

DEMOCRATS SEE BIDEN AND HARRIS AS RELIGIOUS

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

A survey by Pew Research Center on the public's perception of how religious the president and vice president tells us a great deal about the way Republicans and Democrats respond to this issue. Virtually every poll has shown that Republicans score higher on measures of religiosity (beliefs and practices) than Democrats, and this indicator proves revealing when analyzing the Pew survey.

Among all adults, 27% see President Joe Biden as being "very religious." The difference is striking between Republicans and Democrats: only 7% of the former view Biden this way as compared to 45% of Democrats. If we combine "somewhat religious" with "very religious," only 36% of Republicans see the president as religious as compared to 88% of Democrats.

Most Americans, 65%, are not sure what Vice President Kamala Harris' religion is; there is no difference between Republicans and Democrats on this score, each weighing in at 64%. When asked about her overall religiosity score—combining "very religious" with "somewhat religious"—less than half (46%) of Republicans see her as religious as compared to seven in ten Democrats (69%).

Why do 9 in 10 Democrats see Biden as religious when only a little more than a third of Republicans do? Why do most Democrats see Harris as religious, even though they don't know what her religious affiliation is?

The findings suggest the more secular a person is, the more likely he is to see public figures as religious. Conversely, the more religious a person is, the more exacting he is in

labeling public figures religious. In other words, our perceptions about how religious a public figure is, are guided by our own religiosity.

Why do these data matter? We have seen from other studies that secularists are increasingly likely to see religion in a negative light. From this survey, we know it doesn't take much for them to judge someone as religious.

Together, the two perceptions are problematic. Even a whiff of religiosity is enough to make secularists wary. This explains why the more militant among them declare that those who say the Pledge of Allegiance are "Christian Nationalists."

Perception is not necessarily reality, but because it functions that way, the faithful are the ones who should be wary of secularists, not vice versa.

SEX TRANSITIONING FOR MINORS IS CHILD ABUSE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on children who want to change their sex:

It is all the rage among elites in many quarters to sanction sex transitioning for minors. It is time to call this madness for what it is—child abuse. The damage that is being done is incalculable. Consider what this process involves.

Puberty blockers are used to facilitate the sex transition process. These medications stop the normal estrogen or testosterone progression in girls and boys during puberty, affecting vocal chord changes, the development of breast

tissue, brain development and the like. So little is known about the long-term effects of puberty blockers that some doctors say we are dealing with a “blank slate.”

Children who want to continue physically transitioning by taking hormones create a real challenge for doctors, never mind the child. The physical changes are irreversible. Minors who transition are at risk later in life for heart disease, diabetes and blood clots. Taking the hormones of the opposite sex can also reduce fertility. Are adolescents really capable of making these permanent life-altering decisions?

The mental problems associated with sex reassignment are multiple, and they are so serious as to make one wonder what kind of health professional would countenance it. Adults who undergo the transitioning are at risk not only for depression, but suicide. It will not do to say that these maladies are a function of the lack of support these people receive. If that were the case, why do transgender people suffer from high rates of suicide in places like Sweden where they are totally accepted?

If adults are at risk mentally following sex reassignment, we can only guess what minors are likely to be faced with down the line. Do those who profit from their “services” even care?

Dr. Rachel Levine is a man who now identifies as a woman. He was chosen by President Biden to be his new assistant health secretary. Given his status, both physical and professional, it is important to know what his position on sex transitioning is. *[Note: Many insist that a biological man who transitions to a woman should be called “she” or “her,” and that the correct term is gender transitioning, not sex transitioning. But they don’t count. Truth counts.]*

When Roger Severino was director of the Office of Civil Rights at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in the Trump administration, he asked Levine a question that even an

elementary student could answer. "What does it mean to be male or female?" The good doctor couldn't answer.

At the Senate hearing for Levine, Sen. Rand Paul asked him a pointed question. "Dr. Levine, do you believe that minors are capable of making a life-long changing decision as changing one's sex?" Levine dodged the question saying, "Transgender medicine is a very complex and nuanced field."

Paul followed up with another question. "Do you support the government intervening to override the parent's consent to give a child puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones and/or amputation surgery for breasts and genitalia?" Levine dodged the question again saying, "Senator, transgender medicine is a very complex and nuanced field."

Levine is not alone in refusing to answer such basic questions. At the Senate Finance Committee hearing on Xavier Becerra, Biden's nominee to head HHS (he has since been confirmed), Sen. James Lankford said, "The vast majority of Americans do not believe that a nine-year-old child can consent to puberty blockers or that a thirteen-year-old girl can consent to a double mastectomy." He then asked Becerra what his position was on such matters. The best Becerra could promise is that he would follow the law.

Is President Biden aware that these men think it is okay for minors to switch their sex? Absolutely. He himself says that little kids should be afforded the chance.

Last October, during a town hall conversation, Biden was asked by a mother of a transgender child what he would do to help people like her and her child. "The idea that an 8-year-old child, a 10-year-old child decides, you know, 'I want to be transgender, that's what I think I'd like to be, it'd make my life a lot easier'—there should be no discrimination."

Does Biden believe that parental consent should be required before a minor can elect to sex reassignment? We do not know,

but we do know that parental consent is already being ignored in some places, leading to lawsuits.

Most children who seek to transition, if given time, will change their minds. What they are experiencing is not normal.

According to Dr. Paul McHugh and Dr. Lawrence S. Mayer, two prominent psychiatrists who are experts in this field, the idea that “a person might be ‘a man trapped in a woman’s body’ or ‘a woman trapped in a man’s body’—is not supported by scientific evidence.” We need to help young people who suffer from this disorder to get better, not get deeper into trouble.

Once the boys and girls are subjected to the treatments, it is too late. Unfortunately, Biden is stacking his administration with those who are ratifying his twisted vision of the sexes.

It’s time we put an end to this child abuse.

MASS KILLERS HAVE MUCH IN COMMON

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the recent mass killings:

The media would have us believe that Christianity inspired the Atlanta killer, Robert Aaron Long, to go on his rampage. We are also told that Islam had nothing to do with inspiring the Boulder killer, Ahmed Al Aliwi Alissa, to go on his rampage. They are right about the latter but wrong about the former: In both cases, religion had nothing to do with their behavior.

Long and Alissa are alike in one sense: both have serious psychosocial issues and neither has any friends. That should

be the focus of our concern, not their religion.

The professoriate was quick to blame Long's Christianity for his killing spree. Susan Shaw, professor of women, gender, and sexuality studies at Oregon State University, was first out of the starting block. She traced his behavior to the "purity culture" of his Baptist upbringing. Many others followed suit. Indeed, blaming the "purity culture" became a mantra.

CNN's Don Lemon cited the "purity culture," as did feminist author Jessica Valenti. Trinity religion professor Mark Silk said it was the "evangelical purity culture" that drove Long. So did Katelyn Beaty, former managing editor of Christianity Today. Predictably, lgbtnation, a popular gay website, came to the same conclusion. Ashlie D. Steven, a food specialist at Salon, agreed. None of these people are social scientists.

Perhaps the most creative critic of the Atlanta killer is Chris Hedges, a former reporter for the New York Times. He blamed the killings on the "rampant misogyny, hyper-masculinity and racism that lie at the center of the belief system of the Christian right, as well as define the core beliefs of American imperialism." In other words, Long was not responsible for the murders—Christianity and American foreign policy were.

If Christianity is responsible for the Atlanta killer's behavior, why is he such an anomaly? After all, most Americans are Christians, yet there is virtually no evidence that Christianity—which forbids murder—plays a role in mass shootings, or for that matter in shootings of any kind. There was, however, something seriously wrong with the killer.

As we have seen many times, most mass shooters are loners, men who have no friends. By itself, this condition does not cause someone to act violently—there must be other factors—but it almost always plays a role.

Nico Straughan went to high school with Long. He noticed that

the killer was a "very quiet" individual. Another classmate, Jonathan Desire, said Long was "quiet, calm, and collected." A female student who went to school with Long described him as "quiet and really to himself." Another fellow student concurred, saying, "he didn't have a ton of friends and really kept to himself."

Yes, young people who don't have friends tend to be quiet and keep to themselves. Importantly, Long was recently kicked out of his house by his family, leaving him even more alone. He was thrown out because of his internet pornography habit. As it turns out, Long was not lying when he said he was a porn addict. Indeed, he spent time in halfway houses trying to find a cure.

The Cherokee County Sheriff's Office Capt. Jay Baker attributed Long's killing spree to his desire to rid himself of his porn addiction. He said it was "a temptation for him that he wanted to eliminate." Similarly, Tyler Bayless, who roomed with Long for a few months, said the killer would become "very emotionally distraught that he frequented these places."

Marrripedia is a social science encyclopedia that deals with many social and cultural issues. Regarding sexual addiction it says, "Pornography and 'cybersex' are highly addictive and can lead to sexually compulsive behaviors." Moreover, porn addicts are "23 times more likely than those without a problem to state that discovering online sexual material was the worst thing that had ever happened in their life."

This describes Long to a tee. He sought desperately to free himself of his porn addiction, choosing to finish the job by finishing the massage parlor women. Had he been an atheist, he would have acted the same way. It was his inability to form meaningful bonds with others, and his addiction to pornography, that is the root of his problem, not Christianity.

In the case of Alissa, the Boulder mass killer, he also suffered from severe psychosocial problems, though of a different sort from what bedeviled Long.

Alissa was paranoid and had a serious inability to control his impulses. His brother said that Alissa would describe “being chased, someone is behind him, someone is looking for him.” He also had rage issues: he had a police record for bursts of anger, assaulting students and threatening to kill members of the wrestling team.

Like Long, he had no friends. His brother labeled him “very anti-social.” A high school classmate noted that Alissa “didn’t really have a lot of friends.”

What links the Atlanta killer and the Boulder killer are a host of serious personal disorders and a serious absence of bonds. They are to blame for their actions, not outside forces. Christian bashing may make the bigots feel good, but it is of no explanatory value in understanding this issue.

LENO APOLOGIZES TO ASIANS BUT NOT CATHOLICS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on Jay Leno’s apology to Asians:

Longtime NBC “Tonight Show” comedian Jay Leno has come out of retirement to apologize to Asian Americans for the bigoted jokes he told about them while hosting the late-night show. Will Catholics be next to receive an apology? Not a chance. The culture is too anti-Catholic to induce Leno to do so.

From 1997 to 2015, I wrote well over a dozen news releases taking Leno to task for insulting Catholics; I only addressed his most offensive remarks. For example, our files show that in one time period alone, from April 1996 to January 2012, we recorded 37 jokes Leno told about Catholics, some of which were inoffensive and some of which were not (only the latter merited a news release). In addition, I wrote many letters to his executive producer, Debbie Vickers, about his comments.

"Whenever we received a complaint," Leno recently said, "there would be two sides to the discussion: Either 'We need to deal with this' or 'Screw 'em if they can't take a joke.'" Regarding his anti-Asian jokes, he now recalls, "Too many times I sided with the latter even when in my heart I knew it was wrong."

In the late 1990s, Leno concluded he needed "to deal with" a complaint I lodged. He called me in February 1997 to discuss my concerns; I posted a news release following our discussion. I explained to Leno "why jokes about the Eucharist are not synonymous with jokes about Catholic school traditions." He said he understood the distinction. He added that he tells 11,000 jokes a year and may sometimes go over the line. Fair enough. The conversation ended amicably.

Unfortunately, a few years later Leno started in again. Most of his favorite "jokes" portrayed all priests as molesters. Evidently, he took the "Screw 'em if they can't take a joke" approach; he never reached out to me again.

The single biggest problem the Catholic League has had with comedians like Leno is their penchant for making sweeping generalizations. Of course there have been miscreant priests. But to indict tens of thousands of innocent priests because some are rogues is indefensible.

If it is wrong to negatively generalize from the individual to the collective about other demographic groups, why is it

acceptable to condemn all Catholic priests for the offenses of a few? And it's not just Leno who has dumped on priests during his monologue. Many comedians have, and they have done so for years. Yet they are careful not to offend others, and if they do, they apologize.

All we have ever sought at the Catholic League is parity. We don't ask for preferential treatment vis-a-vis other groups. We simply want a level playing field. Regrettably, that remains an elusive goal.

Contact Leno's agent, Steve Levine: slevine@icmtalent.com

CIGNA'S TOP OFFICERS SHOULD RESIGN

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a news story broken by the Washington Examiner on the employment policies at Cigna, a leading health insurance company:

The top officials at Cigna should resign immediately. They have willfully violated their own employment tenets and have adopted patently bigoted employment policies.

Cigna has a "Societal Norms" checklist that asks employees to "Check Your Privilege." Among the choices are "Christian," "White," and "Cis-Male" (meaning biological males). This would suggest that Oprah is not a member of the "privileged class," even though she is rich enough to buy Guatemala.

Telling Christians they are the beneficiaries of "religious privilege," and that they need to admit this, is outrageously false and demeaning. Are those Hispanic Christians who work in

housekeeping at Cigna “privileged”? What about the African American Christians who work in security? And why would atheist executives who are filthy rich not be considered “privileged”?

White males are demonized the most. Indeed, when making hiring decisions, employees at Cigna are asked to abandon their much-vaunted virtue of inclusivity: No white males need apply. According to the Washington Examiner, white males who apply for a job are sidelined, blocked from getting the post. This is obviously racist and sexist, and worthy of a massive lawsuit.

To make matters worse, Cigna lies about its discriminatory policies. One of its diversity officials recently said, “Our inclusive culture at Cigna means that we’re working hard to ensure everyone feels respected, welcome, and like they belong.” Really? Tell that to the white male Christians who are denied jobs because of their status. And how welcoming do Cigna staffers with this profile feel about working for a company that sees them as the enemy?

Senator Marco Rubio calls Cigna’s employment policy “grotesque and un-American.” He’s right. It is morally and legally indefensible.

Even worse is Cigna’s hypocrisy. “Cigna takes great pride in our diverse and talented workforce,” says its 2019 statement on “Diversity and Inclusion.” What they do not admit is how they blatantly discriminate against women and minorities.

Women comprise 77% of the workforce yet they hold only 31% of the Executive/Senior Officials and Manager jobs. Ethnic minorities comprise 34% of the workforce yet hold only 10% of these top jobs. So much for diversity and inclusion. Looks like it’s great to have women and minorities working at Cigna, as long as they know their place.

To top things off, of the 13 members of Cigna’s board of

directors, 77% are white, 15% are black and 8% are Asian; there are no Hispanics. Males make up 77% of these positions; women are 23% of the board's membership.

Cigna's executive and management team also has 13 members. Whites are 85% of the total, while blacks make up 15%; there are no Asians or Hispanics. And just as the case with the board, 77% of these jobs are held by men and 23% by women.

Given the enormous gap between what Cigna preaches about how welcoming and inclusive it is, and what its workplace composition is—to say nothing of its highest paying jobs—fairness dictates that those on the board of directors and its executive and management team resign immediately. They need to set an example. They also need to junk their racist, sexist, and anti-Christian policies.

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SEXUAL ABUSE BILL DIES IN PENNSYLVANIA

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a sexual abuse bill that will not see the light of day:

The sexual abuse of minors has long been the subject of a proposal that would provide a suspension of the statute of limitations in Pennsylvania, allowing alleged victims to pursue their claims in court. To succeed, the House and Senate had to amend the state constitution, which they did in 2019; Gov. Tom Wolf signed the bill.

However, it was soon learned that the Wolf administration failed to initiate a public review process, thus stopping the proposal from being put on the ballot. To rectify this error, an emergency constitutional amendment was proposed, but it was killed on March 22 by state senate Republicans.

The real story here, at least for the Catholic League, is the unmasking of Rep. Mark Rozzi, the most vociferous lawmaker in favor of the bill.

The Catholic League has fought every proposed state law on this subject, wherever it has been introduced, that gives a free pass to public institutions. We know what the game is—"let's get the Catholic Church."

Unlike the public schools, which still have a serious problem with the sexual abuse of minors, the Church has long since cleaned up its act; current news stories are almost always about old cases of abuse. But that means nothing to people like Rozzi, a lawmaker beholden to the teachers' unions.

Senate Judiciary Committee Chairwoman Lisa Baker called Rozzi's bluff. She offered an amendment to the bill that would apply equally to public institutions, eliminating the shield provided by the doctrine of sovereign immunity. Her amendment would also have eliminated the limit on the amount of money victims could sue for (claims against public sector employees are capped at \$500,000). In other words, the public schools would be treated the same way as the Catholic Church.

Predictably, Rozzi went ballistic. His only interest was payback: he claims he was abused by a priest when he was a minor. While we understand his anger, this hardly justifies his enthusiasm for a law that flagrantly discriminates against the Catholic Church.

If a lawmaker who was abused years earlier by a public school teacher were to introduce a bill that only targeted the public sector, giving Catholic schools a pass, we know what the

teachers' unions would say.

In 2017, Rozzi said he heard from “grown men and women whose lives had been destroyed by ministers of every denomination, scout leaders, *public* and private school teachers, coaches, missionaries, and worst of all, family members (my *italic*).” Yet he did nothing to help those abused in the public schools.

No institution, public or private, should ever be exempt from these laws. It is high time that every state repealed its strictures on sovereign immunity.

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RULING CLASS IS RACE OBSESSED

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the ruling class' obsession with race:

We are getting close to the point where if a white person says he prefers vanilla ice cream to chocolate, he risks being labeled a racist. The ruling class, in particular, is obsessed with this issue, seeing racism lurking behind every decision that adversely affects people of color.

We need to grow up. The first thing we need to do is get rid of the term “people of color.” It is meaningless. Asians have little in common with African Americans or Hispanics. Indeed, Asians have little in common with each other: The Chinese do not share a common history or culture with the Japanese, never mind with the Nigerians or Argentineans. The same is true of Hispanics—they vary considerably by their country of origin.

If the goal is to find racism, it is a sure bet it will be found. So when a self-confessed sex addict killed six Asian

women in a massage parlor in Atlanta, the account he offered was immediately dismissed. He did not kill because he is a wacko, the ruling class said, but because he hates Asians. But if the massage parlor women had been Irish, what would they have said about that?

On March 20, a 66-year-old Asian man was punched in the face in Manhattan. Without missing a beat, the media said this was one more example of anti-Asian sentiment. But was it? The offender was a homeless man who walked the streets with a blanket. The assault happened in Chinatown, so the ruling class smelled racism. However, had it happened a few blocks away in the Bowery, no one would have suspected racism.

Last year, Catholic churches were burned and Catholic statues were destroyed—all by left-wing mobs—yet the ruling class never condemned these acts for being anti-Catholic. They are only interested in assaults on “people of color.” But even there, their select interest in anti-Asian crime is more politically motivated than it is a sincere expression of concern. Consider how it is being addressed.

White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki blamed President Trump for the recent attacks on Asians. Katelyn Beaty, former managing editor of Christianity Today, blamed Christianity: the shooter came from a “purity culture.” Similarly, Freedom From Religion Foundation noted that since the shooter was a Christian, the role his religion played must be considered. As usual, CNN fingered white supremacy as the major cause.

As it turns out, blacks, not white supremacists or white Christians, are disproportionately responsible for violence against Asians. But even here we need to be careful about putting too much stock in race-based theories. After all, most of the crime committed against blacks is done by blacks.

No doubt there are many reasons why Asians are being targeted these days. There is one factor, however, that doesn't command

the attention of the ruling class: the extent to which they themselves are responsible.

Everyone knows that Asians, on the whole, excel in school. They succeed so much that they have angered the white ruling class. Indeed, the elites resent the fact that African Americans and Hispanics don't do as well in school, and it is this attitude that accounts for racial quotas in prestigious schools. More important, the ruling class has nurtured a culture of resentment, one that portrays Asians as unfairly getting ahead.

Last year, Asians in California worked hard to defeat Proposition 16, an initiative to reinstate affirmative action. Had it passed, it would have granted preferential treatment based on race, benefiting blacks and Hispanics, but at the expense of Asians. White liberals outspent their Asian opponents by a ratio of more than 20-1, yet they still lost.

The president of the Asian American Coalition for Education, Yukong Zhao, sent a message to white liberals. "Asian Americans will fight fiercely and defeat your racist policies wherever and whenever tried."

This was an accurate observation—the quotas are racist. It does not matter that Harvard's anti-Asian admissions policy was upheld by the courts. Of course, Harvard has a right to say that it can consider such personality traits as courage and leadership when making determinations for admission. But every honest person knows this is a ruse: such attributes have nothing to do with academic performance; they were chosen to limit Asian attendance.

What's happening at Harvard is happening at Yale, Princeton, Columbia, Cornell, Brown, the University of California and elsewhere. It's also happening in elite public high schools throughout the nation. In New York City, Mayor Bill de Blasio has done everything he can to keep Asians from taking up too

many seats in the city's select public high schools. Perversely, he also works against blacks by trying to destroy charter schools.

The ruling class, which is dominated by white liberals, says their anti-Asian policies have nothing to do with fomenting a culture of resentment against Asians. They would rather blame Christians and white supremacists. But to anyone who has seriously studied this issue, their rationale not only lacks evidence, it lacks common sense as well.

LEFT-WING CATHOLICS RIP THE POPE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the way some Catholics are reacting to the Vatican statement on gay unions:

Freedom From Religion Foundation, an anti-Catholic organization, is not happy with the recent Vatican statement against gay unions and gay marriage. Interestingly, it blames left-wing Catholics, saying that it was the "continuing support of the Church by more progressive Catholics that makes possible these pernicious and demeaning pronouncements."

Looks like the atheists at the Catholic-bashing entity spoke too soon. Today, a day after it posted its remarks, left-wing Catholics at the National Catholic Reporter attacked Pope Francis. The March 19 editorial makes it clear that they have finally had it with the pope, branding him a "hypocrite."

This has been a long time coming. For several years, these renegade Catholics have hyped every welcoming move by Pope

Francis to homosexuals, hoping to push him to recognize gay unions and same-sex marriage. However, the decree issued by the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on this subject, done with the approval of the Holy Father, slammed the door shut when it reaffirmed the Church's teachings on sexuality.

The editors at the Reporter said that the Vatican decree gave them "whiplash." Why were they stunned? They cited several instances of the pope uttering kind words about homosexuals, suggesting they did not know the difference between condemning a person's sexual orientation, which is morally wrong, and condemning illicit sexual behavior, which is morally right.

However, it would not be accurate to say that they really don't know the difference. They do. They begrudgingly admitted that the pope's outreach "did not change the church's teaching on human sexuality." So why the astonishment about the Vatican's statement rejecting homosexual unions and marriage?

Catholic Church dissidents never like to throw in the towel. They dream of another day when their voice will be heard. The editorial says it "will take many years" for them to get their way. Don't bet on it.

The fact is the Vatican decree was unequivocal, rendering all future changes impossible. Don't take the Catholic League's interpretation, read what the Vatican said. It explicitly said that "the Church does not have, and cannot have, the power to bless unions of persons of the same sex." There is no wiggle room in that pronouncement.

It's over. Left-wing Catholics have lost on gay sex—which is their favorite issue—now and forever.

Contact Heidi Schlumpf, executive editor at the Reporter:
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NOAH TARGETS BLACK WOMEN AND PRIESTS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on remarks by Trevor Noah that are disturbing:

On March 14, Grammy Awards host Trevor Noah was ecstatic over Cardi B's vulgar performance of a modified version of her song, "WAP." The obscene lyrics, sung by a black woman, contribute mightily to racism and sexism. Indeed, they are so filthy that they would win first prize for the most misogynistic song ever written.

Noah likes it that way. Indeed, he flexed his sexist muscles again when he said her rendition reminded him of "a dream I've had to be in bed with Cardi B." That says a lot about who he really is. Black commentator Candace Owens ripped his dream girl for "celebrating perversity in America," a condition inspired by people like Noah.

Fortunately, fewer people watched the Grammy Awards this year than ever before. The ratings were down 53% compared to last year.

Noah's bigotry was also on display when he smeared priests on the March 16 episode of "The Daily Show." Last year, after I filed a serious complaint about Noah to ViacomCBS, the parent company of Comedy Central, he cooled his jets. But now he is at it again, mocking Baptism and depicting all priests as sexual abusers.

It's time we stopped pretending that white supremacists are the problem. The real problem lies elsewhere, namely with Hollywood bigots like Noah: He is responsible for promoting

negative stereotypes about black women and Catholic priests. It's time he was condemned for doing so.

Contact Noah's publicist, Jill Fritz: jfritz@jillfritzopr.com

NYC MUST OKAY CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on Catholic High Schools in New York City seeking to resume athletic competition:

The Superintendents of Schools for the Diocese of Brooklyn and the Archdiocese of New York have asked the Commissioner of Health and Mental Hygiene for New York City, Dr. Dave Chokshi, to give the green light to Catholic High School athletic competition. That was last week, and still no answer.

New York City has published a timetable for the resumption of athletics for the public schools, but has not said a word about a similar schedule for Catholic schools. Unlike the public schools, which have been closed during the pandemic, Catholic schools have been open. Importantly, Catholic student-athletes, unlike their public school counterparts, have maintained a vigorous conditioning and training program, and are therefore ready to resume competitively.

The Catholic Superintendents of Schools have asked that Catholic schools not be grouped with the public schools when setting guidelines. To mandate that Catholic schools "conform to standards and timeframes issued by the Department of Education for [public school] teams is both without rational

basis and discriminatory against Catholic school students.” No one can logically argue with that position.

It is expected that the public schools will resume competitive play on April 1. Not to deliver the guidelines to the Catholic schools—when explicit requests have been made—is unconscionable. Time is of the essence.

Dr. Chokshi needs to accede to the reasonable request made by the Catholic schools, and he needs to do so without further delay. If he does not, Catholics will assume that Mayor Bill de Blasio has given his blessings to this stall tactic. It is time that Catholic school student athletes were treated fairly, and with dispatch.

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