

# WHY THE SPIKE IN YOUTH SUICIDE?

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the rise in youth suicide:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that young people (ages 10-17) experienced a 56 percent rise in suicide between 2007 and 2017. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for young people, behind accidental injuries (e.g. drugs and car crashes).

Experts are good at providing data, but are not so good at understanding why this is happening. Adolescents are not unaccustomed to bouts of depression, and they are certainly not alone in experiencing stress, so let's not put too much stock in those theories. Access to firearms is hardly new, and if anything it was easier in times past. Something else must be going on.

Suicide in the U.S., especially among young people, is largely a function of feeling isolated, or of lacking the kind of connectivity that is necessary for mental health. Some experts have fingered the role that social media plays in contributing to this phenomenon. They are right to do so.

"After hours of scrolling through Instagram feeds," admits a distraught Colorado high school girl, "I just feel worse about myself because I feel left out." Her sentiment is not uncommon among heavy social media users. Two years ago, *Clinical Psychological Science*, a peer-reviewed journal, found that teens who spend at least five hours on their electronic devices (smartphones, etc.) are 70 percent more likely to have suicidal thoughts or actions than those who use these devices for about an hour each day.

This is nothing new. A major study on the relationship between

social media and suicide rates was published in 2012 in the *American Journal of Public Health*. It reported on the large increase in “prosuicide Web sites” that are available. The internet, it said, provides “a way for people to obtain how-to descriptions of suicide as well as lethal means to kill themselves.” Message boards, video-sharing websites, and chat rooms are commonly accessed. “In sum,” the researchers concluded, “evidence is growing that social media can influence prosuicide behavior.”

If there is one segment of the adolescent population that is experiencing a high rate of suicide it is transgender youth. The conventional wisdom, that discrimination accounts for the problem, is without foundation.

The October 2018 issue of *Pediatrics*, the journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics, published an article, “Transgender Adolescent Suicide Behavior,” that was the first large-scale study on this subject. It found that “between 30% and 51% of transgender adolescents reported engaging in lifetime suicide behavior.” Females who “transitioned” to the other sex had the highest rate.

The researchers had little to say about what was driving these outcomes. But if discrimination were a factor, then we should expect that non-white transgender adolescents have a higher rate of suicide behavior than whites. This is not the case. They found that “transgender youth of color were not at a higher risk compared with white transgender adolescents.” So much for “intersectionality” theories of oppression.

Were it not for political correctness—and this study in *Pediatrics* evinces plenty of it—some hard questions would be raised. Is it really the way transgender adolescents are treated that accounts for their suicide behavior? Or is it their pre-existing mental condition that explains their problem? And is not the very process of transitioning itself a matter of psychological distress?

Our young people deserve better.

Social media, especially among heavy users, is contributing to social isolation. All of us need what sociologists call face-to-face relationships; they are the only authentic ones. Technology can make it easier to discourse, but it cannot provide the glue that constitutes primary relationships. That is the stuff of bonding, and that takes work.

Similarly, the lack of strong social bonds among transgender adolescents—who are their friends?—helps to promote their condition.

We all need a stable and loving environment, one that allows us to mature normally. If this means anything, it means accessing help for those in need. To be precise, it doesn't help the sexually confused to reinforce their disorders with misguided empathy for their condition.

Progress will not be made until we have the courage to tell the truth. Regrettably, the cardinal virtue of fortitude is in short supply, and nowhere is this more evident than in elite circles.

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## **DAVID SPADE ATTACKS GAYS**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a remark made last night on Comedy Central by David Spade:

This is what passes as a joke on Comedy Central: “The Vatican has launched a \$110 eRosary beads. Sounds like a lot of money to get molested online.”

David Spade's comment cannot be read as anything other than an attack on homosexual priests. Thus did he evince his anti-

Catholic and anti-gay bigotry, which unfortunately makes him a perfect fit at Comedy Central.

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## **SEX ABUSE LAW ENGULFS CALIFORNIA SCHOOLS**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the reaction of California public school officials to a new law on sexual abuse:

On October 13, California Governor Gavin Newsom signed into law a bill that allows for the suspension of the statute of limitations for crimes involving the sexual abuse of minors. It provides a three-year window to make a claim, regardless of when the abuse occurred. Going forward, the bill allows those who are up to 40 years of age, or five years from discovery of the abuse, to file suit. Because the Catholic Church has previously been subject to a suspension of the statute of limitations, it is the public schools that stand to be most affected this time around.

Just last week, USA TODAY ran a highly critical story on attempts by the Catholic Church to defend itself against discriminatory legislation. The reporters took the Church to task for hiring lobbyists and lawyers to protest state laws that targeted the Church, but gave the public schools a pass. Now what will they say (and there are legions of others like them in the media) given that it is the public school establishment that is crying foul?

The Associated Press assessed the situation in California as

follows.

“Much of the opposition to the law in California came from school districts, which warn the law goes too far. Lawsuits filed up to four decades after the fact make it much harder to gather evidence because witnesses are more likely to have moved away or died. Plus, the law changes the legal standard of liability, making it easier for victims to win in court. And if victims can prove entities tried to cover up the abuse, the court can multiply the damages by three.”

Troy Flint is the spokesman for the California School Boards Association. He objects to the increase in the statute of limitations.

“That creates problems because in all likelihood, there’s an absence of evidence or at least a serious decrease in the amount of evidence that will be available at that date for decades later, many relevant witnesses if not all witnesses will be unavailable [and] you have staff turnover. This is something that is something that is very threatening to the financial viability of many school districts, particularly smaller school districts where one significant judgment could have a devastating impact on their budget.”

Here’s more from Flint. “We don’t want to minimize or trivialize the trauma associated with inappropriate sexual conduct in schools. The bill has a very real chance of bankrupting or impoverishing many districts which would inhibit our ability to properly serve today’s students and students in years to come.”

Everything Flint said is true. More important, similar objections have been raised by the bishops, but, of course, they are condemned for defending themselves. By contrast, the California School Boards Association is regarded as acting prudently.

*The Mercury News* reports on how one California school

district, the Redlands Unified School District, has been handling this problem.

“A yearlong Southern California News Group investigation revealed that Redland Unified paid out more than \$30 million to settle sex abuse lawsuits against the district since 2013. For years, the school district *covered up allegations of sexual abuse* involving students, allowed teachers to continue preying on students, and ordered teachers and other staff not to cooperate with police during criminal investigations” (its emphasis).

The Catholic Church deserves to be criticized for the way some bishops acted in the past when confronted with priestly sexual abuse. But it also deserves to be commended for making astonishing progress. Yet the secular media—as well as some liberal *and* conservative Catholic media outlets—have been slow to applaud, or even to acknowledge, this verity.

The notion that old claims can be fairly adjudicated is without warrant, which is why we have statutes of limitation in the first place. There should be no state window suspending this due process provision for either the private or the public sector.

Justice is best served by establishing tough new reforms to police the sexual abuse of minors. The public schools have such a model: it’s called the Catholic Church. State lawmakers should take note.

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**BILL BARR’S CRITICS LOOK**

# FOOLISH

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a speech given at Notre Dame Law School by Attorney General William P. Barr:

Attorney General Bill Barr gave an historically accurate and sociologically sound presentation at Notre Dame Law School on October 11 that has been the source of much chatter by his critics. His topic was the militant secularist assault on religious liberty. If anyone has any doubts about whether this exists, let him read the Catholic League website. The points he made were astute.

Every society is conditioned on a modicum of order, lest it devolve into anarchy. In despotic regimes, order is imposed by the state. In democratic regimes, it relies on self-restraint. What is the source of self-restraint? Nothing harnesses the passions better than the Judeo-Christian ethos. When that is endangered, liberty loses.

Barr is rightfully concerned about the attacks on our religious heritage, leaving us vulnerable to social discord. His critics, who are sociologically illiterate, seem to think that secularism can take the place of our Judeo-Christian tradition. They are wrong. Secularism values individualism and appeals to our base appetites.

What upsets Barr's critics more than anything are his comments on the origins of today's attack on religion. "This is not decay. It is organized destruction."

To *New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman, this is "the language of witch hunts and pogroms." Catherine Rampell at the *Washington Post* was just as alarmed, saying his remarks are "a tacit endorsement of theocracy." *Mother Jones* reported that his speech "shocked legal experts." Mary Papenfuss at Huffington Post said his address "revealed how deeply the top

lawman in the nation is tied to his Catholicism.”

Krugman’s scary scenario of witch hunts and pogroms makes him sound delusional. Similarly, Rampell’s fear that Barr wants a theocracy is crazy talk. Any “legal expert” who is shocked to learn about the sociological role of religion in a free society is badly educated. Barr’s Catholicism, naturally, upsets the tolerant ones; they can’t get over it.

Barr’s critics do not believe there is any organized effort to attack our religious roots. Ironically, two of his critics—American Atheists and Freedom From Religion Foundation—are organized to do just that. This shows how clueless Barr’s critics are.

If these savants had it their way, they would censor Barr. “Consider for a moment how inappropriate it is for Barr, of all people, to have given such a speech,” writes Krugman. “The Constitution guarantees freedom of religion; the nation’s chief enforcement officer has no business denouncing those who exercise that freedom by choosing not to endorse any religion.”

The same part of the Constitution cited by Krugman guarantees freedom of speech. Yes, that even allows the Attorney General of the United States to defend religious liberty—just as it allows economists like Krugman to criticize him.

Bill Barr gave a courageous and much-needed statement on the current state of religious liberty. It sounded like it was taken right out of the Catholic League playbook.

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# DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES FAIL THE RELIGION TEST

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on what Democratic candidates for president had to say about religious liberty in the October 10 televised debate:

There was a time, not long ago, when people of faith felt equally at home with the Republican and Democratic Parties. The former was home to most Protestants, and the latter was home to most Catholics and Jews.

A big change came in the early 1970s when Catholics (especially white Catholics) moved away from the Democratic Party; some became Republicans while others sided with independents. An even bigger change occurred more recently, and it was on full display during the debate. To be specific, it is clear that none of the Democratic candidates wants to be tagged as religion-friendly.

Who would a religious-friendly person be? There are many criteria, but among the most central attributes would be someone who supports traditional religious exemptions in law. Religious exemptions have existed since the Founding, and up until recently they have been considered uncontroversial. But things have changed.

The free exercise of religion has always been predicated on the presumptive right of religious institutions to be exempt from laws that violate their tenets. The burden is on the government to show why an exemption should not be granted. That burden does not come lightly. But from the presidential debate, one would never know this. All of the candidates incline against religious exemptions—some more than others—making them the least religion-friendly candidates for president in American history.

Julian Castro is so opposed to religious exemptions that he said that if he is elected, his “first order of business on January 20, 2021” would be to roll back religious exemptions that collide with the rights of homosexuals and transgender persons. He did not give one example where he would honor the First Amendment right to the free exercise of religion over the *nowhere mentioned constitutional rights* of homosexuals and transgender persons.

Joe Biden thought he was flashing his “tolerant” Catholic credentials when he boasted that Ireland was the first nation to change its constitution to allow two people of the same sex to marry. He failed to note the triumph of radical secularism in Ireland and the sharp decline of the Catholic Church.

Pete Buttigieg’s enthusiasm for gay rights led him to take another dishonest shot at Vice President Mike Pence (who was governor of Indiana when Buttigieg was mayor of South Bend). He opined that his marriage to another man moved him “closer to God.” He then said, “And I wish the VP could understand that.”

This lie is right out of the gay rights playbook. The goal is to portray anyone who disagrees with gay marriage as a bigot. It is pure demagoguery, and Buttigieg is a master of it.

In 2015, three years after becoming mayor, Buttigieg “came out,” admitting publicly that he is a homosexual. Here is what Pence said at the time. “I hold Mayor Buttigieg in the highest personal regard. I see him as a dedicated public servant and a patriot.” Moreover, when the two of them met for the first time, Buttigieg said he found Pence to be “affable, even gentle.” In other words, it is not Pence who changed—it is Buttigieg. He is now lying about Pence so he can claim victim status.

Not only has Pence never once questioned Buttigieg’s relationship with God, he has unequivocally said that “If I

saw a restaurant owner refuse to serve a gay couple, I wouldn't eat there anymore." Not exactly the kind of thing we would expect from a gay basher.

Elizabeth Warren told the audience how she believes in the "preciousness of each and every life." This is not true. If it were true, then why did she vote against a law that would make it a federal crime for a doctor not to attend to infants born alive due to a botched abortion? Her failure to do so allows infanticide to exist with impunity.

When Cory Booker was asked if churches should lose their tax-exempt status if they don't support the gay rights agenda, he did not commit himself, though he was clearly not in the religion-friendly camp.

Beto O'Rourke did commit himself: He said that if he is president, there would be "no tax break" for any institution that did not ascribe to the gay rights agenda.

None of the candidates was asked why religious exemptions even exist, or which ones they would keep.

There are some voices in the Democratic Party that freely admit how dangerously secular the Party has grown. Their effort to bring sanity to their Party is commendable. But it is quite clear that they have failed.

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## **STD CRISIS IS NO MYSTERY**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the spike in Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs):

We have an STD crisis on our hands, one that many elites continue to misunderstand.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that syphilis, gonorrhea and chlamydia are at an all-time high. Nearly 2.5 million cases were reported in 2018. What makes this so disturbing is the fact that not too long ago these three diseases had been in decline; they have been increasing for the past five years.

Most alarming is the 40 percent increase in congenital syphilis, cases where newborns contract the disease from their mothers. This resulted in the deaths of 94 infants in 2018.

Gonorrhea and chlamydia increased by 5 and 3 percent, respectively, between 2017 and 2018. Since 2014, the former disease increased by 63 percent and the latter by 19 percent.

What's driving the increase? The CDC says it can be explained by a decrease in condom use among young people and among homosexuals (or what they politely call MSM, which stands for "men having sex with men"), increased screening among some groups, and budget cuts to sexual health programs.

Political and medical elites can always be counted on to blame lack of money. They want more of it. The idea that money, education, and technology can solve what is at heart a behavioral issue is really more of a superstition at this stage. It is scientifically flawed.

In the 1950s, the birth control pill was not available, abortion was illegal, sex education hardly existed, and we spent almost nothing on sexual health programs. According to elite logic in 2019, STD rates should have been through the sky, yet they hardly existed.

What we didn't have in the 1950s was the fallout of a sexual revolution.

For example, the CDC reports that gay and bisexual men, who are a small minority of the population, accounted for the majority (54 percent) of all syphilis cases in 2018. Earlier

this year, it said that primary and secondary syphilis—the most infectious stages of the disease—were mostly attributable to homosexuals; they accounted for almost 90 percent of all cases.

How can this be? Is there anyone—gay or straight—who hasn't heard about the consequences of promiscuity?

If we were serious about combating STDs, we would start asking the hard questions. Why is this largely a gay issue? And why is it that the District of Columbia leads all 50 states in all three STD diseases? But to ask such questions is to run the risk of being labeled homophobic or a racist. So what do the elites do? They say nothing. Meanwhile, innocent babies are dying.

The STD crisis is no mystery. But it takes guts to tell the truth.

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## **BISHOPS OPPOSE REDEFINING “SEX”**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a joint statement by three committees of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB):

Three committees of the USCCB—the Committee for Religious Liberty, the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, and the Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage—have issued a strong statement on three cases before the U.S. Supreme Court on the rights of homosexual and transgender persons.

At issue is whether Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act applies to such persons in the workplace. The bishops make the case that this law does not apply. They are right.

There are two cases that involve the rights of gay employees, and one that involves the workplace rights of a transgender person. While they are not identical, there is one common factor that unites them: the rights being claimed under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act are nowhere found in that law. This provision makes discrimination based on sex—being a man or a woman—illegal. It says nothing about sexual orientation, never mind so-called gender identity, the claim that the sexes are interchangeable.

The substantive issue at stake—whether an employee whose sexual orientation or “gender transition” to the opposite sex can be seen as disqualifying by the employer—is a secondary issue. The primary issue is one of separation of powers. To be specific, the courts are not empowered to make new laws.

The bishops concentrate their remarks on the meaning of “sex” as defined by the Civil Rights Act. “‘Sex’ should not be redefined to include sexual inclinations or conduct, nor to promulgate the view that sexual identity is solely a social construct rather than a natural or biological fact.” Well said.

Indeed, the status of being a man or a woman—there are only two sexes—is independent of same-sex attraction or the phenomenon of trying to switch sexes (which is a biological impossibility).

The bishops did not duck the religious liberty implications of these cases. “Redefining ‘sex’ in law would not only be an interpretive leap away from the language and intent of Title VII, it would attempt to redefine a fundamental element of humanity that is the basis of the family, and would threaten religious liberty.”

If gays and transgender persons want more rights, they must pursue their claims through the legislature. And they must make those claims without violating the religious liberties of employers. At bottom, their status is tied to their behavior, making comparisons to racial discrimination ludicrous.

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## **VICTIMS' LAWYERS LOVE TO SUE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on how law firms are reacting to changes in New York State law affecting the statute of limitations:

The Catholic League has been fighting discriminatory state legislation for many years, particularly when it entails the suspension of the statute of limitations for crimes involving the sexual abuse of minors.

Typically, proposed changes in law do not apply to the public sector, leaving public school victims with only 90 days to file a claim (as opposed to a year or more when the victim is a Catholic school student). We have not fought legislation that treats public entities, such as the schools, the same way it does the Catholic Church.

In New York State, the Child Victims Act was passed last year that covers all institutions, private and public: victims were given one year to file claims, no matter how long ago the alleged offense took place; it was signed by Gov. Andrew Cuomo in February. The evenhandedness in law, however, has not resulted in an evenhanded approach on the part of law firms seeking clients.

There is no way to tell exactly how many Catholic students and public school students in New York State have been victimized by predators over the last half century. But common sense tells us that given the sheer size of the public schools, the latter number would overwhelm the former. Yet there appears to be very little interest in soliciting clients who were abused in the public schools.

Here is a list of some law firms that are currently advertising on the internet or in the media seeking clients. As you will see, their interest is quite selective.

*www.andersonadvocates*: Anti-Catholic lawyer Jeff Anderson is running radio ads advertising his services to Catholic victims. On his website, it says, "If you were sexually abused by a priest or other Catholic clergy in New York, we want to help." In other words, victims of ministers, rabbis, public school teachers, et al. can go elsewhere.

*www.churchfundlawyers.com*: On its website, it opens with, "Lawyers Helping You With the Catholic Church Compensation Fund."

*www.fightforvictims.com*: Its online posting says, "Sexual Abuse by Priests—A Victim of Child Sex Abuse?"

*www.sexabuseclaimscenter.com*: This is the website of Levy Konigsberg. Its heading reads, "Sexual Abuse By The Catholic Church."

*www.consumersafety.org*: It reads, "Sexual Abuse Claims—Priest Abuse—You Have Rights."

*www.meneolawgroup.com*: It flags, "Priests and Clergy Sexual Abuse in New York," offering information on "New York Dioceses Where Documented Abuse Occurred."

*www.lauraahearn.com*: In large letters it says, "New York State Catholic Church Priest Sexual Abuse Settlement Programs and

Bringing a Civil Claim Don't Miss Deadlines."

*www.hermanlaw.com*: It advertises itself as "A Law Firm for Victims of Sexual Abuse." In reality, however, it focuses heavily on the Catholic Church. It boasts, "Decades Of Cover Up By the Roman Catholic Church Ends Now." It even has a "Predator Priest Index" of accused priests (there is no "Predator Teacher Index" for the public schools). It also asks the public to sign a petition demanding the Church release "Secret Predator Priest Files." What secret files? This is pure bunk. The Catholic dioceses have been more transparent than any other institution, religious or secular. They even have their own compensation programs.

There are many other law firms that, while they do not concentrate on the Catholic Church, they nonetheless list the Church right up front.

Why, if there are that many more public school victims are these law firms concentrating so heavily on the Catholic Church? One principal reason is that the Church has a record of settling claims with dispatch, something that is not true of the public schools. For some lawyers, there is also the prospect of settling scores—the anger displayed against the Catholic Church is palpable.

What is going on is religious profiling. We know that African Americans commit more street crime, disproportionately, than whites do. If law firms advertised their services to those victimized by blacks, it would be called racial profiling. Indeed, it would be called bigotry. Bigotry is also in play when the target of sexual offenses is priests.

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# AP STUDY OF ACCUSED PRIESTS DESERVES AN “F”

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on an Associated Press (AP) study of accused priests who are no longer in ministry:

The AP study of former priests who were credibly accused of sexual misconduct reeks of duplicity, and worse.

The nine-month investigation found nearly 1,700 “priests and other clergy members that the Roman Catholic Church considers credibly accused of child sexual abuse are living under the radar with little or no supervision from religious authorities or law enforcement...”

It would be more accurate to refer to the victims as minors, not children, since most of them were adolescents (e.g., victims of homosexuality, not pedophilia).

The thrust of the story is that once an accused priest is no longer in ministry, in many cases the Church no longer polices him. This is hardly unique: The AP reporters fail to mention a single institution in the nation, secular or religious, that monitors every former employee who has been accused of sexual misconduct. Importantly, this certainly includes the profession of journalism. But that is where the similarities end.

Unlike the public schools, for example, background checks for all new employees in the Catholic Church are routine. Therefore, the likelihood of the Church employing an accused sex offender is rare. This is not true elsewhere, especially in the public schools. And while in the last century, some bishops moved accused priests to another parish—this is no longer the case—this is still *the norm* in the public schools. How do I know? Because of studies done by the AP and USA

TODAY.

In 2007, AP published a series of articles about sexual offenses in the public schools. It found that between 2001-2005, 2,570 educators had their teaching credentials revoked because of sexual misconduct. It detailed 1,801 cases of abuse: more than 80 percent of the victims were students, and most of the offenders were public school teachers.

What happened to them? "Most of the abuse never gets reported." What about those who did not get their licenses revoked? They are the "mobile molesters," teachers sent to another school or district, a practice so widespread that it's called "passing the trash."

In 2016, USA TODAY published its own series on abuse in the public schools. It found that "passing the trash" was still the norm: abusive teachers were able to move to new teaching jobs, or to other employment working with youth.

In other words, the molesting teachers not only were not monitored once they left the school, they found teaching jobs elsewhere.

Some might ask, "Haven't some accused priests found employment as public school teachers, and in other professions, including jobs working with young people?" They have. Indeed, the AP story on the Church cites examples of this practice.

But why is this the fault of the Catholic Church? Why is this not the fault of the public school establishment, and other professions, for not doing a background check? Responsible parents do a background check on prospective baby sitters. What's wrong with public school officials?

The USA TODAY report also found that most states (45 of them) refused to abide by a 2015 federal law requiring states to ban secret termination agreements, thus allowing accused molesting teachers to find another job without a problem. As important

as anything, the study found that the federal government still “does not maintain a database of teachers who have sexually molested children.” By contrast, the Catholic Church keeps a record on accused priests.

The AP public school study touched on this issue as well. Here is an excerpt from the first of three stories.

“Too often problem teachers are allowed to leave quietly. That can mean future abuse for another student and another school district.” It offered a quote from Charol Shakeshaft, one of the nation’s top experts on this subject. “They might deal with it internally,” she said, “suspending the person or having the person move on. So their license is never investigated.”

The story continued. “Laws in several states require that even an allegation of sexual misconduct be reported to the state departments that oversee teacher licenses. But there’s no consistent enforcement, so such laws are easy to ignore.” Shakeshaft attributes this outcome to school officials feeling embarrassed, wanting to avoid “the fallout from going up against a popular teacher.”

The AP story on the Catholic Church really starts to overheat when it says that “Priests and other church employees being listed on sex offender registries at all is a rarity.” Have the reporters lost their mind? These priests have been accused—they have not been found guilty!

How could they make such an irresponsible comment? There are only two plausible answers: their hatred of the Catholic Church is off the charts, or they are just plain stupid. *No accused person is registered as a sex offender unless he has been convicted.* On this score alone, the AP study on the Church deserves an “F.”

Is Charlie Rose a registered sex offender? How about Harvey Weinstein? Hundreds of such examples could be cited.

If the AP reporters focused their sights on the public schools, or on those in the media and Hollywood, they would have a whole lot more to chew on than zeroing in on the Catholic Church. But that wouldn't win the applause of their colleagues. It's so much more fun to nail an easy target, even if that target looks good by comparison with others.

Shame on the AP for playing politics with such a serious issue.

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## LOUSY PIECE OF JOURNALISM FROM CRUX

Catholic League president Bill Donohue calls out the Catholic news media outlet Crux:

Christopher White, a Crux correspondent, can't even spell my name right, but his more serious delinquencies entail what he wrote about me in a [news story](#) on the Amazon synod.

He correctly says that [I pointed out](#) that the bishops have a dilemma on their hands. They must decide "how to respect the culture of indigenous peoples while at the same time acknowledging inherent deficiencies in it." If the next sentence sounds like an odd transition, it's because it is. "In short, there is nothing noble about savages—quite the opposite."

In fact, that sentence appears five paragraphs later, *after I quoted from the esteemed anthropologist Napoleon Chagnon about*

*what he described as the savagery of an Indian tribe, the Yanomami, from the Amazon region.* But the reader would never know this by reading what White said.

So why would White jump to this sentence, taking it completely out of context? So he could tee it up for this gem: “Donahue’s [sic] language characterizing the ‘deficiencies’ in indigenous culture was slammed by a number of Catholic theologians and commentators as insensitive or tinged with racism.”

The deficiencies I made reference to were not something of my imagination: I quoted what the authors of the working document on the Amazon synod said. Besides deficiencies in medical care and education, they wrote about the “inefficiency of health/sanitation services.” That’s their language. Does this make them insensitive or racists as well?

One more thing. Who are these theologians and commentators who “slammed” me? Why doesn’t White say who they are? Why haven’t they surfaced? Are they cowards?

Crux has done some very fine work under the auspices of John Allen. But this piece is not of that vintage—it is a lousy piece of journalism.