

BLOOMBERG BOMBS ON KEY SOCIAL ISSUES

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on Michael Bloomberg's record on key social issues:

It was New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani who turned New York around after the disastrous administration of his predecessor, David Dinkins, and it is a credit to Michael Bloomberg that he continued the quality of life improvements instituted by Giuliani. But on two key social issues—abortion and religious liberty—the presidential candidate was a total bomb.

Bloomberg is one of the most radical pro-abortion politicians in American history. When he first ran for mayor of New York in 2001, he pledged to force everyone training to become an obstetrician or a gynecologist in a city hospital to learn how to perform an abortion. It was NARAL's New York City office that pushed him to accept this outrageous policy. Bloomberg issued an executive order on this issue, but in the end he allowed for moral and religious exemptions.

In 2012, the Susan G. Komen Foundation decided to stop funding Planned Parenthood. The pushback from the pro-abortion community was severe, and three days later it reversed its decision. But in that short interim, Bloomberg was so angry with what happened that he personally donated \$250,000 to Planned Parenthood. The previous year he came to bat for Planned Parenthood when Congress considered cutting \$75 million.

Bloomberg's passion for abortion allowed him to appropriate \$15 million from a civic facility revenue bond transaction that benefited Planned Parenthood. In 2012, the proceeds of the bond were used to finance the renovation of 104,000 square feet of space in the building that housed the abortion giant,

supplying it with equipment and furnishing. The new national headquarters was publicly funded even though the Planned Parenthood Federation of America posted a budget of over \$1 billion in 2009-2010.

On religious liberty issues, Bloomberg's record was similarly awful.

He did not endear himself to Irish Catholics in 2005 when he said he wanted to march in the St. Patrick's Day Parade so he could pressure the organizers to allow homosexuals to march under their own banner. His press secretary explained his boss' reasoning by saying, "The mayor believes the best way to change an organization is to do so from within." So here we had an agent of the state—the chief executive of New York City—injecting himself into a religious event so he could promote a secular agenda that would undermine its cause.

The courts have long ruled that religious groups have a right to use public facilities, yet Bloomberg denied the right of an inner-city Christian church to hold religious services in a public school on Sundays, setting up a court challenge. He lost in federal district court in 2005, but his censorial effort was not lost on supporters of the Bronx Household of Faith.

Sometimes Bloomberg acts cowardly when confronted with religious liberty issues. He did so in 2007 when a midtown hotel agreed to display in its store-front window a 6-foot, 200-pound anatomically correct chocolate sculpture of Jesus during Holy Week. The Catholic League protested and public opinion forced the hotel to shut down the exhibit. But the best Bloomberg could do was to say the display should be ignored.

He was similarly agnostic when the owner of the Empire State Building refused to illuminate the building in blue-and-white to honor the centenary of Mother Teresa's birthday in 2010.

The Catholic League assembled 3,500 protesters in the street outside the iconic building—the owner had previously recognized the 60th anniversary of Red China’s genocidal regime—but Bloomberg did not want to get involved. He simply said that the owner should “be consistent.”

In 2011, the Staten Island Ferry Terminals were bereft of holiday displays. Not only were religious symbols such as nativity scenes and menorahs banned, but Bloomberg approved the censoring of secular displays, such as Christmas trees, as well.

Bloomberg’s biggest insult to people of faith was the way he handled the 9/11 ceremonies on the tenth anniversary of the bombings. He banned the clergy, from all religions, from participating: He would not allow a priest, minister, rabbi, or imam to make a short statement. He made matters worse when he had the gall to say that “government shouldn’t be forcing” religion “down people’s throats.” But somehow it was okay for him to shove his secular values down the throats of the faithful.

He was also duplicitous. The same mayor who invoked separation of church and state to institute a gag rule on religious speech was already on record promoting the building of a mosque near Ground Zero. He was entirely understanding of the move by American Atheists to sue New York City over two steel beams shaped like a cross that were found in the debris of the Twin Towers disaster; the atheists objected when the cross was moved from St. Peter’s Catholic Church to its new home at the 9/11 Memorial.

Bloomberg’s policies on abortion and religious liberty are not known to most Americans. Now that he has set his sights on the White House, it is time his sordid legacy is widely known.

NBC SURVEY OF CHURCH EMPLOYEES IS REVEALING

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a survey of Catholic workers by NBC:

There have been many polls of Catholics, but until now there has not been a survey of those who work for the Catholic Church. NBC has filled that void.

Those who work for the Church are listed in the *Official Catholic Directory*. NBC Owned Television stations around the nation distributed the survey to more than 32,000 employees listed in the volume, 2,700 of whom responded. It included nearly 500 priests and deacons, more than 280 religious sisters and brothers, along with nearly 1,900 lay employees, the majority of whom were women.

NBC was honest enough to admit that self-select surveys carry a bias that scientific sampling avoids. The latter allows for everyone in the population, or the universe which the sample generalizes about, to have an equal chance of being selected. However, in surveys of the kind NBC undertook, it is entirely acceptable to proceed this way, as long as the limitations are acknowledged.

The survey covers several issues: the sexual abuse scandal; married priests, ordaining women, same-sex marriage, and birth control; fidelity to core Church teachings; and an assessment of Pope Francis' positions on current issues. Of special interest to the Catholic League is the first issue.

Respondents were asked if sexual abuse is "still a major problem." Almost 4 in 10 (39%) said it is; 14% said it "is no

longer a major problem"; and 46% said this was never more of a problem for the Catholic Church than it has been for other institutions involved in the care of minors. Nuns were the most alarmed, with 56% reporting that sexual abuse is still a major problem today.

NBC interviewed me for this survey on November 8. The reporter, Chris Glorioso, was very professional. There were no "gotcha" type questions or highly tendentious remarks.

I was asked to comment on all of the issues mentioned, but the one NBC chose to report was my reaction to the response of Church employees to the sexual abuse scandal. Here is my answer as quoted in the transcript.

"This is a result of the poisoning of the public mind. Most of the bad guys, most of the priests who molested, are either dead or they're out of ministry. That's not an opinion, that's a fact."

The basis for my comment are the annual reports on this issue published by the National Review Board of the bishops' conference. Over the past decade, the average number of credible accusations made against the clergy in the year in which the data were gathered averaged in the single digits. In the last report, of the 50,648 members of the clergy, .006 percent (three of them) had a substantiated accusation made against them. No institution in the nation where adults interact with minors can beat that number.

Why, then, are four in ten Catholics who work for the Church under the impression that the scandal is still ongoing? And why are nuns the most uninformed?

The "poisoning of the public mind" that I refer to is a function of negative perceptions about the Church as promoted by grand jury and attorney general reports, the media, and the entertainment industry.

The government reports, particularly the Pennsylvania grand jury report, give the impression that the scandal is still ongoing even though most of the alleged offenses mentioned in those documents happened long ago; most of the molesters are in fact either dead or out of ministry. And remember, since no cross examination was allowed, these cases represent alleged crimes: they do not represent convictions.

The media have given much coverage to these reports, and while most stories usually have a line or two about these being old cases, the impression given is that not much has changed. Adding to the misperceptions are late-night talk show hosts who constantly ridicule priests as if they are all molesters. This is bigotry, plain and simple. Why are nuns the most gullible? Some might say they are more sensitive to the victims than others are. Even if this were true, the problem remains: nuns are the most likely to accept the contrived government reports (e.g., the public schools are never investigated for sexual abuse, even though that is where much of it occurs today), never mind the biased reporting and the skewed commentary that are attendant to them.

Half of all the Church respondents were 60 years of age or over, and it is no secret that many of them lean liberal-left (this is especially true of nuns), making them the most likely to be critical of the way the Church has handled the scandal. It appears they are less persuaded by the evidence, or are unaware of it, than others. Either way, this is troubling.

When asked about feeling comfortable allowing a child to go on an overnight retreat supervised by a member of the clergy or a person of trust in their parish or organization, roughly half of the Church employees said there was at least one chaperone with whom they would not feel comfortable. Yet 81 percent believe their parish or organization has handled the issue of abuse properly.

This is not surprising, nor is it problematic. Most Catholics

have not had any personal experience dealing with a molesting priest, yet may be wary of allowing a young person to go on an overnight retreat. If this question were asked of non-Catholics in a slightly different way—"Would you feel comfortable allowing young people to go on an overnight camping trip with adult men from your community?"—it is likely that many would not feel comfortable, at least not with all of them.

When respondents were asked if they think media coverage of the scandal has been mostly fair, 64% said no. Diocesan priests were the most critical of the media.

This is neither surprising nor troubling. From tracking media coverage of the scandal at the Catholic League, we have found far too many instances of bias not to be critical of the reporting. If diocesan priests are the most critical it is likely that they see themselves as being the most vulnerable to false accusations. Everyone agrees that victims must be treated fairly, but what is much less emphasized, if at all, are demands that accused priests be treated fairly. The scales are tipped against them, and they know it.

The entire report is available [online](#) and is certainly worth reading.

MORE ERRORS BY WCPO CINCINNATI

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on more revelations about an investigation of the Catholic Church by WCPO Cincinnati:

We recently [criticized](#) WCPO, the ABC affiliate in Cincinnati, for running a four-part series on Ohio's Catholic dioceses and religious orders. We detailed why it was seriously flawed, and even published a separate [account](#) of how duplicitous the Channel 9 station is: it fails to police its own sexual offenders.

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati has published its own rejoinder to the WCPO investigation, and it is impressive. It reveals many serious errors, so many in fact that it devastates the report. To read its account, click [here](#).

Survey after survey shows how little faith the public has in the media. WCPO's I-Team series on the Catholic Church offers one more example.

AP'S "INVESTIGATION" IS FARFARICAL

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a story by the Associated Press on the Catholic Church:

The Associated Press (AP) says it conducted an "investigation" of the way Catholic dioceses determine whether an accusation of sexual abuse by a priest is credible or not. It says it probed the diocesan review boards and consulted grand jury and state attorney general reports. On this basis it concluded that the review boards have failed.

It would be more accurate to say that AP has failed. It provided no data, just anecdotes. Where is the summary data combed from the diocesan review boards? Moreover, every anecdote that AP offers is critical of the Church. Did the

reporters find no instances where the system worked well? How many were there? What criteria did they use to collect their information? Or did they simply report the most negative comments they could find?

Everyone has an opinion of his dentist. Some have good experiences and others do not. If we wanted to know how patients feel about their dentists we would want to interview a sample of them. Then we would offer a tally, broken down by how favorable their treatment was. That would be a real investigation.

This is not what AP did. It did not sample those who have gone before a diocesan review board to see how they rated their treatment. Which explains the lack of summary data.

When AP did an investigation of sexual abuse in the public schools in 2007, it published the evidence culled from its effort, and then peppered its probe with anecdotes. That is the way it is supposed to be done. But that is not what AP did in this report on the diocesan review boards. It did nothing but offer anecdotes, *all* of them negative.

If an investigation of dentists reported only the unfavorable accounts, would anyone conclude it was fair? That is why this AP investigation is farcical. There are many other holes in this report.

The report is critical of having defense attorneys who represent the Church on review boards. It suggests this could be a conflict of interest. It also objects to the boards operating in "secret," and that they go by different names. Furthermore, it quotes those who were ill-treated by the board. Objections are also raised about having higher standards of proof for deceased priests accused of abuse.

If there is a single thread that is evident in all of these criticisms it is the assumption that the accusers are always right and that the Church should just accept what they say.

Nowhere in this report of 4630 words is there even a hint that accused priests have rights. They are assumed to have none.

Sexual abuse does not take place in public, making determinations of guilt or innocence difficult. They are even more difficult when the alleged offense took place decades ago. They are next to impossible to resolve when the accused is dead. This never seems to cross the minds of the reporters.

Of course, the Church employs defense attorneys: the charges against the accused are serious and the accused has state and constitutional rights that must be observed. It is curious that neither AP, nor anyone else, ever raises conflict of interest issues with lawyers who make millions suing the Church, and who offer huge donations to professional victims' groups, who in turn provide the attorneys with new clients.

Does AP know of any institution in the nation, religious or secular, that conducts investigations of accused employees in public? Are they not *always* done behind closed doors? Why, then, the jab at the Church for operating in "secret"? We don't need any more stereotypes feeding the worst instincts of the Church's enemies. And, yes, dioceses vary in the way they name their review boards. Only those with an animus against the Church would ascribe malicious motive to this unremarkable practice.

AP's most extensive anecdote cites a middle-age man who was allegedly mistreated by the Church. But was he?

The review board in St. Petersburg, Florida ruled against him, saying it could not substantiate his story of being abused by a priest. He's angry. So? Does he have a right to be? He complains that when he was questioned by the review board, the chairwoman interrupted him when he repeated himself. So what?

When he was asked to recall some specifics regarding the place of the alleged abuse and whether anyone else was there, he started to cry. So? Is this supposed to be proof that he is

telling the truth? Why couldn't it be read as an admission that his tale was coming apart? We don't know. What we do know is that the accused can't defend himself—he's dead.

The AP report just assumes this alleged victim is telling the truth, providing zero evidence that the review board unjustly rejected his case.

If some review boards raise the bar on cases where the accused is deceased, asserting a higher level of proof, why is that unfair? Would it be fair to the priest's siblings, or his nephews and nieces, that their brother or uncle—who cannot defend himself—was found guilty without clearing a high bar?

Finally, offering as proof testimony taken from grand jury reports is absurd. Grand juries hear one side of the story—the side of the accuser—and none of them is subjected to cross examination. Therefore, what is typically reported are truths, half-truths, and lies. It would be like releasing only the testimony of the accused who claims he is innocent without ever disclosing the accuser's account. Everyone would see that as a game. It is also a game to focus on grand jury and state AG reports.

AP is capable of doing excellent work. This is not an example of it.

Contact Brian Carovillano, AP managing editor:
bcarovillano@ap.org

WCPO CINCINNATI IS A PROVEN

FRAUD

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on WCP0's duplicity:

Earlier this week, WCP0, the ABC affiliate in Cincinnati, ran a four-part series on the way Ohio Catholic dioceses and religious orders deal with former priests accused of sexual abuse. It was highly critical, contending that the Church does not *supervise* these men once they are no longer in their employ. That is correct.

As I said on [November 19](#), "*no institution* is required by law to track, *never mind supervise*, any former employee who was terminated because of sexual misconduct. Not even at WCP0."

When I wrote this I had no idea that a former reporter for WCP0, Stephen Hill, was arrested in 2004 on eight counts of sexual battery and four counts of unlawful sex with a minor. We subsequently got a tip from someone and followed it up.

Hill actually videotaped himself raping four teen boys: he performed oral sex on them, and in return they performed anal sex on him. He lied to the boys by telling them that a woman named Dawn wanted to have sex with them, but only if they were blindfolded. They agreed. Dawn—meaning him—then sodomized them.

Hill pleaded guilty to four counts of sexual battery on the four boys—three brothers and a cousin; they were teenagers at the time.

He completed his five-year prison sentence in 2009 and returned to his home in Cincinnati. The WCP0 general manager at the time, Bill Fee (who passed away last month), refused to talk to the *Cincinnati Enquirer* about Hill or about any potential employment opportunities.

Hill was not just an ordinary reporter. He was part of the WCPO's I-Team, the same investigative arm of Channel 9 that recently completed a three-month investigation of former priests accused of sexual abuse.

So here's what we need to know. Did WCPO *supervise* Hill when he was released from prison? That is what it is condemning the Catholic Church for not doing today. Is the station *supervising* Hill today, or is it washing its hands of him, the way Fee did? The new general manager is Jeff Brogan. Is he making sure that Hill is *supervised* today, or is he also doing nothing about the former I-Team reporter?

We all know what the answer is. Which is why WCPO is a proven fraud.

When you contact Brogan, ask him why doesn't the "Culture of Silence" it accuses the Catholic Church of—it is posted prominently on its website—apply to WCPO?

Contact: jeff.brogan@wcpo.com

WISCONSIN PUBLIC RADIO'S HIT JOB ON THE CHURCH

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a story published this week on the Catholic Church by Wisconsin Public Radio:

Wisconsin Public Radio's (WPR) story on the Catholic Church is much ado about nothing. It tried hard to find new instances of priestly sexual abuse and wound up with two, both of which are being contested in the courts. Indeed the first tale it rolls

out is of a woman who says she was abused in 1965, but never said anything about it for decades, until, inexplicably, her memory was jogged.

Too bad the reporters are so incurious. Repressed memory is regarded by psychiatrists as an unreliable concept of no scientific value. Indeed, what they have found is that the more horrific the past experience is, the more likely the victim will never forget it.

The reason why WPR's story is almost exclusively on old cases of abuse is because the Catholic Church has long since cleaned up its act. It found, however, someone from Catholic circles to challenge this verity.

It quotes the head of the National Review Board, the body appointed by the bishops to issue annual reports on this issue, as indicating that this problem is still ongoing. Francesco Cesareo, commenting on the latest data, said, "These current allegations point to the reality that sexual abuse of minors by the clergy should not be considered by the bishops as a thing of the past or a distant memory."

One cannot fault WPR for quoting him—what he said feeds its narrative. But it speaks badly of both of them that they find this assessment persuasive. Cesareo noted that "the most recent audits uncovered 26 new allegations from current minors, three of which were substantiated and seven of which were unsubstantiated."

He didn't do the math, so we did. Of the 50,648 members of the clergy, .006 percent (three of them) had a substantiated accusation made against them. *There is no institution in the nation that can match that—not a single religious or secular entity has such a low percentage of accusations made against their current employees.* In other words, Cesareo's dire conclusion is unwarranted and is indeed undercut by his own data. This should have been evident to WPR.

The data also implode the unsubstantiated observation by WPR that “parishioners continue to come forward with fresh accusations.” They manifestly do not—the data indicate just the opposite. What we are hearing about are old cases just now being resurrected.

It does not help WPR’s credibility to cite the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP), a rogue outfit (it is not an organization) that has consistently [lied](#) and whose leadership had been totally [discredited](#).

WPR cites the Pennsylvania grand jury report which found “an estimated 300 priests who had abused about 1,000 children in six of the state’s eight Catholic dioceses.” This is factually wrong.

These cases, which extend back to World War II, are all based on *allegations*, not proven instances of abuse. Indeed, the accused, most of whom are dead or out of ministry, never had a chance to defend themselves, and, of course, none of the accusers were subjected to cross examination. In the end, only three priests were prosecuted.

WPR blithely notes that a proposed Clergy Mandatory Reporter Act would do away with the religious exemption afforded the confessional. “Some Catholics fear this will compromise the sanctity of the confessional,” it says. Some? No practicing Catholic would ever say anything otherwise, and no priest would ever comply. Journalists, psychiatrists and lawyers all depend on confidentiality protections when they deal with their sources, patients, and clients. The priest-penitent relationship is no less serious.

If WPR were really interested in doing an exposé on the sexual abuse of minors—one that is going on in real time—it would do some digging into the Wisconsin public schools.

In December 2016, *USA Today* did an investigation of sexual abuse in the public schools, by state, and found that

Wisconsin merited an “F” in “Sharing Misconduct Information.” In other words, when molesting teachers are shipped off to some other school the new school is never apprised of what they are getting. It is so common in the public schools that it is called “passing the trash.”

There is plenty of trash for WPR to probe. But first it must get over its fixation of digging up old dirt about the Catholic Church.

Contact Mike Crane, Director of Radio: mike.crane@wpr.org

WCPO CHURCH PROBE SMACKS OF BIAS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on an investigation of the Catholic Church by WCPO Cincinnati:

The ABC affiliate in Cincinnati, WCPO, recently launched a three-month investigation into Ohio’s Catholic dioceses and religious orders seeking to learn how they track priests and brothers who have been accused of sexually abusing minors.

The “I-team” did not investigate any other religious body in the state, nor did it launch a probe of any secular institutions. Yet it is precisely in the public sector where most of the sexual abuse is taking place.

What did it find? It compiled a list of 92 priests and religious brothers who were accused of sexual abuse by one source or another. From the interactive report online, we learned that 60 (65%) are dead.

In its four-part series, it offers a short anecdote of 16

priests and one brother. We did our own tally and here is what we found.

- 7 priests are dead
- 4 have been laicized
- 1 has been removed from ministry
- 1 is awaiting trial
- 1 has been permanently suspended
- 1 is on administrative leave
- 1 has an unknown status
- The one brother is dead

In other words, they are either dead or are inactive. If this were the conclusion of a probe of the public schools, it would be the end of the story. But because it is the Catholic Church that has been selectively put under the microscope, it isn't.

In fact, in the Overview, the report even admits that an indictment of a priest in August was the first time in nearly a decade—in *the Tri-State area*—that a member of the clergy has had an accusation made against him. It would be helpful to know how many public school teachers in the Tri-State area have been accused of sexual abuse in the last decade. But apparently the WCPO I-Team has little interest in finding out.

The report correctly notes that the Catholic Church isn't required by law to supervise priests who are no longer in ministry. What it should have said, to be more accurate, is that *no institution* is required by law to track, *never mind supervise*, any former employee who was terminated because of sexual misconduct. Not even at WCPO.

So what's the big deal? Shaming. Shaming the Catholic Church—that's what this contrived story is all about. Take, for example, how the report handles the case of Rev. Daniel Pater.

Pater was bounced five years ago by the Vatican for sexually abusing a teenager. But a month after he was fired, he took a

job as the director of music for a small Episcopal Church in Lincoln Heights. WCPO finds this scandalous. Guess who it blames? The Catholic Church. Why didn't the Protestant church ask Pater about his background? Isn't it up to the prospective employer to do some digging? Since when does the burden fall on the organization that kicked the guy out? This is bunk.

What is driving this report is the desire to suspend the statute of limitations for these crimes, allowing alleged victims to sue even if the offense occurred in the 1940s. And as we have seen in other states where this game is played, the law either does not apply to the public schools, or if it does the steeple-chasing attorneys have no interest in fighting the bureaucracy: they prefer to squeeze the Catholic Church, for reasons both financial and ideological.

It is the family where most sexual abuse of children takes place. Yet no one—not a single attorney—will publicly state that he is available to represent those women whose live-in boyfriend, or the stepfather, has raped their son or daughter. That's because the rapacious lawyers go after the big bucks, hoping to sink the Catholic Church.

"Some may accuse us of revisiting accusations from decades ago that were painful to Catholics," WCPO says. "But our motives are simple: to ensure that the public has more complete information on priests who have been credibly accused of child sexual abuse than local Catholic Church leaders had been willing to provide."

This is wholly unpersuasive. The predicate is false: The sexual abuse of minors is taking place right now in the public schools and universities, yet the reporters are not providing the public with "more complete information" on teachers and professors.

In December 2016, *USA Today* released a study of all 50 states grading them on how they handle sexual abuse in the public

schools. On the measure of "Sharing misconduct information," the Ohio public schools received an "F." In 2017, AP studied the same issue and found that in Ohio, "The state education department did not collect information on sex assaults in schools."

In other words, the public schools in Ohio are an utter disgrace in handling this issue. If they don't collect information, and don't share whatever they know about their molesting teachers, it stands to reason that they don't track, much less *supervise*, them.

Ohio's problem with sexual misconduct extends to the university level.

In 2018, it was reported that "Ohio University has more rapes and sexual assaults in general than similar schools in Ohio." This was the finding of Clery Act reports.

In 2019, AP noted that "An Ohio State team doctor [Dr. Richard Strauss] sexually abused at least 177 male students over nearly two decades, and numerous university officials got wind of what was going on but did little to stop him." The report, which was issued by the university, said that "Ohio State personnel knew of complaints and concerns about Strauss's conduct as early as 1979 but failed for years to investigate or take meaningful action."

There is plenty of rich material on sexual abuse in Ohio's public schools and public universities, never mind what is going on in the Tri-State area. The only thing lacking is the will, and the courage, to launch a probe.

Contact Craig Cheatham, executive producer and chief investigative reporter: Craig.Cheatham@WCPO.com

BISHOP BARRES SUPPORTS RIGHTS OF THE ACCUSED

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on Bishop John Barres' defense of accused priests:

No institution in the nation publishes the names of employees accused of sexual misconduct except for some dioceses in the Roman Catholic Church. They don't do it in Hollywood, the media, the public schools, or in any other religion. Just some Catholic dioceses. One diocese that refuses to go along is the Diocese of Rockville Centre on Long Island.

It is also challenging a portion of the New York State Child Victims Act: it maintains that the suspension of the statute of limitations that the Act entails is a violation of the due process clause in the state constitution.

Bishop John Barres is certainly concerned about the welfare of those young people who have been sexually abused: He has made good on efforts to institutionalize compensation for them. But he is also concerned about the rights of the accused, which is why his diocese is challenging the Child Victims Act.

On November 18, News 12 Long Island ran a news clip about "some demonstrators" who showed up on Sunday outside St. Agnes Cathedral, home of the diocese, to protest the court action taken by Barres. How many were "some"? Two. That's right—two demonstrators showed up. One of them, Robert Hoatson, is an embittered ex-priest from New Jersey who hates the Catholic Church. So this is what passes as news?

Kudos to Bishop Barres for standing up for the rights of the accused, as well as for the welfare of victims.

WHITE DEMOCRATS HAVE A RELIGION PROBLEM

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the results of a new survey on religion conducted by the Pew Research Center:

The Pew Research Center has released a survey on religion's role in society that covers a wide range of issues. Of particular interest to the Catholic League are those Americans who are religion-friendly versus those who are not.

The majority of Americans believe that churches and religious organizations (a) do more good than harm (b) strengthen morality in society, and (c) mostly bring people together. That is a good sign. But this is not true of Democrats in general, and of white Democrats, in particular.

While a majority of Republicans (71%) believe religion does more good than harm, only 44% of Democrats believe this is true. Republicans are also more likely to see religion as an agent that strengthens morality (68%) versus only 41% of Democrats. Does religion mostly bring people together? Yes, say 65% of Republicans; just 39% of Democrats feel this way.

When broken down by race, it is clear that white Democrats differ sharply with black Democrats. Regarding the issue of religion doing more good than harm, 57% of blacks say this is true while only 39% of whites agree. The majority of blacks (52%) contend that religion strengthens morality in society and that it mostly brings people together. Just a third of whites think this way about these two issues (35% and 32%, respectively). Hispanics fell in between on these matters.

It is striking that a plurality of white Democrats see religion as mostly pushing people apart (36% feel this way as opposed to 32% who think religion brings people together). Only 21% of black Democrats maintain that religion mostly pushes people apart.

The relative hostility on the part of Democrats to religion—largely driven by whites—is not lost on the public. When asked if the Republican Party is generally friendly toward religion, 54% agreed but only 19% said the Democratic Party was. Which professions are the most unfriendly to religion? University professors and news reporters and news media.

It is hardly a secret that the vast majority of professors and reporters are Democrats and that they are not exactly known for being religion-friendly. This bias shows up in many ways in public life, and indeed it even colored the narrative of those who wrote the Pew report.

For example, in the graph on the subject of who is religion-friendly (p. 9), the headline reads, “Just Over Half of Americans Say GOP Is Friendly Toward Religion.” Surely a more startling headline would be “Less than 20% of Americans Say the Democrats Are Friendly Toward Religion.”

Who do Americans trust, as measured by ethical standards? Medical doctors (87%), police officers (70%), and religious leaders (65%) garner a strong majority. Bringing up the rear are journalists (45%), lawyers (44%) and elected officials (26%).

Finally, most Americans are satisfied with the amount of political discussion in sermons. But they are not trusting of the clergy’s advice when it comes to issues they have no expertise in, such as global climate change (only 13% say they have a lot of confidence in their clergy providing useful guidance in this area).

What accounts for the perception that white Democrats, professors and reporters are so unfriendly to religion? Ideology. They are mostly secularists who discount the benefits of religion in society, trusting their own moral code instead. That, however, raises all kinds of potential problems, not only for others, but for themselves as well.

OHIO RELIGIOUS LIBERTY BILL ADVANCES

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a religious liberty bill in Ohio that is promising:

By a margin of 61-31, the Ohio House voted for a bill this week that would secure religious liberty for public school students; it now goes to the Senate for approval

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Timothy Ginter, allows the board of education in each school district to provide for “a moment of silence each school day for prayer, reflection, or meditation upon a moral, philosophical, or patriotic theme.” It also prohibits teachers from mandating that students participate.

Also permitted are classroom activities of a “moral, philosophical, or patriotic theme.” However, no student must be required to participate in such activities if he has a religious objection.

Finally, students cannot be prohibited from “the free, individual, and voluntary exercise or expression of the pupil’s religious beliefs in any primary or secondary school.”

The ACLU of Ohio is worried that if the bill becomes law, teachers may not penalize students who hold to a creationist perspective on the origins of the universe. One lawmaker, Rep. Phillip Robinson, said, "We already have religious freedom protected at the federal and state level."

The ACLU fear is unfounded. This may come as a shocker to the civil libertarians, but Catholic school students in their science classes are expected to master the science curriculum approved by their state. Catholic school students do not mistake Genesis for Science 101, or vice versa. If this is not a problem for the Catholic schools, it will not be a problem for the public schools.

Rep. Robinson no doubt believes we should have laws that bar racial discrimination at the local level, and not just at the federal and state level. Why, then, does he think we may not need laws barring religious discrimination at the local level?

This bill would not be necessary were it not for the machinations of militant secularists seeking to eliminate the most elementary examples of religious expression in the schools. The ACLU is a case in point. To cite one of many examples, its efforts to ban school performances of "Jesus Christ Superstar" is exactly why we need more protections for religious liberty.

We hope the Ohio Senate affirms the First Amendment rights of students and passes this bill.