

2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

The Catholic League's 2023 Year in Review is now available. It contains an overview of some of our most important battles and victories over the last year. To read it, click [here](#).

MEDICAL PROFESSION BOWS TO TRANSGENDERISM: PARTS I & II

To read how medical journals and associations have adopted the politics of transgenderism, click [here](#).

To read Part I, click [here](#).

CHRISTMAS JOY ELUDES ATHEISTS

[Bill Donohue](#)

This is the most joyful time of the year, especially for Christians. It is not a good time for dogmatic secularists, many of whom are deeply unhappy. If anything, Christmas brings out the worst in them.

Take Freedom From Religion Foundation. The radical atheists paid well over six figures to place an ad in the *New York Times* on December 14, hoping to draw the ire of Christians. It backfired: it drew our condolences.

This is what they believe:

- There is no god
- There is no sin
- There is no higher purpose
- There is no hell
- There is no heaven

At a time when most people are smiling, caroling, dancing and hugging, these deeply embittered Americans are in a state of depression.

Thoroughgoing materialists, they have no idea why we were born—we just happen to exist.

Sin is a fiction, they believe, which explains why they don't regard what the Ten Commandments proscribe to be of any consequence.

We were put here on earth for no other reason than to satisfy our base cravings.

When we die, none of us will be held accountable for our misdeeds, whether guilty of greed or genocide.

Those who have behaved admirably, in some cases altruistically, have done so for naught—what happens on earth stays on earth.

A more unrealistic, and dour, perception of reality would be hard to find. No wonder they bask in negativity.

Avoid them if you can this Christmas season.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

MEDICAL PROFESSION BOWS TO TRANSGENDERISM

[Bill Donohue](#)

Elites in the medical profession have taken up the cause of transgenderism. They know that what they are promoting cannot be scientifically validated, but their politics overrides such considerations.

We have prepared a two-part series on this issue: one on the medical schools and the other on medical associations and journals. Part I is being released today; Part II will be released Dec. 27.

To read Part I, click [here](#).

MADONNA IN FREE FALL

[Bill Donohue](#)

When Madonna burst onto the scene in the 1980s, her all-around talent made her an overnight sensation. Her ability to shock was powerful, especially her vile anti-Catholic antics. Now she is in free fall, having become an old lady who likes to be masturbated on stage by her lesbian friends.

In 2015, Billboard noted that “Anyone who’s watched Madonna’s revealing 1991 documentary *Truth or Dare* remembers the unforgettable scene where Madge, despite warnings from local police, simulates masturbation while singing ‘Like a Virgin’ on her Blond Ambition Tour.”

The cops have since checked out. She could have sex with a dog on stage and no one would complain except for PETA.

One media outlet, outkick.com, described the senior citizen's performance last weekend at Brooklyn's Barclays Center as proof that "the old girl is not only still alive and kicking, it also seems as if her lesbian sex drive is still as strong as ever." But she also needs the cash.

"Madonna still has to pay bills and if suburbanites are willing to pay her to go have simulated sex with one of her dancers six months after she nearly died [she spent days in the ICU following a serious bacterial infection], then get after it girlfriend."

Another media source, mamamia.com, put it this way: "Don't be alarmed, but right now there's a 65-year-old woman simulating masturbation on stage in front of 20,000 people. Not only that. She's getting lapdances from all comers. She's being touched and rubbed and pulled and groped, tied up, even. A man in a jockstrap, bottom exposed, is pretending to perform oral sex on her."

Here's the clincher. "Oh, and her children are watching. Participating, sometimes. Some of them are adults, some of them are kids. It's a family show that is very definitely not a family show." As the Daily Mail noted, "The singer, 65, shared a kiss with a topless dancer while donning satin lingerie, before she was joined onstage by her daughter Estere, 11, once again."

What does Madonna say when asked about the propriety of sexualizing children? She answered that a few years ago while performing in Lisbon, Portugal. After first auctioning off a Polaroid photo she had just taken of herself on stage (which she then pushed between her legs to "develop"), she turned to the crowd and said, "I see some children in the audience and don't want to offend anyone but, you know that, this is my

p***y.”

Madonna’s inability to shock is not a healthy sign. It suggests cultural numbness, a condition born of relentless acts of deviance to the point of being normalized. When right and wrong become blurred—what sociologists call anomie—outrageous behaviors of all sorts are met with aplomb.

That is exactly what happened during the Weimar Republic in Germany. Moral anarchy has a short shelf life, and in the German case along came a man who was heralded for totally transforming society.

Totalitarianism is not assured once anomie settles in, but normlessness is never a healthy cultural sign.

POPE AND THE PRESIDENT ADDRESS ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

[Bill Donohue](#)

The two most powerful Catholics in the world, the pope and the president, are increasingly critical of Israel’s response to the October 7 terrorist attack by Hamas on Israeli civilians. This, in turn, has led them to come under fire for their response.

On December 17, Pope Francis addressed reports that Israel Defense Forces (IDF) shot and killed a mother and daughter inside the Holy Family Parish in Gaza the day before. The pope noted that “unarmed civilians are targets for bombs and gunfire” in Gaza. “This is terrorism and war,” he said. “Yes, it is war. It is terrorism.”

Subsequently, the IDF denied this story. It said it had been contacted by church representatives about an incident at Holy Family Parish, but “no reports of a hit on the church, nor civilians being injured or killed, were raised.” It emphasized that “The IDF takes claims regarding harm to sensitive sites with the utmost seriousness—especially churches—considering that Christian communities are a minority group in the Middle East.”

Let’s hope the IDF is right. We await more evidence. But in the meantime, it is never wise to conflate terrorism and war. Terrorism is the intentional killing of innocents and is always wrong. War, as the Catholic Church has long acknowledged, while never desirable, may be a just response in certain circumstances.

Dating back to the fourth century, St. Augustine outlined circumstances where war is morally justifiable. This was the beginning of the Church just war doctrine. [On October 16](#), I examined conditions in the Israel-Hamas war and concluded that Israel had met the criteria for a just war.

Pope Francis evidently disagrees. He reportedly told Israeli President Isaac Herzog that it is “forbidden to respond to terror with terror.” Because of his conflation of terrorism with war, it appears that *any* military response by the IDF constitutes terrorism. If that is the case, the term has been emptied of its meaning. Terrorism, it must be said, is not a synonym for war.

This appears to put the pope at odds with the just war doctrine as stated by the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The *Catechism* says that although working for peace is a must, “as long as the danger of war persists and there is no international authority with the necessary competence and power, governments cannot be denied the right of lawful self-defense, once all peace efforts have failed.”

Last year, the pope spoke more forcefully about this subject. On March 16, 2022, he said the following.

“There was a time, even in our Churches, when people spoke of a holy war or a just war. Today we cannot speak in this manner. A Christian awareness of the importance of peace has developed. Wars are always unjust since it is the people of God who pay.”

A more direct rejection of Church teaching on this subject would be impossible to make. The pope’s comments are unequivocal.

In October, after Hamas started the war, President Biden criticized Israel for its retaliatory strikes. Following the massive killing of innocents by Hamas terrorists, the president accused “extremist settlers” in Israel of “pouring gasoline” on the fire.

Last month, referring to the early stages of the war, Biden claimed Israel was “indiscriminate” in its response to Hamas. He repeated that charge at a private fundraiser in Washington, D.C. on December 8, accusing Israel of “indiscriminate bombing” in Gaza.

Biden’s accusation is a serious matter. We know that Hamas is using innocent Palestinians as human shields, making sure its tunnels are protected. Does the president believe that the IDF is not exercising restraint and is simply firing away at any and all targets?

What the pope and the president have to say about war carries great moral weight. This makes it incredibly important for them to make sure that their comments are based on the empirical evidence.

MEET THE CONGRESSIONAL BIGOTS

[Bill Donohue](#)

There are Republican bigots and Democrat bigots, but when it comes to Christians and Jews, the big prize goes to the Democrats. Here's the proof.

If the Equality Act were to become law, it would force Catholic doctors to perform abortions and sex-reassignment surgery. Catholic hospitals that refuse to comply would be denied federal funding, effectively shutting them down. The same fate awaits Catholic foster care programs: they would either have to agree that two men can adopt children or lose federal funding.

Those who say that Catholic personnel and institutions would be protected by the Religious Freedom Restoration Act are wrong: the Equality Act exempts itself from this legislation, a bill signed into law by President Bill Clinton.

Regarding Jews, House Resolution (H.Res.927) addresses two related issues: (a) a condemnation of anti-Semitism on university campuses and, (b) a condemnation of the three university presidents from elite institutions who failed to unequivocally condemn genocide against Jews.

We did a study of those House members who co-sponsored the Equality Act and those who also refused to vote against the House resolution condemning anti-Semitism.

Of the 128 Democrats who voted against the House resolution, 127 co-sponsored the Equality Act (the one who initially did not, Gabe Amo, has subsequently said he now supports it); there was one Republican, Thomas Massie, who voted against the

House resolution. To read the tally, click [here](#).

Growing up in New York, I have many fond memories of how the Democrats were the Party of Catholics and Jews. Catholics know that those days are long gone. Now Jews are learning the same lesson.

I hasten to add that many Catholics and Jews are not exactly enthralled by the Republicans. Indeed, there are now more politically homeless Catholics and Jews than ever before.

CATHOLIC LEAGUE TO ATHEISTS—SUE US

Bill Donohue

We've had it with atheist bullies. That's why we are asking one of their most prominent groups to consider suing us. Here's how this developed.

An atheist hate group from Wisconsin, Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF), registered a complaint about a nativity scene being displayed by the Toledo Fire Department in Toledo, Iowa, outside of Des Moines. The crèche has been a feature of the firehouse for about 20 years. City leaders initially gave in and removed the nativity scene.

Toledo Mayor Brian Sokol then decided to put the nativity scene back at the firehouse: secular symbols now surround the crèche. We commend him for doing so and we pledge to assist him if he is further badgered.

In their letter to Toledo officials, FFRF said the following: "Nativity scenes on public property are unnecessary,

inappropriate and divisive. It is irrefutable that the nativity is a religious, Christian symbol. The best solution is to remove this nativity scene and discontinue hosting religious displays on public property.”

FFRF is wrong. This is pure intimidation. Nativity scenes on public property are necessary and appropriate at Christmastime, and the only people who think they are divisive are Christian bashers who specialize in dividing Americans.

It is entirely legal to display a nativity scene on public property; some conditions may apply.

The Catholic League erected its life-size nativity scene in Central Park on December 7; it will be up until after the new year. We get a permit from the City of New York’s Parks Department every year, and have had our nativity scene on display there since the mid-1990s.

We don’t have any secular symbols surrounding our display—no Jack Frost or reindeers. It is purely a religious expression. That is because Central Park is considered a public forum, open to all points of view.

If we were to display a nativity scene on or near City Hall, the seat of government, we would have to include secular symbols; otherwise it might give the impression that the government is endorsing Christianity.

Therefore, what Mayor Sokol has done is entirely constitutional. We contacted his office today pledging our support. We notified the mayor’s office that if FFRF wants to sue, and he is unable to access pro-bono counsel, we will pay the legal bills to defend him in court.

If FFRF wants a showdown over this issue, let them sue the Catholic League for erecting its nativity scene in Central Park. Good luck with that.

Contact Amitabh Pal, FFRF's communications director:
apal@ffrf.org

BOSTON BURSTING WITH BIGOTRY

[Bill Donohue](#)

The Boston Metropolitan area, which includes Cambridge, is bursting with bigotry these days. It's not hard to figure out why.

Michelle Wu is the Mayor of Boston. She is an avid proponent of racial segregation. So much so that she is holding a Christmas party that bans people who are white. Called the Electeds of Color Holiday Party, invitations were mistakenly sent to all members of the city council, including the seven who are white. She apologized for this misstep, but not for her racist decision: the segregated party will go on as planned.

Harvard is located in Cambridge, a suburb of Boston. Its president, Claudine Gay, says she is opposed to bullying and harassment but is not sure whether calling for the extermination of Jews meets that standard. She said that calling for the genocide of Jews depends on the context. She did not say what context would make it inoffensive.

Harvard believes in racial segregation on campus. That is why it annually holds a separate graduation ceremony for black students.

One thing Harvard does not believe in is free speech. In the "2024 College Free Speech Rankings," published by the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression, Harvard was

ranked dead last (#248) on this score. It received the lowest score possible, 0.00, meriting the tag “Abysmal.”

Where do the bigoted ideas that Boston has embraced come from? From the faculty, of course. They are the most intolerant of all Americans. Leading the way is a professor at Boston University, Ibram Henry Rogers, better known as Ibram X. Kendi. He is the leading proponent of Critical Race Theory, the racist ideology—all white people are racists—allegedly crafted to combat racism.

Boston is also home to censoring the free speech of Christians. For 12 years, the city of Boston had authorized 284 flags to fly atop a city flagpole outside of City Hall, representing a myriad of government and private interests. But in 2018 it turned down a request by Camp Constitution to fly what they described as a “Christian” flag. Gay Pride flags were okay, but not Christian ones. The Boston bigots lost in the Supreme Court in a unanimous decision.

It is not the cops and firefighters in the Boston area who are promoting bigotry and censoring speech. No, it is those who have been intellectually raped by professors. Instead of fostering tolerance and independent thinking, higher education has become a hot bed of intolerance and group think.

CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS IN TIMES SQUARE

[Bill Donohue](#)

Many passersby in Times Square are taking pictures of our digital billboard celebrating Christmas. The billboard offers

a positive message at Christmastime; it appears for 30 seconds, 4-6 times per hour. It is located on the east side of Broadway between 44th and 45th Street, and will be featured through Christmas Eve.

[Here is a photo of it, taken from street level.](#)