

NEWS OF CATHOLIC MASSACRE IN NIGERIA IS TAINTED

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on media coverage of the Catholic massacre in Nigeria:

Father Andrew Abayomi was finishing his celebration of Mass at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Owo, Ondo state (Nigeria) on Pentecost Sunday when terrorists shot the congregation and threw explosives at the church building, killing dozens of people. This was only the latest in a series of killings carried out by radical Islamists against Christians in Nigeria, though the media are reluctant to discuss the identity of the terrorists.

No one was better at describing what happened than Nina Shea, whose expertise is monitoring religious liberty worldwide at the Hudson Institute. "The massacre in a church while filled with Sunday worshippers is an atrocity that we've repeatedly seen in northern Nigeria over the years. Those were the work of Islamist extremists." Mostly Muslims live in the north of Nigeria; the south is populated by Christians.

Among the media who did an accurate job reporting on the mass shooting was Christianity Today, Quartz Africa and Reuters. They made it clear that Muslim radicals were to blame.

The New York Times and the Associated Press made a passing reference to the role of Muslims (abcnews.com and the Washington Post picked up the AP story). Many others were worse.

The National Catholic Register branded what happened a "massacre," and PBS spoke about "gunmen"; neither identified who they were. Catholic News Agency also ran a story on the "gunmen," but also issued a report citing Shea.

Catholic News Service and the BBC were particularly egregious in covering up the role of Muslim extremists. They both referenced the Reuters story, which made it clear that Muslims were persecuting Christians, but neither made any mention of that fact, preferring to talk about “gunmen.”

CNN said the attacks against Christians had been orchestrated by “Boko Haram terrorists,” but did not identify them as Islamists. The Guardian wrote about “ethnic Fulani terrorists,” not mentioning that they are Jihadists.

Aljazeera misled the public by writing about violence committed by farmers and “nomadic herders.” Guess who the “nomadic herders” are? Muslims. The Muslim Fulani herdsmen are the same Jihadists named by Genocide Watch who were responsible for 100% of the 7,400 Christians killed between 2015 and 2020.

Regarding the killings, Nina Shea puts much of the blame on the Biden administration. “Kidnappers and murders of priests and pastors, enslavement of Christian girls, and mob lynching’s for alleged blasphemy against Islam” have gotten worse since Biden removed Nigeria from the United States’ “Country of Particular Concern” (CPC) list of countries where egregious religious persecution is taking place.

Shea took aim at Secretary of State Antony Blinken, saying he “needs to address this crisis, stop making excuses for it based on a climate change narrative and designate Nigeria as a CPC. Anything less is unconscionable.”

The media cover-up of the Muslims atrocities, coupled with the passivity of the Biden administration, is why this horror show continues.

AMICUS BRIEF FILED IN FIRST AMENDMENT CASE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on an amicus brief commissioned by the Catholic League:

The clash between gay rights and the First Amendment rights of freedom of speech and freedom of religion has been occurring at record speed over the past decade. The latest iteration involves a Colorado-based web designer, Lorie Smith, who is making a preemptive strike against the Colorado Anti-Discrimination Act (CADA): it would require her to promote messages that run afoul of her religious convictions.

The Catholic League, represented by the Pittsburgh law firm of Gallagher Giancola, has filed an amicus brief supporting Smith in her quest to maintain her First Amendment rights.

This case resembles the Masterpiece Cakeshop case that the Supreme Court ruled on in 2018. In that case, Jack Phillips refused to make a wedding cake for two men, citing his religious objections to same-sex marriage. He did not deny gays from purchasing his baked goods; he simply would not agree to personally inscribe a wedding message for the two homosexuals.

Phillips won in the Supreme Court, but the ruling was narrowly drawn. He won because the high court said that the Colorado Civil Rights Commission, which sat in judgment of this case, made bigoted anti-Christian comments about him, thus compromising their decision. The big issue remains: Can a person who has religious reasons for not being complicit in affirming gay marriage prevail in the courts?

Smith, like Phillips, has never refused to service homosexual individuals. She draws the line, however, when she is forced to express a message that runs counter to her Christian

beliefs. She filed a lawsuit to stop the state from forcing her to provide web services celebrating gay weddings, citing her First Amendment rights of free speech and religious liberty.

“When religious liberty concerns are coupled with free expression,” our friend-of-the court brief says, “the Constitution demands the most exacting scrutiny. That is because the First Amendment, as understood from the Founding, provides special protection for the religious, their right to speak freely, and their right to refrain from speaking.”

Secular critics who side with the gay lobby argue that there is a difference between religious beliefs and religious conduct. Nonsense. Beliefs and speech mean little if they are restricted from being acted upon in a legitimate fashion.

“By including a full and robust ‘free exercise of religion’ within the First Amendment,” our lawyers contend, “the Founders understood that they were protecting not only the right for the religious to believe what their faith taught, but to put those beliefs into action. To conclude otherwise would be to ‘trivialize the idea of religion by separating thought from life, faith from works.’”

Freedom of speech and freedom of religion are not absolutes, but infringements upon them must clear a high bar. They must be presumptively honored: challenges to them carry a very heavy burden.

We look forward to oral arguments in the fall and a decision around this time next year.

5% OF VOTERS SUPPORT NO LIMITS ON ABORTION

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on surveys on abortion that appear to contradict each other:

A Wall Street Journal/NORC (WSJ) survey found that 68% of Americans believe that *Roe v. Wade*, which legalized abortion, should not be overturned. Yet a Rasmussen survey of American voters found that only 5% believe abortion should be legal in all cases, with no restrictions whatsoever. How to explain the apparent contradiction?

The Rasmussen survey was limited to registered voters; the WSJ poll was not. But that alone would hardly account for what appears to be a huge difference. There is something else going on that explains the differing outcomes.

Recent surveys by the Pew Research Center and Gallup come to the same conclusion as the WSJ poll on the issue of public support for *Roe*: they all conclude that most Americans, while supporting restrictions, do not want *Roe* overturned. Their singular failure is in assuming that most Americans know what *Roe* allows: as interpreted by the courts, it allows for abortion-on-demand. That would surely come as a surprise to most.

Virtually every survey that asks about restrictions, including those by WSJ, Pew and Gallup, finds that the vast majority of Americans want them. This clearly put them at odds with what *Roe* permits, thus undercutting the narrative that most Americans do not want *Roe* overturned.

Similarly, surveys that do not inform respondents that overturning *Roe* would not ban all abortions are dishonest. This matters gravely because the conventional wisdom assumes that overturning *Roe* would do exactly that. In fact, if *Roe*

were overturned, each state's legislature would decide what the terms should be.

The value of the Rasmussen survey is that it is not conditioned on the perspective of respondents regarding the provisions of *Roe*. "In aggregate, when asked about specific restrictions, such as notifying the father, notifying the parents of a teenager, and waiting periods," 5% say that "No restrictions should be placed on abortion."

The findings of the Rasmussen survey should prompt other survey houses to reconsider the wording of their questions. Questions that presume an accurate understanding of the issue are bound to provide an inaccurate picture, which further feeds misperceptions.

Survey research can be a great way of judging the pulse of the nation.

This assumes, however, that it is done in an unbiased manner.

RULING CLASS EMBRACES GAY PRIDE MANIA

Catholic League president Bill Donohue addresses gay pride month:

Most Americans don't care whether someone is a heterosexual or a homosexual, but they do care when they are told they must affirm his status. Tolerance is one thing—to tolerate is to "put up with"—and that is what everyone is entitled to. But no one is entitled to require that others ratify their status, and this is particularly true when status affirmation becomes part of a larger agenda.

The ruling class—the elites in government, law, business, education, the media, the arts and the foundations—is consumed with celebrating gay pride in the month of June.

President Biden has issued “A Proclamation on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, And Intersex Pride Month, 2022.” He says that “this month, we celebrate generations of LGBTQI+ people who have fought to make the possibilities of our Nation real for every American.”

Biden’s federal agencies are posting images of the “Progress Pride Flag,” giving special attention to men and women who falsely claim that they are of the other sex. The Air Force and Marines are also “recognizing and honoring the contributions of our LGBTQ service members.”

Corporations are funding gay pride events in and out of the workplace. Colleges and universities, including Catholic ones that previously had an orthodox reputation, have embraced this agenda. The media are second to none heralding gay pride events.

Unlike racial and ethnic groups which celebrate their contributions to America, the ruling class is raising the flag for those who are celebrating their sexual behavior, not their ascribed status. Conduct, unlike racial and ethnic identities, is normative, meaning that it is subject to moral review. It is therefore open to commendation or condemnation.

No one should be required to affirm someone else’s sexual practices, and despite what the ruling class says, that is one of the reasons for holding gay pride events. The source of gay “pride” is what the actors do in bed and with whom, thus making them qualitatively different from racial and ethnic celebratory events. Fixated on their body, not their heritage, makes gays radically different from all other demographic groups. It is a function of their narcissistic tendencies.

Those who think this is being unfair should read what a

prominent gay activist and author, Brandan Robertson, has to say about gay pride parades. "So, yes, people of all shapes, sizes, religions, ethnicities, races, and cultures will be marching through the streets shirtless, and perhaps pantless (hello speedos!) but this has a lot less to do with LGBT+ being hyper-sexual or promiscuous—instead, it's a radical display of liberation and safety, a time to let our bodies and lives be seen as the beautiful displays of creativity and majesty that they are—something, again, that straight people get to see and do every single day."

There is not a single racial or ethnic celebration that can be described this way. It is gays who make their body, and their sexual practices, the primary source of their identification, not others.

The other reason we have these events is to normalize what is intrinsically abnormal, i.e., the notion that the sexes are interchangeable. They manifestly are not. There are but two sexes—man and woman—and the gender roles that are attached to them are universally recognized. They are the same everywhere, historically and worldwide, and that is because they are a reflection of human nature, which is an immutable condition.

In a time when the nation is already divided along many social and cultural lines, we don't need more celebrations of how different we are. The emphasis should be on how much we have in common with our fellow man, while at the same time respecting diversity.

The ruling class, however, is busy seeking to divide us, carving us up into endless segments of society; this began with the multicultural agenda in the schools in the 1980s. Indeed, our elites have become the primary source of intolerance in this country. Resistance to them is long overdue.

CATHOLICS NEARLY ALONE IN OPPOSING ROE v. WADE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on opposition to the decision that legalized abortion:

In 1973, when the Supreme Court legalized abortion in its *Roe v. Wade* decision, Catholics were nearly alone in their opposition to it. There were some elements in the Lutheran Church, and in the Orthodox Jewish community, who opposed it, but most Protestants and Jews supported the ruling. As a major religious group, Catholics were the only ones to speak out against it.

The 1970s saw a wholesale reversal among evangelical Protestants. Two decades ago, Richard Land, who at that time was the president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, explained what happened. "Nowhere has the shift on the pro-life issue been more dramatic than among Southern Baptists."

Regarding abortion, Land said that "many [Southern Baptists] perceived it as a Catholic issue. While I was in the seminary from 1969 to 1972 in New Orleans, there was no pro-life consensus among the student body or faculty." What changed them? He said that "the subsequent horror of 1.5 million abortions a year caused Southern Baptists who took biblical authority seriously to begin to re-examine what the Bible had to say about God's involvement with life in the womb from conception onward."

By the late 1970s and the early 1980s, evangelicals had moved to the pro-life camp. It is also true that during this decade, the Republican Party, which was more closely aligned with the

pro-abortion side, became pro-life, and the Democrats, who had been mostly pro-life, became activists for abortion rights. For example, both Rev. Jesse Jackson and Sen. Ted Kennedy had been staunchly pro-life at the time of *Roe*, but by the end of the decade they had switched to the pro-abortion side.

The Catholic Church never had to jump ship. It has always been pro-life.

Today, most mainline Protestant denominations are more enthusiastic about defending abortion rights than they were in 1973. In a recent Pew survey, 83% of Jews support abortion in all or most cases, though Orthodox Jews are mostly pro-life and certainly opposed to abortion-on-demand.

It is sad to note that President Biden and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, both of whom identify as “devout Catholics,” are champions of the most radical abortion laws and policies imaginable, putting them at odds with science, as well as the Catholic Church.

Overturing *Roe v. Wade* will not ban all abortions, so the fight for the life of the unborn will continue. We expect the Catholic Church will continue its noble legacy of offering alternatives to abortion, caring for the women seeking forgiveness for having an abortion, and promoting the pro-life cause from conception to natural death.