

SALUTE TO ST. PATRICK

Bill Donohue

[Note: We run this article each year on March 17]

The heroics of St. Patrick are not appreciated as much as they should be. He is the first person in history to publicly condemn slavery, and one of the first leaders to champion the cause of equal rights.

There is much to celebrate on March 17. Fortunately, his writings, though slim, are eye-opening accounts of his life: *Letter to the Soldiers of Coroticus* and *Confession* reveal much about the man. Along with other sources, they paint a picture of his saintliness.

Patrick was born in Britain in the 4th century to wealthy parents. It is likely that he was baptized, though growing up he did not share his family's faith. He was an atheist.

When he was 15, he committed what he said was a grave sin, never saying exactly what it was; it appears it was a sexual encounter with a young girl. No matter, it would haunt him throughout his life.

At age 15 or 16 (the accounts vary), Patrick was kidnapped and enslaved by Irish barbarians. They had come to plunder his family's estate, and took him away in chains to Ireland. While a slave, he converted to Christianity, praying incessantly at all hours of the day. After six years, he escaped, and made his way back home.

His family thought he was dead, and with good reason: no one taken by Irish raiders had managed to escape and return. St. Patrick biographer Philip Freeman describes how his family received him, stating "it was as if a ghost had returned from the dead."

After he returned home, he had a vision while sleeping. He felt called to return to Ireland. This seemed bizarre: this is where he was brutalized as a slave. But he knew what Jesus had commanded us to do, "Love thy enemy." He was convinced that God was calling him to become a missionary to Ireland. So he acted on it, despite the reservations of family and friends.

Patrick became a priest, practiced celibacy, and was eventually named a bishop. Contrary to what many believe, he did not introduce Christianity to Ireland, nor was he Ireland's first bishop. But he did more to bring the Gospel to Ireland than anyone, converting legions of pagans, especially in the northern parts of the island.

His missionary work in Ireland has been duly noted, but his strong defense of human rights has not been given its due.

No public person before him had denounced slavery, widespread though it was. Jesus was silent on the subject, Aristotle thought it was a natural way of life, and neither master nor slave saw anything fundamentally wrong with it. Patrick did.

Though he did not invoke natural law specifically, he was instinctively drawn to it. He taught that all men were created equal in the eyes of God, and that the inherent dignity of everyone must be respected.

Patrick did more than preach—he lashed out at the British dictator, Coroticus, harshly rebuking him for his mistreatment of the Irish. In fact, Patrick found his Irish converts to be more civilized than Coroticus and his band of thugs.

Patrick was way ahead of his time in the pursuit of human rights. Not only were men of every social status entitled to equal rights, so were women. In his *Letter to the Soldiers of Coroticus*, he scolds "the tyrant Coroticus—a man who has no respect for God or his priests." More important, he made a startling plea: "They must also free Christian women and captives." His reasoning showed the power of his faith when he

said, "Remember, Christ died and was crucified for these people."

He did not mince words. "So, Coroticus, you and your wicked servants, where do you think you will end up? You have treated baptized Christian women like prizes to be handed out, all for the sake of the here and now—this brief, fleeting world."

What makes this all the more dramatic is the way the pagan world thought about women: the idea that women were equal to men was totally foreign to them. But the women understood what Patrick was saying, and gravitated to him in large numbers. The Christian tenet that all humans possess equal dignity had taken root.

Did the Irish save civilization, as Thomas Cahill maintains? Freeman thinks not—"it had never been lost." But everyone agrees that had it not been for St. Patrick, and the monasteries that followed, much of what we know about the ancient world would not exist.

Indeed, it is difficult to fathom how classical Greek and Roman literature would have survived had it not been for the Irish monks who attracted students from many parts of Europe. They are responsible for preserving the great works of antiquity. And all of them are indebted to St. Patrick.

It is believed that he died on March 17, sometime during the second half of the fifth century. That is his feast day, the source of many celebrations in his honor. His impact extends beyond the Irish and the Catholic Church—human rights are a global issue—making him a very special person in world history.

WAS YEOH THE FIRST ASIAN OSCAR WINNER?

Catholic League president Bill Donohue addresses the issue of ethnic identity:

Am I who I say I am, or am I what nature says I am? The former is an interesting psychological issue but it has no bearing on reality: our ethnicity, like our sex, is biologically determined. It is not a function of perception. It matters not a whit what we claim to be. What matters is who we really are.

NPR lit up the Twitter sky when it said that Michelle Yeoh was the “first person who identifies as Asian” to win the Oscar for Best Actress. The Identity Police quickly swung into action, maintaining that Merle Oberon was the first Asian woman to be nominated for the Academy Award for Best Actress in 1935. Not so quick.

Poor Merle didn't know who she was. She was born in India to her pre-teen mother, but grew up thinking her mother was her sister. That's because her English dad was bedding the gal whom Merle thought was her mother (she was actually her grandmother). After her father abandoned her, Merle's real mother ran off with some other guy and married him, and this opened the door for her dad's lover to assume the role of her mother. Got that?

As to her ethnic identity, Merle grew up lying about it, choosing to identify as a white person, claiming to be born in Tasmania to an elite British officer. But did she lie? After all, her dad was Anglican, but then again Barack Obama's mother was white yet he is considered a black man. Are there no biracial people anymore?

To complicate matters more, consider the reaction of the Identity Police. Their hissy fit over Merle not being

recognized as the first Asian to be nominated for Best Actress is wholly without merit. According to their twisted ideology, identity is all that matters, and since she identified as a white girl, that means she was as white as Snow White. Therefore, she wasn't the first Asian to be recognized for Best Actress. Yeoh was.

The Identity Police cannot have it both ways. We are either what nature says we are or we are what we say we are. But perhaps we should not be so judgmental and simply welcome them to our club—the reality club—the one that treats identity as a farcical attribute. Now if they would only admit that they are a fraud, that would be real progress.

THE POPE, HOLLYWOOD AND TRANSGENDERISM

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on how Hollywood and the pope recently addressed transgenderism:

If there were any doubt that the religious vision of sexuality, as represented by the pope, and the secular vision, as represented by Hollywood, were dissimilar, they were wiped away over the weekend.

On March 10, an Argentine daily newspaper, *La Nación*, published an interview that Pope Francis gave on the subject of transgenderism. "Gender ideology, today, is one of the most dangerous ideological colonizations. Why is it dangerous? Because it blurs the difference and the value of men and women."

The pope also said that "some people are a bit naïve and

believe that it [gender ideology] is the way to progress." Such persons, he said, do not recognize "an anthropology of gender, which is extremely dangerous because it eliminates differences [between men and women]."

Two days later, at the Academy Awards, Daniel Scheinert, the co-director of the Oscar-winning movie, *Everything Everywhere All at Once*, took the occasion to defend drag queens and drag children. He said they were "a threat to nobody!" The crowd loved it.

The pope understands that human nature is fixed: there are only two sexes. Hollywood thinks human nature is fluid: there are many sexes, or what they inaccurately call "genders."

Is the Hollywood crowd naïve, as the pope says, or are they something more sinister? To conclude they are naïve is to say they can be educated as to their follies. But if they are not naïve, and they know exactly what they are doing, then they are willfully promoting what the pope calls "one of the most dangerous ideological colonizations."

In a burst of honesty, drag queen Kitty Demur warned parents two years ago about taking their kids to drag events.

"I have no idea why you want drag queens to read books to your children... What in the hell has a drag queen ever done to make you have so much respect for them and admire them so much? Other than put on makeup and jump on the floor and writhe around and do sexual things on stage? I have absolutely no idea why you would want that to influence your child. Would you want a stripper or a porn star to influence your child?"

The drag queen asks all the right questions. Too bad Hollywood isn't listening.

DELAWARE

WEIGHING

CONFESSIONAL BILL

Catholic League president Bill Donohue addresses the priest-penitent privilege under scrutiny in Delaware:

Last week we asked lawmakers in Vermont to reconsider a bill aimed at curtailing the sexual abuse of minors that would force priests to divulge what they learned about this subject in the confessional. Now we are asking lawmakers in Delaware the same thing.

State Rep. Eric Morrison introduced a bill on March 2 that would amend existing law on mandatory reporting of child abuse to cover information learned in the confessional. We are not doubting his motive. We are questioning his reasoning.

Going after child sexual abusers is noble, but it can be done without sacrificing the priest-penitent relationship. Without the assurance of confidentiality, no priest would offer confession and no layperson would seek absolution.

The reasoning behind this effort seems to be that it is not unusual for priests to learn of such crimes in the confessional. There is no evidence to support this idea. Indeed, anyone who would violate a minor is so morally debased in the first place that the last thing he would do is seek penance from a priest.

Such a bill is being weighed in Delaware suggests that the sexual abuse of minors is ongoing. This is rubbish. The clergy sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church took place mostly between 1965 and 1985.

As I recounted in my book, [*The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse: Clarifying the Facts and the Causes*](#), the reforms enacted over the past two decades have been a stunning success: the average number of credible accusations made against approximately 50,000 members of the clergy is in the single digits. The fact is that most of the molesters are either dead or have been kicked out of the priesthood.

If lawmakers find it necessary to break the priest-penitent relationship, are they prepared to bust journalists who refuse to give up their sources? Will they go after psychologists who refuse to divulge what they learn from their patients? What about lawyers who find out things from their clients that must remain secret? Will the lawmakers bust that relationship as well?

If journalists, psychologists and lawyers are permitted to keep their exemption, but priests are not, then such a law will surely be challenged in the courts. That is not an outcome most people in Delaware would likely support.

Separation of church and state applies to state encroachment on religion. For state actors to force priests to essentially kill the Sacrament of Reconciliation is a clear violation of that First Amendment provision. It is also not an outcome the residents of Delaware would likely support.

There are some important steps that can be taken to curtail the abuse of children. They should be implemented. But not among them is busting the seal of the confessional.

SUPPORT AWARENESS DAY!

DETRANSITION

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on Detransition Awareness Day:

On March 12, the Hollywood gang will congratulate themselves again at the Academy Awards, and some Oscar winners will no doubt make obscene comments. It's who they are.

On the same day, an event that is of much greater cultural significance will take place: it's Detransition Awareness Day. Hollywood will not be cheering, but everyone else should be. Detransitioners are people who have made the courageous decision to transition back to their normal sex.

Last year those who had transitioned to the opposite sex, and back again, held a Zoom conference on March 12 to discuss their experiences. Participants logged in from the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, the United Kingdom, Germany, Spain, Chile, Brazil, and other countries. Their stories would shake most people.

In recent years, there has been a sharp increase in children who are confused about their sex, with girls transitioning to boys much more than vice versa. The latest data show that approximately 30 percent now transition back to their father-determined sex.

It is a national scandal that the elites in the medical profession are mostly supportive of transgender ideology. To counsel young people to switch their sex—which despite anatomical surgery can never happen in any true biological sense—is child abuse.

Virtually every boy and girl who has expressed misgivings about his or her natural sex has been encouraged by

therapists, and those in the medical community, to take the next step. If they were left alone to work through this stage, 80 percent would choose not to transition.

Why do we need Detransition Awareness Day? Because those who make the decision to reverse course are attacked for doing so. They are harassed, verbally abused, stigmatized, shunned, and treated like dirt. Many examples could be cited. Here are a few.

Sinead Watson works as an advisor to Genspect, a parent-led organization opposed to transgenderism. In 2015, she made the switch from female to male; she decided to detransition in 2019.

Her second decision was greeted by therapists with scorn. "They just didn't want to speak about detransition," saying "it was like a kick in the stomach." She calls the initial push to transition young people "disgusting," arguing that the affirmative model must change.

Chloe Cole is the first person in the United States to bring a lawsuit against those who assisted her, as a minor, to make the medical transition. That was when she was 12. Four years later she realized this was a mistake.

When she made the first transition, her parents were told what has become the standard line—if you don't support your child to transition she may commit suicide. Chloe says that "they were pretty much coerced into allowing this to happen." Her lawsuit expressly says that she and her parents were "falsely informed" that she was "at a high risk for suicide."

When she changed from male back to female, she was "attacked online" and in person. "I started getting harassed a lot." She was shunned at school and made to feel like a pariah, if not a traitor to the cause of transgenderism.

There is no end to the services afforded to those who buy into

the transgender scam and seek to transition. But there is nothing available for those who seek to detransition. This includes the Biden administration, which has shamelessly taken the side of the child abusers.

Those who choose to return to their nature-given status should be given every resource available. They are the ones who truly deserve our compassion and support.

ABORTIONISTS ARE NO HEROES

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a very sick celebration:

Most pro-life Americans understand, but do not condone, why some young girls and adult women make a terrible mistake by terminating the baby in their womb. Some make this decision out of fear, or they panic. They need to be ministered to, and that is why the Catholic Church has an outreach program, Project Rachel, that offers them help and guidance.

What pro-lifers don't understand is why anyone would celebrate those doctors who make their living by exploiting women and killing their children. Abortionists are no heroes.

March 10 is Abortion Provider Appreciation Day. According to the Abortion Care Network, the sponsor of this event, they will celebrate "all of the courageous, compassionate people who provide abortion care." They will do so "through love notes, art, acts of kindness and support, messages of affirmation, a giant love-fest Tweetstorm, and more."

There is nothing compassionate or loving about killing the innocent. This infamous day tells us volumes about the

character of those who support it. They prove, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that they are not reluctantly pro-choice. No, they are rabid pro-abortion enthusiasts.

Contact: info@abortioncarenetwork.org

SEAL OF CONFESSION UNDER FIRE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue addresses the priest-penitent privilege under scrutiny in Vermont:

The Catholic League is used to doing battle with lawmakers who want to violate the seal of confession. Their intentions vary, but in each case the proximate cause of such legislation is the sexual abuse of minors.

In the last few years we succeeded in beating back attempts to vitiate the priest-penitent privilege in Utah and North Dakota. Now Vermont is considering such a law.

The sponsor of the Vermont legislation is State Sen. Dick Sears Jr. Unlike many other lawmakers, he comes to this matter with good credentials: he has a record of combating child abuse. Unfortunately, his dedication to this cause has allowed him to think that progress could be made if we lifted the priest-penitent privilege.

In a letter I sent today, I commended Sears for his work. I also mentioned that I am a Catholic leader and author, and that my interest in this subject led me to write a book about it, [*The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse: Clarifying the Facts and the Causes*](#).

"I am writing to you in the hope that you might reconsider one aspect of your bill on this issue," I said, "namely the part

that touches on the priest-penitent relationship. If the seal of the confession is broken, it would vitiate its raison d'être. It is also unenforceable: no priest I know would ever violate his obligation to maintain confidentiality."

Whenever we have dealt with this matter, I always ask those sponsoring a bill like the one proposed by Sen. Sears the same question. "Where is the evidence that the priest-penitent privilege plays a role in the unfolding of the clergy sexual abuse scandal?" I am aware of none.

It must be said that the scandal that rocked the Catholic Church took place mostly between 1965 and 1985. Moreover, the reforms enacted over the past two decades have been a stunning success: the average number of credible accusations made against approximately 50,000 members of the clergy is in the single digits. The fact is that most of the molesters are either dead or have been kicked out of the priesthood.

Journalists will go to prison before giving up their sources. Psychologists would never divulge what they learn from their patients. Lawyers learn of things from their clients that must remain secret. Ditto for priests in the confessional.

There are some important steps that can be taken to curtail the abuse of children. They should be implemented. But not among them is busting the seal of the confessional.

We copied the other members of the Vermont Senate Judiciary Committee, as well as Burlington Bishop Christopher Coyne. We are not asking that the bill be withdrawn: our only interest is having all parties to it to reconsider the decision to bust the seal of confession. It won't protect one minor, but it will trample on the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

STUDENTS' PARENTS CALLED "CHRISTO-FASCISTS"

No teacher has the right to make bigoted remarks about the parents of students. Such an occasion recently took place in a school district in Washington. What follows is Bill Donohue's letter to the school superintendent in charge of the school where this happened.

March 6, 2023

Dr. Alan Spicciati
Superintendent
Auburn School District
915 Fourth St. NE
Auburn, WA 98002

Dear Dr. Spicciati:

The purpose of this letter is to inquire about your school district's response to the blatantly anti-Christian statement recently made by Kelly Love; she teaches at Auburn School District 408.

It has been widely reported that Love was upset with a teacher who sought to alert parents to some school policies that were being kept from them. In reply, Love said, "I cannot disagree with this more. So many students are not safe in this nation from their Christo-fascist parents."

Such a sweeping and clearly anti-Christian remark runs counter to the Auburn School District's policy on equity. Dr. Gary Howard, an equity specialist whose work is flagged on the District's website, cites several "Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices." Among them are the following: a) "Students are affirmed in their cultural connections" b) "Teachers are personally inviting" c) "Learning environments

are physically and culturally inviting” and d) “Classroom is managed with firm, consistent, loving, guidance.”

Love violated these tenets. By calling the parents of Christian students “fascists,” she is clearly not affirming the “cultural connections” of these students, nor is she being “personally inviting.” Indeed, the environment she has created is anything but “culturally inviting,” and she sure doesn’t exhibit the kind of “love” and “guidance” these students expect.

If a teacher called the parents of Native Americans “Christo-fascists,” swift punishment would follow. It should not matter what the ethnicity of the parents is. What matters is that Christians should not be smeared by a state employee. That is a serious matter.

I would appreciate hearing from you about the disposition of this case.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.
President

cc: Erin Mersino, Esq.
Kelly Love

DRUG LEGALIZATION FAILS MISERABLY

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the failure of drug legalization:

We have been told repeatedly that the “war on drugs” has been an utter failure. That’s because nothing can stop people from using illicit drugs. Worse, our failure to legalize them makes a black market inevitable. Therefore, it makes more sense to regulate drugs and get rid of the black market.

If by failure it means that the law has not prevented people from taking drugs, then this is true. Much the same could be said about wife beating. Should we legalize it?

Many parts of the country have legalized certain drugs, marijuana in particular, yet in virtually every case the black market has increased, not decreased.

In the mid-1990s, William F. Buckley Jr. ran a lengthy piece in *National Review* titled, “The War on Drugs Is Lost.” He and several others argued it was time to legalize all drugs, including cocaine and heroin. That idea was dumb then and it is even dumber now.

In 2019, lawmakers in Colorado made the possession of a small amount of heroin and cocaine a misdemeanor, not a felony. The Democrat-controlled legislature included fentanyl, the most dangerous drug of them all. Colorado prosecutors pleaded with lawmakers to exempt fentanyl—four grams is the equivalent of 13,000 deadly doses—but they refused. What happened? Opioid overdose deaths increased by 54 percent in 2020.

In 2018, Washington’s King County, which encompasses Seattle, and neighboring Snohomish County, stopped charging people for small amounts of hard drugs. Meth overdoses skyrocketed, going from 18 deaths in 2008 to 197 in 2019. Heroin overdose deaths jumped from 45 to 147 and fentanyl-related deaths climbed from 9 to 196, during the same period. Seattle-radio show host Jason Rantz says decriminalization made “the problems worse.” In fact, he brands it “an unmitigated disaster.”

The notion that drug legalization would put an end to the black market is completely unfounded. A recent editorial in

the *Wall Street Journal* on how drug legalization has failed in California explains what has happened, yet the editorial board seems not to fully understand why. The subtitle of the article says, "The black market in pot proliferates despite legalization." Despite? It would be more accurate to say *because of* legalization.

Whenever and wherever drugs are legalized, there is a spike in illicit drugs. Why? For one, legalization sends a moral message to the public, and that is, despite slogans to the contrary, people will interpret the decision as a green light. That means the market will balloon.

With drug legalization comes state taxes and regulations, both of which are a boon to drug lords; they are wholly unaffected. Moreover, government drug stores will never allow the public to buy an unlimited amount of drugs, nor will they allow for the purchase of every conceivable drug. Thus have they created another loophole for the drug lords to exploit. Nothing can stop this from happening.

Not too long ago, New York Governor Kathy Hochul and New York City Mayor Eric Adams were singing the praises of marijuana legalization. No more.

In 2019, New York lawmakers not only voted to legalize marijuana, they voted to stop those from selling illegal weed from being punished; they were given criminal court summons and a small fine. To show how merciful they were, the legislature gave those previously busted for drugs first dibs in getting a license to sell marijuana. Guess what happened?

"Truth to tell," wrote Bob McManus in the *New York Post*, "New York's plan to legalize weed, turn its distribution over to ex-cons and then scoop up sales taxes while making no serious effort to combat illegal competition always seemed weird." As he noted, "Used syringes litter city streets; there are pop-up shooting galleries in public spaces—and fentanyl overdoses are

pacing an increasingly deadly opioid epidemic.”

Mayor Adams is despondent. “Children are getting high on their way to school. Children are taking these gummy bears. I must be old-fashioned. People don’t realize what’s happening in our country and in our city.”

He’s right. The illegal pot shops are everywhere. Indeed, one is directly across from City Hall.

Hochul is totally confused. She pushed hard to legalize smoking marijuana but now wants a big tax hike on smoking cigarettes. To top things off, she wants to ban smoking menthol cigarettes and other flavored tobacco, but she is not seeking a ban on flavored vaping products or on fruity-scented marijuana!

There are certain vices that we will never stop. The best we can do is curtail them. But removing from the criminal justice system those vices that have traditionally been prosecuted is the worst possible way to deal with them.

CONGRATS TO STATEN ISLAND ST. PAT’S DAY PARADE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the Staten Island St. Patrick’s Day Parade:

On Sunday, March 5, Staten Island will hold its traditional St. Patrick’s Day Parade. As always, everyone is welcome to celebrate the contributions of St. Patrick. Those who seek to hijack the parade by drawing attention to their own agenda are not welcome.

Larry Cummings is the head of the Richmond County St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee. He made the right decision not to allow homosexuals to crash the parade.

Gays are welcome to march, but, like everyone else, they are expected to blend in and not turn the parade into a celebration of their cause. Perversely, they insist on marching under their own banner. Cummings has wisely rejected their bid. He is on solid legal and moral grounds.

In 1995, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled unanimously that the private sponsors of Boston's St. Patrick's Day Parade could exclude marchers whose message they reject. This was a no-brainer: If groups who promote a cause that is contrary to the stated purpose of a parade are allowed to march, they would effectively neuter the message of the parade's organizers. This would mean, for example, that there would be no way to stop neo-Nazis from marching in a Salute to Israel Parade.

Cummings is on solid moral grounds as well. The parade celebrates St. Patrick, not sexual orientation. No one is stopping homosexuals from having gay pride parades and celebrations. Indeed, what started as a one-day event quickly turned into gay pride week, and now we have gay pride month, but evidently that is not enough to satisfy them. Their disrespect for the diversity that St. Patrick's Day parades represent is appalling.

Michael McMahon, the district attorney for Richmond County, is calling the parade organizers "bullies" and "mean-spirited." But we know who the bullies are—people like him who want to turn a Catholic event into a celebration of homosexuality.

Tom Wrobleski is a Staten Island commentator whose grasp of the facts is deplorable. He tried to bring Pope Francis into the debate by implying he would take the side of gays seeking to march under their own banner.

Wrobleski says the parade organizers "forget that Pope Francis

has said 'who am I to judge?' when it comes to homosexuality." That is absolutely false.

In my 2021 book, *The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse: Clarifying the Facts and the Causes*, I cover this issue. The pope was asked about a specific gay priest who had unproven accusations made against him. He told reporters, "If someone is gay and he searches for the Lord and has good will, who am I to judge him." Nothing unusual about that—that is routine Catholic teaching.

In other words, the pope was speaking about one priest, a man who was presumably a) searching for the Lord and b) exercising good will. Wrobleski left that out, and he also left out the word "him" at the close of the pope's comment. The Holy Father's remark had nothing to do whatsoever with justifying homosexuality. Does Wrobleski want us to believe that Pope Francis was championing sodomy?

Larry Cummings should receive the support of everyone who believes in freedom of association, religious liberty, and diversity. Those who reject these noble goals are flexing their anti-American muscles and should be shown the gate.