

# SCOTUS RULING ON RELIGIOUS RIGHTS IS ILLUMINATING

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on reaction to the U.S. Supreme Court ruling limiting attendance at houses of worship:

Just before midnight on Thanksgiving eve, New York State Gov. Andrew Cuomo, a professed former altar boy, took it on the chin when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 5-4 that his executive order limiting occupancy in houses of worship could not stand. It was blocked pending a review by the 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals.

Though Cuomo had already rescinded his order, the occupancy limits he imposed—10 in red zones and 25 in orange zones—were seen as executive overreach; the restrictions were imposed because of Covid-19 concerns. The high court knew he could reinstate his restrictions, which is why it did not pass up the opportunity to decide this case.

The Supreme Court said that “even in a pandemic, the Constitution cannot be put away and forgotten.” It was a win for the Diocese of Brooklyn and Agudath Israel of America.

The Catholic and Jewish institutions argued that declaring religious services to be “non-essential,” while labeling pet stores, hardware stores and other secular entities “essential,” was a serious First Amendment infringement on their religious liberty. Cuomo dug himself a hole when he admitted in a press conference that his order is “most impactful on houses of worship.”

One of the most interesting aspects of this case was the reaction to the ruling.

We would expect secular militants to be angry, and they were.

No organization has exerted more time, money, and energy using Covid-19 as a pretext to abridge religious liberties more than Americans United for Separation of Church and State. This is an organization founded by anti-Catholics after World War II; to this day it remains hostile to Catholics, as well as to some other religious affiliations. It filed an amicus brief in this case.

“So far this year, Americans United has filed 40 other amicus briefs in courts across the country in similar cases involving requests for religious exemptions from COVID-19 public health orders.” That was its official reaction to the high court decision affirming religious liberty. In addition, it has issued over two dozen news releases and opinion pieces on this subject, all of which stress that it would be unconstitutional to allow religious exemptions to public health restrictions.

What was most illuminating was the reaction of liberal religious publications and organizations. They were in a jam: if they approved of the Supreme Court ruling, it would put them on the side of religious conservatives; if they disapproved, it would put them on the side of secular militants. So what did they do? They punted. For the most part, they took the cowardly way out and said nothing.

*America* and *Commonweal* are liberal Catholic media outlets. They said not a word. The *National Catholic Reporter* is a dissident media source that rejects many Church teachings; it also said nothing. *Sojourners*, a liberal Protestant publication, and Religion News Service, which hosts a variety of liberal religious writers, also went mute.

Crux, a liberal Catholic website, posted one piece by its editor, John Allen. He tried ever so hard to be objective, but he ultimately failed. “Contrary to popular mythology, most secular liberals aren’t hostile to religion, merely indifferent.” That may be true for individuals, but it is certainly not true of secular liberal organizations that opine

and act on religious liberty issues. That's what counts.

The silence on the part of religious liberals to the Supreme Court ruling is daunting. It shows their uneasiness with granting churches and other houses of worship the same rights as afforded many secular institutions. Indeed, it says much more than that. Religious media outlets should be expected to affirm a *special* place in constitutional law for religious institutions—that is what the First Amendment ordains! Their failure to do so is telling.

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## **BIDEN'S ALLIES THREATEN RELIGIOUS LIBERTY**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on impending threats to religious liberty:

Left-wing advocacy organizations are wasting no time pressing Joe Biden to do away with the religious liberty protections afforded by the Trump administration. As we have previously [detailed](#), no president has done more to secure religious liberty than Donald Trump.

The three most prominent organizations asking Biden to undo Trump's progress are the American Civil Liberties Union, the Human Rights Campaign, and the Center for American Progress.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is obsessed with sex: it wants to make sure that homosexuals, the sexually confused (transgender people), and women seeking an abortion never have rights that are subordinate to religious rights. It does not matter to the civil libertarians that the former are nowhere mentioned in the Constitution and the latter are

enshrined in the First Amendment. The ACLU is worried that “a new wave of bills seeking to create religious exemptions” will succeed, endangering the rights of “LGBTQ” people.

No right is more important than conscience rights, a liberty which is ineluctably tied to religious rights. It is this premier right that the ACLU loathes. In a statement released after the election, it condemned “attempts by the Trump administration to invoke religious or personal beliefs.” It said that such exercises can be used to discriminate against LGBTQ people. It further stated that “invoking religious or moral objections” to the LGBTQ agenda cannot be tolerated.

On November 11, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) issued its “Blueprint for Positive Change 2020.” It is chock-a-block full of recommendations for Biden. One of its priorities is to upend the new direction taken by the Office of Civil Rights within the Department of Health and Human Services under President Trump. It specifically takes aim at the Office’s enforcement of “federal conscience and religious liberty laws.” Once again, the LGBTQ agenda is considered to be more important. Thus HRC joins the ACLU in the left-wing assault on conscience rights.

HRC also wants to pare back the religious liberty protections afforded faith-based programs by the Trump administration. If its position were followed, it would essentially excise the faith element in faith-based initiatives. This, of course, is its goal.

The most draconian recommendation promoted by HRC is its call for the Department of Education to reconsider its standards for accrediting religious institutions of higher education. In short, it wants to deny accreditation to religious colleges and universities that do not meet its secular vision of education.

HRC is incensed over the current mandate that accreditation

agencies “respect the stated mission” of these religious institutions. It takes particular umbrage at the religious liberty protections cited in the Higher Education Opportunity Act, a law passed by the Congress during the outgoing Bush administration in 2008.

The Center for American Progress (CAP) encourages the Biden Administration to do everything the ACLU and HRC want, focusing on doing away with religious exemptions initiated by the Trump administration. However, it does have a few novel ideas of its own.

CAP is big on “diversity outreach” efforts to minority religions. This multicultural game, of course, is less interested in recognizing minority religions than it is in whittling away at our Judeo-Christian heritage. It does not stop there.

“Religious outreach efforts should also specifically include secular humanist or nonreligious groups, as well as faith-based or spirit-rooted communities who do not observe a specific religious tradition.” If the gurus who wrote this were honest, they would simply say that religious outreach efforts should embrace organizations founded to subvert religion. Inviting atheists to have a table at religious gatherings is like having racists participate in a forum on racism. Yes, there are non-bigoted atheists, but organized atheist entities invariably harbor an animus against religion.

CAP urges the Biden administration to “safeguard the separation between religion and government.” Really? Then why does it say, “Together with Pope Francis, the Biden administration should organize a global gathering of religious leaders to discuss climate change and refugee issues”?

Whatever happened to that proverbial “wall” separating church and state? No matter, if the pope is to have a voice on climate change (not exactly his specialty), why not invite the

Holy Father to share his views on gender ideology—the fanciful notion that we can switch our sex? He properly calls it “demonic.”

Constitutional law professor Patrick Garry notes that it was never the intent of the Founders to “place religion and nonreligion on the same level.” In fact, “Textually, the Constitution provides greater protection of religious practices than for any secular-belief-related activities.” This is what gnaws at the ACLU, HRC and CAP.

Much is being made of Biden’s alleged “devout” Catholic status. Yet many of his policies on life, marriage, the family, and sexuality are at variance with the teachings of the Catholic Church. Now he is being besieged by organizations that are positively inimical to his professed religion. He cannot have it both ways any more. It is time for him to draw a line in the sand, before his allies eviscerate it altogether.

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## **HYPING LAY CATHOLIC DIVISIONS**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a story by the Associated Press about the way lay Catholics allegedly responded to Archbishop Gomez’s statement on Joe Biden:

Most of the news stories on the alleged widespread division in the ranks of the Catholic laity are bogus. How do I know? Because most writers, and many pollsters, fail to disaggregate on the basis of religiosity. To be exact, those who do not make a distinction between practicing Catholics and non-practicing Catholics are intellectually dishonest. Lumping them together yields a distorted profile of the Catholic community.

Virtually all polls that disaggregate on the metric of religiosity have long found that most non-practicing Catholics reject Church teachings on life, ordination, marriage, the family, and sexuality. To what extent can they be called Catholic? If their views are practically indistinguishable from non-observant Americans, why are they not classified as secularists?

This is not a new phenomenon, but it is already clear that if Joe Biden is elected president next month by the Electoral College, this issue is going to escalate in the media.

A clear case in point is the November 18 AP story by David Crary, "Catholics Divided as Bishops Examine Biden's Abortion Stance." While Crary properly notes that Catholics split the vote on Trump-Biden (50% to 49%, respectively), he makes the point that there is an alleged Catholic divide over comments recently made by Archbishop José Gomez, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

Gomez told his fellow bishops that Biden's record on many policy positions, such as abortion, is problematic: it posed a "difficult and complex situation" for the Church. According to Crary, Catholics are "sharply divided" over Gomez's remarks.

Crary cites no evidence, save for a few comments made by so-called progressive Catholics. He provides no survey data. That is because most Catholics—you can take it to the bank—have no idea what Gomez said, and this includes *real* Catholics (i.e., those who are practicing). So why the need to make up a controversy when there isn't any?

Here's what's going on. Catholics who reject Church teachings on the aforementioned issues are all ginned up these days, hoping to press the bishops to fall in line with Biden (or at least not to challenge him.) That's what this is all about. Just consider the comments made by left-wing Catholics.

David Gibson of Fordham's Center on Religion and Culture says,

“The USCCB leadership simply can’t embrace the idea of engagement and goodwill that Pope Francis has asked of them.” It apparently does not occur to Gibson that it is Biden, not the bishops, who can’t embrace many central teachings of the Catholic Church, and it is that—not episcopal recalcitrance—that is driving this issue. If only Biden would obey.

Natalia Imperatori-Lee, who teaches religious studies at Manhattan College, also blames the bishops. She says, “they’d like to start an antagonistic relationship” with Biden. The truth is that Biden is at war with the Catholic Church: He opposes teachings on abortion, marriage, sexuality (he is a big transgender fan) and religious liberty. That’s the cause of the antagonism. Her attempt to portray Biden as the victim is risible.

Thomas Groome of Boston College blames Gomez for his “dreadfully unfortunate” address. Spoken like a true dissident. Crary also quotes Jamie Manson, another dissident—she is now the head of an anti-Catholic and pro-abortion letterhead (Catholics for Choice)—lashing out at Gomez for his “condescending remarks.” Practicing Catholics would be more inclined to see his statement as unpretentious, even humble, like the man himself.

Left-wing Catholics cited by the media are not representative of Catholics found in the pews. Indeed, they are more closely aligned with secularists. This is a shell game, designed to shape public opinion with a false narrative. Biden is the problem, not the bishops.

Contact Crary: [dcrary@ap.org](mailto:dcrary@ap.org)

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# INDIANA LAWMAKER MUST RENOUNCE HIS BIGOTRY

Catholic League president Bill Donohue is asking newly elected Rep. John Jacob (R) from Indiana to renounce the anti-Catholic remarks he posted on Facebook prior to taking office. To read Donohue's letter, click [here](#).

Contact Jacob's press secretary: [samantha.holifield@iga.in.gov](mailto:samantha.holifield@iga.in.gov)

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## BISHOPS BESET BY BIDEN

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the U.S. bishops and their relationship with Joe Biden:

Assuming Joe Biden is chosen as president next month by the Electoral College, he will pose a problem for the bishops. Indeed, the head of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), Archbishop José Gomez, indicated this week that the bishops are already beset by Biden. If Biden were a Protestant, it would not complicate matters for the bishops, but he is a baptized Catholic.

At the USCCB meeting this week, Gomez said there were some policies, such as immigration, where Biden's "faith commitments will move him to support some good policies." But there are other issues, such as abortion, which Gomez stressed is "our preeminent priority," where Biden deviates sharply from Catholic teachings. To deal with this dilemma, Gomez appointed Detroit Archbishop Allen Vigneron to head a working task force; he will coordinate efforts among the various USCCB committees.

Among Biden's top priorities is to codify into law the Supreme Court ruling in *Roe v. Wade*. In other words, Biden wants to lock in the right of a woman to abort her child at any moment of pregnancy, for any reason whatsoever, thus blunting any future court challenges.

Biden explained his stance last year saying that he "personally" agrees that life begins at conception. Thus, he said, he was in agreement with the "doctrine of my church." He failed to note that the consequences of his decision as a public official on a matter that ineluctably impacts the public cannot logically be seen as a personal one. Moreover, his "personal" decision is dismissive of scientific evidence on the beginning of human life.

Biden also wants to get rid of the Hyde Amendment, thus forcing taxpayers to pay for abortions. Biden was a supporter of the Hyde Amendment when it was introduced in the 1970s, and stayed the course right up until June 2019. That was when—two months after he announced he was going to run for president—he flipped sides. Similarly, he wants to change Title X so that Planned Parenthood, and other family planning entities, can receive federal funds to pay for abortions.

Gomez said at the bishops' conference that these policies are going to create "confusion among the faithful about what the Church actually teaches on these questions." How could it not?

No organization, including secular ones, can expect its members to practice fidelity to its strictures if its leaders do not. We see this playing out right now across the country when many local, state, and federal officials are insisting that the public abide by strict Covid-19 rules, all the while making exceptions for themselves. Such hypocrisy engenders cynicism and disrespect for their authority.

The confusion that Gomez mentioned is heightened when we learn of a Catholic elementary school in Baltimore that is

accommodating a third-grade girl in her fictional quest to identify as a boy. It is not just Biden that is contradicting Church teachings. Biden, by the way, announced at a town hall event last month that “on day one” he would ease all restrictions on “transitioning” to the opposite sex.

If this isn’t enough to deal with, Gomez also cited Biden’s interest in restoring the Health and Human Services mandate that requires employers, including Catholic non-profits, to pay for abortion-inducing drugs in their healthcare plans. To put it differently, the “devout Catholic” wants to force the Little Sisters of the Poor to pay for these life-ending drugs.

The Equality Act, which would be the most serious assault on religious liberty ever countenanced, is championed by Biden. This was not lost on Gomez, who referenced it in his remarks. This legislation would lead to an assault on the autonomy of Catholic hospitals and ensure that boys who think they are girls can compete against biological girls, sharing locker rooms and showers with them.

Biden is already under pressure from the likes of Linda Sarsour, a Muslim activist with an anti-Semitic record, to make good on his extremist agenda. She said the approach favored by her side now goes from “defensive to offensive.” From the way things are shaping up, she may not be as busy as she thinks: the scheduled assault on life, marriage, the family, and sexuality looks to be on automatic pilot.

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## ASSESSING “THE McCARRICK

# REPORT”

**Bill Donohue**

*This is my analysis of the “Report on the Holy See’s Institutional Knowledge and Decision-Making Related to Former Cardinal Theodore Edgar McCarrick,” or what is commonly known as “The McCarrick Report.” Much of what follows is a summary overview designed to spare readers the necessity of reading the 461-page document. It also includes my assessment of some key events.*

The “McCarrick Report” excels in providing abundant information about the ascent of Theodore McCarrick to the highest ranks of the Catholic Church. No other study comes close to providing such rich material, much of it heretofore unknown to the public.

If there is one outstanding flaw, it was the refusal to interview Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò. This is especially unconscionable given that the Report mentions him 306 times, mostly to discredit him.[\[1\]](#) What makes this truly astonishing is that persons who were mentioned only a few times were interviewed. Thus, the decision not to interview Viganò was deliberate.

I never met Archbishop Viganò but I can attest to his integrity. In late 2015, after a notable Catholic contacted me about a bishop who refused to do anything about a rogue priest, I reached out to Viganò; at the time he was the Apostolic Nuncio to the U.S. He got right on it and acted responsibly. Indeed, he took my request to investigate this matter very seriously. This is important because he says the Report unfairly blames him for not investigating McCarrick, something which he vigorously denies.[\[2\]](#)

When I became president of the Catholic League in 1993, McCarrick was the Archbishop of Newark. At the time, our

office was located in the Catholic Center at the Archdiocese of New York; Cardinal O'Connor was kind enough to move our office to the 20th floor, next to his office, so I got a chance to know him well.

I was only in the job for a few years when I received a call from McCarrick. I remember two salient comments he made. He was very kind, praising my work combating anti-Catholicism. But he also said something that rocked me: He said it was his desire to come across the Hudson and succeed Cardinal O'Connor as the next Archbishop of New York. Why, I thought, would he tell me this?

McCarrick's quest to assume this post apparently consumed him. As we learned from the Report, while talking to two bishops in 1990, he "pounded the table and blurted out 'I deserve New York.'" [\[3\]](#) His sense of entitlement was appalling.

It now becomes clear from reading the Report that one of McCarrick's characterological weaknesses, present from the beginning, was his excessively ambitious nature. It was in 1968 that McCarrick, then a monsignor, was first considered for elevation to the episcopate. Those charged with assessing his credentials were impressed by his multiple skills, but "several informants expressed concern that McCarrick might be overly 'ambitious.'" [\[4\]](#)

He was made Auxiliary Bishop in the Archdiocese of New York in 1977. Four years later, he was being considered to head a newly created diocese, the Diocese of Metuchen in New Jersey. He again impressed everyone. Yet there was a "sole concern," that being his "obvious ambition to be promoted in the ecclesiastical hierarchy." [\[5\]](#) He was a careerist, a priest whose quest for a red hat (to be a cardinal)—in one of the nation's most prestigious dioceses—proved to be an unhealthy preoccupation.

The first signs of trouble became apparent in the 1980s. That

is when his homosexual escapades became known. At least three of the four bishops in New Jersey at the time failed to act responsibly: they allowed him to continue his predatory behavior unchecked.

McCarrick's penchant for seducing seminarians is well documented in the Report. His house in Sea Girt, down the Jersey Shore, was a favorite spot for him to lure these young men. He intentionally invited more men than he had beds for, and he did this with regularity. He didn't just sleep with these young men: He either attempted to have sex with them, or succeeded in doing so.[\[6\]](#)

What McCarrick did was not simply wrong—it was evil.

Evil is a strong word. It should not be used promiscuously. In a book that I have written about this subject, *Disabling the Catholic Church: The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse* (to be published later next year by Ignatius Press), I make it clear that while the molesting priests—the vast majority of whom were homosexuals—were sick men, it would be inaccurate to label most of them evil. The same cannot be said of McCarrick. Let's be honest: Any bishop who would stain young men preparing for the priesthood has the hand of the Devil on him.

McCarrick had some help from other priests. For example, Monsignor Anthony Joseph Gambino, after listening to a priest who told him what McCarrick did to him, Gambino had the nerve to admonish him.[\[7\]](#) Just as disconcerting, after Archbishop Gabriel Montalvo, the Apostolic Nuncio, learned from Father Boniface Ramsey in 2000 about McCarrick's sexually abusive behavior at his beach house, sharing beds with seminarians, Montalvo never got back to him.[\[8\]](#)

After McCarrick was appointed Archbishop of Newark in 1986, Bishop Edward T. Hughes succeeded him as the Bishop of Metuchen. When a priest came to Hughes relaying how McCarrick abused him, he listened carefully but never got back to

him.[\[9\]](#) In fact, he never said a word to anyone in the U.S. or Rome. Hughes did the same to every other priest who confided in him.[\[10\]](#)

McCarrick not only abused seminarians at his beach house, he preyed on them at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York. One of them told Hughes—to no avail—that McCarrick “tried to convince me that priests engaging in sexual activity with each other was normal and accepted in the United States, and particularly in that diocese.”[\[11\]](#) To the extent this is true, it is proof of the homosexual network in the Catholic Church in the 1980s.

What did Hughes do when he heard this? Amazingly, he told the priest “to forget about McCarrick’s misconduct and to forgive McCarrick ‘for the good of the Church.’”[\[12\]](#) No one speaks this way simply to protect a fellow bishop. I have read too much about this issue to know that there was something else going on in Hughes’ life that explains his response.

On January 25, 1990, soon after Bishop James McHugh was appointed to head the Diocese of Camden, he had dinner with three other priests: Monsignor Dominic Bottino, Newark Auxiliary Bishop John Smith, and a young cleric. In front of everyone, McCarrick started rubbing the crotch of the cleric. The young man froze while the others looked away. No one said a word.[\[13\]](#)

We know this because in 2018 Bottino finally admitted what happened. Neither bishop found what McCarrick did objectionable. In fact, McHugh even commended Bottino for the way he “handled” the incident.[\[14\]](#)

If the New Jersey bishops were delinquent, the Archbishop of New York proved to be meritorious. It was Cardinal John O’Connor, a man whom I worked with and greatly admired even before reading the Report, who had the courage to blow the whistle on McCarrick. Regrettably, he ran into opposition,

both in the U.S. and in Rome.

In the early 1990s, Cardinal O'Connor started receiving anonymous complaints about McCarrick.[\[15\]](#) O'Connor knew McCarrick for many years, and he also knew how common it was to field all sorts of false complaints about priests, so he understandably passed the letters on to McCarrick. Then more letters of this sort reached O'Connor's desk. Also receiving copies was the Nuncio, Rev. Agostino Cacciavillan.[\[16\]](#) The Report notes that no investigation took place.[\[17\]](#) But things were only heating up.

In 1999, Cardinal O'Connor engaged the new Nuncio, Archbishop Gabriel Montalvo, in a conversation about McCarrick's suitability to succeed him as Archbishop of New York. O'Connor warned him that there are "some elements of a moral nature that advised against" consideration of McCarrick's candidacy.[\[18\]](#) Influencing O'Connor were psychiatric reports on one of McCarrick's seminarian victims; a graphic account of McCarrick's behavior was provided.[\[19\]](#)

At the same time that McCarrick was being considered for the New York archdiocese, he was being assessed as a candidate to assume the duties at two other dioceses. He received the support of several bishops, who rallied to his side. Washington Archbishop James Cardinal Hickey named McCarrick as his number one choice for promotion.[\[20\]](#) Cardinal Bernard Law, Archbishop of Boston, was also supportive of McCarrick's candidacy, admitting, however, that "from time to time 'a cloud' appeared over McCarrick's head regarding what he termed a 'misplaced affection.'" [\[21\]](#) Others might call it sexual abuse.

O'Connor proved his chops when he wrote a six-page letter to Nuncio Montalvo; the letter was dated October 28, 1999.[\[22\]](#) It was so personal and confidential that the Archdiocese of New York does not have a copy of it.[\[23\]](#) But the Vatican does.



The case made against McCarrick was sober and convincing. O'Connor relied on the findings of Dr. Richard Fitzgibbons, a psychiatrist from Pennsylvania, and Monsignor James Cassidy, a psychologist from the Archdiocese of New York.[\[24\]](#) I did not know Cassidy (he died in 2015), but I have spoken to Fitzgibbons, and I am well aware of his outstanding work. I hold him in high regard. O'Connor did as well.

At the end of his letter, O'Connor said that he could not "in conscience, recommend His Excellency, Archbishop McCarrick for promotion to higher office..."[\[25\]](#) As we know, McCarrick had a wide network of allies, and they proved to be decisive, but not before McCarrick had a chance to weigh in against O'Connor.

On August 6, 2000, three months after O'Connor died, McCarrick wrote to Bishop Stanislaw Dziwisz, particular secretary to Pope John Paul II, addressing O'Connor's allegations against him.[\[26\]](#) McCarrick admitted that friends of his in the Curia came across O'Connor's letter and "tipped me off about it."[\[27\]](#)

McCarrick accused O'Connor of "deeply attacking my life as a bishop," saying he knew O'Connor "did not want me as his successor."[\[28\]](#) He was apparently clueless as to why. Worse, he lied when he said, "I have never had sexual relations with any person, male or female, young or old, cleric or lay, nor have I ever abused another person or treated them with disrespect."[\[29\]](#)

It is a source of great disappointment that Pope John Paul II believed McCarrick, not O'Connor.[\[30\]](#) Whether it was his experience in Poland of hearing malicious lies about priests, as some have suggested, or his being surrounded by dupes, it is not clear. Perhaps both. According to Archbishop Viganò, Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Secretary of State, was the one most responsible for convincing the pope to side with McCarrick.[\[31\]](#)

McCarrick did not succeed O'Connor but he was appointed Archbishop of Washington. He served from 2001 to 2006, without new accusations being made against him.[\[32\]](#) But he was confronted by Susan Gibbs, the archdiocese's communications director, and CNN reporter Connie Chung, about past allegations. He denied them all, admitting only to sharing beds with seminarians (as if this wasn't a problem in itself).[\[33\]](#)

On the eve of his 75th birthday, McCarrick submitted his required resignation to Pope Benedict XVI. Nuncio Montalvo wanted McCarrick to stay on for another two years, and Benedict agreed.[\[34\]](#) But then new information about McCarrick's homosexual advances came to the pope's attention, and he quickly reversed his decision. McCarrick was told of the Holy Father's desire that he "immediately resign as Archbishop of Washington."[\[35\]](#) On May 16, 2006, Benedict accepted McCarrick's resignation.[\[36\]](#) His problems, however, were only beginning.

A month later, an attorney representing a priest who said McCarrick abused him met with Vatican officials. The priest described a fishing trip in upstate New York that took place in 1987. McCarrick invited him and two other priests to go with him. They had dinner and then went back to a local hotel to watch TV. Shortly after going to bed, the priest "rolled over and noticed the Archbishop and another priest having sex on another double bed. At that point the Archbishop noticed that I was looking and invited me to be 'next.' The other priest laughed and joked at the Archbishop's invitation for me to have sex with him."[\[37\]](#) Though shaken, he did not accept the invitation.

The priest subsequently offered more testimony about another incident. The Diocese of Metuchen reached a settlement with his claims in November 2006.[\[38\]](#)

More problems emerged when Richard Sipe, a former Benedictine

monk and psychotherapist, sent a letter to Pope Benedict about McCarrick's sexual misconduct, providing a lot of information, including reports by Catholic journalist Matt Abbott.[\[39\]](#) Though Sipe's letter was posted on the internet, it received little attention by the media. Fortunately, it wasn't ignored in Rome.

In 2006, and again in 2008, Archbishop Viganò sent a memorandum to Pope Benedict XVI about what Sipe had said, and what he himself had learned about McCarrick.[\[40\]](#) The evidence of McCarrick's misconduct was mounting, becoming ever more difficult to deny, though some still tried to defend him. Among them was Cardinal Kevin Farrell, who lived with McCarrick for 6 years in Washington. He claims he never heard of any wrongdoing, and indeed "never suspected, or ever had reason to suspect, any inappropriate conduct in Washington."[\[41\]](#) That would make him unique.

McCarrick proved to be shameless. He was asked many times not to present himself in public and to quietly retire. As stubborn as he was self-serving, he blew everyone off. He even claimed victim status, contending that the proposed restrictions amounted to "persecution."[\[42\]](#)

If there is one big mistake Benedict made, it was not laying down the law in writing.[\[43\]](#) When it comes to manipulative and self-absorbed people like McCarrick, the door must be shut firmly in their face, otherwise they will exploit any remaining opening.

This explains why McCarrick refused to abide by every request to curtail his public appearances—he saw the lack of teeth in the requests as evidence of their flatulence. He traveled all over the world under Benedict, and did so with greater ease under Pope Francis.[\[44\]](#)

When Pope Francis was elected in 2013, he said he never heard of any rumors related to McCarrick's past sexual conduct.

Similarly, he professed not to know of any restrictions on his travelling.[\[45\]](#) He said he assumed that allegations against McCarrick must have been without foundation, otherwise Pope John Paul II would have treated him differently.[\[46\]](#)

On June 23, 2013, Pope Francis agreed to meet with Archbishop Viganò; they met again on October 10. Five years later, on August 22, 2018, Viganò claimed that Pope Francis asked him about McCarrick during the June meeting. Viganò says he told him about “a dossier this thick” on McCarrick. “He corrupted generations of seminarians and priests and Pope Benedict ordered him to withdraw to a life of prayer and penance.” Viganò added that McCarrick had committed “crimes” and was a “serial predator.”[\[47\]](#) Viganò says he discussed McCarrick’s exploits again at the October meeting.

According to the Report, Pope Francis “does not recollect what Viganò said about McCarrick during these two meetings.” In fact, he says he never knew a thing about McCarrick until the Archdiocese of New York revealed allegations against McCarrick in 2017.[\[48\]](#)

On June 8, 2017, the Archdiocese of New York received a complaint about McCarrick abusing a teenage male in the 1970s. Archbishop Timothy Cardinal Dolan had established an Independent Reconciliation and Compensation Program to deal with past cases of priestly sexual abuse, and it was this mechanism that proved to be McCarrick’s last straw. This was the first time anyone had heard of McCarrick abusing a minor.[\[49\]](#)

An investigation of this matter concluded that the allegations against McCarrick were “credible and substantiated.”[\[50\]](#) Following the archdiocese’s policies, Dolan recommended that the case be made public. That was done on June 20, 2018, and on July 28, Pope Francis accepted McCarrick’s resignation from the College of Cardinals.[\[51\]](#)

This sad chapter in the history of the Catholic Church in the U.S. is now over. Most of the sexual abuse took place between the mid-1960s and the mid-1980s. Media reports, however, continue to poison the public mind, having the public believe it is still ongoing. What they are reporting, in almost every instance, are past cases of abuse. Most of the bad guys are either dead or out of ministry.

Had the New Jersey bishops acted responsibly, McCarrick would not have been able to continue with his predatory behavior. How could this happen? Lurking behind all of this is the overwhelming presence of a homosexual network of priests, both in the U.S. and in Rome. They are very good at covering for their own. Until and unless this web of deceit and perversion is owned up to—which it hasn't—lay Catholics will continue to be wary of the hierarchy.

We should not forget the heroes. Pope Benedict XVI has written with great clarity and honesty about the “filth” in the Church. Significantly, he understands the social and cultural dynamics that brought about the scandal as well as anyone. This has angered so-called progressive Catholics.

Their interest is not in telling the truth. Their interest is in diverting attention away from the homosexual origins of the scandal. They, and their allies in the media, continue to talk about the “pedophilia” scandal, when the fact is it has been a homosexual scandal all along. When we fail in the diagnosis, we fail in combating the malady.

Cardinal O'Connor, as we have seen, proved to be heroic. He should be a role model for every priest, regardless of rank. Had it not been for another New York archbishop, Cardinal Dolan, McCarrick might have gotten away with it. How many other institutions in our society, secular as well as religious—many have been plagued with sexual abuse—have ever brought charges against one of their own offenders at the top rungs of their organization? There are none.

There will be much more written on this subject, but for now at least, we have in “The McCarrick Report” a much better understanding of how the breakdown in accountability happened. What still needs to be addressed is why it broke down, and what steps can be taken to make sure it never happens again. That is something I discuss in my new book.

[\[1\]](#) Archbishop Vigano made this comment on the Nov. 12 episode of Raymond Arroyo’s ETWN show, “The World Over,” Nov. 12, 2020.

[\[2\]](#) Ibid.

[\[3\]](#) “The McCarrick Report,” p. 91.

[\[4\]](#) Ibid., p. 23.

[\[5\]](#) Ibid., p. 27.

[\[6\]](#) Ibid., pp. 70-71.

[\[7\]](#) Ibid., p. 73.

[\[8\]](#) Ibid., p. 190.

[\[9\]](#) Ibid., p. 76.

[\[10\]](#) Ibid., p. 77.

[\[11\]](#) Ibid., pp. 84-85.

[\[12\]](#) Ibid., p. 87.

[\[13\]](#) Ibid., p. 92.

[\[14\]](#) Ibid., p. 93.

[\[15\]](#) Ibid., pp. 95-99.

[\[16\]](#) Ibid., pp. 101-10

[\[17\]](#) Ibid., p. 111.

- [\[18\]](#) Ibid., p. 129.
- [\[19\]](#) Ibid., pp. 117-23.
- [\[20\]](#) Ibid., p. 130.
- [\[21\]](#) Ibid.
- [\[22\]](#) Ibid., p. 131.
- [\[23\]](#) Ibid., p. 140.
- [\[24\]](#) Ibid., pp. 134, 137.
- [\[25\]](#) Ibid., 139.
- [\[26\]](#) Ibid., p. 169.
- [\[27\]](#) Ibid., p. 170.
- [\[28\]](#) Ibid., pp. 169-70.
- [\[29\]](#) Ibid., p. 170.
- [\[30\]](#) Ibid., pp. 173-74.
- [\[31\]](#) "The World Over," EWTN, Nov. 12, 2020.
- [\[32\]](#) "The McCarrick Report," p. 211.
- [\[33\]](#) Ibid., pp. 215-219.
- [\[34\]](#) Ibid., pp. 230-31.
- [\[35\]](#) Ibid., p. 232.
- [\[36\]](#) Ibid., p. 246.
- [\[37\]](#) Ibid., p. 251.
- [\[38\]](#) Ibid., p. 260.
- [\[39\]](#) Ibid., pp. 279-81.

[\[40\]](#) Ibid., pp. 282-86.

[\[41\]](#) Ibid., p. 290.

[\[42\]](#) Ibid., p. 308.

[\[43\]](#) Ibid., p. 298.

[\[44\]](#) Ibid., pp. 370-72.

[\[45\]](#) Ibid., p. 394.

[\[46\]](#) Ibid., pp. 401-02.

[\[47\]](#) Ibid., pp. 403-04.

[\[48\]](#) Ibid., pp. 404-05.

[\[49\]](#) Ibid., p. 433.

[\[50\]](#) Ibid., p. 434.

[\[51\]](#) Ibid., p. 435.

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## DISSIDENTS ATTACK POPE JOHN PAUL II'S LEGACY

Bill Donohue comments on an editorial from the *National Catholic Reporter* slandering St. John Paul II:

Over the years, I have documented the attacks by the dissident Catholics at the *National Catholic Reporter* against the Church. Hardly a day goes by that they do not impugn at least one aspect of the Faith. However, their editorial "US Bishops, Please Suppress the Cult of St. John Paul II" sinks to an even greater low as they seek to censor this beloved saint.



The *Reporter* cites Pope John Paul II's "calamitous, callous decision-making" regarding former Cardinal McCarrick for why the legacy of this holy man must be cancelled. Particularly, the *Reporter* believes that he "willfully put at risk children and young adults in the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C., and around the world" while setting "a deplorable example for bishops in ignoring the accounts of abuse victims."

Oh, how they cherry pick their history.

While the *Reporter* is quick to note that St. John Paul II personally instructed the Vatican's Secretary of State to add McCarrick to the list of those being considered for promotion, they fail to note that it was John Paul II who initially removed McCarrick in the first place over concerns for his "moral maturity."

When claims of sexual misconduct reached the pope, following standard protocol, he asked for an investigation into the matter. While accusations of McCarrick's vile acts did arise, other bishops came to his defense and discounted these allegations.

Further, McCarrick used personal relations in the Vatican, particularly a letter written to John Paul's personal secretary, Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz, to assure the pontiff that nothing was amiss.

Even though there is sizable evidence that St. John Paul II took proactive steps (although, in hindsight, less than effective ones,) and he was misled by McCarrick, the *Reporter* argues that now the chief item to address next week during the annual U.S. Bishops' Conference should be "requesting the Vatican formally suppress John Paul's cult." These dissidents will only be happy if the Swiss Guard is sent out to remove his name and image from every church, school and other public venue.

In reading this editorial, one gets the sense that the true

villain of the “McCarrick Report” is not the predatory ex-cardinal, but rather Pope John Paul II. This allows the blame to shift away from the true perpetrator of the crimes, and in doing so, one could argue that the *Reporter* has done more to cover for McCarrick than John Paul ever did.

It is ironic as it is perverse, that the *Reporter*, which is quick to judge others for the clergy sexual abuse scandal, denies its own role in contributing to it. To be specific, its relentless attacks on the Church’s teaching on sexuality enabled sick men to justify their homosexual assaults.

While every pontiff who is mentioned in the “McCarrick Report,” in hindsight, could have done more to confront the homosexual ex-cardinal, to hold St. John Paul II particularly responsible and to banish any public devotion to him is beyond the pale. In cancelling his legacy, look for the dissident Catholics at the *Reporter* to fill the void with some charlatan more in line with their deranged preferences.

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## **CUOMO’S ANIMUS AGAINST RELIGION LAID BARE**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a lawsuit filed by the Diocese of Brooklyn:

Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio, who heads the Diocese of Brooklyn, has a lawsuit before the U.S. Supreme Court that could prove to be historic.

All reasonable persons understand the right of government to impose limited restrictions on the public during a pandemic, but only unreasonable persons maintain that such powers are

boundless. It is more than unreasonable—it is unconstitutional—to target churches and other houses of worship for special treatment.

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo acted irresponsibly when he placed greater restrictions on churches than he did on hardware stores. That is what the Brooklyn Diocese's lawsuit contends. By declaring that pet stores and brokers' offices should have greater freedom to operate than synagogues, for example, Cuomo is showing his animus against religion.

If anyone has any doubt that Cuomo exhibits a flagrant hostility to religion, let him read what the governor has said. At a press conference, he admitted that his Executive Order is "most impactful on houses of worship." That is where he crossed the line. Not only are houses of worship not considered "essential" businesses, they are intentionally relegated to a second-class status.

The lawsuit nails this point just right. It argues that Cuomo's Executive Order "expressly singles out 'houses of worship' by that name for adverse treatment relative to secular businesses, and does so in a way that is not narrowly tailored to any compelling government interest, in direct violation of the First Amendment's Free Exercise Clause."

Similarly, Cuomo put a cap on the number of people who can go to church in his so-called "red" and "orange" zones—10 and 25, respectively. As the lawsuit says, the "fixed-capacity limits imposed by Governor Cuomo on 'houses of worship'—and only 'houses of worship'—proves once again his bias. When a 7-11 can have more people in its store than a church, it tells us volumes about what is really going on.

Bishop DiMarzio has once again done the right thing. When Covid-19 is behind us, Catholics will remember bishops like him who defended their religious rights, refusing to be treated as pawns of the state.

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# THE SELF-IDENTITY SCAM

Bill Donohue comments on the “self-identity” craze plaguing our culture:

To prove his own existence, Descartes famously said, “I think, therefore I am.” To prove their own identity, we now have people saying, “I identify as X, therefore I am X.”

In my lifetime, never have I seen more intellectual dishonesty than exists today. Many live in a world of fiction. Adult men and women, especially those drugged by higher education—they are overwhelmingly white—are playing a child’s game of pretend. They pretend to be someone they manifestly are not.

Males claim to be female and females claim to be males. Not too long ago, they would be placed in an asylum. Now they are running diversity programs on Wall Street.

I recently had to fill out a form before I underwent a routine medical procedure. Most of the questions were unexceptional. But there was one page—an entire page—that asked questions about my gender. [This was factually incorrect: gender refers to socially learned roles deemed appropriate for men and women. I should have been asked about my sex.]

One of the options I was given was “non-binary,” meaning neither male nor female. Another option I had was to check off “intersex, genderqueer or gender non-conforming.”

At least the guy who pretends he is a woman may get a beer at half price on ladies night. What do these poor folks qualify for?

After answering that I am male, one of the questions asked

whether I identify as a male. Another asked what pronouns I would like the medical staff to use when speaking to me. I was given choices such as “she/her, he/him, they/them.” I have never met a “them” and would not care to meet such a creature in a restroom.

At this point, I refused to cooperate. I put a big X across the page, adding that this is all nonsense. Two healthcare persons saw this and just smiled. They knew it was nonsense too. But they did not want to lose their job by admitting that those who insist on this form are certifiably insane.

If only they were certified as insane. Then we could get them committed. Unfortunately, those responsible for this madness have graduate degrees. They are mind-control freaks. They want us to affirm their sick politics. Moreover, they have infested the vast majority of professions throughout the nation. The corporate boys and the government bureaucrats—taking their cues from screwed-up educators—are attempting to shove down our throats this preposterous self-identity scam.

It’s not just male-female identity that is a victim of subjectivism. Race is as well. Remember Rachel Dolezal? She was the white gal who said she was black. Her parents are white. She later admitted she was a liar. She is not alone.

Jessica A. Krug, who is white, changed her name to Jessica La Bombalera and claimed to be black. She is a real gem. She actually got the prestigious Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture to award her financial support so she could write a book about slavery. One day she came clean.

She admitted that she lied about “my lived experience as a white Jewish child in suburban Kansas City.” One of her other lies was to say she was from Spanish Harlem, where I used to work. Funny, I recall a lot of my students’ names, but I never met a La Bombalera. That one I would remember. Oh, I forgot to say that Jessica was recently forced to retire from George

Washington University: it was learned that she is white. She was a professor of African American history.

There are men who have sex with men and claim they are not homosexuals; many social scientists believe them. We have Catholic women, many of whom are ex-nuns, who call themselves a priest, claiming they were “ordained” by feminist ex-Catholics. Indians, who came to America from Asia, consider themselves to be Native Americans (our elites agree). And so on.

It is important not to lose our sense of humor over this scam. I loved what happened over the summer when a male cop had to conduct a body search of a female rioter on the street. Her fellow rioters screamed at him, “You can’t search her, you’re a man.” To which he replied, “No I am not—I self-identify as a woman.”

I myself have said on TV that some people think I am a big Irishman. “I am not,” I say. “I identify as a Chinese dwarf.”

Not sure just how far the elites will push these delusional ideas, but it is clear that it all stems from the postmodern assault on truth. Once truth doesn’t matter—the law allowing two men to marry—everything is possible.

This has happened before. In the last century, Jews were identified as less than human. We know what happened. In fact, Hitler is on record saying there is no such thing as truth. Now he is in good company—legions of professors in the arts and sciences agree with this assessment. Are they so drunk with ideology that they can’t connect the dots? You got it.

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# CRITICS OF McCARRICK REPORT ARE A MIXED BAG

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on critics of the Vatican-released report on former Cardinal Theodore McCarrick:

Having read the 449-page report by the Holy See on former Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, and having completed a manuscript on the subject of clergy sexual abuse (it is scheduled to be published later next year), I am in a position to assess its findings. That will be done soon.

My immediate interest is in assessing the Report's critics. They are a mixed bag. Some are reasonable, others are not.

One person mentioned in the Report has contacted me providing evidence that he was misrepresented. How many other factual errors there are in the document, I cannot say. Clearly there are some parts where the conclusions drawn are not convincing.

The priestly sexual abuse scandal has understandably angered Catholics. That, however, is no excuse for inflammatory rhetoric about the Report.

Calling it a "whitewash," which is what Michael Brendan Dougherty of *National Review* did, is simply ignorant: it is the most authoritative account to date we have on what happened. On the left, the *Daily Beast* ran a piece by Barbara Latza Nadeau calling McCarrick a "pedophile." Wrong. He was a homosexual predator.

Elizabeth Bruening, a columnist at the *New York Times*, says that "The Catholic Sex Abuse Crisis Is Far From Over." If she knew better, and actually examined the data, she would know that it is long over. The heyday of the scandal was 1965-1985.

Lots of critics think that the real problem lay in "clericalism," suggesting that more lay involvement is the answer. They should read the Report about the mother and father who saw their sons being stroked by McCarrick right in front of them, yet only one parent, the mother, found it objectionable. Lay people are just as prone to lacking street smarts as bishops, and it is fatuous to pretend otherwise.

Then we have Austen Ivereigh, Pope Francis' Defender-in-Chief in the U.K., saying that Saint John Paul II's name should be taken off high schools because he promoted McCarrick.\*

It would be a mistake to dismiss all critics of the McCarrick Report. Just be careful not to swallow the moonshine of the belligerent ones, and be especially on guard about those who harbor an agenda.

*\*Ivereigh contacted us and says that he never said what was attributed to him about Saint John Paul II. We picked it up from a column by Rod Dreher. Dreher, however, misidentified the source of this comment. It was not Ivereigh who said this—it was Michael Sean Winters. Thus, we are correcting the record. Shame on Winters.*