

ST. SERRA VANDALS TO BE ARRAIGNED

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on court proceedings against those who vandalized a statue of St. Serra:

On December 11, five persons will be arraigned in Marin County, California for destroying a statue of Saint Junípero Serra at Mission San Rafael on October 12. Serra was an 18th century priest who did more to defend the rights of American Indians than any other person. A petition defending the thugs has been sent to District Attorney Lori Frugoli.

On October 29, I wrote to D.A. Frugoli in support of San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone's call for justice. He said "this attack on a cherished religious symbol on our own church property is not a minor property crime, but an attack on Catholics as a people." I seconded Cordileone's plea that Frugoli apply the full measure of the law against those responsible for this vicious anti-Catholic crime.

One of the principal defenders of this obscene petition is a woman called Morning Star Gali, an American Indian. She justifies the violence by saying this is "an opportunity" for the Catholic Church "to rectify issues of the past and the violence that the church is responsible" for. She is the project director for Restoring Justice for Indigenous Peoples.

Gali is a left-wing extremist funded by—you guessed—George Soros. She suffers not only from a moral disability, she has a poor command of history.

Her moral disability is evident in her audacious claim that the Catholic Church is responsible for oppressing Indians. It was the Spanish colonizers who mistreated Indians, and it was the Church that did what it could to mitigate this injustice.

It must also be said that the Indians were very good at killing each other, thus Americans today do not need to be lectured by their descendants about oppression.

Gali, and those like her, need to stop perpetuating the myth that American Indians are an “indigenous” people. They are not. As defined by the Cambridge Dictionary, “indigenous” means “naturally existing in a place or country rather than arriving from another place.” The ancestors of American Indians arrived from Asia. Ergo, they are no more indigenous to America than any other immigrant group.

D.A. Frugoli should treat this incident as a hate crime, and not as a political act.

Contact Frugoli: lfrugoli@marincounty.org

BECERRA’S CATHOLICITY POSES A PROBLEM

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on Joe Biden’s pick of Xavier Becerra for Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS):

As pointed out in [detail](#), it is indisputable that Xavier Becerra is a threat to life—at its beginning and at its natural ending—and to religious liberty. This alone is enough for practicing Catholics to be outraged, but given that he claims Catholic status, it spells grave danger.

Like many Catholic politicians who rail against the most serious public policy positions of the Catholic Church, Becerra does not flag his Catholic identity, though he does

roll it out when it suits him. For example, in 2013, when speaking in support of illegal aliens obtaining American citizenship, he said he was a “proud Latino of Catholic heritage.” In 2018, he sported his brilliance when he concluded that “maybe you don’t have to be Catholic to be a good person.”

In other words, in the few times when Becerra has spoken about his religion, it has been done either to showcase his identity politics or to prove the banality of his thinking. There is no public record of him ever reflecting on how his Catholic upbringing shaped his life.

If Becerra were to be confirmed by the Senate, he will surely do what he can to promote abortion-on-demand, with public funding, and to undermine religious exemptions.

This raises a question about his boss: Why would Biden, another self-professed Catholic, want to appoint an enemy of the Catholic Church to the one cabinet post where he can do the most damage? The obvious answer is because Biden himself is at war with these Church teachings.

This is nothing new for Biden. Consider who was the first HHS Secretary under the Obama-Biden administration: Kathleen Sebelius. She is responsible for the HHS mandate that sought to force Catholic non-profits to pay for abortion-inducing drugs in their healthcare plans. In short, she was the single most important person to crusade against the Little Sisters of the Poor, nuns whom Biden pledges to crush again (they won in the Supreme Court this past summer).

Sebelius was never conflicted about abortion. Indeed, she was best friends with Dr. George—the Killer—Tiller, the man who, by his own admission, performed over 60,000 abortions, specializing in partial-birth abortions. He contributed mightily to her campaign when she ran for governor of Kansas. Moreover, Associated Press reported that Gov. Sebelius lied

about the amount of money she received from him. Tiller knew that if he greased her, she would not interfere with his "profession." He was right about that.

In 2002, Sebelius described herself as "a practicing Catholic." Four years later she said, "My Catholic faith teaches me that life is sacred. Personally, I believe abortion is wrong." She said this immediately after she vetoed a bill that would have strengthened her state's ban on late-term abortions.

In 1992, when Sebelius was a state legislator, Archbishop Ignatius Strecker rebuked her for leading what he dubbed as a "death-march of the unborn." When she became governor of Kansas in 2003, Archbishop James Keleher asked her to move her inauguration interfaith service from Topeka's Assumption Catholic Church. She refused. Then Archbishop Joseph Naumann called her out, challenging her to name *one* instance in her long legislative career where she supported limiting abortion rights. She could not. He subsequently asked her not to go to Communion.

Biden has been asked by some members of the Catholic clergy not to go to Communion. That was before he became even more extreme in his defense of publicly funded abortion-on-demand.

Los Angeles Archbishop José Gomez, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, recently expressed his concerns about Biden's views and his religious identity. He asked Detroit Archbishop Alan Vigneron to chair a special committee to deal with this issue.

Now that Biden has picked Becerra to be his new HHS Secretary, continuing the legacy of the Obama-Biden administration's record of choosing Catholics who are at war with the Church for this post, Vigneron, and all the bishops, have their work cut out for them.

Biden has made his move. It is up to the bishops to make

theirs—they are now in the Catholic equivalent of the Situation Room.

BECERRA IS A THREAT TO LIFE AND LIBERTY

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on why Joe Biden's pick for Secretary of Health and Human Services is a serious problem:

It would be hard to find any public servant more anti-life and anti-religious liberty than Xavier Becerra. Yet he has been named by Joe Biden to be his Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS), a post that directly impacts on life and religious liberty.

Becerra is the Attorney General of California, with no background in medicine or health. Last week five prominent healthcare organizations called on Biden to appoint "qualified physicians to serve in key positions critical to advancing the health of our nation." They were reportedly unhappy with his choice of Becerra, and some said they were "astounded."

So what are Becerra's qualifications for the job? He is passionate about expanding access to abortion, and that is about it. Quite simply, he is a pro-abortion zealot. When he served in Congress, before his current post, he voted in favor of allowing human embryonic stem cell research, thus giving the green light to the killing of nascent human life, all in the name of science.

He voted against making it a crime to kill an unborn baby during the commission of another crime. He approved of human

cloning for research purposes. He said no to funding healthcare providers who refused to provide abortion information. He voted to fund abortion at home and abroad. He opposed banning partial-birth abortion. And he opposed a ban on transporting minors to get an abortion.

Not surprisingly, Becerra always gets a 100% rating from NARAL and Planned Parenthood; he merits a 0% rating from the National Right to Life.

No abortion is more gruesome than partial-birth abortion procedures: it kills babies who are 80% born. This explains why the Congress banned it in 2003. Becerra voted to keep it legal.

Pro-abortion advocates say they are not really champions of abortion; they claim to be pro-choice. If that were indeed the case, they would be in favor of giving pregnant women contemplating an abortion the choice of bearing the child and putting the baby up for adoption. But few are. Becerra is not one of the few. In fact, he has worked hard to deny these women such a choice.

In 2016, the California Attorney General's name appeared in a case before the U.S. Supreme Court, *National Institute of Family & Life Advocates v. Becerra*. The lawsuit was brought by this pro-life institute after Becerra tried to effectively close down the state's crisis pregnancy centers.

Becerra invoked a law that required abortion alternative centers to post a message that undercut their purpose: they were mandated to tell their clients that the state will pay for their abortion. The centers pushed back arguing that this constitutes "compelled speech" and is therefore unconstitutional under the First Amendment. The Supreme Court agreed in 2018, but it had no effect on Becerra cooling his jets.

Remember the pro-life activists who went undercover to film

Planned Parenthood officials trafficking in aborted baby parts? Becerra brought felony charges against them, something so drastic that even the pro-abortion *Los Angeles Times* criticized him for “disturbing overreach.” In 2017, a judge dismissed 14 of the 15 charges as legally insufficient.

If Becerra believes the state should be allowed to step on the brakes of human life from developing, he also believes the state should be allowed to accelerate its demise. He is a big proponent of allowing sick patients to check out early. That is why he spent a lot of time fending off challenges to California’s End of Life Option Act, a law passed in 2016.

Becerra’s record on religious liberty is as extreme as his views on the sanctity of human life. As both a congressman and as attorney general, he has worked tirelessly to undermine conscience rights.

For example, in another losing effort, he objected when the Supreme Court defended the religiously grounded conscience rights of business owners who were being compelled to pay for life-taking procedures in their healthcare plan. He said it is one thing for an individual to hold to his religious beliefs, quite another for him to act on them. The high court was not impressed with this kind of hair-splitting dichotomy.

Whenever it comes to a clash between gay rights and religious liberty, count on Becerra to honor the former—even though they are nowhere mentioned in the Constitution—and not the latter, even though they are expressly mentioned in the First Amendment. This explains why he filed an amicus brief in the case where a baker was being forced against his will to prepare a specially made wedding cake for two men.

When Catholic foster care programs only approve of adoption for a married man and woman, look for Becerra to oppose the religious liberty interests of the Catholic agency. He insists that every unnatural parental unit—e.g., two people of the

same sex—should have the right to force Catholic foster care programs to render them acceptable as adoptive parents.

Becerra also wants to force healthcare workers to participate in unnatural sexual surgeries, that is, in cases where male parts are transitioned to a female, and vice versa. If the workers protest, invoking their conscience rights, he says they should lose.

The Little Sisters of the Poor have been besieged with lawsuits attempting to force them to pay for abortion-inducing drugs in their healthcare plans. Becerra is one of the cultural warriors working against them. He fought the Trump administration's defense of the nuns' religious liberty objections, filing lawsuits to compel them to follow the HHS mandate. He fought them at every juncture and will now lead the fight, as pledged by Biden, to undermine the Supreme Court victory awarded the nuns this past summer.

Not surprisingly, Becerra also objected to the religious exemptions sought by houses of worship during the Covid-19 pandemic. No matter how draconian the restrictions on houses of worship, Becerra could be counted on to defend them, blithely disregarding their First Amendment rights.

On life and liberty, Becerra's record is positively obscene. It would be wise for Biden to pull his nomination now before things get ugly. People of faith, and fair-minded persons of no faith, must stand in unison against such an extremist.

Let Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell know about your concerns.

Contact his press secretary, Doug Andres:
Doug_Andres@mcconnell.senate.gov

COVID'S MENTAL HEALTH EFFECTS VARY WIDELY

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a new Gallup poll on mental health:

Covid-19's effects on our physical health is clear cut: we are witnessing a surge in infections, hospitalizations and deaths. We are also witnessing a surge in mental health problems. Now we have the results of a new Gallup poll that offers rich demographic detail.

The segment of the public that is experiencing the most dramatic effects of Covid-19 are young single women who identify as liberals and are not religious. The segment that is suffering the least mental health problems are older married men who identify as conservatives and are church-goers. [Note: I am using the term liberal for what the poll names as Democrats, and conservative for what are identified as Republicans.]

All of this is consistent with what I found in my 2015 book, [*The Catholic Advantage: Why Health, Happiness, and Heaven Await the Faithful*](#).

Of all the demographic categories—sex, party affiliation, religiosity, race, age, and income—there is only one subgroup that is actually reporting better mental health than a year ago: those who attend religious services on a weekly basis (they experienced a 4% increase—every other category and subgroup witnessed a decrease).

We have known for years that there is a positive correlation between those who score high on religiosity (beliefs and

practices) and physical health; the more religious the person is, the healthier he is likely to be. The correlation is even higher when measures of mental health are weighed.

What causes this phenomenon? Beliefs are related to bonding, and bonding keeps us mentally fit. The obverse—secular-minded people who are unattached and without strong family and friendship bonds—are the most at risk for loneliness, depression and suicide.

Young unmarried people do not enjoy, on average, the strong bonds that older married persons enjoy. Women are particularly given to problems when social bonds are weak. Liberals tend to be secularists and they lack the bonding that religious persons experience through prayer.

In my book, I contrasted two very different segments of the population: cloistered nuns and Hollywood celebrities. The former were by far the healthiest, both in terms of physical and mental health. They bonded with each other, horizontally, and with God, vertically. Such a tight-knit lifestyle explains why they are also the happiest. By contrast, the self-absorbed milieu that Hollywood is noted for works against social bonding. Hence, the surfeit of mental problems that mark Tinseltown.

Here's the bottom line: The growing secularization of our society, combined with a less than friendly environment for people of faith to operate in, is a threat to our mental health.

Everyone knows we can't beat Mother Nature. What everyone does not know is that we can't beat nature's God, either. Going it alone is not in our best interest.

SIGN WHITE HOUSE PETITION ON ICE DETAINEE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue is asking everyone to sign a White House petition on an ICE detainee. He explains why:

If there is one Christmas message that needs the support of everyone this year, it is an appeal to President Donald Trump to release Pornchai Moontri from the custody of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). He has suffered too much already. He deserves to be repatriated to Thailand.

I have known about the plight of Pornchai for many years. It was Fr. Gordon J. MacRae—he is another victim of injustice—who brought Pornchai's story to my attention. Pornchai rightly credits Fr. MacRae with mentoring him. More than that, MacRae brought him into the Catholic Church. This was done in a New Hampshire prison where they were housed.

In 2007, the Catholic League published an essay by Pornchai on his incredible ordeal. The late Fr. Richard John Neuhaus and Harvard Law professor emeritus Mary Ann Glendon also reached out to him.

Here is why Pornchai deserves to be released.

Pornchai was born in Thailand in 1973 and was abandoned by his mother when he was two-years-old. She intended to sell him, but a young relative came to his rescue and brought him into his home. When he was 11-years-old his mother reemerged with a new husband; they took him to Bangor, Maine, against his will. His stepfather, Richard Bailey, immediately started raping him, and did so for three years. At age 14, Pornchai escaped (it was his second escape) and became homeless. When he was 18, he got into a fight with a much bigger man while he was intoxicated and took the man's life during the struggle (he

was so drunk he does not recall stabbing him).

While awaiting trial, Pornchai's mother came to visit him in jail, warning him that if he disclosed to the authorities what his stepfather did to him, she would suffer the consequences. Fearing for his mother's life, he prudently decided not to speak, even to the point of not defending himself in court. He was convicted of murder and sentenced to 45 years in prison. Maine has no parole.

In 2000, his mother attempted to leave her husband; they were living in Guam. That is where she was beaten to death. The only suspect was her husband, but there was no evidence to convict him. Subsequently, many things changed.

In 2005, Pornchai was sent to a New Hampshire State Prison. That is where he met Fr. MacRae. Five years later, Pornchai became a Catholic; he soon became a fan of the Catholic League.

In 2018, after new evidence emerged—advocates for Pornchai pursued Bailey—and justice was finally done. Bailey was convicted on forty felony counts of child sexual abuse against Pornchai.

On September 11, 2020, Pornchai, after serving his full sentence, was released at age 47 to the custody of ICE for deportation to his native Thailand. He is still in custody, with no end in sight.

Pornchai has served his time and has suffered enough. He should now be set free.

We are asking everyone to [sign the White House petition](#). Christmastime is the perfect time to deliver justice to Pornchai Moontri.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AFFIRMED AGAIN BY HIGH COURT

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the December 3rd Supreme Court decision on religious liberty:

This has been a lousy two weeks for the imperial governors of New York and California.

Last week, the U.S. Supreme Court told Gov. Andrew Cuomo that his occupancy limits on houses of worship were unconstitutional. There is something called the First Amendment, the court ruled, that puts the brakes on his executive authority. Now the high court has smacked down similar limits imposed by Gov. Gavin Newsom.

With no dissents, the Supreme Court ordered U.S. District Court Judge Jesus Bernal to reconsider his support for the occupancy limits imposed by Newsom. He was told to review its 5-4 decision last week striking down Cuomo's draconian edict.

It was Catholics (Diocese of Brooklyn) and Jews (Agudath Israel of America) in Brooklyn who won in New York. It was Protestants (Harvest Rock Church) in Pasadena who won in California. The latter objected to a complete ban on indoor gatherings in houses of worship, and to a limited ban on outdoor gatherings.

Every reasonable person concedes that local and state executives are within their rights to exercise extraordinary powers during an emergency condition such as a pandemic. But such rights are not boundless. The U.S. Constitution does not take a holiday.

The arrogance of Cuomo and Newsom is appalling. Their disrespect for the free exercise of religion—the preeminent constitutional right—is equally appalling. The faithful are entitled to *more rights* than are afforded Costco shoppers, so when they wind up with *less rights* than those who frequent tattoo parlors, it is clear that a religious animus is in play. It needs to be excised.

Had Justice Amy Coney Barrett been denied a seat on the Supreme Court, the ruling last week would have been 4-4, and our side would have lost (Cuomo's win in the federal courts would have stood). And if that had happened, the high court would not have been able to tell Judge Bernal to take a second look at his decision, citing their ruling last week.

Covid-19 is a serious threat, but when politicians such as Cuomo and Newsom go easy on mobs gathering in the streets, ignoring social distancing—many of whom are violent thugs—and then lay down the gauntlet on peaceful and health-observant church goers, they decimate their moral authority.

What makes these two men so contemptible is that they each profess, to this day, to be Catholic. Yet there is nothing that they have decided on religious cases that would be any different if proffered by a militant atheist.

No one is asking them to be in lockstep with Catholicism on every policy decision, but when the best they can do is to proclaim their interest in climate change as a reflection of their Catholic values—while rejecting Church teachings on life, marriage, the family, and religious liberty—then they have squandered their religious heritage. There is nothing admirable about that.

CATHOLICS CANNOT TRUST NEERA TANDEN

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the nomination of Neera Tanden for a senior-level position in the Biden administration:

Joe Biden has nominated Neera Tanden to direct the Office of Management and Budget in his administration. It is a bad choice. There are several reasons why Catholics cannot trust her.

Tanden heads the Center for American Progress (CAP), a left-wing think tank funded by Big Tech and Wall Street. She is a long-time Democratic operative who worked for Hillary Clinton and President Barack Obama. These credentials, however, matter little when there is no reason to trust her.

What is of interest to Catholics is Tanden's pivotal role in [writing](#) the notorious Health and Human Services (HHS) mandate. It sought to force Catholic non-profit organizations, such as the Little Sisters of the Poor, to pay for abortion-inducing drugs, contraception and sterilization in their healthcare plans.

When Catholic bishops objected to the HHS mandate, Tanden was miffed, [saying](#) this initiative was a matter of healthcare, not religious liberty. Yet the fact was that under this provision, Catholics would be required to pay for abortifacients. Such a flagrant violation of their conscience rights, grounded in their religion, mattered not a whit to her.

There is more to this story.

Tanden was a close associate of John Podesta, the founder of CAP. In 2016, Wikileaks [released](#) emails by him and others discussing ways to create a "Catholic spring." The term was

code for [fomenting](#) a “revolution” in the Catholic Church. At the time, Podesta was chairman of Hillary Clinton’s presidential campaign. He was responsible for creating two phony Catholic groups, Catholics United and Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good, both of which falsely argued that Catholic teachings on abortion and sexuality could be rejected by Catholics in good standing.

Tanden was part of the email chain. In an email to Hillary Clinton, she labeled the Catholic Church’s denunciation of the HHS mandate an example of “misogyny.” That is exactly the way the foes of the Catholic Church talk—any objection to mandating that abortion-inducing drugs must be funded by Catholic taxpayers is anti-women. Speaking of her Democratic colleagues in the White House, she [said](#), “The Church still scares the crap out of these guys.”

Tanden also took the side of those who maliciously attacked Brett Kavanaugh, the Catholic judge who was being considered for a seat on the U.S. Supreme Court in 2018.

She reflexively believed the fanciful tales of Christine Blasey Ford, the distraught professor who could never find a single person to verify her claims of sexual assault against Kavanaugh. Tanden even smeared Senator Susan Collins for supporting the Catholic nominee. She criticized the Republican senator for what she [called](#) a “pathetically bad faith argument as cover for President Trump’s vicious attacks on survivors of sexual assault.”

When Kavanaugh was confirmed, Tanden [said](#), “His confirmation does not signal the end of our society’s fight to eliminate sexual assault and harassment.” In fact, when Tanden wrote that she had already impugned her credentials as a warrior against sexual misconduct. Just a few months earlier, she was involved in outing a female victim of sexual harassment by a staff member at CAP.

After it made the news that allegations of sexual harassment and retaliation had taken place at CAP, Tanden, the president, called a staff meeting to assure everyone that there was nothing to worry about. It was at this meeting when she [disclosed](#) who the anonymous person was—Tanden made sure everyone knew the identity of the victim.

When “Mary” quit, she [sent](#) a memo to the organization’s leadership. “On several occasions, myself and others on the team felt as if reporting had been a mistake and that the retaliation, worsening of already tenuous team dynamics, and treatment by supervisors outweighed the seemingly positive act of reporting sexual harassment in the workplace. CAP’s culture obscures its mission. I surely expected better out of an organization that housed a national campaign on sexual assault.”

[According](#) to journalist Glenn Greenwald, the accused was “one of Neera Tanden’s male allies.” Greenwald accused Tanden of violating “a confidential complaint about sexual harassment” when she “outed this woman at the all-staff meeting out of vengeance.”

One of the CAP employees who was at the meeting [told](#) a reporter what happened. “There is literally one thing you cannot do in this meeting and that is out the victim and Neera did it multiple times...It also destroys whatever small level of confidence in the system remained. As a manager I don’t know I can tell staff to trust the system when the head of the organization just outed the victim in front of the entire organization. It is impossible to trust her.”

If it is impossible for the public to trust Neera Tanden, it is doubly impossible for Catholics to trust her.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell should lead the fight to block her nomination as the new head of the Office of Management and Budget.

Contact McConnell's press secretary, Doug Andres:
Doug_Andres@mcconnell.senate.gov

INDIANA STATE REP. WILL NOT RENOUNCE HIS BIGOTRY

The following is an open letter to Indiana state lawmakers about one of their Republican colleagues who refuses to renounce his bigotry:

Dear Indiana Legislators:

On November 19, I contacted Indiana state Representative John Jacob, asking him to renounce a series of anti-Catholic remarks he made while running for office, pledging never to make them again. I gave him to the end of the month, November 30, to "put an end to this issue" (my letter was sent via email and in the overnight mail). He has not replied.

To see a sample of his bigoted commentary, posted on social media platforms, click [here](#).

There is no legitimate place for someone like Jacob in public office. Anyone who would post anti-Catholic hate speech on social media is not fit to represent his Catholic constituency. Hopefully, you will read his bigoted posts and let him know of your disdain for his behavior.

Furthermore, I am requesting that Republican lawmakers, beginning with House Speaker Todd Huston, not to include Jacob in the Republican caucus. Had Jacob made these invidious remarks while in office, I would have asked that he be censured. At the very least, he should now be marginalized by

his colleagues.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.

President

Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights

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Contact Indiana House Speaker Todd Huston (R) asking him to lead the way in barring Jacob from the Republican caucus:

h37@iga.in.gov