for president of the United States.

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SALUTE TO ST. PATRICK

Bill Donohue

The heroics of St. Patrick are not appreciated as much as they should be. He is the first person in history to publicly condemn slavery, and one of the first leaders to champion the cause of equal rights.

There is much to celebrate on March 17. Fortunately, his writings, though slim, are eye-opening accounts of his life: *Letter to the Soldiers of Coroticus* and *Confession* reveal much about the man. Along with other sources, they paint a picture of his saintliness.

Patrick was born in Britain in the 4th century to wealthy parents. It is likely that he was baptized, though growing up he did not share his family's faith. He was an atheist.

When he was 15, he committed what he said was a grave sin, never saying exactly what it was; it appears it was a sexual encounter with a young girl. No matter, it would haunt him throughout his life.

At age 15 or 16 (the accounts vary), Patrick was kidnapped and enslaved by Irish barbarians. They had come to plunder his family's estate, and took him away in chains to Ireland. While a slave, he converted to Christianity, praying incessantly at all hours of the day. After six years, he escaped, and made

his way back home.

His family thought he was dead, and with good reason: no one taken by Irish raiders had managed to escape and return. St. Patrick biographer Philip Freeman describes how his family received him, stating “it was as if a ghost had returned from the dead.”

After he returned home, he had a vision while sleeping. He felt called to return to Ireland. This seemed bizarre: this is where he was brutalized as a slave. But he knew what Jesus had commanded us to do, “Love thy enemy.” He was convinced that God was calling him to become a missionary to Ireland. So he acted on it, despite the reservations of family and friends.

Patrick became a priest, practiced celibacy, and was eventually named a bishop. Contrary to what many believe, he did not introduce Christianity to Ireland, nor was he Ireland’s first bishop. But he did more to bring the Gospel to Ireland than anyone, converting legions of pagans, especially in the northern parts of the island.

His missionary work in Ireland has been duly noted, but his strong defense of human rights has not been given its due.

No public person before him had denounced slavery, widespread though it was. Jesus was agnostic on the subject, Aristotle thought it was a natural way of life, and neither master nor slave saw anything fundamentally wrong with it. Patrick did.

Though he did not invoke natural law specifically, he was instinctively drawn to it. He taught that all men were created equal in the eyes of God, and that the inherent dignity of everyone must be respected.

Patrick did more than preach—he lashed out at the British dictator, Coroticus, harshly rebuking him for his mistreatment of the Irish. In fact, Patrick found his Irish converts to be more civilized than Coroticus and his band of thugs.

Patrick was way ahead of his time in the pursuit of human rights. Not only were men of every social status entitled to equal rights, so were women. In his *Letter to the Soldiers of Coroticus*, he scolds “the tyrant Coroticus—a man who has no respect for God or his priests.” More important, he made a startling plea: “They must also free Christian women and captives.” His reasoning showed the power of his faith when he said, “Remember, Christ died and was crucified for these people.”

He did not mince words. “So, Coroticus, you and your wicked servants, where do you think you will end up? You have treated baptized Christian women like prizes to be handed out, all for the sake of the here and now—this brief, fleeting world.”

What makes this all the more dramatic is the way the pagan world thought about women: the idea that women were equal to men was totally foreign to them. But the women understood what Patrick was saying, and gravitated to him in large numbers. The Christian tenet that all humans possess equal dignity had taken root.

Did the Irish save civilization, as Thomas Cahill maintains? Freeman thinks not—“it had never been lost.” But everyone agrees that had it not been for St. Patrick, and the monasteries that followed, much of what we know about the ancient world would not exist.

Indeed, it is difficult to fathom how classical Greek and Roman literature would have survived had it not been for the Irish monks who attracted students from many parts of Europe. They are responsible for preserving the great works of antiquity. And all of them are indebted to St. Patrick.

It is believed that he died on March 17, sometime during the second half of the fifth century. That is his feast day, the source of many celebrations in his honor. His impact extends beyond the Irish and the Catholic Church—human rights are a

global issue—making him a very special person in world history.

COVER-UP AT SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER?

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on troubles at the Southern Poverty Law Center:

Is there a cover-up in play at the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC)? Why was its famous co-founder, Morris Dees, fired? Why are the media not demanding transparency? This matters to the Catholic League because SPLC has a long record of targeting legitimate Protestant and Catholic organizations.

So far at least, the *Alabama Political Reporter*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *New York Times* are the only media outlets that are doing the kind of digging we would expect from serious journalists. SPLC is content to say that undisclosed problems have arisen which led to Dees' firing.

Internal emails obtained by the *Alabama Political Reporter* show that “the problems—which employees said spanned from sexual harassment to gender- and race-based discrimination—were more systemic and widespread, creating an atmosphere over several years in which female and minority employees felt mistreated. The employees also said that they felt their complaints were either not heard or resulted in retaliation from senior staff.”

The *Los Angeles Times* found something similar. “One letter—signed by about two dozen employees and sent to the board of directors before news broke of Dees' firing—said that

internal 'allegations of mistreatment, sexual harassment, gender discrimination, and racism threaten the moral authority of this organization and our integrity along with it.'"

Charges of sexual harassment are of primary interest to the Catholic League: SPLC has been a relentless foe of traditional sexual morality. It also brands as hate speech comments that reflect the Judeo-Christian understanding of sexual ethics.

Worse, it even lists some legitimate Christian organizations, most prominently the Family Research Council (FRC), as hate groups, simply because they adhere to such precepts. In the case of FRC, being listed as a hate group inspired a madman to go on a shooting rampage at its headquarters.

Then there is the double standard. No bishop could ever be removed from office without a public accounting. Moreover, Dees himself has been mentioned as allegedly engaging in some sort of misconduct. What did he do? When did he do it? Who knew all along?

Imagine a news release issued by a diocese saying its bishop has been asked to step down, saying only that workplace problems such as sexual harassment have been noted by many employees. Imagine further that the media are told "nothing more is going to be said!"

That's what's going on with SPLC. "Asked about the nature of Dees' alleged misconduct," the *Los Angeles Times* reports, "a spokesman for the organization said in an email: 'We can't comment on the details of individual personnel decisions.'"

The next time some "in your face" reporter demands that a diocese be more transparent about a priest who has been removed from ministry, it should say it is taking a page out of the SPLC playbook and say, "We can't comment on the details of individual personnel decisions." And then walk away. Let them all howl.

Contact Richard Cohen, president of SPLC:
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SOME CATHOLICS QUESTION THEIR STATUS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a recent survey of Catholics:

A recent Gallup survey shows that news stories about clergy sexual abuse have Catholics questioning their affiliation with the Church. Before examining why, an analysis of the data is warranted; it reveals a nuanced portrait of Catholics.

The survey found that 37% of Catholics said they are questioning whether to remain in the Church; the figure in 2002 was 22%. Who are these Catholics? Most of them seldom or never go to church: 46% of these Catholics are questioning whether to remain versus 22% of those who attend church weekly. In other words, those with one foot out the door are more likely to consider exiting, which is precisely what we would expect.

A more interesting picture emerges when Catholics are asked how much confidence they have in the priests in their parish versus priests in general. Six in ten have confidence in their own priests (41% said “a great deal” and 18% said “quite a lot”) versus only a third for priests nationwide (20% said “a great deal” and 12% “quite a lot”). The figures for the bishops are similar to the latter.

Not surprisingly, Catholics who are regular attendees have a great deal of confidence in their priests, sporting a figure

of 86%; but only 39% of those who seldom or never attend church feel this way. Most of the latter probably wouldn't be able to name the priests in their parish.

The difference between Church-goers and lapsed Catholics is most revealing when considering the second bank of questions. There is a reason why Church-goers have a lot of confidence in their priests: though it was not mentioned in the survey or in the concluding analysis, *almost all priests have never had an accusation made against them.*

Thus, the everyday experience that Catholics who are regular church-goers have is a positive one—they and their priests are untouched by the scandal. But they read a lot about other priests, clergymen they do not know, and that explains the big drop in confidence for priests nationwide.

What Catholics are reading, of course, matters. For example, most of the news stories on the recent Vatican summit left the impression that the sexual abuse scandal is ongoing. It is not. It is certainly not true in the United States: most of the offenses that took place were in the last century.

Here's a quick anecdote that demonstrates why Catholics may think that conditions have not improved.

"New Jersey Priest Accused of Sexual Abuse Found Shot to Death." That was the headline flashed before the reader in a *New York Times* story on March 13. It's misleading—he was an ex-priest. He was defrocked in 1992 after earlier charges of abuse, homosexual in nature, were revealed.

The *Times* did identify him as a "former priest" in the article (he was also a former public school teacher, but that got little attention). However, his ex-priest status was not noted in the headline (which is the way other newspapers treated this story).

The point is that many people these days only glance at the

headlines and then move on to a story they want to read. The reader was left with the impression that nothing has changed in the Catholic Church. In reality, what never changed was the *New York Times*.

This is just one example among many. Time and again the media have put the worst possible face on the scandal, leaving the public to believe that it will never end.

The fact is there are reporters, pundits, educators, activists, entertainers, lawyers, and professional victims' groups, as well as Catholic dissidents, *who don't want it to end*. Their goal is to keep it alive so they can push for their secular reforms.

Beware of being played by those with an agenda.

MICHIGAN OFFICIALS ASKED TO PROBE THE SCHOOLS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on why he is appealing to Michigan officials to probe the public schools:

[As we pointed out recently](#), perverts and rapists are preying on public school students in Michigan today, yet neither Governor Gretchen Whitmer nor Attorney General Dana Nessel are asking for an investigation of the schools. That's because they are too busy hounding the Catholic Church.

Nessel recently started an investigation of clergy sexual abuse, but not of ministers, rabbis, or imams—only Catholic priests—and Whitmer is asking state legislators for a \$2 million supplemental allocation to pay for the Catholic probe.

Why only Catholic priests? Was there some breaking news that priests are on a rampage molesting students? No. It is due to one thing: the Pennsylvania grand jury report released last year that detailed wholly unchallenged and unsubstantiated charges against priests, most of whom were dead or out of ministry.

Why was the Pennsylvania grand jury report launched? Not because of some pending crisis initiated by law enforcement or reporters. It began because one bishop turned in one high school faculty member who was accused of an offense in the 1990s.

Now ask yourself this question: If a school superintendent turned in a teacher for an old offense, would Pennsylvania's Attorney General launch an investigation of every public school in the state dating back to when Truman was president?

In any event, what does this have to do with Michigan? Nessel argues that if there were cases of abuse in Pennsylvania—dating back to World War II—then surely there must be cases in Michigan. Surely there are. Ditto for the public schools. So why aren't lawmakers being asked to investigate them?

Does Michigan have a problem with public school students being sexually abused? Clearly it does. How do we know? Because in the 50- state analysis of this issue conducted by *USA Today*, published in 2016, Michigan was rated among the worst in the nation: It received a grade of "F." Also, in 2017, CARE House ranked Michigan 6th in the nation in the number of cases of human trafficking.

Accordingly, I am writing to Governor Whitmer and the entire state legislature asking for an investigation of sexual abuse in the public schools. If they decide to cherry pick the Catholic Church, they would be guilty of religious profiling. Moreover, the courts may see them as engaging in religious

discrimination. Surely many Catholics, and non-Catholics, would.

The Catholic League takes this issue seriously. That is why we filed an amicus brief defending the rights of priests in Pennsylvania last year. We won, 6-1, in the Pennsylvania Supreme Court last December.

We will be monitoring all Michigan public officials on this matter, and will take whatever steps are necessary to assure justice. We will also keep Michigan Catholics in the loop as events unfold.

Contact Governor Whitmer's chief of staff, JoAnne Huls: HulsJ1@michigan.gov

THE GULLIBLE GEORGE WILL

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on an opinion piece by syndicated columnist George Will that appeared in the March 12 edition of the *Chicago Tribune*:

Opinion writers who opine about matters they are not well grounded in are a problem. George Will is such a man. A devout atheist, he takes the Catholic Church to task for offenses, real and contrived, relying heavily on the work of Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro, the man behind the discredited Pennsylvania grand jury report on the Church.

If Will took the time to read the grand jury report, which I did, and if he took the time to read the John Jay reports on the issue of clergy abuse, which I did, he would not appear so gullible.

I debunked the grand jury report when it was released. One of

the myths I addressed is taken up by Will. He begins his article by saying, "'Horseplay,' a term to denote child-rape, is, says Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro, part of a sinister glossary of euphemisms by which the Catholic Church's bureaucracy obfuscates the church's 'pattern of abuse' and conspiracy of silence."

Will took Shapiro's bait. First of all, most of the alleged victims were neither children nor were they raped: inappropriate touching of adolescents—which is indefensible—was the typical offense. So stop the hyperbole, Mr. Will.

Also, the word "horseplay" was not part of the lexicon of Church officials: it appears once in over 1300 pages of the report, and it was used to describe the behavior of a seminarian. Once again, Will fell for Shapiro's ploy.

Don't take my word for it—read what Peter Steinfels said about Shapiro's grand jury report; he is a former religion reporter for the *New York Times*.

After reading the report, fact checking the accusations, and speaking to those familiar with the report, including people in Shapiro's office, Steinfels concluded that Shapiro's most serious and sweeping indictments of the Church are "grossly misleading, irresponsible, inaccurate, and unjust."

Don't take Steinfels' word for it—consider what happened in December. That's when the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled 6-1 in favor of eleven accused priests who claimed that releasing their names to the public would violate their reputational rights as guaranteed by the Pennsylvania Constitution. The Catholic League filed an amicus brief in this case.

The court ruled that the report contained "false, misleading, incorrect and unsupported accusations."

Will needs to rewrite his article, rebutting what I said, what

Steinfelds wrote, and what the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled.

He should know better than to cite a grand jury report as the basis of his article. The priests named in the grand jury report were never afforded the right to challenge the accusations. That is because such reports are investigative, not evidentiary.

In 2015, after Will accused Pope Francis of standing against “modernity, rationality, science, and ultimately...open societies,” I wrote the following about him: “He is an educated man, but his grasp of Catholicism is on a par with that of Bill Maher’s.” Looks like nothing has changed.

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AFFIRMATIVE ACTION FOR THE SEXUALLY CONFUSED?

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the “Equality Act,” which is expected to be introduced this week:

The Equality Act has been around for decades, under various names, but it always fails. It will again this year, even if it clears the House; Rep. Nancy Pelosi, the House Speaker, has said the legislation is a priority for the new Congress. If most Americans knew what it is really about, they would not support it.

This bill is not about equality—it is about trashing the free exercise of religion as guaranteed by the First Amendment. In effect, it would gut the constitutionally sound practice of

awarding religious exemptions whenever there is a conflict between religious expression and the rights of homosexuals and the sexually confused (e.g., a man who thinks he is a woman, and vice versa).

The Equality Act has two major goals: (a) it would amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to ban discrimination against homosexuals and the sexually confused, and (b) it would undermine the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) of 1993 by allowing gay rights to trump religious rights.

The predicate of this legislation is that sexual orientation and gender identity are analogous to race and ethnicity, and are therefore deserving of the same protections afforded by the Civil Rights Act. However, that is based on a false assumption.

Sexual orientation speaks to behavior, and gender identity, in this context, refers to the sexually confused; by contrast, neither race nor ethnicity are a function of volition.

While no one can justify unequal treatment on the basis of ascribed characteristics such as race and ethnicity, justifying disparate treatment on the basis of achieved characteristics such as sexual orientation and gender identity can be justified in some instances.

For example, religiously devout parents may rightly object to having their children counseled by a woman who has acquired male genitalia. In normal times, this would not be controversial. Sadly, we live in abnormal times.

There is one very important aspect of the Equality Act that has been generally ignored, even by its critics: It would mean that homosexuals and the sexually confused would qualify for affirmative action.

Of course, the Equality Act says nothing of the kind. It is deceptive. In fact, it pulls the affirmative action trigger.

When the Civil Rights Act was proposed, Sen. Hubert Humphrey, the majority whip, explained that “the proponents of the bill have carefully stated on numerous occasions that Title VII does not require an employer to achieve any sort of racial balance in his work force by giving preferential treatment to any individual or group.” He even went so far as to say that he would “start eating the pages [of the bill] one after another” if any such language were found.

Humphrey was right about the bill—it explicitly prohibited preferential treatment. But he was wrong regarding its interpretation by administrative agencies and the courts. In its wake have come goals, timetables, quotas, utilization studies, validation tests, maps, charts, graphs, as well as bureaucrats armed with their supplementary updates. And lots of lawsuits, most of which affirmed preferential treatment.

Hence, if African Americans qualify for preferential treatment because of the way the Civil Rights Act has been interpreted, then there is no stopping homosexuals and the sexually confused from qualifying were the Equality Act to pass.

This would mean that an employer who is a practicing Catholic, evangelical Christian, observant Jew, Muslim, or Mormon, would be expected to give preferential treatment to homosexuals and the sexually confused (save for small businessmen) when hiring.

We cannot allow the Pelosi rule—pass the bill and then we’ll figure out what it means—to be operative. We already know what it would lead to, and that is not something most Americans would ever support.

Contact Pelosi’s chief of staff:
robert.edmonson@mail.house.gov

SUPPORT JEWISH SIT-IN AT PELOSI'S OFFICE

On March 14, the National Conference of Jewish Affairs will hold a sit-in at Rep. Nancy Pelosi's congressional office at the Longworth House Office Building (15 Independent Ave SE, Washington DC) at 1:00 p.m.

The occasion of the protest is the failure of the Democrat leadership to adequately respond to the anti-Semitism of Rep. Ilhan Omar and Rep. Rashida Tlaib.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue issued the following remarks today on this subject:

We applaud the work of our friend, Rabbi Aryeh Spero, for leading the sit-in at Rep. Nancy Pelosi's office. She acted cowardly by yielding to the voices of extremism in her Party. Rep. Omar, Rep. Tlaib and some other zealots wanted, and succeeded in getting, a statement on bigotry that was ultimately flatulent. We labeled it a "sham" for diluting the initial statement condemning anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitism is a scourge that must be stamped out wherever it exists. That it exists within a segment of the Democratic Party is obvious. It needs to be expunged without further delay.

Catholics are urged to stand with our Jewish allies. To learn more about the sit-in call Rabbi Spero at (212) 252-6861. Call Pelosi's office (202) 225-4965.

BOB LOCKWOOD, R.I.P.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the death of Robert P. Lockwood:

Bob Lockwood passed away March 4. He was one of the most prolific Catholic journalists of our time, writing columns and books for Our Sunday Visitor for decades. He was also the president of Our Sunday Visitor Publishing, a company he brought to a new level of excellence. His last post was as director of communications for the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

I knew Bob well. He was a member of the Catholic League's board of directors. He later served as our director of research and was then named to our board of advisors.

There was nothing Bob wouldn't do for the Catholic Church, or the Catholic League. He never turned down an assignment and worked diligently on every project he undertook.

Besides being an astute writer, editor, and publisher, Bob was fun to work with, and he loved a new challenge. Gregarious and good humored, he was the kind of person every organization, Catholic or otherwise, would love to have on staff.

God bless Bob Lockwood. He left us too soon; he was 69.

AP DENIES CULPABILITY FOR

“PRIEST” AD

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a response by the Associated Press (AP) to an earlier news release today:

A few hours ago, we said that we learned from PJ Media that AP posted a false statement about a Catholic priest on the website of an ABC affiliate in Nebraska, KLKN-TV. The ad was about a drag queen entertainer, “Father” Anthony Capretta, who, we were able to verify, is not a priest.

Lauren Easton of AP, the person whom we listed as the contact person at AP, called to say that it had nothing to do with the posting. We have no reason to believe that she is not telling the truth.

So who is responsible? The TV station told PJ Media that it has no control over what AP posts on its website, and disavows culpability. This, in itself, is remarkable. AP, according to PJ Media, did not respond when asked for a comment. Now AP says no one contacted them. Attempts to contact PJ Media were unsuccessful.

The offensive ad—libeling priests—did not get posted by magic. So while we are not happy with the refusal of the guilty party to own up, fairness dictates that we not malign the innocent. That is why we have deleted the earlier news release on this subject.